May 19, 2023

TO: **RAILS Board of Directors**

FROM: **Monica Harris, Executive Director**

SUBJECT: **FY 2024 Operational Plan and Budget Overview**

This memo is intended as a general overview of the proposed RAILS Operational Plan for FY 2024. You will also find a rigorously detailed budget narrative in this packet, prepared by RAILS Finance Manager Sharon Swanson.

At our April meeting, I presented an overview of the initiatives included in the Draft Operational Plan for FY 2024. These initiatives directly respond to member need as detailed in our strategic plan, as well as our purpose as described in the Illinois Library System Act:

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state to encourage the improvement of free public libraries and to encourage cooperation among all types of libraries in promoting the sharing of library resources. (75 ILCS 10.1)

I wish to extend my thanks to the Illinois Secretary of State for the additional APC grant funding that RAILS received in FY2023. This increase allowed us to continue much needed and heavily used services on behalf of member libraries in FY2023 and the upcoming FY2024. The Illinois State Library has instructed us to submit an operational plan and budget based on an annual revenue of $11,871,714, which is funding from the Area and Per Capita Grant. As a reminder, this does not include additional projected revenue of approximately $1.7 million, consisting chiefly of fees from services and materials (including eRead Illinois and the ILDS contract).

As costs continue to increase, it is important for us to continue to focus on efficient and sustainable management of our services while maintaining the maximum benefits for our member libraries. A continued prudent approach to budgeting is important given the increased costs of personnel, utilities, fuel, vehicles, and facilities. Our focus is on sustainability and directly meeting member needs as has been detailed in our strategic plan.

To that end, our service expansion is focused on: resource sharing; equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility; infrastructure support; and administrative support for RAILS staff and programs. Highlights are as follows:

1

Resource Sharing:

Resource sharing is our primary goal under the Illinois Library System Act and the RAILS Strategic Plan (2022-2025). We work in service of this goal in many ways through the resource sharing of materials through library consortia, delivery of materials throughout our service area, continuing education, consulting, cooperative purchasing, and the maintenance of our many statewide programs including eRead Illinois, Explore More Illinois, and Find More Illinois.

The growth of our Find More Illinois (FMI) program has been substantial in the last year. We originally developed Find More Illinois because not every library can afford to or will choose to join a consortium. Find More Illinois was developed as an affordable solution for resource sharing for those libraries, and it can also serve as an alternative to OCLC for interlibrary loan. This year we are continuing our investment in Find More Illinois core platform enhancements and increased development and subsidies for offsetting one-time FMI costs. Additionally we are pursuing the development of the Verso expansion of FMI, which would be a circulation software packaged with FMI for libraries that are either not automated or under-automated.

Replacement vehicles continue to be a top priority, with costs on vehicle replacement having been deferred since FY2020. Vehicle costs have also continued to increase rapidly, and we must invest in these purchases to meet the needs of member libraries for delivery.

Our eRead Illinois e-book program continues to see growth for FY2024. Costs to administer this program are maintained by RAILS, and participant fees directly support the purchase of ebooks in the shared collection. We have identified the need for more K-12 and Spanish language materials, and RAILS is budgeting $100,000 to meet this increased need and spread the effectiveness of the collection for all participants.

Our Explore More Illinois cultural pass program has seen some exciting growth in this last year, with many long identified cultural institutions in Chicago coming on board as attractions in 2022 and 2023. We plan to continue the momentum through a rebrand in cooperation with Chicago Public Library and the Illinois Heartland Library System and a reach out to libraries with additional printed materials.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility:

We are continuing our journey as an organization committed to the values of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility as outlined in Goal Two of our Strategic Plan.

A full equity audit of our RAILS personnel manual will be completed by an outside consultant. This process will be completed in conjunction with the full policy review of the personnel manual planned for FY2024.

Our RAILS EDI Committee has identified the need to create buy in for best practices around EDI with library leadership including trustees. In response we are creating some EDI focused training specifically for trustees with the support of our EDI consultant, Biz Lindsay Ryan.

This year we would like to contract with Freedom Lifted, a learning module around DEI principles led by nationally recognized facilitator Mia Henry, developed specifically for a library audience. This 4–5-hour training module can be taken asynchronously and can provide libraries interested in developing their own cohorts the opportunity to support additional training with costs for the program as budgeted by RAILS.

Infrastructure Support and Administrative Support:

As you are all aware, inflation continues to be a concern and affects many areas of the budget, including staff salaries. Over the last ten+ years, we have been able to attract and retain an exceptional staff and it is essential that our salaries remain competitive so that we can continue to do so. Many RAILS member library directors report that they are considering salary increases in the range of 3-6% for the coming year. IHLS is proposing across the board raises of 5% (they included a raise of 4% last year). Sharon has provided and included information about the cost of a 4.5% across the board raise for our staff. The total cost of the raise is $231,650.00.

For your information, we have also included the cost of a 4% increase, which you can see detailed below:

	4% Increase	4.5% Increase	New Positions and Positions to be Filled	Delivery Personnel Adjustments
Library Professionals	$ 44,812.00	$ 50,413.00	$ 236,309.00	
Other Professionals	$ 72,153.00	$ 81,170.00		$4,113.00
Support Services	$ 68,864.00	$ 77,499.00	$ 54,010.00	$7,407.00
SS/Medicare	$ 14,689.00	$ 16,424.00	$ 22,210.00	$881.00
Unemployment	$ -	$ -	$ 1,031.00	$ -
WC	$ 3,308.00	$ 3,679.00	$ 241.00	$346.00
IMRF	$ 2,207.00	$ 2,465.00	$ 3,196.00	$ 130.00
Insurance	$ -	$ -	$ 22,019.00	$ -
Totals	$ 206,033.00	$ 231,650.00	$ 339,016.00	$12,877.00

In addition to the salary adjustment requested, we are requesting the addition an HR Assistant (pay scale level 4). The workload on our Human Resources department has increased substantially in recent years with our increased internal efforts on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, as well as work related to procedural changes related to the Union representing some of the Delivery staff. This position would offer additional administrative support to the department, freeing up supervisory staff the opportunity to work more directly on personnel policies and other staff infrastructure updates in FY24. We are also requesting the addition of 250 hours of temporary work related to our Data team's ongoing projects.

I hope that the Board will approve our proposed Budget and Operational Plan. I think it reflects our sincere desire to provide relevant and responsive services to members while maintaining our commitment to strong fiscal management and sustainability, and reflecting our priorities as outlined by the RAILS strategic plan. I look forward to our discussion.

RAILS FY2024 System Area and Per Capita Grant Application

2.2 Detailed Budget Narrative

This budget narrative for the FY2024 plan of service in the Area and Per Capita (APC) grant application provides an overview and a programmatic analysis of the proposed budget. Its purpose is to enhance understanding of the budget components and how the budget supports and aligns with the plan of service. All comparisons made to the prior year budget refer to the FY2023 budget. We have included as an attachment a spreadsheet showing line-item details of the FY2024 budget and FY2023 budget, with a breakdown by administration, delivery and LLSAP support revenues and expenditures, and a comparison of the two.

Due to the additional APC grant funding that RAILS received from the Secretary of State during FY2023, RAILS has been able to cover increased expenses, enhance current services, and pursue new programs and initiatives for our members in support of our plan of service and our strategic plan goals during FY2023 and FY2024. RAILS continues to be extremely grateful for these extra funds to help us keep meeting the ever-changing needs of our members, especially in a time of continuing cost increases for most of our services and materials. These additional funds assist with keeping our salaries competitive given the relentless increases in the consumer price index, meeting expected increases in all insurance costs for calendar year 2024, funding the increased need for our cataloging grants for members to join LLSAPs and grants for the My Library Is program, as well as meeting increased utility and lease expenditures.

