

RAILS Report

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

Databases, Deals, and Discounts

RAILS Deals & Discounts Result in Big Savings for Member Libraries

RAILS partners with vendors to offer special, deeply discounted rates for RAILS member libraries. These discounts resulted in over \$1 million in savings for members in FY 2021.

EBSCO deals saved 120 libraries over \$500,000. Other impactful deals included Communico, OpenGov, PatronPoint, PressReader, Quill, and Swank Movie Licensing, which combined for over \$300,000 in savings for participating libraries. Discounts are also available for items purchased through participating library supply catalogs. We will continue to work with vendors and our members to provide advantageous, consistent, and transparent pricing for RAILS libraries.

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

RAILS completed the switchover of Career Online High School from Gale to Smart Horizons. The new [RAILS/COHS marketing site](#) includes more details about the program.

RAILS staff attended a Rockford Public Library COHS graduation on June 24. Twelve students received diplomas. In total, 125 adult Illinois students have earned a high school diploma via the COHS program.

RAILS also hosted two COHS networking group meeting for members on July 13. Six attended.

Other RAILS Deals and Discounts News

[OrangeBoy Savannah](#)[®] is a community engagement platform that helps libraries understand customer needs in real-time. The software provides a distinct set of tools to measure library performance, understand and respond to demand for library services, report results to the community, allocate resources, communicate with customers, identify patterns of use, secure feedback, and more. Two webinar demos were held for RAILS members in May.

[Barcodes, Inc.](#) curated a custom collection of hardware to meet the specific needs of libraries of all types. Each item listed on the RAILS/Barcodes, Inc. Partner Page is available at a discount for RAILS members. Further discounts may be available for large purchases.

The [Minitex Products store](#) offers discounted pricing for Bibliotheca products, as well as other big ticket items. Minitex is a not-for-profit program of the University of Minnesota Libraries and generously extends this discount to libraries nationwide.

RAILS member libraries are eligible to purchase a [Gale database package](#) at discounted rates. The package includes In Context Elementary, In Context Global Issues, Gale Health and Wellness, and more.

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

As of June 3, 309 (76%) libraries renewed their eRead Illinois membership (not including RSA subscribers). Final renewal notices are going out this month, and the renewal period concluded on June 30.

RAILS E-Resources Usage Statistics

The following tables show usage of eRead Illinois and the BiblioBoard Library for FY 2021 (through June).

eRead Illinois Checkouts

Time Period	E-books	Audiobooks	Total
June 2021	19,647	13,922	33,569
Fiscal Year to Date	335,986	185,628	521,614

BiblioBoard Views

Time Period	Number of Views
June 2021	2,157
Fiscal Year to Date	25,462

E-Resources Networking/Promotional Activities

RAILS hosted an e-content networking meeting on April 26. Libraries discussed OverDrive's recent acquisition of RBDigital's services, including digital magazines. There was also a short discussion of RAILS's [OpenGov story](#) about the impact of the pandemic on library e-content usage. RAILS is planning on updating this analysis later this spring.

Leila Heath, Library Resources & Programs Manager, attended the May Electronic Subscription Managers Networking Group meeting to promote RAILS initiatives, including our [Vendor Privacy Policy Project](#) page and using the "[My Library Is...](#)" [campaign](#) website/blog to help promote library e-resources.

Delivery

On May 11, RAILS released an [RFP for delivery and sorting services](#). We are seeking proposals from service providers to provide an efficient and cost-effective long-term delivery strategy. A wide variety of options are open for proposals including sorting, delivery, shuttle services, and mail forwarding services. The RFP was created with the assistance of Greg Pronevitz, the consultant RAILS has been working with to help us plan for the future of delivery.

Submissions for the RFP were due on July 12, and RAILS hosted a bid opening at 5 p.m. on that day. We received four proposals from: Tech Logic, Lyngsoe Systems, Continental Transportation Solutions, and statcourier.

RAILS staff will review the proposals and make a recommendation to the RAILS Board at the September 24 board meeting. Contract negotiations will begin following board approval.

RFP Project Schedule

Date/Time (CST)	Event
May 12, 2021 at noon	Issue RFP
June 3, 2021 at 11 a.m.	Mandatory virtual meeting for potential vendors
June 17, 2021 at 4 p.m.	Accept written questions until this time
June 24, 2021 at 5 p.m.	RAILS responds to final written questions
July 12, 2021 at 5 p.m.	RFP responses due
July 12, 2021 at 5 p.m.	Response opening virtual meeting
August 12, 2021 at 5 p.m.	RAILS staff to review and make recommendation.
August 26, 2021 at 5 p.m.	Delivery staff recommendation
September 2021	Present recommendations to RAILS Board for final action. Contract negotiations begin after approval by the RAILS Board.
To be determined	Implementation planning begins upon contract execution
January 2022	Service start date, subject to negotiation with selected vendor

Explore More Illinois

[Explore More Illinois](#) is RAILS' online cultural pass program. Cardholders at participating Illinois public libraries can take advantage of discounts at museums, park districts, historical societies, zoos, arts centers, recreational facilities, and other attractions. Jessica Barnes, RAILS Special Projects Librarian, hosted an [Explore More Illinois](#) webinar on May 18. She reviewed the public site, the website, and the statistics dashboard. Over 60 signed up and 31 people attended. A [recording is available](#) on the Explore More website.

