

RAILS Report

RSC FY2021 Goal 1: Increase a Statewide Culture of Resource Sharing

Databases, Deals, and Discounts

RAILS Purchases ConsortiaManager to Streamline Group Purchase Processes

RAILS recently purchased ConsortiaManager, an online resource designed specifically for consortia. ConsortiaManager will help us increase efficiency, capacity, and member communications related to our group purchases, and will save a lot of staff time. Several RAILS staff attended a Zoom overview of the product in early March.

Career Online High School (COHS)/Smart Horizons Career Online Education Update

RAILS met with staff at Flossmoor Public Library to discuss ways to promote [COHS](#) to youth and teen librarians. The majority of COHS students are parents, and working with youth services staff is one way to increase visibility of the program.

We also talked with Smart Horizons about their marketing team creating social media content that RAILS and member libraries can use. They were very receptive to our ideas, and we will be working with them as we get closer to July, when Smart Horizons will take over the marketing of COHS from Gale.

Other RAILS Deals and Discounts News

[Comics Plus](#) gives students unlimited, simultaneous access to thousands of age-appropriate digital comics, graphic novels, and manga—at school and at home. Elementary, middle school, and high school packages are available, along with educational resources to help integrate comics into the curriculum and/or extracurricular activities.

For more details on offers, log into the RAILS website with your L2 login information and go to the [Deals and Discounts](#) page.

E-books and E-Content

eRead Illinois Update

RAILS is developing a dashboard to help public libraries retrieve statistics on the number of e-books and audiobooks in [eRead Illinois](#) for their [Illinois Public Library Annual Report](#) (IPLAR). We will make the dashboard available to our member libraries once it's finalized. [Get a sneak peek here.](#)

[ALA's Core E-Books Interest Group Meeting at ALA Midwinter](#)

RAILS staff attended ALA's [Core E-Books Interest Group](#) meeting in February. This group works to be influential with e-book publishers and vendors to benefit libraries and library users. The meeting included an update on e-book activity around the country, including proposed legislation in different states.

Delivery

Greg Pronevitz, the consultant RAILS has been working with to help us plan for the future of delivery, has continued to work with RAILS on the preparation of an RFP. In May, RAILS will release the RFP seeking proposals from vendors across the country on potential efficient and cost-effective delivery strategies. Greg also presented information on the Future of Delivery at the RAILS Member Update on April 27.

On April 12, RAILS reduced the delivery quarantine period from 3 days to no longer requiring a quarantine period. RAILS staff have continued to monitor the updated information coming from the REALM study as well as the CDC, and a review of the REALM data by qualified staff from the Oregon Department of Health via the Oregon State Library and similar state agencies. After a careful review of this information, as well as our ongoing understanding of the most likely ways that the current iteration of the COVID-19 virus is transmitted, led RAILS to determine that a quarantine period for delivery materials was no longer necessary.

RAILS staff continued to meet with other Illinois delivery stakeholders, including the Illinois State Library, the Illinois Heartland Library System, and CARLI to discuss delivery plans and communications. We have also met with the Midwest Delivery Group and ALA's Association of Specialized, Government, and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASGCLA) (now part of ALA CORE). All of these meetings have been extremely helpful in determining a best course of action for RAILS.

Explore More Illinois



We are thrilled to announce that [Explore More Illinois](#), our online cultural pass program, restarted April 1. April 1 also marks the two-year anniversary of Explore More Illinois. Twelve attractions with more than 20 offers will be available in April, and other attractions have committed to resuming their offers when capacity at their locations can increase.

Currently, 333 libraries (292 RAILS libraries and 41 IHLS libraries) participate, and we will continue to work on adding libraries and recruiting new attractions.

RSC FY2021 Goal 2: Improve Awareness of Resource Sharing

Update on E-Book Grant from Illinois State Library

In November 2020, RAILS received a \$125,000 e-book grant from the Illinois State Library to acquire additional educational and recreational titles for juvenile and young adult users of the [eRead Illinois](#) Axis 360 shared digital collection.

As of May 1, RAILS had spent \$99,686 of the grant money: \$60,924 for 2,356 e-books and \$38,762 for 768 audiobooks. RAILS continues to receive suggestions for titles to purchase with grant funds; eRead members can make suggestions [via this form](#).

In mid-March, RAILS sent a [press release](#) to a variety of local media outlets and the library press promoting the grant.