In addition to continuing to support the multiple state-wide projects including the ILDS delivery, L2 website and maintenance, Find More Illinois (FMI), FOIA/OMA hotline, BiblioBoard E-resources, eRead Illinois, and the My Library Is program, RAILS is planning to add substantially to its support for Find More Illinois with the VERSO Consortia product, consortia, EDI initiatives for the member libraries and our internal staff and policies, promotional support for RAILS programs individualized for each member library type, and re-branding of Explore More Illinois in partnership with the Chicago Public Library and the Illinois Heartland Library System. As in prior years, the Federal portion of our APC grant funds ($1,936,143.79) will be used to support our delivery service to our members, specifically to cover a portion of our delivery staff salaries as well as a portion of our contractual agreement with our delivery outsourcing vendor who provides delivery services to a portion of our member libraries.

The FY2023 General Fund was budgeted to have a surplus of $556,769 and then amended mid-year for salary changes to have a surplus of $463,271. The General Fund is budgeted to have a surplus of $255,445, but we have several FY2024 purchases planned from our Capital Projects Fund ($899,000) which brings out total FY2024 budget surplus to a $643,555 deficit. With the expected FY2023 retirement of the RAILS Executive Director and the newly awarded additional APC funds, RAILS delayed pursuing many new projects. The FY2024 budget incorporates many of these projects, some of which have the flexibility to be one-time or be continued in future fiscal years. The budget that we are presenting includes all of the services that RAILS believes we should be providing to our members to meet the plan of service and our strategic plan goals while keeping RAILS' newly added services for the member libraries sustainable for the long term.

The FY2024 budget reflects the movement of PrairieCat to additional independence from our IT support and our facilities support. Due to this movement, the Coal Valley and Bolingbrook expenditures that were formerly allocated between administration and delivery, have been moved in total to the delivery budget. In addition, in-kind expenditures for facilities, vehicles and other support for RSA NFP that were formerly charged to administration have been moved to the LLSAP department due to the change in the LLSAP support grant formula to deduct all in-kind support from the annual grant award amount.

RAILS has deferred vehicle purchases for several years due to outsourcing investigations, and, most recently, vehicles have been unavailable due to market shortages. Government purchasing contracts have once again been secured by local vendors, and RAILS plans to purchase twelve replacement vehicles during FY2024.

Summary

The proposed FY2024 plan of service continues its support of programs and activities included in the RAILS strategic plan approved by the RAILS Board in January 2022. Major activities include:

- Support for libraries to join LLSAPs/consortia (including evaluation of the VERSO consortia for non-automated and under-automated libraries)
- System delivery and ILDS
- Find More Illinois
- Maintenance and continued development of the L2 platform
- Continuing education and training for members, including public library trustees
- Data collection for deals & discounts, delivery, LLSAPs, eRead Illinois pricing model, etc.
- Support for eRead Illinois and BiblioBoard
- Explore More Illinois
- Re-imagining our policies and services through an EDI focus and leading EDI efforts with member libraries
- Group purchasing
- Grants to members for continuing education events with an EDI focus and to help show the value of school libraries through My Library Is
- Specialized cataloging and cataloging training for libraries

As in past years, we used zero-based budgeting, meaning we developed the FY2024 budget from the ground up. We included all activities that we believe are necessary to support our strategic plan.

Revenues

General Fund revenues of $16,904,086 are budgeted to increase $1,742,980 from the FY2023 budget. This increase is primarily due to the increases in reimbursements ($840,700), investment income ($622,231), and fees for services and materials ($290,815).

No Special Revenue Fund activity is budgeted for FY2024. Applications for grant funds were submitted for the continued development and maintenance of the L2 platform as well as the continued specialized cataloging program, but the grant funds for these projects have not yet been awarded. The expenditures for these projects are budgeted in the General Fund.

Expenditures

Budgeted general fund expenditures of $16,648,641 are $1,950,807 above the FY2023 budgeted amounts. Lower than prior year expenditures are budgeted in professional services and equipment rental, repair and maintenance expenditures. Budgeted expenditures increased in all other categories, with the largest increases in library materials, personnel, contractual services, and buildings and grounds expenditures.

For the General Fund, we are budgeting total estimated revenues exceeding estimated expenditures by $255,445. We also are budgeting $899,000 of expenditures from the Capital Projects Fund, which has no budgeted revenues. Per the Illinois State Library guidance, we budgeted Area and Per Capita grant revenues of $11,871,714, the FY2024 anticipated award amount.

Revenue Details

FY2024 estimated total revenues of $16,904,086 consist entirely of General Fund revenues.

APC grant revenues ($11,871,714) are budgeted at the FY2023 award amount. The APC grant amount accounts for 70.23% of the General Fund revenue budget. Excluding reimbursement revenues, the percentage increases to 85.02%.

General Fund fees for services and materials of $1,382,052 are budgeted to increase $290,815 from the FY2023 budget primarily due to a budgeted increase in payments from RSA ($155,826), resulting from the changes in the LLSAP support calculation, increases in ILDS contract fees and expected fuel surcharges ($29,523) for statewide delivery, a large increase in eRead Illinois membership fees due to the budgeted addition of the PrairieCat consortium ($80,000), and, after a year of waiving fees for the membership due to an incentive period in the vendor's contract, the addition of Find More Illinois membership fees ($46,466). FMI implementation fees have been waived for new members who join prior to January 2024. These increases are partially offset by a decrease in budgeted HR Source membership fees and CE event fees. Fees included in the budget are:

- ILDS contract fees for statewide delivery to academic institutions ($597,672)
- eRead Illinois membership fees ($430,000), which support purchases of additional content
- FMI membership fees ($46,466), which partially offset program costs and help to ensure sustainability
- Fees to member libraries ($22,000), billed on a sliding scale that partially offset RAILS' expenditures for HR consulting for the membership.

Additional General Fund revenues consist of reimbursements ($2,940,700), which is an $840,700 increase from the FY2023 budget. This program is continuing to significantly expand this year and has significantly expanded over the past several years (as a comparison, FY2015 reimbursement revenues were $565,742). Significant increases include $400,000 for EBSCO databases due to increased anticipated participation, $250,000 and $225,000 for new products (Brainfuse and CreativeBug, respectively), $160,0000 for Press Reader, and $95,000 for Gale Small Business Builder. These increases were partially offset by a decrease of $350,000 which was budgeted as a placeholder in FY2023 for potential new products. The addition of six new products (LOTE Online for Kids, Brainfuse, CreativeBug, Hiveclass, Infobase Streaming, and Infobase Products) are budgeted in FY2024. Major group purchase

programs budgeted are for EBSCO databases ($1,300,000), Communico Cloud ($450,000), Press Reader ($250,000), Brainfuse ($250,000), several Gale products ($244,500), CreativeBug ($225,000), and SWANK ($80,000). Amounts budgeted as reimbursement revenues are beneficial to RAILS' members as they provide economies of scale for collaborative purchasing initiatives to help scarce member library dollars stretch as far as possible and to increase resource sharing. These revenues have no impact upon fund balances as they offset corresponding group purchase expenditures.

We have also included E-rate reimbursements amounting to $6,120. This amount decreased $5,980 from the FY2023 budgeted amount due to contract timing issues with one of our telecommunications vendors. In past years, before FY2020, we had not included these revenues in the budget because of uncertainties in the billing and approval process. We, however, have been successful in securing these revenues and are confident of their pending realization.