As of July 8, 372 libraries (306 RAILS libraries and 66 Illinois Heartland Library System libraries) participate. RAILS continues to recruit new attractions for the program and to restart offers with attractions that have reopened with the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. As of July 8, 20 attractions participate.

RAILS staff met with CARLI (Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois) staff on July 8 to discuss the implications of expanding Explore More Illinois to community colleges using ALMA, CARLI's ILS (integrated library system). We are planning a follow-up meeting for August.

RSC FY2021 Goal 2: Improve Awareness of Resource Sharing

Update on E-Book Grant from Illinois State Library

RAILS continues to purchase K-12 content for our [eRead Illinois](#) Axis 360 shared collection through [e-book grant funds awarded by the Illinois State Library](#). At the time of this writing, we have spent 97% of the total \$125,000 award, and expect to finish purchasing grant materials by June 11. RAILS received over 100 suggestions from members during the grant period, and added most of these items to the eRead collection.

E-Book Grant Purchases as of May 31, 2021

Material Type	Number of Items	Total Expenditures
E-books	2,788	\$74,102
Audiobooks	928	\$46,967
Totals	3,716	\$121,069

The next phase of the project will focus on the evaluation and use of these collections.

Collaboration on Statewide Initiatives

Sharing Best Practices with Consortia Purchasing Managers Nationwide

Leila Heath, Library Resources and Programs Manager, met with a group of Consortia Purchasing Managers from [Califa \(California\)](#), [Midwest Collaborative for Library Services](#) (Michigan), [OhioNet](#), and the [Florida Academic Library Services Cooperative](#) on April 22. The group discussed issues and procedures related to purchasing across large, multitype consortia. The group meets bi-monthly.

Group Virtual Programming and RAILS FAQ

As more libraries show an interest in partnering on virtual events, a group of RAILS members created the Illinois Joint Library Programming Group to cooperatively offer events for patrons at participating libraries. RAILS has been involved in their discussions, and we [created an FAQ](#) with information on how we can support such collaborative efforts.

IT Product Discounts and Purchasing

In response to an inquiry from a member library, RAILS has been exploring the viability of IT-related discounts. Last month, we told you about two recent offers for the [Minitex Products Store](#) and [Barcodes, Inc.](#) RAILS Information Technology Manager Wesley Smith also hosted an IT Purchasing in Libraries Discussion on June 16 to learn more about our members IT hardware and software purchasing needs and experiences.

Directors University

Directors University (DU) is a joint project of RAILS, IHLS, ILA, and the Illinois State Library. This traditionally in-person, annual event provides training and networking opportunities for first-time or new-to-Illinois public library directors. The event is once again virtual in 2021.

Directors University (cont.)

DU began on June 4 with 42 participants from across the state. Presentations and small group discussions will continue weekly throughout the summer with the final session scheduled for October 8, 2021. New this year, with input from the RAILS Board ED Committee, is a directive to all presenters to incorporate principles of EDI into their content.

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 May, June, and July meetings included:

- SOPPA (Student Online Personal Protection Act)
- More collaboration around AISLE's Reader's Choice Awards
- Diversity in Literature Bill
- RAILS EDI Continuing Education Grants and potential AISLE EDI program collaboration
- Collaboration with the RAILS Advocacy Committee around school libraries and academic preparedness for college
- School feedback on My Library Is.. campaign and upcoming survey for schools
- School data availability in Illinois

RAILS has partnered with Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS) and AISLE to offer an updated session: System E-Content and E-Resources for Illinois Educators on Thursday, September 23rd at 4pm. Presenters from both RAILS and IHLS will share more about their e-books/e-audiobook programs, vendor discounts, networking events, and much more. This session is appropriate for library assistants, library media specialists, classroom teachers, technology coordinators, and school administrators.

RAILS Awards Seven EDI Training Grants

RAILS offers Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion [Training Grants](#) to help libraries, networking groups, and consortia plan training events for library staff and/or board members. We recently selected seven organizations to receive grants, with their training events to take place this fall on topics including collection development, web accessibility, and implicit bias. All RAILS members will be invited to attend. Watch upcoming issues of *RAILS E-News* for details.

Congratulations to our grant recipients!

- Cooperative Computer Services (CCS)
- Mount Prospect Public Library
- Orland Park Public Library
- Peoria Public Library
- Prairie Trails Public Library
- System Wide Automated Network (SWAN)
- Warren-Newport Public Library District

RSC FY2021 Goal 3: Provide Services for the Unserved

Universal Service/Unserved

The RAILS Universal Service Committee met on June 10th. Items on the agenda included a discussion of the progress on several key issues relevant to the committee including:

- Multiple Listing Service
- Library Mergers
- Library cards for non-resident minors
- School library cards and reciprocal borrowing
- Tax bill formula options

The group also discussed the updates in legislation with Greg McCormick, Director of the Illinois State Library. Legislation discussed included the Cards for Kids Act, the E-Resources Card, Disabled Veterans' Standard Homestead Exemption, and the statewide database proposal.

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](#).

The next Universal Service Committee meeting will be on Thursday, September 9th at 1pm.