

June 2021

RAILS Continuing Education and Consulting Talking Points

- RAILS offers continuing education (CE) for library staff to help them provide the best possible service to their customers. In the past year, we have offered approximately 50 online training opportunities for member libraries, averaging one CE event per week. Member library staff can learn about upcoming CE opportunities by subscribing to the weekly [RAILS E-News](#) and/or viewing the event calendar on [L2](#).
- RAILS provides a broad range of training on topics ranging from basic skills to new technologies and other innovative services. This training helps libraries remain relevant to the customers/communities they serve. RAILS CE is offered at no charge to libraries through their membership in the system.
- CE events are recorded whenever possible to allow members to access training when it is convenient for them. Over 200 recorded webinars and workshops are available from the [RAILS CE Archives](#). This is found under the “Services” tab on the RAILS website. While some recordings require a L2 login, many can be accessed without a login by library staff in RAILS or IHLS.
- RAILS partners with both the Illinois State Library and the Association for Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE) to offer school librarians CE that qualifies for PDH credits.
- RAILS offers [training event grants](#) to networking groups, consortia, and member libraries seeking funding to host a CE event. During the current year, RAILS training event grants focus on topics related to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Members can learn about CE events grants under the “Services” tab on the RAILS website.
- To support member library trustee education, RAILS offers statewide access to *Short Takes for Trustees*, an online and on-demand series from United for Libraries that features short training videos on a variety of trustee competencies. Additionally, RAILS offers regular Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Open Meetings Act (OMA) training. More information is available on the [Trustee Training page](#) of the RAILS website.
- RAILS contracts with the Ancel Glink law firm to provide a statewide [FOIA/OMA hotline](#) at no cost to libraries. Library directors and FOIA/OMA officers may use the hotline to receive answers to questions regarding the Open Meetings Act or Freedom of Information requests. This hotline has been in use for several years and continues to be utilized on a weekly basis. Hotline details are available in the Consulting Services section of the RAILS website.
- The [RAILS Consulting Directory](#) is an information tool for libraries seeking free or paid consultants in a variety of areas, including legal issues, technology, EDI, strategic planning, and fundraising. This online directory can be found in the Consulting Services section of the RAILS website.
- RAILS Consulting and CE staff receive consulting questions on a regular basis from our members. Common inquiries include nonresident service questions, policy/procedures, and requests for staff/board guidance. Our CE and Consulting department is committed to being responsive to member needs, providing the guidance they are seeking, or connecting them to someone who can. Members can reach us at 630.734.5295 or CE@railslibraries.info.