April 14, 2022

TO: **RAILS Board of Directors**

FROM: **Deirdre Brennan**

SUBJECT: **Draft FY 2023 Operational Plan**

Overview of draft Operational plan

The Illinois State Library has instructed us to submit an operational plan and budget based on annual revenue of $11,870,000, which includes a $1.9 million increase over FY 2022.
In our operational plan you will see many continuing services, of course, and new services that come directly from our strategic plan and the input we received from members during the planning process. We are thrilled with the budget increase because it means we can cover increased expenses for existing services, provide new and enhanced services requested by members and continue our prudent stewardship of the tax dollars that support RAILS.
This memo provides high level information about the services outlined in the operational plan.
I will be happy to answer any and all questions about the plan at the board meeting, of course.
We are still developing the budget, gathering predictions about inflation in general, future fuel costs, salary increases, as well as developing job descriptions and details for new services.

Increased expenses:

The Illinois Library Delivery Service ((ILDS) is funded through a $550,899 grant from the state library that is separate from our per capita grant. This grant does not cover all of our costs as there is a cap on the percentage annual increase. The RAILS budget will cover any revenue gap.

Fuel in general will be more expensive, affecting all our delivery routes.

Inflation is driving prices up generally and is affecting salaries. We are seeing library salary increases in the neighborhood of 5-7%. Of course, we need to remain competitive and are considering a 5.9% across the board raise.

There are other potential increases which we are still researching.

New programs

Our first priorities for enhanced services are in three areas – equity, diversity, and inclusion; support for FMI; and member engagement.

EDI is a major goal identified by member in our new plan. Also, RAILS must continue to work on EDI internally. We will need additional consulting and CE staff to lead the planned training cohort of members and work internally with the climate team and with the board in developing appropriate policies.

The growth in Find More Illinois is thrilling and important. To sustain and increase this growth and respond to library requests for features, we need to grow staff support for FMI as well.

Member engagement is a crucial component of our work. I have talked with the board at previous meetings about wanting to provide strategic planning assistance for libraries. Also, one big take-away from the strategic plan was the feedback we got that we don't, despite our best efforts, truly understand the needs of all the types of libraries we serve. Related to this, is that we don't do as good a job as we need to communicating about our services to the different types of libraries. Additional staff in this service area will help to continue existing services and also to meet the needs described above. We also need to develop and implement, with partners, a robust training program for trustees.

Statewide database licensing has also been identified as an important project that will help all our member libraries. Leila is researching the best way to get started and how much funding to devote to this on an annual basis, but I expect we will want to put $500,000 towards this program.

These are the highlights of new services. I look forward to discussing these with the board at the meeting.

RAILS FY 2023 System Area and Per Capita Grant Application

3.0 System Operational Plan

This document presents the Reaching Across Illinois Library System's (RAILS) operational plan for FY 2023. Our overarching goal in implementing this plan will be to ensure that we are providing the best possible service to all levels of library staff at RAILS member libraries of all types and sizes across our 27,000 square mile area and helping them to provide the best possible service to their customers.

The additional funding requested by the Secretary of State for the FY 2023 System Area and Per Capita Grant program represents the first increase to this program in over 25 years. This funding will greatly increase RAILS' ability to cover increased expenses, enhance current services, and add new services to help us achieve this goal. RAILS greatly appreciates the efforts of Secretary White and the Illinois State Library (ISL) to make this increase a reality.

This plan was developed with a great deal of input from RAILS members as is required by the administrative rules for library systems, including feedback received from over 1,000 members from all types of libraries via town halls, focus groups, member updates, and other encounters during RAILS' 2022 strategic planning process. This document follows the arrangement of the new RAILS strategic plan approved by the RAILS Board on January 28, 2022.

While the new RAILS strategic plan highlights many major initiatives for FY 2023, it does not cover all the day-to-day work that is required to keep RAILS operational and to meet all statutory priorities. These activities are included in the "Other Administrative Activities" section at the end of this document.

All activities included in this plan are aligned with and support statutory priorities for Illinois library systems as noted.