Investment income of $700,000 is budgeted for FY2024, an increase of $622,231 from the $77,769 budgeted for the prior year. Interest rates on money market funds, such as Illinois Funds, have increased to a current level of just over 5.00%, due to the Federal Reserve's historic increases in interest rates to combat inflation. This increase in investment income is also due to RAILS purchasing a series of investments with laddered maturities to attempt to stabilize returns during periods of fluctuating rates. We are conservatively assuming that FY2024 investment yields will peak over the next several months and then remain relatively level over the next fiscal year with an average return of 3.75%, and that we will receive APC funding in a pattern sufficient to maintain our current average investment balances after deducting our FY2024 Capital Fund purchases.

Other revenues are budgeted at $3,000, which decreased $6,500 from the FY2023 budget. These are primarily amounts received for the sale of Illinois Library Law and Serving Our Public books that RAILS purchases at a discount for members, as well as credit card rebates. Book purchases are expected to be minimal in FY2024, given that the current editions of these books have been published for several years. The revenue from these book sales has no impact upon fund balances as they offset corresponding expenditures for print materials.

In summary, General Fund revenues of $16,904,086 are budgeted to increase $1,742,980 from the FY2023 budget, primarily due to an increase in reimbursements ($840,700), investment income ($622,231), and fees for services and materials ($290,815).

As in FY2024, no Special Revenue Fund revenues are budgeted for FY2024 due to the uncertainty of the grant revenues in support of developing and maintaining L2 as well as the grant revenues to support specialized cataloging.

Expenditure Details

Expenditures—Personnel

General Fund personnel-related expenditures of $7,319,266 are budgeted to increase by $605,410, or 9.02%, from the prior year budget. Personnel-related expenditures are budgeted to account for 43.96% of total expenditures, compared to 45.68% in the revised FY2023 budget, comprising the largest single category of RAILS expenditures. The FY2024 budget for salary expenditures incorporates the following highlights and assumptions:

RAILS FY2024 System Area and Per Capita Grant Application |June 1, 2023

- A system-wide 4.5% salary increase has been included except for personnel whose salaries would reach the maximum amounts within their position grade, who instead will receive increases to the maximum amounts. Other exceptions to this increase are for those staff members subject to a collective bargaining agreement who will receive the prescribed annual increase in the agreement. We also have incorporated salary adjustments for three remaining delivery staff who were not included in the FY2023 mid-year adjustment to move the existing delivery department staff from $18 to $19.50 per hour and move the delivery service managers to the mid-point of their pay grade. The total impact of the above 4.5% increases is approximately $209,082 for salaries and $22,568 for other personnel expenditures. The impact of the delivery department salary adjustments is $11,520 for salaries and $1,357 for other personnel expenditures. The budget incorporates an 11% anticipated increase in health insurance costs for the second half of FY2024.
- The budget includes the addition of a human resources assistant who will support the organization's human resources needs as whole, as workload related to labor turnover, policy development and support related to the Union that represents a portion of the Delivery staff, and best practice as it relates to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion has increased substantially. With the increase in programs and initiatives, the budget also incorporates the addition of a temporary data research assistant who would work a total of 250 hours with a focus on eRead IL analysis, human resources projects, and several other long-standing projects. Lastly, the budget incorporates filling the associate executive director and the director of marketing and communications positions that are now vacant or will become vacant in FY2024. The total compensation for the four positions expected to be filled during FY2024 is $339,016 ($290,319 for salaries and $48,697 for other personnel expenditures). This is a net increase from the FY2023 budgeted salaries of $37,468 for salary and other personnel expenditures.

General Fund salary expenditures of $5,718,825 are budgeted to increase by $364,152, or 6.80%, from the prior year budget. Administrative salaries account for $156,070, LLSAP support (RSA) salaries account for $41,515 and delivery accounts for $166,567 of the total increase. In an effort to increase equity across the delivery department after a collective bargaining agreement was approved for a certain portion of the delivery staff, the delivery driving and sorting staff were raised to $19.50 with delivery service managers increased to the mid-point of their salary grade. The starting wage for delivery driving and sorting staff remains at $17 per hour.

The General Fund FY2024 budget for social security taxes increased $28,079, or 6.86% from the similar increase in budgeted salaries. Unemployment insurance is budgeted to increase $8,520, or 44.61%, due to an expected 38.41% increase from the FY2023 rate. Since the rate is based on the last three years' experience and does include an experience factor for Illinois state as a whole, it can have large fluctuations. Worker's compensation expenditures are budgeted to increase $4,465, or 4.03%, due to the increase in budgeted salaries.

Retirement benefits are budgeted to increase $9,246, or 16.87% from the FY2023 budget due to increased salaries and wages and an anticipated increase in the employer contribution rate. The calendar year 2023 contribution rate, which applies to the first half of FY2023, is .96%. Due to the fluctuations in IMRF investment returns, IMRF advised employers to be budget cautiously for potential employer contribution increases. The second half of FY2024 is budgeted to anticipate a conservative 1.30% contribution rate for a blended rate for the fiscal year of 1.13%. RAILS pension obligations are

funded in excess of 100%, resulting in low funding obligations for FY2024 as well as FY2023, but this funding percentage did decrease from 131.39% to 104.41% from the end of calendar year 2021 to 2022.

Health, dental, and life insurance expenditures of $900,908 are budgeted to increase $193,948, or 27.43% from the FY2023 budget due to an expected 11% increase in health insurance rates for the second half of the year, the two added administrative positions, more staff electing to enroll in the health insurance plans, and staff selecting higher coverage plans. RAILS experienced no rate increase in FY2021 due to the decision of the insurance cooperative that we participate in to change insurance carriers from Blue Cross Blue Shield to Aetna, but we did experience an increase in FY2022 of 8.31% for medical premiums and 4.92% for dental premiums as well as an increase in FY2023 of 10.04% for medical premiums and either an 11.38% or 4.81% increase for dental premiums, depending on the plan selection. This account budget is constructed on a departmental and location basis based on the current expenditure levels and adjusted for future cost increases. RAILS is continuing the health reimbursement account (HRA) program, which was first implemented in FY2017, in which employees participate in a higher deductible ($1,500) PPO program, at lower premiums, but retain the low deductible ($500) benefit.

Other fringe benefits of $19,000 are budgeted to increase $1,500. This account includes provisions to reimburse employees for additional deductible expenses incurred under the HRA program ($5,500), the tuition reimbursement program ($5,000) and various administrative fees. The employer contributions to the health savings account (HSA) program were increased from $1,000 to $2,500 based on expected usage.

The FY2024 budget of $24,000 for temporary help, all of which are budgeted for the delivery department, increased $3,000 from the FY2023 budget, but the entire budget for temporary help decreased $1,500 due to the elimination of the need for temporary help for human resources to cover anticipated time off. Actual expenditures incurred during FY2023 for position vacancies and staff leave coverage have been well in excess of budget. Recruiting expenditures of $12,000 are budgeted to decrease $3,000 from the FY2023 budget primarily due to an anticipated decrease in recruiting efforts for delivery staff and the FY2023 completion of the executive director search.

Collectively, FY2024 General Fund personnel expenditures are budgeted to increase $605,410, or 9.02% from the FY2023 budget, due primarily to budgeted increases for cost-of-living increases, the addition of the human resources assistant and temporary data research assistant positions, as well as the expected increase in health, dental, and life insurance rates for the second half of the year.

Expenditures—Operating

The following is a discussion of FY2024 budgeted General Fund expenditures.

