

RAILS Report

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

Databases, Deals, and Discounts

ConsortiaManager Update

ConsortiaManager (CM) is an online resource that helps increase efficiency, capacity, and member communications related to group purchases. RAILS staff began CM weekly training on September 2 and will continue through the fall. The training process includes building the content needed to create a robust site for those managing and participating in RAILS discount offerings.

RAILS staff also attended the CM User Group Meeting on August 25 to learn more about new and upcoming enhancements and user experiences. Over 40 consortia subscribe to CM worldwide.

Other RAILS Deals and Discounts News

BTCat Discount for RAILS Public and Specialized Libraries

RAILS public and specialized libraries are eligible for discounted pricing for [BTCat](#), a state-of-the-art library cataloging utility and database that provides efficient and easy to use features for any size library. Two informational webinars were offered in November and free trials are available for RAILS members.

BookBrowse for Libraries Discount

RAILS has negotiated advantageous pricing for [BookBrowse for Libraries](#), an award-winning readers' advisory resource for public libraries. BookBrowse features curated contemporary book recommendations and reading and book club resources. Several RAILS libraries subscribe to BookBrowse and free trials are available for RAILS members. Three informational webinars were offered in November.

Swank Group Purchase Sign-Up through December 31

RAILS public libraries are eligible for a special discounted rate for the annual [Swank](#) Movie Licensing USA public performance license. The license allows unlimited showings of thousands of movies, from classics to new releases. Select movies for outdoor viewings are also included for a limited time. Swank also provides materials to help promote events and engage patrons.

RAILS public libraries currently not covered by a Swank license must sign up for the group purchase by December 31, 2021. The [Swank sign-up form and pricing are available on the Deals & Discounts page](#). The license is valid from January 1 - December 31, 2022.

E-books and E-Content

BiblioBoard Restructuring

RAILS will be restructuring the resources available on the [BiblioBoard platform](#). Many of the collections currently available via BiblioBoard will be transferred to [eRead Illinois Axis 360](#), where they will be available for simultaneous use. We will refocus the remaining collections on content created in Illinois

communities by Illinois authors/ creators. We are making these changes in response to where we see the most user engagement with BiblioBoard resources. The rebranded instance will connect directly to inkie.org.

eRead Illinois Grant Update

RAILS received the final payment of \$69,309.88 from the Illinois State Library for our eRead Illinois Grant. We received the \$125,000 grant in August 2020 to purchase e-books and e-audiobooks for K-12 users of [eRead Illinois](#). The next phase of the grant project will focus on an evaluation of trends observed with the eRead Illinois collection throughout the grant period.

Other eRead Illinois News

RAILS staff have been analyzing the [eRead Illinois](#) fee structure. The results of this analysis will help inform future development opportunities.

RAILS staff also met with Baker & Taylor (B&T) representatives at Burr Ridge on September 28 to discuss general RAILS/B&T business. (B&T is the vendor for eRead Illinois.)

Use of RAILS E-Resources

The following tables show the use of the [eRead Illinois](#) Axis 360 collection and the [BiblioBoard Library](#) in October and for FY 2022 thus far.

eRead Illinois Axis 360 Checkouts

Time Period	E-books	Audiobooks	Total
October 2021	26,246	16,211	42,457
FY 2022 (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022)	95,147	61,926	157,073

BiblioBoard Views

Time Period	Number of Views
October 2021	1,160
FY 2022 (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022)	4,526

Explore More Illinois

[Explore More Illinois](#) is RAILS' online cultural pass program. As of November 2, 398 Illinois libraries participate in the program (320 RAILS and 78 IHLS member libraries), and there are 32 attractions.

New attractions include Butterworth Center and Deere-Wiman House in Moline, The Lansing Historical Society Museum, the City Lit Theater of Chicago, and the Museum of the Grande Prairie in Mahomet. We also recently added our first out-of-state attractions: Civil War Museum, Dinosaur Discovery Museum, and Kenosha Public Museum, all in Kenosha, Wisconsin. See [complete list](#) of attractions.

RAILS staff met with [CARLI](#) (Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois) staff on August 26 to further discuss steps towards potentially expanding Explore More Illinois to community colleges.