Strategic Plan Goal One: *RAILS provides leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing for all member libraries.*

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
Enhance the sharing of knowledge and best practices through member networking and communications between all types of libraries	Plan/schedule virtual and in-person networking opportunities for staff at all levels at all sizes and types of libraries (academic, public, school, and specialized) to share best practices on a variety of topics Work with statewide partners, including the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE), Illinois Association of College & Research Libraries (IACRL), Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS), Illinois Library Association (ILA), Special Libraries Association-Illinois Community (SLA-IL), and others to plan networking opportunities for	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	staff from different types of libraries and for trustees from public libraries	
	Publicize existing RAILS networking groups and the benefits of belonging to a networking group to all levels of staff at all types and sizes of libraries	
	Assist in the formation of new RAILS networking groups as needed	
	Continue to build and strengthen relationships and engagement with RAILS networking groups. Offer to have a RAILS staff member attend a meeting of each RAILS networking group to share the latest RAILS news and gather feedback on RAILS programs/services.	
	Continue providing subsidized Zoom and conference calling accounts to qualified RAILS networking groups	
	Implement and transition to the Listserv electronic mailing list software application, utilizing the Library Directory & Learning Calendar (L2) API for member authentication on RAILS-managed email lists to the extent possible. Communicate resulting changes in RAILS email list procedures to all members to ensure a smooth transition.	
	Encourage use of RAILS mailing lists, including lists geared toward different library types and sizes, and staff at all levels	
	Establish new mailing lists/forums as needed. Sunset lists that aren't being used.	
Leverage economies of scale to provide greater purchasing power for member libraries so they can offer more resources to their users than libraries would be able to afford on their own	Expand the RAILS discount and group purchase program by offering new deals for member libraries of all sizes and types as possible. Target publicity to help ensure that staff from different types of libraries know about specific offers available to their library type. Gather input from members at all types and sizes of libraries on desired discounts/group purchases.	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Implement new offerings in response to this feedback as feasible.	
	Investigate potential revenue-generating opportunities through the RAILS discount and group purchase program, including the possibility of charging administrative fees for cooperative purchases	
	Continue to work with statewide partners to advocate for additional funding for a statewide database package to provide better economies of scale. Through the power of numbers, we could negotiate better pricing than an individual library could on its own and avoid unnecessary duplication in purchasing and managing key resources throughout the state. Libraries could use local dollars on other critical programs/resources. • Encourage staff from all types of libraries to advocate with elected officials for a statewide database program. Provide talking points.	
	Test pilot a program in the RAILS area to offer systemwide database access to RAILS libraries and area residents, including those not currently served by a public library	
	Complete set up of Consortia Manager (CM) platform. Use CM to manage RAILS group purchases and discounts, streamline work processes, provide a platform for member participation, and compile evaluative statistics on member savings.	
	Widely publicize member savings realized through RAILS discounts and group purchases to demonstrate the impact of the program	
	Redesign Deals & Discounts webpage as part of overall RAILS website redesign (see below)	
	Promote ISL Try-It! Illinois database trial to RAILS members as a way for them to try new databases before purchase	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Network with group purchasing managers nationwide to explore new opportunities and solutions, and to develop best practices **Career Online High School Program (COHS)** Continue to subsidize the cost and management of the COHS platform to enable libraries to offer adult learners accredited high school diplomas and career certificates Heavily promote COHS program - Target libraries not yet participating in the program with large populations of adults who have not received a high school diploma - Target youth services library staff to help them promote the program to young parents without a high school diploma - Continue to meet with networking group of COHS library staff participants to develop and promote the program	