Library Materials
The major expenditure item of library materials, E-resources ($3,478,500), is budgeted to increase $1,022,300, or 41.62% from the FY2023 budget. Group purchase E-resources expenditures of $2,940,700 are budgeted, compared to $2,100,000 budgeted for FY2023. These expenditures are offset by reimbursement revenues and will have no impact on fund balances. In addition, the budget provides that RAILS will use the proceeds of its eRead Illinois membership fees ($430,000), or $80,000 above the FY2023 budget, to purchase e-books for the eRead Illinois Axis 360 shared collection. Additional content purchases for eRead Illinois for K-12 and special language materials with a focus on schools are

RAILS FY2024 System Area and Per Capita Grant Application |June 1, 2023

budgeted at $100,000. Finally, the budget provides for the group purchase ($7,000) of the Public Web Browser for member libraries. The content and Public Web Browser purchases will be provided at no cost to the membership.

Buildings and Grounds
Total buildings and grounds expenditures of $570,343 are budgeted to increase $85,189, or 17.56% from the FY2023 budget due primarily to an increase in rent expenditures for the new lease for the Bolingbrook facility as well as modest increases for the East Peoria and Rockford facilities. Warehouse space is extremely scarce in the Bolingbrook area and the available space is at or above the increase in the lease that we signed with our current landlord (13.57% and a 131.74% increase in the rent and common area maintenance, respectively). Utilities are budgeted to increase $20,509 due primarily to the new fixed rate energy agreement that RAILS has in place with Northern Illinois Municipal Electric Collaborative (NIMEC), locking in a 25.94% increase in the aggregated per kWh rate for the next three years, in comparison with the market rate that runs 27.00% higher than NIMEC's aggregated rate. Building repairs and maintenance increased $13,475 primarily due to a $20,000 contingency for build-out costs if RAILS chooses to pursue a new leased facility as leases expire, partially offset by no major planned building maintenance projects during FY2024. Property insurance is expected to decrease in Coal Valley slightly and increase at Burr Ridge due to the results of the two appraisals that we had performed during FY2023 that valued the Coal Valley building at a total value of $405,000 (decreased from $500,000 in 2011) and the Burr Ridge building at a total value of $3,660,000 (increased from $2,200,000 in 2017).

Vehicle Expenditures
Total vehicle expenditures of $713,870 are budgeted to increase $26,392, or 3.84% from the FY2023 budget, primarily from increases in vehicle insurance ($20,016) and other vehicle expenditures ($9,400), partially offset by slightly decreased vehicle repairs and maintenance expenditures ($3,400).

The FY2024 vehicle insurance expenditures ($149,000) are budgeted to increase $20,016 due to increased insurance needs from the planned purchases of twelve replacement delivery vehicles during FY2024 as well as anticipated premium increases overall. Other vehicle expenditures ($16,250) are expected to increase ($9,400) due to the RAILS signage costs for the new delivery vehicles.

The actual expenditures during FY2023 for vehicle repairs and maintenance were consistently above the FY2023 budget due to the aging and heavy usage of RAILS' fleet. RAILS has not purchased new vehicles since FY2020. The RAILS delivery fleet includes numerous vehicles that have over 200,000 and 300,000 miles, and annual repair costs on these vehicles, in particular, can be extremely high. Due to the planned purchases of new vehicles very early in FY2024, we have budgeted a slight decrease in vehicle repairs and maintenance ($3,400).

The FY2024 budget assumes level fuel usage of 8,333 gallons/month and a market price of $4.25/gallon, which is unchanged from the prior year. Given the current market prices, this approximates the budget average that we expect to see for most of FY2024.

Travel, Meetings and Continuing Education
Total expenditures of $317,342 for this category are budgeted to increase $81,640, or 34.64%.

In-state and out-of-state travel expenditures increased $31,024 and $22,708, respectively from the FY2023 budget. FY2023 actual expenditures were lower due to continued decreased travel to the

member libraries and to conferences. We expect FY2024 expenditures to continue to increase due to the ending of the disaster proclamation and the complete return to in-person meetings.

Registrations and meetings ($86,305) expenditures are budgeted to increase $10,188 from the FY2023 budget. These expenditures primarily include registration fees and sponsorships, if applicable, for all conferences and courses as well as various board meeting and hospitality expenditures. We increased these expenditures from the prior year budget as we are planning to attend additional conferences in-person (including conferences that are held biennially) as well as cover higher sponsorship costs for conferences while promoting services for members in fulfillment of our collaborative leadership goal in our plan of service.

The FY2024 continuing education budget of $86,000, an increase of $17,720 from the FY2023 budget, supports the RAILS strategic plan goal to provide continuing education (CE) and consulting on the topic of and through the viewpoint of equity, diversity and inclusion, especially with a focus on library trustees; My Library Is grants; general resource sharing issues; interlibrary loan (ILL) and the ILLINET Interlibrary Loan Code; reciprocal access; reciprocal borrowing; nonresident services; etc. The program primarily relies on outside, paid trainers and consulting sources to satisfy these needs. Costs include speaker fees and travel, facility, hospitality, and other associated costs. This line also includes slightly increased ($1,500) CE event expenditures and a $1,000 increase in CE event grants. For FY2024, this line also includes $18,500 for Freedom Lifted subscriptions for member libraries to provide social justice and leadership training through an EDI lens. The budget provides for continuing education in the following categories:

- *General* — $51,500 — Continued offerings of workshops, webinars, HR Source, Trustee Academy, and other events
- *CE event grants* — $16,000 — Continued support of RAILS libraries, networking groups, and consortia seeking to organize a CE event that is made available to RAILS members. Will continue to focus on the strategic plan goal of EDI in FY2024
- *Freedom Lifted subscriptions* — $18,500 — Social justice and leadership training subscriptions taught with an EDI perspective that will made available to RAILS members

Public Relations
Public Relations expenditures of $27,100 are budgeted to increase $11,000 from the FY2023 budget due primarily to the one-time expenditures to brand Explore More Illinois ($20,000), partially offset by a decreased need for promotional materials due to purchases made in FY2023 that were done to take advantage of significant savings. This expenditure line also includes promotional materials for Find More Illinois ($5,000).

Liability Insurance
Liability insurance expenditures of $58,075 are budgeted to increase $10,775 from the FY2023 budget, primarily from an estimated 17.00% increase in calendar year 2024 rates.

Supplies, Postage and Printing
Total expenditures of $195,320 for this category are budgeted to increase $47,874 from the FY2023 budget, primarily from a $40,597 increase in computers, software, and supplies expenditures. The FY2024 budget includes the replacement of all staff monitors and dual monitor stands ($37,000) as the current monitors are all at end of life. The FY2024 budget also includes several software subscriptions

with modest increases. Delivery supplies expenditures of $46,850 increased $5,050 due primarily to an anticipated increase in the cost of labels, based on FY2023 actual expenditures.

Telephone and Telecommunications
FY2024 budgeted expenditures of $116,886, which incorporate existing contracts, are $11,208 above the FY2023 budget primarily due to increased contractual prices for fiber services for the Burr Ridge and Bolingbrook locations as well as modest expected increases for the remainder of our telecommunications expenditures.

Equipment Rental, Repair & Maintenance
Total expenditures of $138,522 for this category are budgeted to decrease $30,427 from the FY2023 budget, primarily due to decreased equipment repair and maintenance agreements. The budget includes existing contracts for HVAC maintenance, copier equipment, and annual maintenance expenditures on various equipment and software, including Zoom. The largest portion of this decrease is due to the reduction in the support contract costs for our servers.