RAILS Vendor Privacy Policy Pilot Project

About 20 RAILS public libraries have added their vendor/e-resource information to our [Vendor Privacy Policy web page](#), which debuted in January. The page contains links to privacy policies for third-party vendors who provide e-resources to public libraries. Libraries can easily create a customized list with links to their resources.

We're encouraging all RAILS public libraries to add their library's information to make this tool as comprehensive and useful as possible.

Collaboration on Statewide Initiatives

RAILS, IHLS, and AISLE partnered on a successful March 4 webinar on "System E-Content and E-Resources for Illinois Educators." A total of 75 RAILS and IHLS members registered. The virtual panel included RAILS and IHLS staff, and a librarian from Bloom High School District #206 who gave a strong testimonial for eRead Illinois Axis 360.

School librarians in attendance received information on a variety of system-supported resources, including [eRead Illinois](#), [inkie.org](#), and [BiblioBoard](#). A [recording of the event](#) is available in the RAILS CE Archives. RAILS and IHLS plan to host another program in August as a "back to school" event.

AISLE Partnership Meetings

RAILS staff meet monthly with staff from AISLE, IHLS, and ILA to discuss ways we can advocate for school libraries. Topics discussed at the April meeting included:

- SOPPA (Student Online Personal Protection Act)
- AISLE Reader's Choice Awards

- Diversity in Literature Bill
- Statewide Database Proposal Update
- EDI Continuing Education Grants
- Collaboration with RAILS Advocacy Committee around School Libraries and Academic Preparedness for College

RAILS Awards My Library Is... Grants to 14 School Libraries

RAILS awarded 14 [My Library Is... Grants](#) to school library members in March. These grants help school libraries focus on projects that tell their story and increase visibility and support for school libraries in general. AISLE helped evaluate the grants. Awardees include:

School/District	Project Name
Batavia High School	How Can We Help?
Beach Park Community Consolidated School District 3	My Library Is... Moving Forward
City of Chicago School District #299	My Library Is Inclusive
Deer Creek-Mackinaw CUSD #701	3-D for 3-P: Printing, Promoting, and Public Relations
Deerfield Public School District #109	Virtual Shepard Learning Commons
Durand CUSD #322	There's a Library in Durand!?
Kaneland High School	#KanelandReads
Kankakee School District	KSD/KPL Young Author's Contest
Lockport School District 91	KGTV Meets #KGLRC
Prospect Heights School District 23	Axis360
Reed-Custer CUSD 225U	My Library Will Be...Current!
Woodland CUSD 5	Culture & Diversity Collection w/Programming
Woodland CCSD #50 - Woodland Middle School	A Beautiful MOSAIC of Cultures!
Zion School District 6	East Elementary School's NEW Dual Language Program

RSC FY2021 Goal 3: Provide Services for the Unserved

Universal Service/Unserved

New Information on Cards for Kids Act on Universal Library Service Pulse Page

RAILS members have asked a lot of questions about the recent [Cards for Kids legislation](#), which specifies that K-12 students living in unincorporated areas who are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches under the National School Lunch Program, shall not be charged a nonresident fee to use the library. In response, RAILS has included a variety of information on the act on our [Universal Library Service: Serving the Unserved Pulse Page](#).

Library staff have also asked what to say when asked why giving “free” library cards to kids/students is a good idea, or to justify providing additional library services to nonresidents in general. RAILS created [talking points](#) to help meet these needs and posted them on the pulse page as well.

We also posted [Library Cards for Underserved and Unserved Minors: FAQ/Best Practices](#). Catherine Yanikoski, Deputy Director, Joliet Public Library, created this document to provide detailed information on the Cards for Kids Act and to answer a number of frequently asked questions.

BiblioBoard

While we have not seen the same usage spike in BiblioBoard that we have seen with eRead Illinois, unique BiblioBoard content performed especially well in 2020. The top five most viewed items included a title from the [RAILS for Schools site](#), the 2019 Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author Project winning title (*The Bone Shroud*), a [local community collection](#) title from Brookfield Public Library, and a title from the [Recovering the Classics](#) collection.

We are looking forward to exploring new programs and awareness campaigns, including a series of webinars, with BiblioLabs, our BiblioBoard vendor, throughout 2021.

Spreading the Word about E-Resources Available Free through RAILS

RAILS sent a [press release](#) to media contacts statewide to publicize the availability of [BiblioBoard resources](#) to everyone in Illinois, without needing a login or library card. Thousands of e-resources are available free of charge through our partnership with BiblioLabs.

We also shared a template of the release with members so they could customize it for their patrons. The template is available via the [BiblioBoard page](#) of our website.