RAILS will continue to seek greater efficiencies, innovations, and enhancements to delivery services	Work with RAILS members of all sizes and types to determine the most appropriate delivery method to meet their needs Consult with members on delivery issues/concerns on an ongoing basis. Widely promote the use of the delivery help desk ticketing system. Continue evaluating the response to the FY 2021 delivery RFP to provide the highest quality and most cost-effective delivery services. Explore additional outsourcing of delivery services as appropriate based on RFP results. Purchase additional delivery vehicles if needed based on outcome of FY 2021 RFP Promote the need to complete quarterly delivery volume counts to RAILS members. Consult with libraries on an individual basis as needed. Develop strategies to improve and achieve total compliance with quarterly delivery counts to get more accurate information on delivery volume	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Examine count data to determine potential changes to existing delivery routes and best practices. Continue to test and implement an iPad app for drivers to track delivery volume and other delivery functions Continue providing high-quality statewide delivery services to Consortium of Academic & Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) via ILDS (Illinois Library Delivery Service). Evaluate ILDS data to analyze changes in volume and respond with necessary and appropriate service changes. Continue to explore possibilities to automate delivery processes to streamline services and improve efficiency. Monitor progress with automation made by IHLS and SHARE and apply lessons learned to our efforts. Work with ISL to research capital funding options for large-scale automation projects. Continue working with GeoMARC (formerly Laboratory for Applied Spatial Analysis) on potential future improvements to RAILS delivery service, including delivery route efficiencies	
Work collaboratively with members, the Illinois Heartland Library System, and the Illinois State Library to identify and support appropriate and affordable shared catalog solutions and expand resource sharing to all libraries and residents.	**General** Continue to work with the RAILS Resource Sharing Committee to investigate and recommend ways to improve and increase resource sharing in Illinois. Address the shared focus of this committee and the Universal Services Committee on working toward universal service in Illinois. Collaborate with ISL, IHLS, Chicago Public Library System (CPLS), AISLE, CARLI, IACRL, ILA, SLA-Illinois, and other stakeholders to expand resource sharing in Illinois Collaborate with and support the work of the International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC) **Promote/Support LLSAP Membership**	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Provide a mix of financial support and in-kind services to six RAILS LLSAPs: CCS, Pinnacle, PrairieCat, Rock River Library Consortium, RSA-NFP, and SWAN. Approximately 413 library agencies (518 individual buildings) participate in one of these LLSAPs. Continue to provide financial support to LLSAPs via the LLSAP Support Grant. If the LLSAP Sustainability Working Group completes its work during FY 2023, begin to implement the group's recommendations, including possible restructuring of LLSAP financial support. Offer catalog membership grants to encourage libraries to join a RAILS LLSAP and to make LLSAP membership more affordable Help members meet the new requirement in the Illinois administrative rules to evaluate whether they will make their holdings available via a shared collection. Publicize Find More Illinois as an option for meeting this requirement. Plan/conduct annual in-service day for all consortia staff to help them exchange news, ideas, and best practices Promote the value of consortium membership to all types and sizes of RAILS libraries via RAILS communication tools, committee work, and member encounters Continue to work with RAILS Consortia Committee to investigate and recommend ways to improve and increase consortial services in Illinois Continue to work with Consortia Committee's LLSAP Sustainability Working Group on plans to ensure that all RAILS LLSAPs are financially self-sustaining • Continue to investigate a statewide ILS (integrated library system) platform • Develop tools to help libraries assess their automation options and the suitability and affordability of LLSAP membership	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Continue to talk with statewide partners including ISL, IHLS, CARLI, CPLS, and all LLSAP managers about the possible development of a statewide ILS and