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March 17, 2023

TO: RAILS Board

FROM: Monica Harris, Executive Director

SUBJECT: 8.2 RAILS Board Member Job Description

The RAILS Board Member Job Description has been updated in order to reflect discussion around the importance of Board diversity by the RAILS Board, as well as the reflection under Goal Two of the current RAILS Strategic Plan. There was desire from the RAILS Policy Committee to provide the Nominating Committee with a Diversity Statement that outlines the priority of the RAILS Board. If the updates to the RAILS Board Member Job Description are approved, the updated Board Member Job Description will be included in the Nomination Form.

Changes to the Board Member Job Description include:

- The inclusion of a Diversity Statement for RAILS Board Candidates
- Updates to the requirements around participating in the RAILS Board in keeping with Open Meetings Act requirements after the expiration of the Disaster Declaration in May 2023

RAILS Board Member Job Description

General Description

The RAILS Board of Directors is composed of 15 individuals who work as a team on issues affecting the long-term future of the Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) and its member libraries. The board includes:

- Eight board members from RAILS public libraries
- One individual employed by a RAILS academic library
- One individual employed by a RAILS school library
- One individual employed by a RAILS special library
- Four individuals elected at large and currently employed or current members of the governing board of a RAILS public, academic, school, or special library

All board members represent the overall interests and needs of RAILS member libraries as a whole across a 27,000 square mile area, rather than individual libraries, institutions, or specific communities/regions.

Board members are elected by the RAILS membership and serve without compensation. (RAILS reimburses board members for travel and other necessary expenses.) The RAILS Board may also appoint board members to fill vacancies between elections.

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Diversity Statement for RAILS Board Candidates

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The RAILS Board seeks candidates that reflect the diversity of the RAILS membership in terms of race, ethnicity, age, geographic location, staff position, and other factors. RAILS is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our human capital is the most valuable asset we have, and this includes the RAILS Board as well as our staff. The collective sum of the individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, inventiveness, innovation, self-expression, unique capabilities, and talent is a significant part of not only our culture, but our reputation and organizational achievement as well. It is also important for RAILS to “model best practices in equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion” as stated in Goal Two of the current RAILS Strategic Plan.

Term

The term of office for a RAILS Board member is three years. No board member may serve more than a total of six years unless two years have elapsed since the sixth year of service.

General Duties/Responsibilities

- Attend and actively participate in 11 board meetings per year either in person, at a RAILS service center or approved videoconference location, or via Zoom if you are able to attend in a public location and can post the board meeting agenda at that location at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. required/allowed by pandemic restrictions. (RAILS will reimburse all travel and lodging costs to attend board meetings.) Review agendas and all supporting documents prior to each meeting.
- Actively serve on at least one board committee
- Monitor the system's finances and overall financial health and approve all budgets and expenditures
- Establish, review, revise, and approve policies for the effective management of the system
- Hire and evaluate the performance of the RAILS Executive Director
- Stay informed about RAILS programs/services by reading the weekly *RAILS E-News* and other means
- Promote the latest RAILS news, including information about programs/services, to other staff and trustees at your library and/or to other RAILS members from your type of library
- Attend conferences, webinars, events, etc. to stay current on what is happening with different types of libraries (academic, public, school, and specialized) and in the library world in general
- Seek opportunities to network with other library professionals, trustees, advocates, etc.
- Serve as an ambassador and advocate for RAILS, RAILS member libraries of all types (academic, public, school, and specialized), and for libraries in general

Requirements

- Cannot have more than two unexcused absences from board meetings during the system year
- Must be a legal resident in the RAILS geographic region
- Complete Open Meetings Act training within 90 days of being seated on the RAILS Board
- File an annual Statement of Economic Interest as required by the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act
- File an annual Conflict of Interest form
- Maintain familiarity with Illinois library system laws*, the Freedom of Information Act, the Open Meetings Act (OMA), the Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act, the State Official and Employees' Ethics Act, and with Robert's Rules of Order
- New board members must attend an orientation session (approximately four hours) at the RAILS Burr Ridge service center prior to beginning service on the board or shortly thereafter. RAILS will reimburse all travel/lodging costs.

Acknowledgement

(To be signed after election/appointment)

I acknowledge that I have read this job description and can meet the responsibilities and requirements listed.

Signature

Date

*See additional information about board service in the Reaching Across Illinois Library System Bylaws, [Article Five](#) and the Illinois Library System Act, [section 3030.250](#).

