

RAILS Board Universal Service Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 7, 2023 | 1:00 pm

Minutes

1. Welcome and Call to Order
Alice Creason, chair, called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm.
2. Roll Call of Committee Members
Krempl called roll of the RAILS Universal Service Committee members.
Present:
Alice Creason – Lewis University
Angela Campbell – RAILS Coal Valley
Su Reynders – RAILS Burr Ridge
Michelle Roubal – RAILS Burr Ridge
Brooke Sievers - RAILS Burr Ridge
Catherine Yanikoski – Aurora Public Library, Eola Road Branch
Alissa Williams – RAILS East Peoria
Absent:
Lynn Stainbrook
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
Burr Ridge: Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Renya Krempl (the designated note taker)
On Zoom: Anne Slaughter
4. Public Comments
There were no public comments.
5. Consent Agenda
 - 5.1. Adoption of the Agenda
 - 5.2. Approval of the RAILS Board Universal Service Committee Minutes of September 7, 2023
Sievers moved for the approval of the consent agenda. Reynders seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.
6. Discuss member terms and committee charge.
Harris presented the proposed committee terms for non-board members. The proposal was approved by the committee.
Harris discussed the rationale and proposed changes to the committee charge.
After a brief discussion, Roubal motioned for the revised charge to be approved, Sievers seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Final vote or action may be taken at the meeting on any agenda item subject matter listed above unless the agenda item specifically states otherwise.

7. Illinois State Library Advisory Committee (ISLAC) Update

Harris gave an update on the November meeting of ISLAC. The first topic was the new Public Act 103-100. It will affect the certification process for libraries. There will be additional questions that libraries will need to answer to certify their compliance with the act. The Secretary of State's budget was also discussed. It includes increased support for prison libraries and grant funds for technology. Another topic of discussion was the Service Maps project, which was used to estimate the number of unserved in Illinois. License to Read Act was discussed, in particular the Secretary of State's ability to negotiate eBook prices on behalf of Illinois libraries. Further meetings will take place to come up with the best strategy.

Harris mentioned that ISLAC is considering creating a task force relating to the unserved population in Illinois. She stated it is not clear if prison residents are counted as unserved since library service is so uneven in correctional facilities. The next meeting of ISLAC is scheduled for January 25th, 2024.

8. Unfinished Business

8.1 Multiple Listing Service (MLS) update

Harris notified the committee that the request to include library information on property listing sheets was reviewed by Midwest Real Estate Data (MRED), and they have no plan to add additional fields to the sheet. There is a link in one of the tabs in the property description in MLS that allows for the library service information to be viewed, if available. Harris suggested the MLS update request be removed from the regular agenda and be reassessed later. Williams wondered if it would be possible to get realtors to spread awareness and support this effort.

8.2 Statewide databases and online educational resources update

Harris gave an update on this initiative, as it was discussed at the last ISLAC meeting. It could be a big step in offering at least some library services to the unserved population. Illinois State Library (ISL) could issue a card allowing access to electronic resources. ISL looked closely at the solutions adopted by Michigan and New York, which are similar to Illinois. Illinois is only one of two states in the country that does not have a centrally managed program for residents to access electronic resources. Also, many Illinois libraries do not currently have access to online databases at all. School and community libraries are among the heaviest users in other states. The project is currently in the procurement process, and there are no specific implementation dates yet. The funds need to be allocated in this fiscal year. Harris related how this situation developed in other states. Vendors are very interested in participating in the program at the state level. It does not preclude libraries from contracting with their preferred vendor other than the State choice. Harris pointed out that having access to a state package might free up funds for libraries to utilize towards other services.

9. New Business

9.1 Broadband Access Presentation – Anne Slaughter

Slaughter summarized the big initiative involving two federal broadband programs currently in the works: the Broadband Equity and Deployment (BEAD) Program and the Digital Equity Act. The BEAD Program will allocate over \$1 billion to the state of Illinois for broadband expansion, and the Digital Equity Act will allocate \$1.4 billion to all 50 states for digital equity programs, with Illinois receiving a part of the amount. Both programs require the states to produce plans that must be publicized for comment before being finalized. Slaughter emphasized the importance of all Illinois libraries being included in the asset inventory for the BEAD Program and the need for libraries to have the capacity to offer broadband services sustainably. RAILS worked with Heartland and CARLI to create a coalition advocating for libraries. She stressed that a digital divide exists in Illinois, and digital redlining is taking place. For the population to have access to library services, they need to have access to reliable internet connections. She referred the Board to the Broadband for Libraries website, which will keep information about broadband for libraries up to date.

10. Meeting recap and agenda building for the next RAILS Board Universal Service Committee

Meeting on March 7, 2024 – Alice Creason

Creason recapped the meeting and listed topics for the next meeting: an update on the statewide database project, an update on the broadband project, and a review of the 2016 plan.

11. Adjournment

Creason adjourned the meeting at 2:30 pm.