Professional Services
Total expenditures of $272,615 for this category are budgeted to decrease $40,385 from the FY2023 budget, primarily from a $57,500 decrease in consulting expenditures related to the FY2023 completion of RAILS' new website redesign, partially offset by an expected $14,500 increase in legal fees given our first year of navigating the collective bargaining agreement that covers a portion of our delivery staff. Actual FY2023 legal fees were well above the budgeted amounts due to the costs associated with collective bargaining negotiations. FY2024 budgeted consulting expenditures include $45,000 for the HR Source membership for the member libraries, $35,000 for consulting related to the investigation of the VERSO Consortia project that would provide an ILS for non-automated and under-automated libraries, and $19,500 for equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) consulting for the organization and the membership in support of the goal to model best practices of EDI.

The $156,500 budget for Consulting consists of:

- HR Source (Formerly MAI) discount membership program — $45,000
- VERSO Consortia product investigation for non-automated and under-automated libraries — $35,000
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) consulting — $19,500
- Re-benchmarking all positions organization-wide — $15,000
- Cataloging services consulting for member libraries — $14,000
- Delivery routing and consulting — $10,000
- EDI review of the employee handbook — $7,000
- FOIA/OMA hotline — $6,000
- IT best practices security audit — $5,000

We are continuing to develop contracts with consultants in a variety of areas for which libraries and RAILS have needs. These needs and priorities change from year to year, as will the amounts that we have budgeted. We have not hired permanent staff to provide consulting services, as that service model limits our ability to respond to changing financial conditions and the needs of members.

Contractual Services

Total expenditures of $3,414,654 for this category are budgeted to increase $118,117 from the FY2023 budget, due primarily to an increase in contractual agreements with systems, member libraries and other cooperatives ($98,859) as well as increased information service costs ($22,372).

The FY2024 budget for agreements with systems, member libraries, and other cooperatives expenditures ($1,736,871) is $98,859 above the FY2023 budget primarily due to an increase in administration expenditures ($163,000), partially offset by a change in how support is allocated between administration and the LLSAPs ($64,141). This increase in administration includes increased support for cataloging membership grants ($150,000), which are budgeted based on expressed interest and anticipated need, as well as a $50,000 increase in My Library Is grants for school libraries, partially offsite by reductions in this line for VERSO Consortia expenditures that we are budgeting in other lines for FY2024.

LLSAP direct support expenditures decreased $64,141 from the FY2023 budget, as RSA and PrairieCat will receive in-kind personnel support from RAILS personnel that will be recorded within the administration department. RAILS intends to continue its support payments to six entities, three of which (CCS, Rock River and Pinnacle) were added in FY2020. The FY2024 and FY2023 support payments are shown below:

		FY 2024		FY 2023
CCS	$	210,232	$	197,698
Pinnacle		56,989		55,107
PrairieCat		516,776		564,277
RRLC		66,836		69,549
RSA		0		0
SWAN		499,038		527,381
Total Direct LLSAP Support	$	1,349,871	$	1,414,012

The FY2024 total support allocations to PrairieCat and RSA are $566,570 and $848,834, respectively. Since budgeted RSA in-kind support expenditures ($1,134,748) exceed this amount, RSA will make payments to RAILS of $285,914.

This amount is also increased by information services costs which increased overall by $22,372 primarily due to an increase in our website support as well as the creation of an eRead IL signup form.

In addition, this increase was slightly offset by a $2,574 decrease in other contractual services primarily due to a $34,749 decrease in the budgeted delivery services contract with Continental Transportation Logistics (CTL). Instead of the anticipated 22% increase during FY2023, we negotiated a 20% increase. This long-delayed increase was due to increased labor, overhead, and fuel costs that are similar to the continued increases that RAILS is experiencing. This decrease was partially offset by a $32,175 increase in development and licensing fees for the Consortia Manager product to further streamline the group purchase program as well as additional fees for the pilot and investigation phase of the VERSO Consortia product.

The FY2024 other contractual services budget provides for administration expenditures of $413,369, an increase of $32,175 from the FY2023 budget. These expenditures include:

- Find More Illinois expenditures of $166,369, or $22,175 above the FY2023 budget
- BiblioLabs platform expenditures of $70,000, an increase of $25,000 from the FY2022 budget, to support the statewide BiblioLabs platform for Inkie.org which promotes local self-published author materials
- Explore More Illinois expenditures of $55,000 to expand the program, which connects library patrons to deals and discounts from museums and other cultural attractions. This has increased $5,000 from the FY2023 budget
- Additional expenditures of $35,000 related to the continued development and maintenance of the L2 website, a decrease of $35,000 from the FY2023 budget
- A provision of $25,000, which is RAILS' investment to continue the Smart Horizons Career Online High School group purchase offer
- A provision of $30,000 to implement Consortia Manager, and increase of $8,000 from the FY2023 budget, which provides an infrastructure for managing member library group purchases and discounts as well as create the opportunity for the expansion of group purchase programs and process efficiencies
- A provision of $15,000 for Open-Gov contractual support, which will provide for additional RAILS transparency to its members and other interested parties
- A provision of $10,000, which will cover the costs of a pilot investigation for the VERSO Consortia product
- A provision of $4,000, which will cover the cost of record conversion for the VERSO Consortia pilot investigation
- A provision of $2,000 for the Backstage Library Works bibliographic MARC records processing for eRead Illinois
- A provision of $1,000 for potential records shredding in compliance with our Illinois State approved records retention plan

Capital Outlays

Expenditures of $899,000 are budgeted $464,000 above the FY2023 budget. The budget includes $15,000 to replace RAILS' firewall and $50,000 for modernizing and replacing the aging cabling at the Burr Ridge facility.

A provision of $34,000 for sprinkler system, patio and sliding door replacements for the Burr Ridge facility is incorporated into the budget in addition to $50,000 for carpet replacement and other necessary renovations at the Coal Valley facility.

The FY2024 budget also includes $750,000 for the purchase of twelve delivery vehicles to replace our aging fleet. RAILS last purchased vehicles in FY2020 but has deferred purchases due to evaluation of an RFP for additional outsourcing and, more recently, market shortages.

Conclusion

General Fund revenues of $16,904,086 are budgeted to increase $1,742,980 from the FY2023 budget, primarily due to increases in reimbursements ($840,700), investment income ($622,231), and fees for services and materials ($290,815).

Budgeted General Fund expenditures of $16,648,641 are $1,950,807 above the FY2023 budgeted amounts. Lower than prior year expenditures are budgeted in two expenditure categories: professional services and equipment rental, repair, and maintenance. Budgeted expenditures increased in all other categories, primarily library materials, personnel, contractual services, and buildings and grounds.

For the General Fund, we are budgeting that total estimated revenues will exceed estimated expenditures by $25,445. We also are budgeting $899,000 of expenditures from the Capital Projects Fund, which has no budgeted revenues.

The budget and plan of service are based on level APC funding of $11,871,714. We requested additional funding ($53,611) to support the L2 program, and additional funding ($45,627) to support the world language and specialized format cataloging consulting services. The budget we are presenting includes the services that RAILS believes we should be providing to our members.

This is both a forward-looking and financially sound budget that will enable RAILS to work toward meeting the goals in its strategic plan and the activities identified by the Illinois State Library with enough flexibility to allow for additional activity growth and cost increases for the future.

RAILS FY 2024 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 2024. 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.

As a part of this effort, we look to increase collaborations with our statewide partners to share best practices, to work on cooperative projects to benefit Illinois libraries of all types and sizes, and to make the most efficient use of system funding. Examples of these proposed collaborations appear throughout this document.

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 at RAILS member update sessions; at the Meet and Greet sessions held throughout our area to welcome RAILS' new Executive Director; at visits to member libraries, both in-person and virtual; via various surveys conducted of our membership as described throughout this document; and other means.

