
RAILS Report – Resource Sharing Committee

RAILS Releases Illinois Libraries: Agencies of Impact, a Data Study

At RAILS, our mission statement “We Connect Libraries” reflects our belief in the transformative power of libraries. We go beyond brick-and-mortar walls, fostering collaboration and resource-sharing to empower libraries of all types and sizes. That’s why we have published the [Illinois Libraries: Agencies of Impact, a Data Study](#). We want to help member libraries of all types and sizes demonstrate their value to their various stakeholders. This booklet is designed to assist you in doing just that by diving deep into the quantifiable impact of Illinois libraries. Whether you’re a library worker, a board member, or a community advocate, this information will help you showcase return on investment, staffing expertise, and community reach.

CTL Contract Renewal

Over the past few months, RAILS staff have evaluated several different contract renewal options from our delivery contractor Continental Transportation (CTL). CTL currently provides delivery and sorting services for RAILS to support interlibrary loan for member libraries primarily located within Cook, DuPage, and Lake counties. After completing a thorough budgetary and staffing analysis for these renewal options, RAILS staff determined that the most advantageous option is to retain delivery services with CTL while reassigning sorting responsibilities for these routes to our Bolingbrook operation. Although this revised CTL contract represents operational changes not included in our FY25 Plan of Service, we feel that the projected cost savings and opportunity for increased efficiencies merit its implementation this year.

RAILS Welcomes Maggie Thomann as Library Resource Specialist



Maggie Thomann has been selected as the new Library Resource Specialist in RAILS’ Resource Sharing department. This position was added in FY2024 to support the growing Deals & Discounts program. Thomann’s first day in the position was September 4, 2024. Thomann has over 20 years of experience in various libraries, most recently as the Adult Department Director at the Glen Ellyn Public Library. She has also served on the ECC/Digital Library of Illinois Executive Board, the Adult Reading Round Table steering committee, and the ILA iRead, Conference, and Awards committees. As the Library Resource Specialist, Thomann will help identify quality products and services for RAILS member libraries, maintain and analyze data related to purchasing, and process finalized deals.

Anne Slaughter Named DCEO Broadband Advisory Council Chair

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) has announced that RAILS Director of Technology Services Anne Slaughter has been appointed the new Broadband Advisory Council Chair. Anne has been representing libraries on the Council since its inception in 2019. This is a wonderful opportunity for Anne and a great opportunity to continue her work in making

Freedom Lifted Renewal

RAILS has signed an agreement to continue providing [Freedom Lifted's Social Justice in Public Libraries](#) to all RAILS member libraries. This asynchronous learning opportunity can be an important part of member library's efforts toward providing a better understanding of principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in libraries. The new contract will extend access to this valuable program until September 2025.

IMLS Grant Opportunity

RAILS has committed support to the IMLS-funded [iLead: Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders with an EDI Lens](#). The initiative, which is designed as a no-cost, open-access national leadership program has a focus on inclusive leadership. We are serving as part of a coalition including the Chicago Public Library and the Illinois Library Association, as well as many other national partners if the next stage of this project is funded by IMLS. I believe this project has the potential to make a positive impact on the library community, and I hope there will be more to share soon.

Statewide e-Resource Package

The Illinois State Library's Greg McCormick and Suzanna Jones presented the Statewide e-Resource package at the RAILS Member Update on September 4. The recording is now available on the RAILS YouTube page. The Illinois State Library is also hosting a series of training sessions through September 25, and virtual office hours for libraries through October, November, and December.

Digital Accessibility in Libraries Pulse Page

To keep libraries informed and compliant with details related to digital accessibility, RAILS has released a new Digital Accessibility in Libraries Pulse Page. This page will be updated frequently with more information on digital accessibility issues, federal laws and guidance, resources for libraries, CE events, and more. For more information, please visit the [Digital Accessibility in Libraries Pulse Page](#) on the RAILS website.

2024 ILA Legislative Meetups

The Illinois Library Association's 2024 legislative meetups are now scheduled and currently available for registration on the ILA website at <https://www.ila.org/events/legislative-meetups>. These seven legislative events will be held December 3-10 at locations including Alsip, Oak Brook, Northbrook, Normal and DeKalb. The legislative meetups provide an opportunity to meet with legislators and speak with them firsthand about issues affecting you and your library.

RAILS Premieres New Podcast for School Library Workers

RAILS is thrilled to announce the premiere of its newest podcast, *Can't Shelve This*. The series is co-hosted by RAILS Data Analyst Janette Derucki and Illinois Heartland Library System School Library Membership Coordinator Leah Gregory. The podcast aims to create a space for school library workers to feel seen, entertained, and informed all at once. Episode one, titled "You Can Totally Sit With Us," introduces listeners to the podcast's co-hosts as they discuss what they've observed happening across school libraries in Illinois—the good, the bad, and the ugly.

