



March 14, 2022

TO: RAILS Consortia Committee – LLSAP Sustainability Working Group
FROM: Anne Slaughter
SUBJECT: Statewide ILS discussions

Many of you are aware of or were present for a series of statewide meetings that were recently held to discuss the idea of statewide collaboration on some form of consortial or ILS consolidation. These meetings were convened by Leslie Bednar, Executive Director of the Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS) and Cassandra Thompson, Director of SHARE (IHLS' LLSAP), who were inspired by the discussions at this working group's last meeting in January.

The first meeting, on January 27, included representatives from IHLS/SHARE, Illinois State Library (ISL), PrairieCat, RAILS, RSA and RRLC. Conversation focused on the proposal of a potential partnership between the SHARE community and members of the three RAILS LLSAPs present.

On February 4, representatives from IHLS/SHARE, ISL, PrairieCat, RAILS, and RSA met with consultant Carson Block for a conversation that "zoomed out" on the idea of a statewide ILS solution. Carson advocated for an investigation beginning with a survey aimed at identifying needs and wants among libraries, rather than an initial focus on a specific solution or solutions. The group acknowledged the highly charged nature of this conversation for all stakeholders as it expands, and agreed that all Illinois consortia should be included moving forward.

Finally, the most recent meeting on February 22 included representatives from IHLS/SHARE, RAILS, ISL, PrairieCat, RSA, RRLC, Pinnacle, CCS, CARLI/I-Share, and SWAN. Chicago Public Library was invited to participate but did not attend. This conversation circled back to the idea of SHARE expansion, alongside the consideration of other options, and touched on many issues and possible approaches.

We've invited all of the above representatives to join us at the working group's March 21 meeting so everyone can share and discuss further regarding this series of conversations and the larger topic of statewide collaboration on an ILS solution.