the future of statewide resource sharing **Expand and Promote Find More Illinois (FMI)** Recruit libraries to join FMI • Develop/update FMI promotional plan • Target promotions at libraries that would grow and enhance resources available through FMI • Promote FMI benefits to nonautomated libraries as appropriate • Promote FY 2023 incentive offer from Auto-Graphics Provide training, consulting, and technical support to FMI libraries Continue to offer the new Enhanced Borrowing service, which takes requests that are unfilled in the FMI software and sends them to the RAILS OCLC account for RAILS staff to fill via OCLC lenders Continue working with Auto-Graphics, our FMI vendor, on enhancements and additional services, including: • Verso ILS for nonautomated or underautomated libraries (at little to no cost to participating libraries) • Interstate borrowing • Providing additional access to MARC records through FMI Continue to offer IHLS the opportunity to participate in FMI Redesign FMI website as part of overall RAILS website redesign (see below) **Support High-Quality Cataloging** Continue providing basic cataloging training	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Offer additional training in response to member feedback	
	Continue offering World Language Cataloging Services Program as detailed below	
	eRead Illinois Axis 360	
	Recruit RAILS libraries and IHLS non-SHARE libraries to join eRead Illinois	
	Support the training and marketing needs of eRead Illinois participants	
	Change eRead pricing model to establish equitable pricing for participants and to enable RAILS to continue to improve the collection and meet user needs • Make plans to rollout pricing changes in FY 2024 • Develop communication plan to ensure that all stakeholders are notified of pricing changes well in advance • Explore the possibility of subsidizing enrollment costs for some libraries based on need	
	Evaluate eRead content to ensure that it continues to meet member needs (see also EDI section below) • Continue to enhance and develop additional content for K-12 students • Regularly seek input from eRead participants on the collection and implement member suggestions as possible	
	Redesign eRead website as part of overall RAILS website redesign (see below)	
	Network with e-content managers nationwide to stay abreast of new developments and initiatives	
	Inkie.org Library	
	Continue to partner with BiblioLabs to offer the Inkie.org Library to support self-publishing, Illinois authors, and Illinois e-content	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Provide promotional tools and strategies to help libraries promote Inkie.org Library resources to the public	
	Continue offering group purchase pricing on BiblioBoard products for self-published authors	
	Publicize Inkie.org Library resources as being free (courtesy of RAILS) to all Illinois libraries and to all Illinois residents, including those not served by a public library	
	Provide current information on available resources to IHLS to share with their member libraries	
	Explore More Illinois (EMI)	
	Publicize EMI to all Illinois public libraries and encourage them to participate	
	Continue to work with IHLS to recruit IHLS libraries and set them up in the program	
	Continue to grow/expand the number and types of participating attractions, including attractions in other midwestern states. (See also EDI section below.)	
	Continue to work with Illinois Central College (ICC) on implementing a community college pilot program. Promote program to other community colleges based on results of ICC pilot.	
	Explore the possibility of making EMI available to users of academic, school, and specialized libraries	
	Change program name and branding as appropriate to reflect multistate participation	
	Redesign EMI website as part of overall RAILS website redesign (see below)	
	Network with ePass (EMI's software) administrators nationwide to explore new opportunities and solutions	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Other E-Resources Initiatives	
	Continue to participate as a partner in the CARLI Open Textbook grant	
	Continue to develop the RAILS Vendor Privacy Policies and VPAT (Vendor Product Accessibility Template) web pages with links to privacy policies and VPATS for third-party vendors providing e-resources to public libraries. The content of these pages is managed by member libraries, with RAILS providing website design and hosting, as well as procedural standards. • Based on member feedback and participation, determine whether to expand the project to include academic, school, and specialized libraries	
	Provide ongoing support for the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) and Illinois Digital Heritage Hub	
	Partner with other library organizations to continue dialogue with publishers on need for better e-book access/pricing for libraries/consortia	