This document follows the arrangement of the RAILS strategic plan approved by the RAILS Board on January 28, 2022. 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	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	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 staff at different levels from different types of libraries and for public library trustees	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	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	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Assist in the formation of new RAILS networking groups as needed	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Continue to build and strengthen relationships and engagement with RAILS networking groups. Attend networking group meetings as appropriate to share the latest RAILS news and gather feedback on RAILS programs/services.	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Create new project-based networking opportunities in which volunteers from RAILS member libraries can assist other members with limited resources with weeding, processing materials, cleaning up the library, and other finite projects	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Continue with plans to offer member groups the opportunity to meet in person at RAILS service centers as possible, as was done pre-COVID 19	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Continue providing subsidized Zoom and conference calling accounts to qualified RAILS networking groups	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 5)
	Encourage use of RAILS mailing lists, including lists geared toward different library types and sizes, and staff at all levels	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Establish new mailing lists as needed. Sunset lists that aren't being used.	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
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	Continue to 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 members know about specific offers available to their library type.	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 6) 23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Gather input from members at all types and sizes of libraries on desired discounts/group purchases. Implement new offerings in response to this feedback as possible.	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 6)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Continue to work with statewide partners to advocate for additional funding in the Secretary of State's budget for a statewide electronic resources package to provide better economies of scale. Encourage member library staff to advocate for the package as appropriate.	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 6) 23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 f) 5)
	Continue the development of the comprehensive Consortia Manager platform to manage RAILS group purchases and discounts	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 6) 23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 5)
	Develop standards and evaluation metrics to gauge the effectiveness of the deals & discounts program. Widely publicize member savings to demonstrate the program's impact.	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 6) 23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Network with group purchasing managers in Illinois and nationwide to explore new opportunities and develop best practices	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 6)
	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 Explore additional ways to expand and promote the COHS program, including: • Targeting libraries not yet participating in the program with large populations of adults who have not received a high school diploma • Targeting youth services library staff to help them promote the program to young parents without a high school diploma	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 6) Applies to entire section
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	23 ILAC 3030.215 e) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 e) 2) 23 ILAC 3030.215 e) 3)
	Purchase additional delivery vehicles	23 ILAC 3030.215 e) 2)
	Consult with members on delivery issues/concerns on an ongoing basis. Widely promote the use of the delivery help desk.	23 ILAC 3030.215 e) 6)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Continue to promote the delivery video training series developed in FY 2023 to help library staff learn about delivery procedures	23 ILAC 3030.215 e) 6)
	Promote the need for RAILS members to complete quarterly delivery volume counts. Consult with libraries on an individual basis as needed.	23 ILAC 3030.215 e) 5) H)
	Develop strategies to improve and achieve total compliance with quarterly delivery counts to get more accurate information on delivery volume. Examine count data to determine potential changes to existing delivery routes and best practices.	23 ILAC 3030.215 e) 5) H)
	Continue to evaluate the implementation of the iPad app for drivers to track delivery volume and other delivery functions. Continue to explore additional opportunities to automate delivery processes to streamline services and improve efficiency.	23 ILAC 3030.215 e) 5) H)
	Continue providing high-quality statewide delivery services to CARLI (Consortium of Academic & Research Libraries in Illinois) members via ILDS (Illinois Library Delivery Service). Evaluate ILDS data to analyze changes in volume and respond with necessary and appropriate service changes.	23 ILAC 3030.215 e) 2)
	Continue working with GeoMARC (formerly Laboratory for Applied Spatial Analysis) on potential future improvements to RAILS delivery service, including delivery route efficiencies	23 ILAC 3030.215 e) 1)
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**	
	Work with the RAILS Resource Sharing Committee to ensure sustainable, equitable resource sharing to help meet the first goal of the RAILS strategic plan. Promote/encourage the use of Find More Illinois statewide to help achieve this goal.	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Collaborate with the Illinois State Library (ISL), IHLS, Chicago Public Library System (CPLS), AISLE, CARLI, IACRL, ILA, SLA Illinois, and other stakeholders to expand resource sharing in Illinois	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Collaborate with and support the work of the International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC)	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 3)
	Promote/Support LLSAP Membership	
	Continue to support six LLSAPs (CCS, Pinnacle, PrairieCat, Rock River Library Consortium, RSA-NFP, and SWAN) financially via the LLSAP Support Grant, as well as offering the use of RAILS meeting spaces and other services	23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 3)
	Continue to support RSA's efforts toward greater operational independence from RAILS, including their transition to an Illinois intergovernmental instrumentality and the process of beginning to employ their own staff	23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 1)
	Continue to offer the Catalog Membership Grant to fund one-time costs for libraries wishing to join an LLSAP. Evaluate and iterate on the new grant process framework introduced in FY 2023.	23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 1)
	Continue progress on the development of RAILCAR, a data collection and analysis initiative designed to supplement existing data related to LLSAPs and library automation. Develop specific criteria for LLSAPs and libraries to evaluate affordability. This tool will be integrated into the processes for both the LLSAP Support and Catalog Membership Grants.	23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 1)
	Promote the value of consortium membership to all types and sizes of RAILS libraries via RAILS communication tools, committee work, and member encounters	23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 1)
	Continue to work with RAILS Consortia Committee to investigate and recommend ways to improve and increase consortial services in Illinois	23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 1)
	Expand and Promote Find More Illinois (FMI) Recruit libraries to join FMI • Target promotions at libraries that would grow and enhance resources available through FMI	23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 2) 23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 8) 23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 9) All apply to FMI section

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	• Promote FMI benefits to nonautomated libraries	
	Continue to promote the growth of FMI, including via an extension of the FY 2023 incentive program and collaborating with CARLI to add I-Share members who wish to participate	
	Enhance the FMI program with add-on services as appropriate. Implement operational efficiencies as the program grows.	
	Provide training, consulting, and technical support to FMI libraries	
	Undertake feasibility, cost assessment, and planning process for adding a basic ILS component to FMI, aimed at automating nonautomated or under-automated libraries and making it possible for them to participate more fully in resource sharing	
	Continue to offer IHLS the opportunity to participate in FMI	
	Support High-Quality Cataloging	23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 5) 23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 6) Both apply to entire section
	Continue to develop/deliver cataloging training in response to member feedback, including recurring opportunities and one-time workshops	
	Formally evaluate the effectiveness of RAILS cataloging training and cataloging services	
	Continue support and consulting in cataloging-related activities for eRead Illinois and Find More Illinois	
	Investigate the possibility of establishing a mentorship program for Illinois library catalogers, possibly in collaboration with IHLS' Cataloging Maintenance Center (CMC). Survey libraries to determine need/interest.	
	Explore the possibility of becoming a member of the Library of Congress' Program for Cooperative Cataloging/Name Authority Cooperative Program	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Continue offering World Language Cataloging Services Program as detailed below	
	eRead Illinois Axis 360	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 3) 23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 4) All apply to entire eRead section
	Recruit RAILS libraries and IHLS non-SHARE libraries to join eRead Illinois	
	Support the training and marketing needs of eRead Illinois participants	
	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	
	Celebrate/promote the 10-year anniversary of eRead Illinois	
	Network with e-content managers in Illinois and nationwide to share and stay abreast of new developments and initiatives	
	Inkie.org Library	
	Continue to develop and promote the Inkie.org Library program to support self-publishing, Illinois authors, and Illinois e-content statewide	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Continue offering group purchase pricing on BiblioBoard products for self-published authors	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 6)
	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	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Provide current information on available resources for IHLS to share with their member libraries	23 ILAC 3030.215 b)1)
	Explore More Illinois (EMI)	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Work with CPLS and IHLS to rebrand the program to reflect participation of libraries statewide, including implementing a name change and new logo. Publicize rebranding efforts widely.	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Collaborate with CPLS and IHLS to publicize EMI to all Illinois public libraries and community colleges and to encourage them to participate	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Continue to grow/expand the number and types of participating attractions, including attractions in other midwestern states. Collaborate with CPLS and IHLS to recruit attractions.	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Explore the possibility of making EMI available to users of academic, school, and specialized libraries	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Network with ePass (EMI's software) administrators nationwide to explore new opportunities and solutions and to share best practices	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Other E-Resources Initiatives	
	Continue to participate as a partner in the CARLI Open Textbook grant	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 3)
	Continue to develop RAILS Vendor Privacy Policies and VPAT (Vendor Product Accessibility Template) web pages with links to policies and VPATs for third-party vendors providing e-resources to public libraries • Based on member feedback and participation, determine whether to expand the project to include academic, school, and specialized libraries	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Provide ongoing support for the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) and Illinois Digital Heritage Hub	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Support/publicize License to Read Act, making it possible for the Secretary of State to negotiate favorable pricing for e-books and e-audiobooks for libraries	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Partner with other library organizations to continue dialogue with publishers on need for better e-book access/pricing for libraries/consortia	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 3)

