

June 21, 2022

**TO: LLSAP Sustainability Working Group**

**FROM: Deirdre Brennan, RAILS Executive Director  
Anne Slaughter, RAILS Director of Technology Services**

**SUBJECT: LLSAP Sustainability Working Group Decision**

I apologize for the long delay since we last met. It has been extremely difficult to find a meeting date that worked for a majority of working group members. Since we met, Anne and I have spent a lot of time reviewing the consultant proposals related to the possible development of a statewide ILS and developing next steps for the group. We also had the opportunity to talk with Greg McCormick, Leslie Bednar, and other colleagues to get their opinions about the proposals and the potential for a statewide ILS.

We had hoped to be able to have a conversation with the working group about the conclusions we have reached but given the difficulty of scheduling a meeting decided to send this memo. The conversations at the LSWG have been very helpful in clarifying our thinking about the nature of the financial sustainability problem and potential solutions. Five things have become clear:

- Except for RSA, the LLSAPs are independent organizations that depend to a varying extent on financial support from RAILS. PrairieCat's finances are not as robust as the other independent LLSAPs, but they have made steady and important progress and have plans in place to make even more progress in the upcoming year.
- The suggestion for the development of stronger Catalog Membership Grant criteria is an excellent one that we are already working on and will incorporate going forward. The associated development of RAILCAR will also assist in ensuring financial stability and sustainability for the LLSAPs and their members.
- The conversations about Find More Illinois in our working group meetings were very helpful. As a result of your suggestions, FMI now offers a complete resource sharing solution for RAILS libraries that cannot afford or choose not to join an LLSAP. It can also serve as a resource sharing link among existing consortia. We have a responsibility to provide all our member libraries with equitable services including access to an affordable resource sharing platform and think FMI is the way forward.

- Finally, RAILS libraries do not need another ILS and we don't need consultants to identify barriers to resource sharing and the reasons why libraries don't join an LLSAP; we are all too familiar with the political and economic issues that affect libraries in RAILS (and throughout Illinois).
- Accordingly, we will turn our focus to RSA and their transition to independence, and to the robust development of FMI for all libraries that need this service.

As you know, RAILS serves more than 1200 member libraries and no two of them are alike in their resource sharing needs. We always focus on how best to provide equitable and sustainable resource sharing services to all our members, and practice excellent stewardship of tax dollars. We will share this memo with the Consortia Committee at its July 18 meeting as the results of the LLSAP Sustainability Working Group discussions. We thank the working group for your assistance in identifying the appropriate path forward working group for your assistance in identifying the path forward.