Strategic Plan Goal Two: *RAILS models best practices in equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion.*

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
RAILS will provide leadership in developing and providing resources that will support member libraries' efforts to provide equitable, diverse, and inclusive services.	Implement projects planned by the RAILS Board EDI Committee and subcommittees: • Launch learning cohort to train 50-60 members on EDI best practices • Further develop EDI presenters' database based on focus group feedback • Research job descriptions and job ads and develop web page with links to templates, checklists, and a rubric for job descriptions and interview questions • Focus on offering bystander intervention training, EDI training for boards and	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	administrators, and training on implementing EDI principles in marketing and messaging	
	Offer additional EDI-related continuing education (CE) to RAILS members based on member feedback. Collaborate with other Illinois stakeholders offering EDI-related CE to avoid duplication of effort.	
	Continue offering World Language Cataloging Services grant program statewide, providing quality MARC records via an outsourced vendor and/or performing cataloging services in-house, depending on language • Continue seeking grant funds from ISL to fund the program • Continue publicizing the program to libraries statewide	
	Continue to develop/promote an eRead Illinois collection and Inkie.org Library resources that address the needs of an ethnically and culturally diverse audience. Encourage libraries to promote these resources to their communities and provide talking points to help them with this effort. Regularly evaluate the collection using industry respected tools to identify potential gaps.	
	Recruit attractions for Explore More Illinois of interest to an ethnically and culturally diverse audience	
	Promote the Career Online High School Program (see above) as addressing the needs of a culturally, economically, and ethnically diverse audience	
	Add additional My Library Is… (see below) activities and resources to help libraries showcase their impact/value in promoting EDI and in welcoming all to the library, no matter what their race, age, ethnicity, economic background, etc.	
	Plan/conduct *Sparks* podcast interviews highlighting successful strategies libraries have used to provide EDI-related programs and services	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Provide/promote opportunities for members from all types and sizes of libraries to share best practices and collaborate on EDI-related challenges through the RAILS EDI mailing list, EDI Pulse Page, and other activities Promote and provide administrative support as applicable for RAILS EDI-related networking groups, including the Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color Group; the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Metadata Group; the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Team in Youth Services; and others Include EDI elements in RAILS grants for members (CE Event grants, My Library Is… grants, etc.) when possible, to encourage applicants to provide equitable, diverse, and inclusive programs/services and to publicize these offerings to their communities	
Examine all aspects of RAILS policies, procedures, and core services through an equity lens and make needed improvements.	Continue to grow and develop RAILS' external and internal EDI strategies and initiatives Conduct an equity analysis of all RAILS programs, services, and communication tools, including but not limited to: • Reviewing the current RAILS website and the redesigned website (see below) for accessibility • Investigating providing interpreters for RAILS meetings with a large attendance, including CE events • Continuing with transcription service for *Sparks* podcast and exploring the need for additional transcription services Regularly evaluate RAILS Employee Handbook to ensure that all language and policies meet our EDI goals Establish a new employee connection plan as a component of onboarding RAILS staff to help build an inclusive culture and improve employee retention	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Continue the work of the RAILS Climate Team to identify and implement internal best practices and initiatives for RAILS staff, including but not limited to: • Create database of current RAILS partners/ vendors and assess how they align with our EDI goals • Create a rubric RAILS staff can use when selecting partners/vendors. Share rubric with membership as appropriate. • Continue holding regular EDI training sessions for RAILS staff	
Work with RAILS members of all types to identify and implement ways to diversify library governing bodies and staff to increase representation and better reflect the communities they serve.	Work with RAILS Board Policy Committee to change RAILS Board election policies and procedures to attract a more diverse board • Review sample policies and procedures from HR Source and peer organizations and adapt as appropriate for RAILS • Develop promotional plan to acquaint members with new policy/procedures, to continue to attract diverse candidates, and to encourage members to vote with EDI principles in mind Share strategies RAILS develops to recruit a diverse board with member libraries Provide training/consulting/guidance for member libraries of all types to help them develop a more diverse and representative board Provide opportunities for libraries of all types to share best practices and strategies they have used to diversify their governing boards, including via the RAILS EDI Pulse Page and mailing list Provide training/consulting for RAILS members to help them diversify their hiring and recruitment practices Share strategies RAILS has used to recruit and maintain a diverse staff with members Provide opportunities/tools for members to share strategies they have used to recruit a more diverse	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	staff, including the EDI mailing list and the EDI Pulse Page	

