November 10, 2023

TO: **RAILS Board**

FROM: **Joe Filapek, Associate Executive Director**

SUBJECT: **RSA Independence Project**

As the last consortium to be operated with RAILS staff members, RSA (Resource Sharing Alliance) is currently planning for the funding and employment of its own staff, following a model similar to that of PrairieCat and SWAN to achieve operational independence from RAILS. One of the first steps in this process will be the conversion of RSA from a 501c3 Not for Profit to an Illinois Intergovernmental Instrumentality. This will bring into line RSA's governance structure with that of other RAILS consortia and facilitate ongoing alignment with LLSAP funding and support from RAILS. A number of key dates and milestones for the RSA Independence Project occur over the next two fiscal years, and we anticipate RSA achieving full operational independence from RAILS by July 2026. An outline of those key dates and milestones can be found on the following pages.

RAILS is currently working with RSA leadership to support a communication plan that will ensure effective communication across RSA member libraries during this transition. As a critical facilitator of resource sharing across a large number of our member libraries, RAILS wants this transition to be a successful one for staff and members alike. To provide additional details on the independence project and progress on the associated timeline, RSA Executive Director and LLSAP Services Manager Kendal Orrison will speak at the November 17, 2023 board meeting.

Key dates and milestones for this project:

• 1 July 2024 – Convert from 501c3 Not for Profit to and Illinois Intergovernmental Instrumentality (III)
• 1 July 2025 – 1st day of RSA directly employed staff
• 1 July 2026 – RSA operating entirely on RSA sourced and maintained IT and infrastructure
• 2026 & 2027 – Survey the library automation system world for potential migration

---

1 July 2024: Most Important date for member libraries

RSA needs to convert from our existing 501(c)(3) organizational structure to an Illinois Intergovernmental Instrumentality (III) organization. Why? RSA is the only automation consortium in the state NOT organized as an III. RSA is not eligible for IMRF retirement and other benefits currently offered to staff while a 501(c)(3). Being organized the same way as the other consortia will help position RSA for better staff retention and ongoing alignment with models for LLSAP funding and support from RAILS.

The RSA Board has set 1 July 2024 as the first day of the new organizational structure. This will require all libraries in RSA to sign a new intergovernmental agreement to remain in RSA. When signing the new agreements, libraries will also be approving new RSA Bylaws and potentially, a new RSA fee structure.

Milestones for this phase include:

• 9 Nov 2023 Users Group – Draft Governmental structure, Draft Bylaws, Draft Library/RSA Intergovernmental Agreement

• 8 Feb 2024 Users Group – Final Drafts of the above documents, Final draft of the new fee structure if available, Communications package for Directors and Administrators about organizational change.

• 1 March 2024 – New Intergovernmental Agreements, Bylaws, and potential new fee structure circulated to members. Members approve all changes by signing the Intergovernmental agreement.

• 9 May 2024 Users Group – Review of progress of member signup, additional communications for libraries who have not yet signed.

• May/June 2024 – Phone calls and library visits to members who have not yet signed.

1 July 2025: Most important date for RSA staff members

RSA's Board of Directors, working with outside parties, will design and procure all the staffing benefits, HR and payroll support, job descriptions, and more required to directly employ staff currently supporting RSA by 30 June 2025. Much of this work can't be started until RSA has reorganized as an III organization. To ensure staff experience a smooth transition and feel supported moving forward, the RSA Board hopes to design a salary scale and benefits program close to their current RAILS employment. This is especially true for the major benefits. This will also position RSA to hire qualified staff in the post-independence future. Along with benefits and retirement programs, we also need to procure HR and

payroll support, additional administrative support, and more to replace everything currently provided by RAILS we haven't had to think about until now.

1 July 2026: 'Fully independent' date

RSA can't transition off RAILS provided IT services until RSA staff are employed by RSA. Until that time, RSA staff MUST use RAILS provided services to ensure HR compliance and FOIA request coverage. During the mid-2025 to June 2026 timeframe, RSA will procure, set up, and maintain almost all the services currently provided by RAILS.