COVID-19 and Vaccine Education

RAILS created a Vaccine Education Toolkit with flyers, posters, sample social media posts, videos, and fact sheets that libraries can reproduce to educate their communities about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines. There is a link to the toolkit on the COVID-19 Pulse Page on the RAILS website. This page also includes the latest news on COVID-19, including what different libraries are doing to serve their communities during the pandemic.

RSC FY2021 Goal 2: Improve Awareness of Resource Sharing

Web Accessibility: VPAT Project for RAILS Public Libraries

RAILS has a Web Accessibility Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) [web page](#) to help public libraries understand web accessibility and how to vet resources. This project fits in well with RAILS EDI efforts, as digital technology accessibility is essential when considering library purchases to achieve equitable and inclusive service and access to resources. Members can view the VPATs and easily create a customized VPAT page for their library.

RAILS Assists ILA Small & Rural Libraries Forum

RAILS is in the process of establishing an email list for the Illinois Library Association's Small & Rural Libraries Forum and helping them to acquire a [Zoom license through RAILS](#). You can read more about this group in this recent [My Library Is... blog post](#).

AISLE Partnership

School Data

Our ongoing monthly meetings and partnership with AISLE (Association of Illinois School Library Educators), IHLS (Illinois Heartland Library System), and ILA (Illinois Library Association) have resulted in some innovations and developments that can help all of us to serve Illinois school libraries better. We are currently focused on how to get better clarity around providing better school library data in Illinois. School library data specialist Keith Curry Lance reported that of the 480 school districts missing data in his national reporting, 400 of them were located in Illinois. Pat Burg, Library Program Specialist from the Illinois State Library has also joined the group for several discussions about this important topic. RAILS continues its efforts to refine the current available data, and AISLE is currently preparing letters to ISBE (Illinois State Board of Education) to bring more light to this issue.

Collaborating on Continuing Education

RAILS, IHLS, and AISLE offered the Zoom webinar, "System E-Content and E-Resources for Illinois Educators," on September 23 at 4 p.m. Library assistants, library media specialists, classroom teachers, technology coordinators, and school administrators learned how system e-book programs, vendor discounts, networking events, and other services can benefit them.

Increase in Per Capita Grants

The School District Library Grant provides supplementary support for the school district's library media program to enhance student learning and academics. Grant funds are typically used for the acquisition of library materials to support reading for academics and enjoyment, library subscriptions to electronic resources, or library-based technology to support student research. Public Act 102-0039 allowed for increased funding starting in FY 2021. The rate per pupil has been increased from \$0.75 to \$0.885 per student of schools with a qualified school library. The minimum award increased from \$750 to \$850.

The Public Library Per Capita and Equalization Aid Grant was established to assist public libraries to improve and increase library services within their service areas. Effective with the FY 2021 grants, the per capita rate increased from \$1.25 to \$1.475.

RSC FY2021 Goal 3: Provide Services for the Unserved

Universal Service/Unserved

At its October meeting, the RAILS Board approved a [RAILS Board Statement on Universal Library Service](#). The statement reads:

As long as even one Illinois resident does not have access to a public library, our state is not meeting its basic obligations to educate all residents.

Access to public libraries is a crucial part of early childhood literacy, lifelong learning and academic success. Illinois residents are at a disadvantage with other states that have universal service when they compete for college admission or jobs throughout their lives.

Since systems were established in 1967, Illinois librarians and stakeholders have been discussing how to establish universal library service in our state. In the Illinois Library System Act which established the systems and still governs them, responsibility is specifically given to systems to find ways to serve the unserved.

RAILS takes this responsibility very seriously; it is part of our strategic plan and our board has established a Universal Service Committee to raise awareness and discuss new possible avenues of service.

RAILS, with the advice and guidance of the board and the Universal Service Committee, has been working for four years to achieve universal library service in Illinois and we have had some success through small projects or local initiatives. But incremental progress is not enough. At this time, RAILS believes that it is essential that the library community in Illinois come together, under the leadership of the Illinois State Library, to develop a plan and timeline for achieving universal service. We ask that the State Library convene a group to discuss and develop the plan and timeline.

Fifty-four years have passed since 1967. Many plans have been developed and left to gather dust. We can wait no longer to achieve this important and fundamental goal to bring equitable library service to Illinois residents.