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.	Continue offering regular EDI training opportunities for all RAILS members. Collaborate with other Illinois stakeholders offering EDI-related continuing education (CE) to avoid duplication of effort.	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Offer EDI training targeted at public library trustees	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Evaluate the RAILS FY 2023 EDI Learning Cohort. Based on this analysis, consider forming a FY 2024 Cohort	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Explore other online, asynchronous EDI training programs to offer RAILS members during FY 2024	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Launch an EDI-focused directory of trainers and public programmers	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Continue offering World Language Cataloging Services grant program statewide • Continue seeking grant funds from ISL to fund the statewide program • Continue publicizing the program to libraries of all types statewide • Continue to promote the benefits of IHLS' Cataloging Maintenance Center program and how that program differs from and works in conjunction with the RAILS program	23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 5)
	Continue to develop/promote an eRead Illinois collection and Inkie.org Library resources that address the needs of an ethnically and culturally diverse audience. Regularly evaluate the collection using industry respected tools to identify potential gaps.	23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 3)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Recruit attractions for Explore More Illinois of interest to an ethnically and culturally diverse audience	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Promote the Career Online High School Program (see above) as addressing the needs of a culturally, economically, and ethnically diverse audience	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Publicize successful strategies libraries have used to promote and foster EDI via the My Library Is… campaign (see below)	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Plan/conduct *Sparks* podcast interviews highlighting successful strategies libraries have used to provide EDI-related programs and services	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	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	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Promote and provide administrative support as applicable for RAILS EDI-related networking groups	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	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, inclusive, and accessible programs/services and to publicize these offerings to their communities	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
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	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Promote the accessibility features of the redesigned RAILS website and continue to monitor and make changes to the website with accessibility in mind	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Conduct thorough analysis/evaluation of RAILS Employee Handbook to ensure that all language and policies meet our EDI goals	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3)
	Continue to support the onboarding of new RAILS staff through an employee connection program	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	designed to help build an inclusive culture and improve employee retention	
	Continue the work of the RAILS Climate Team to identify and implement internal best practices and initiatives for RAILS staff	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3)
	Continue holding regular EDI training sessions for RAILS staff	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3)
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	Continue to work with the RAILS Board Nominating Committee and others to attract diverse candidates to run for the RAILS Board. Promote RAILS' goal to develop a more diverse board in election publicity.	23 ILAC 3030.250
	Provide training/consulting/guidance for member libraries of all types to help them develop a more diverse and representative board	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	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	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Provide training for RAILS members to help them diversify their hiring and recruitment practices	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Provide opportunities/tools for members to share strategies they have used to recruit a more diverse staff, including the EDI mailing list and the EDI Pulse Page	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1

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	Provide CE/consulting/tools to help libraries with different aspects of fundraising, including how to advocate for additional/continued funding from library administrators, funders, etc.	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Continue to schedule regular meetings with AISLE, Chicago Public Schools (CPS), IHLS, ILA,	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
offer essential and cutting-edge services to their communities	and ISL 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 American Library Association (ALA) calls to actions • Continuing to work with the ILA Public Policy Committee to discuss legislation of importance to libraries	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Keep RAILS libraries informed of important legislative developments affecting libraries	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	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 • Encouraging members to contact their elected officials as appropriate and providing talking points on specific issues and programs as possible	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Develop video(s) through the My Library Is… initiative to demonstrate the importance of continued/increased funding for all types of libraries, including possible interviews with library patrons on the importance of libraries. Publicize the video(s) widely and encourage libraries of all types to use them to publicize the importance of continued/increased library funding.	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2) 23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	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	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
Help member libraries of all types and sizes demonstrate their value to their different stakeholders	**My Library Is… (MLI) Initiative** Continue to promote My Library Is… website resources via the *RAILS E-News* and other publicity channels	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Continue to encourage staff at all levels from all types and sizes of libraries to contribute posts to the My Library Is… blog to share best practices in telling the library story	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	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 libraries of all types to demonstrate their value	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Continue offering MLI grants to help libraries with limited resources to tell their stories more effectively	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	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	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Continue to work with IHLS to further expand and publicize the initiative to staff at all types and sizes of libraries statewide	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	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)	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
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 ILLINET Interlibrary Loan Code, nonresident services, the RAILS Resource Sharing Policy, etc.	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 1)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Provide CE/consulting on library advocacy, management and practice, and other core service areas identified in the administrative rules	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Provide CE/ to help libraries meet per capita grant requirements and standards for their type of library	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 1)
	Offer CE/consulting assistance and other resources to help libraries of all types and sizes to develop/maintain a current strategic plan	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 1)
	Identify/monitor issues, trends, and challenges affecting libraries of all types and sizes and provide CE/consulting to help libraries respond to these issues and challenges	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Continue to develop Library Pulse pages on the RAILS website to help members respond to current issues, challenges, and trends	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Produce regular RAILS *Sparks* podcasts on current issues/trends affecting libraries of all types and sizes	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Continue to gather member input on CE needs from all sizes and types of RAILS libraries and implement training to meet those needs	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 2) 23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Continue to monitor library director retirements in the RAILS community and explore offering leadership training as needed to make up for the resulting loss of knowledge and experience	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	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. Continue prioritizing EDI-related topics for the grants as referenced above.	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Continue to partner with AISLE to identify training needs for school library staff and to offer joint CE opportunities based on that feedback	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Continue to work jointly with the Illinois State Library and AISLE to offer school library staff PDH (Professional Development Hours) credits for RAILS-organized CE opportunities. Submit application to ISBE for RAILS to become an authorized provider of PDH credits.	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Work with statewide stakeholders to plan and offer Directors University, the statewide training initiative for new public library directors. Publicize widely.	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Work with statewide stakeholders to plan and offer Directors 2.0 to offer intermediate-level training for library directors. Publicize widely.	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Work with statewide stakeholders to possibly plan and offer Elevate Illinois Libraries Leadership Program to recruit and nurture future Illinois library leaders	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Continue partnership with United for Libraries to provide statewide, online, on-demand trustee training. Publicize training widely.	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Continue to support IHLS trustee training grant project. Publicize project to members as appropriate.	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Collaborate with partners to offer additional trustee training opportunities in response to member feedback	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Consult with/attend library board meetings as appropriate to help boards meet legal requirements and to develop leadership skills	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Continue partnership with HR Source to provide CE and discounted membership. Publicize widely.	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Continue partnership with Ancel Glink to offer statewide FOIA/OMA hotline. Publicize widely.	23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)