Strategic Plan Goal Three: *RAILS assists member libraries in preparing for the future.*

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
Leveraging RAILS' power and influence in the Illinois library community, work collaboratively for additional funding for all types of libraries to ensure that libraries have the staffing, technology, and infrastructure needed to offer essential and cutting-edge services to their communities.	Provide CE/consulting to help libraries with fundraising, including information on finding funding partners and opportunities, and how to advocate for additional/continued funding from library administrators, funders, etc. Continue to schedule regular meetings with AISLE, IHLS, and ILA to discuss collaborative projects to help school libraries deal with funding challenges Participate in a wide variety of efforts to help advocate for continued/increased funding for all types of libraries, including: • ILA Legislative Meetups • Responding to ALA (American Library Association) calls to actions • Continuing to work with ILA Public Policy Committee to discuss legislation of importance to libraries Keep RAILS libraries informed of important legislative developments affecting libraries Publicize opportunities for staff from member libraries to advocate for continued/increased funding for libraries as appropriate, including: • Encouraging members to attend ILA Legislative Meetups • Encouraging members to respond to ALA calls to action • Encouraging library staff to use talking points and other resources on the My Library Is… website Develop professional quality video(s) through the My Library Is… initiative to demonstrate the importance of continued/increased funding for	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	all types of libraries. Publicize the video(s) widely and encourage libraries of all types to use them to publicize the importance of library funding. Develop a "funding toolkit" on the My Library Is… website with resources to help libraries advocate for additional/continued funding, including talking points, continuing education opportunities, templates, and other instructional material Work with the RAILS Board Advocacy Committee to educate the board about issues affecting RAILS and libraries that may require their advocacy efforts locally, regionally, or nationally	
Help member libraries of all types and sizes demonstrate their value to their different stakeholders.	**My Library Is… (MLI) Initiative** Plan strategies/activities to address needs identified on FY 2022 individualized MLI surveys of the four types of RAILS libraries (academic, public, school, and specialized) Continue to work with MLI Advisory Group (consisting of staff from all types of libraries) to publicize the initiative and to develop new activities to help respond to FY 2022 MLI survey feedback Redesign MLI website as part of overall RAILS website redesign (see below) • Add BiblioBoard Recovering the Classics book covers and promotional materials to MLI website as part of redesign In addition to the funding toolkit mentioned above, develop additional toolkits on the MLI site to respond to challenges all types of library respondents identified on the 2022 MLI surveys Use weekly *RAILS E-News* to publicize different MLI website resources	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Work with a consultant to develop templates to include on the MLI website for libraries to customize for their own use	
	Continue targeting MLI grant program at school libraries to help with the growing and dire need for school libraries to tell their stories more effectively	
	Examine talking points available on MLI website and revise/expand them as necessary to make sure they help staff at all sizes and types of libraries to demonstrate their value to different stakeholders	
	Continue to work with IHLS to further expand and publicize the initiative to staff at all types and sizes of libraries statewide	
	Continue to work with AISLE, IACRL, ILA, SLA-IL, and other stakeholders on common goals/ activities re to the MLI initiative to avoid duplication of efforts	
	(See additional campaign activities in previous section)	
Professional development and member engagement efforts are future-focused, crossing library types and specific to individual library type needs.	Provide CE/consulting on general resource sharing issues identified in the administrative rules, including interlibrary loan, the ILLNET Interlibrary Loan Code, nonresident service, the RAILS Resource Sharing Policy, etc. Provide information and training resources related to these topics on the RAILS website.	
	Provide CE/consulting on library advocacy, management and practice, and other core service areas identified in the administrative rules	
	Provide CE/ to help libraries meet per capita grant requirements and standards for their type of library	
	Identify/monitor issues, trends, and challenges affecting libraries of all types and sizes and	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	provide CE/consulting to help libraries respond to these issues and challenges • Help libraries respond to any remaining challenges related to COVID-19 Offer CE/consulting assistance and other resources to help libraries of all types and sizes to develop/maintain a current strategic plan Continue to develop Library Pulse pages on the RAILS website to help members respond to current issues, challenges, and trends Produce regular RAILS *Sparks* podcasts on current issues/trends affecting libraries of all types and sizes Continue to gather member input on CE needs from all sizes and types of RAILS libraries and implement training to meet those needs Based on member input, continue to offer CE Event Grants to help libraries, networking groups, and library consortia plan/offer training events of interest to library staff • Give priority to grant projects targeting training events at staff from academic, school, and specialized libraries Continue to partner with AISLE to identify training needs for school library staff and to offer joint CE opportunities based on that feedback Continue to work jointly with the Illinois State Library and AISLE to offer school library staff PDH credit for RAILS-organized CE opportunities Work with statewide stakeholders to develop Directors University, the statewide training initiative for new public library directors. Publicize widely. Work with statewide stakeholders to develop Directors University 2.0 to offer intermediate-	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	level training for library directors. Publicize widely.	
	Work with statewide stakeholders to develop Elevate Illinois Libraries Leadership Program to recruit and nurture future Illinois library leaders. Publicize widely.	
	Continue partnership with United for Libraries to provide statewide, online, on-demand trustee training. Publicize training widely.	
	Develop a comprehensive trustee orientation toolkit on the RAILS website	
	Consult with/attend library board meetings as appropriate to help boards meet legal requirements and to develop leadership skills	
	Continue partnership with HR Source to provide CE and discounted membership. Publicize widely.	
	Continue partnership with Ancel Glink to offer statewide FOIA/OMA hotline. Publicize widely.	

Strategic Plan Goal Four: *RAILS leads alongside member libraries to develop and strengthen the Illinois library community and expand services to all.*