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 System, the Illinois Library Association, the Illinois State Library, and the Special Libraries Association – Illinois Community.	**Service Standards** Continue conversations with ISL, IHLS, and other partners to explore possibility of revising system membership standards to help libraries of all types provide better service to their communities **L2 (Library Directory and Learning Calendar)** Ask ISL to continue to provide additional grant funding to support L2 Continue to provide statewide leadership for L2 • Host, maintain, and develop additional features • Provide ongoing user help and support to library staff, networking groups, and sponsor organizations (LLSAPs, ISL, library systems) • Update and maintain externally sourced directory data • Provide technical support, ongoing reporting, and any necessary development for annual library certification • Facilitate the statewide advisory group (L2G2) and participation in the Intercept open source community Continue to contract with Aten Design Group for L2 support and development **Certification** Work with ISL, IHLS, and other partners to improve and enhance the annual certification process Work with RAILS members to ensure that they complete the certification process **Other Collaborative Initiatives** RAILS Executive Director continue to serve on Illinois State Library Advisory Committee	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 4) A) Applies to entire L2 section 23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 4) C) 23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 4) C) 23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Work with CPLS and IHLS to schedule meetings and other get-togethers for system staff • Plan event at ILA conference in Springfield for any staff or board member interested in attending from any of the three systems • Schedule regular meetings to discuss statewide services and ideas for collaborating to promote those services • Plan a joint board meeting for IHLS and RAILS systems for Spring 2024	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Continue to schedule regular meetings with AISLE, CPS, IHLS, ILA, ISL, and others as appropriate to discuss collaborative projects to benefit school libraries as referenced above	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Collaborate with AISLE, IHLS, ILA, and ISL to plan an online Illinois School Library Training event, targeted at individuals working in school libraries with no formal library education	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Collaborate with AISLE, IHLS, ILA, and others to form a Regional Response Team to help libraries facing materials challenges	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Continue providing leadership and support to SLA-IL via the RAILS Member Engagement Manager publicizing SLA-IL activities and events and looking for opportunities for collaborations. RAILS' Member Engagement Manager will continue to maintain a seat on the SLA-IL Board as well.	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Continue regular meetings with the Commissioner of the Chicago Public Library to discuss collaboration possibilities	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	Continue to engage in statewide efforts focused on broadband expansion, technology adoption, and digital equity issues as significant federal and state funding is distributed, including continued service on the Illinois Department of Economic Opportunity's Broadband Advisory Council. Work to ensure that libraries are aware of and equipped to participate in these efforts, in collaboration with IHLS and other Illinois library representatives.	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Continue to serve as sponsor for library-related conferences as possible, including conferences aimed at libraries of all types and different staff levels	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	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	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
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.	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	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Promote the member centers for different types of libraries on the redesigned RAILS website	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Mail promotional pieces to libraries not receiving RAILS delivery as appropriate to ensure they are aware of the programs/services available to them	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Follow up on results of RAILS Services Inequity Study conducted in FY 2023. Publicize study findings and RAILS' planned action steps in response to the findings.	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 2)
	Continue to meet with AISLE, CPS, IHLS, ILA, and ISL to address the needs of school libraries as referenced above	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	Continue to work with other stakeholders statewide and beyond on school library data project (see next section)	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)
	(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	Continue to work with AISLE, CPS, IHLS, ILA, ISL, and other stakeholders statewide on the school library data project, with the goal of educating school library staff, administrators, boards, and other about the importance of school libraries and the need to support and fund them • Create an online, sustainable presence for Illinois school library data, with the goal of	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	building a digital resource center for school library advocacy • Brand project, including developing a name and designing a logo • Publicize the project widely, including conducting a social media campaign to publicize data being collected and benefits of project	
	Follow up on results of RAILS Services Inequity Study as referenced in previous section	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 2)
	Develop a centralized RAILS data hub to coordinate and manage incoming data sources used to support services for RAILS members and staff • Determine core data sources used by RAILS staff and create documentation for requirements, maintenance, and access • Develop method for training staff on proper data usage and create data request ticket system	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 2)
	Create RAILCAR (as referenced above), which will contain information from core data sources for LLSAPs and member libraries to inform their decisions on consortium membership and compare LLSAP operations	23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 1)
	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. (See other sections of this document for plans to gather and respond to member feedback on specific RAILS programs/services)	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 2)
Collaborate with the Illinois State Library, the Illinois Heartland Library System, and other partners to develop a plan	Continue to work with the RAILS Board Universal Service Committee to find and implement solutions to challenges related to the unserved in Illinois	23 ILAC 3030.215 f) 5)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
and timeline for achieving universal service	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 • Promote RAILS talking points designed to help library staff demonstrate the benefits of adopting this legislation to their boards and other stakeholders	23 ILAC 3030.215 f) 5)
	Continue to work with statewide partners to seek legislative support for statewide access to electronic resources for all Illinois residents, including the unserved (see further details above)	23 ILAC 3030.215 f) 5)
	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 ISL per statutory requirements.	23 ILAC 3030.215 f) 4)

Other Administrative Activities

The following section details RAILS' planned FY 2024 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	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 4) B) Applies to entire section
	General Member Communication/Engagement Promote available programs/services via RAILS communication tools and member encounters, including:	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G) Applies to entire section

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	• RAILS website • Weekly *RAILS E-News* • Continuing to ramp up our social media engagement efforts • 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 online site visits to any interested library to remind them of system benefits • 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 • 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 programs at library-related conferences as appropriate to promote RAILS programs/services Contract for continued support for new RAILS website, to include: • Interface and automation to generate the quarterly delivery count forms • Design/theming work for potential EDI Trainer/Presenter Directory • Custom development of Gutenberg editor • Help building form for eRead Illinois signup/renewal period if Consortia Manager is not ready to handle this process • Miscellaneous design tweaks, feature development, and software and server updates	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Continue to gather feedback on the redesigned RAILS website and make improvements/ enhancements to the site based on that feedback Complete the migration of service-specific websites (eRead Illinois, Explore More Illinois, Find More Illinois, and My Library Is …) to the current version of Drupal website software Plan and conduct a promotional campaign to increase the number of subscribers to the *RAILS E-News* Continue to make improvements to the weekly *RAILS E-News* based on the results of the FY 2022 *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.	
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 the RAILS board mailing list and other means Ensure that the board is aware of RAILS' progress in meeting the goals and objectives of our new strategic plan 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 and meet members from different areas Continue to promote and encourage diversity on the RAILS Board as referenced above	23 ILAC 3030.250 Applies to entire section

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Support board conference/meeting attendance as appropriate Work with RAILS Board Policy Committee to establish schedule for regular review of RAILS policies	
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 Committees to develop collaborative activities for all staff • Plan in-person staff in-service day in FY 2024 • Offer regular staff engagement activities at service centers throughout the year Conduct salary benchmarking study to ensure that RAILS salaries are fair and equitable, to help retain highly qualified staff, and to attract new talent Develop a succession plan for RAILS in conjunction with the RAILS Board Policy Committee Continue discussions with new staff who have worked at RAILS for at least 90 days to gather input on their onboarding and orientation experiences. Make changes to RAILS' onboarding process as appropriate in response to this feedback. Continue to prioritize EDI-related staff activities and initiatives as referenced above	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) Applies to entire section
Maintain robust technology infrastructure needed to carry out all RAILS programs/services	Replace printers, firewalls, and monitors at all RAILS service centers Redesign and replace network cabling at Burr Ridge service center	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 5) Applies to entire section

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Audit and improve security practices across wide area network and IT systems Establish formalized structure for staff to inform and request input on IT-related projects they are planning Update and expand disaster recovery plan and staff cybersecurity training Implement SharePoint and standardized file management practices across the organization	