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
RAILS will continue to strengthen collaborative relationships with partner library organizations, including the Association of Illinois School Library Educators, the Chicago Public Library, the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois, the Illinois Association of College & Research Libraries, the Illinois Heartland Library	**Service Standards** Work with ISL, IHLS, and other partners to revive conversation about revising system membership standards to help libraries of all types provide better service to their communities Work with partners to plan a public library trustee training initiative, to ensure that public library trustees are aware of their roles and responsibilities, and the roles/responsibilities of the library director and staff	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
System, the Illinois Library Association, the Illinois State Library, and the Special Libraries Association – Illinois chapter.	**L2 (Library Directory and Learning Calendar)** Continue to provide statewide leadership for L2 • Host, maintain, and develop additional features for L2 • Provide ongoing user help and support • Continue to contract with Aten Design Group for L2 support and development • Ask ISL to continue to provide additional grant funding to support L2 • Provide a robust API that allows IHLS and LLSAPs to pull library and event data from L2 into their own websites Continue working with statewide L2 Governing Group on long-term goals for L2, implementation of major new projects, and quality assurance • Explore possibility of completing IPLAR reports through L2 **Certification** Work with ISL, IHLS, and other appropriate partners to improve and enhance the annual certification process Work with RAILS members to ensure that they complete the certification process **Other Collaborative Initiatives** Continue to schedule regular meetings with AISLE, IHLS, and ILA to discuss collaborative projects as referenced above Continue providing leadership and support to SLA-IL via the RAILS Member Engagement Manager serving as President of that group, publicizing SLA-IL activities and events, and other means Continue regular meetings with the Commissioner of the Chicago Public Library to discuss collaboration possibilities Continue to serve as sponsor for library-related conferences as possible, including conferences	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	aimed at libraries of all types and different staff levels Partner on grant initiatives with library-related organizations to improve library service in Illinois and to help demonstrate the value of all types of libraries	
RAILS will continually seek to understand member perceptions of inequities in system services to better support academic, school, and specialized libraries, as well as public libraries of all sizes.	Conduct research on what RAILS academic, school, and specialized libraries know about the services available to them, whether they use those services, and what additional services RAILS might offer of benefit to them Develop targeted RAILS programs/services guides for academic, school, and specialized member libraries to ensure they are aware of the services available to them. Mail guides to individual libraries (approximately 853 locations). Develop regular, targeted email communications for academic, school, and specialized libraries to ensure that they are aware of specific RAILS programs/ services of benefit to them and the latest RAILS news of possible interest to their library type Enhance/expand type of library sections on RAILS website with website redesign Continue to work with AISLE, IHLS, ILA, ISL, and Dominican University to gather data on Illinois school libraries to get a better picture of school library needs in Illinois and how we might collaboratively address those needs • Analyze additional data gathered from school libraries during the 2022 certification process • Develop and maintain school library database of useful information. Eventually expand the database to include unique data for academic and specialized libraries. Present program at 2022 ILA Annual Conference (if proposal is accepted) with a panel of speakers addressing the specialized library crisis	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Attend Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) conference to stay aware of issues and challenges facing small and/or rural libraries (See also Communications section below)	
Continuously evaluate RAILS programs and services to ensure that they are having an impact and are helping to create the best possible future for all member libraries.	Develop and regularly update an action plan for the new RAILS strategic plan with measurable objectives Develop and conduct annual member satisfaction survey of all types of RAILS libraries Continue to solicit member feedback via RAILS communication tools, surveys, and member encounters. Implement changes/additions to RAILS programs/services based on member input as appropriate. Ensure that we are getting feedback from libraries of all types and sizes in all geographic areas of the system. Make use of internal data and information to improve and optimize programs and services (See other sections of this document for plans to gather and respond to member feedback on specific RAILS programs/services)	
Collaborate with the Illinois State Library, the Illinois Heartland Library System, and other partners to develop a plan and timeline for achieving universal service.	Continue to work with the RAILS Board Universal Service Committee to find and implement solutions to challenges related to the unserved in Illinois • Continue to work with members to identify obstacles to libraries adopting the extended Cards for Kids Act legislation. Encourage all libraries to extend service to all children in unserved areas. • Continue with efforts to have public libraries added to real estate listings Work with the Resource Sharing Committee to increase awareness within the library community to the significant number of Illinois unserved Continue to work with statewide partners to seek legislative support for statewide database access for	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	all Illinois residents, including the unserved (see further details above) Test pilot a program in the RAILS area to offer systemwide database access to area residents, including those not currently served by a public library (see further details above) Work with ISL and other stakeholders to simplify nonresident card laws and rules • Work with ISL on an FAQ with answers to frequently asked questions on nonresident laws and rules Continue to publicize Inkie.org Library resources as being available to all Illinois residents, including those without access to public library service. (See additional details above.) Based on the outcome of the Explore More Illinois community college pilot (see above), give those without access to library service the option of using Explore More through participating community colleges Publicize requirement for library boards to vote annually on participation in the nonresident program and for members to update their participation information via L2. Publicize the names of participating/nonparticipating libraries and share with the Illinois State Library per our statutory requirement.	

Other Administrative Activities

The following section details RAILS' planned FY 2023 activities to meet statutory priorities for Illinois library systems not included in the sections above.

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
Engage and communicate with members and potential members from all types of libraries throughout the RAILS area to ensure they are aware of system programs/ services of benefit to them and to better understand, anticipate, and meet their needs	**Member Recruitment** Engage with libraries of all types that express an interest in RAILS membership Visit potential members to ensure they meet membership criteria Work with RAILS Board on new member recommendations for approval by ISL **General Member Communication/Engagement** Promote available programs/services via RAILS communication tools and member encounters, including: • RAILS website • Weekly *RAILS E-News* • Visiting as many members as possible, either virtually or in person, concentrating on libraries that RAILS has not visited or had any correspondence with in the past two years • Offering to attend a meeting of all RAILS networking groups as specified above • Scheduling regular member updates • Using available type of library mailing lists and lists for different levels of staff to communicate about specific programs/services of interest • Offering "New Director Welcome" online discussions • Sending all new RAILS library directors a welcome communication to acquaint them with system programs/services • Offering an online "RAILS Refresher" to any interested library • Continuing to feature "RAILS Minute" videos with the RAILS Executive Director highlighting the latest system news • Exhibiting at library conferences, including conferences for different types of libraries and different levels of staff • Presenting program at library-related conferences to promote RAILS programs/services	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Redesign RAILS website to replace outdated version of Drupal • Continue work with outside designer/ developer • Continue gathering feedback from all types of libraries, including via usability testing and auditing/evaluating use of current website content • Ensure that new website is fully accessible to those with disabilities as referenced above • Complete the migration of the RAILS website and project sites (eRead Illinois, Explore More Illinois, Find More Illinois, My Library Is…) to the latest version of the Drupal content management system as a part of the redesign • Launch new website on railslibraries.org domain, communicate address change widely, and implement appropriate redirects from other domains Coordinate with RAILS IT to change RAILS email domain to @railslibraries.org to coincide with change in website address Continue to make improvements to the weekly *RAILS E-News* based on the results of the FY 2021 *RAILS E-News* survey and other member feedback Gather feedback from different levels of staff (including non-librarians) on how RAILS can communicate with them more effectively. Develop strategies to respond to this feedback. Expand use of digital communication strategies as possible to promote RAILS programs/services to different audiences and to help members promote RAILS programs/services available to the public Expand/enhance RAILS' social media tools (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn) as possible to engage and communicate with members • Track social media metrics and make strategy adjustments as necessary	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	• Determine what additional social media tools RAILS might use to engage with members at all types and sizes of libraries and with all levels of staff at different RAILS libraries	
Engage and communicate with the RAILS Board of Directors to ensure that they are aware of RAILS programs and services, that they can serve as ambassadors for RAILS, and that their service on the board is as rewarding as possible	Communicate regularly with the board through board mailing list and other means Keep board informed about important issues for RAILS and for libraries of all types. Provide talking points for communicating with members about RAILS programs/services. Plan/implement orientation session at Burr Ridge service center for all new RAILS Board members. Invite existing board members to attend for a refresher. Schedule board meetings in different parts of the RAILS area as possible so the board can learn about different areas of the system Continue to promote and encourage diversity on the RAILS Board as referenced above Support board conference/meeting attendance as appropriate	
Recruit RAILS staff as needed to meet roles specified in administrative rules and to support strategic plan goals and objectives. Actively seek a diverse staff in terms of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identify, and other factors.	Encourage/support professional development for staff Continue to hold regular staff meetings to keep all staff informed of the latest RAILS developments and to help staff at different service centers engage with each other Continue work of RAILS Employee Committee to develop collaborative activities for all staff • Evaluate possibility of in-person staff in-service day in FY 2023 Continue to prioritize EDI-related staff activities and initiatives as referenced above	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
Maintain robust technology infrastructure needed to carry out all RAILS programs/services	**General** Replace servers at remote locations Replace core switch at Burr Ridge Replace Wi-Fi access points at all RAILS locations Implement cloud backup for all RAILS services Implement necessary changes to meet new cybersecurity requirements, such as multi-factor authentication Begin looking into replacing online ticketing system for possible completion in FY 2024 **Polycom Equipment** Evaluate current locations of Polycom equipment to ensure that members in all areas have access to a videoconference location Contact locations to ensure they can continue to meet requirements for member meetings. Find new locations for equipment as necessary. Replace all Polycom units and TVs at RAILS locations Publicize the ability for members in all areas of RAILS to attend RAILS meetings via videoconference (if available)	