Agenda Item 8.2

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October 13, 2024

> **TO:** **RAILS Resource Sharing Committee**
>
> **FROM:** **Joe Filapek, RAILS Associate Executive Director**
>
> **SUBJECT:** **RAILS Resource Sharing Activities**

Included in your packet you'll find portions of the RAILS fiscal year 2025 operational plan that are focused on Strategic Plan Goal #1: *To provide leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing for all member libraries.* This plan was reviewed by the RAILS Board of Directors at their May 2024 meeting and outlines the many ways RAILS seeks to support resource sharing across our system through a variety of planned activities. Since the charge of the Resource Sharing Committee is largely advisory and to offer feedback and recommendations in a variety of areas related to resource sharing, we wanted to share this document to see what questions or comments you might have related to these planned activities.

On a related note, RAILS is considering the creation of a member-facing annual report. This report would highlight our activities and initiatives from the previous year. As we consider how to structure this report, we would be grateful for any feedback this committee has to offer. Particularly for activities related to resource sharing, what services would you like to see highlighted in a RAILS annual report to our membership?

We look forward to discussing these items at our October 18 meeting.

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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 by supporting the resource sharing of materials through library consortia through our LLSAP support grants, 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.

We are continuing to anticipate the growth of in-state travel and in-person visits to member libraries this year, in keeping with the trends we have observed in FY2024. Our members appreciate opportunities to interact with RAILS staff in a face-to-face environment. Replacement vehicles continue to be a top priority, and the purchase of eight additional vehicles at the cost of $460,000 has been budgeted in FY2025. Vehicle costs have also continued to increase rapidly, and we must invest in these purchases to meet the needs of member libraries for delivery.

We continue to hear from members about the importance of offering opportunities for training and learning related to leadership development. We are budgeting $10,000 to further develop a concept around leadership training for libraries of all types.

Our data team identified new areas for potential investment in our eRead Illinois program that will provide maximum impact to users. Costs to administer this program are maintained by RAILS, and participant fees directly support the purchase of eBooks and audiobooks in the shared collection. We have identified the need for more audiobooks and graphic novels as a result of the data study findings, and RAILS is budgeting $25,000 to meet this increased need and increase the impact of the collection for all participants.

Our E-resources expenditures ($3,730,425) are expected to increase in FY2025 by 7.24%. It is important to remember that these expenditures are offset by reimbursement revenues and have no impact on fund balances. Since the largest part of these expenditures come from EBSCO purchases, these projections could change dramatically based on the outcome of the Statewide Databases program from the Illinois State Library and the Secretary of State.

RAILS FY 2025 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 2025. All of the activities that occur at RAILS tie directly to our vision statement:

> *Thriving libraries are essential to all who learn, live, or work in Illinois.*

And our mission statement:

> *We Connect Libraries*

RAILS is committed to 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 to helping them to provide the best possible service to their customers.

RAILS strives to operate effectively and efficiently by working collaboratively with partners across the state. We seek to better understand the ecosystem in which we work, and this requires being a good partner when the need arises.

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.

The following document includes the continuation of activities from previous years' plans as well as new activities that fall within our strategic plan. 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	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	(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.	
	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)
	Continue with plans to offer member groups the opportunity to meet in person at RAILS service centers as possible.	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
	Work with statewide partners – including those at the Secretary of State's Office/Illinois State Library - to promote availability of the statewide electronic resources package. Along with internal and external partners consider new avenues for outreach and engagement around this resource, for all library types.	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)
	Online High School Programs Continue to subsidize the management of the COHS and Gale: Excel Adult High School platforms to enable libraries to offer adult learners accredited high school diplomas and career certificates. Explore additional ways to expand and promote the COHS and Gale: Excel Adult High School programs, 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 8 additional delivery vehicles to replace the aging fleet.	23 ILAC 3030.215 e) 2)

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Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	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)
	Promote the need for RAILS members to complete quarterly delivery volume counts. Consult with libraries individually as needed.	23 ILAC 3030.215 e) 5) H)
	Continue discussions with RAILS Consortia Committee about finding new ways to utilize data to get an accurate count for delivery.	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 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).	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)
	Review and revise the RAILS Resource Sharing Plan to reflect new legislation and updated areas of focus.	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, 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, with ongoing evaluation and adjustment of the grant process framework to maximize support to nonautomated libraries.	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 is 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)	
		23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 2)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Recruit libraries to join FMI. • Target promotions at libraries that would grow and enhance resources available through FMI. • Promote FMI benefits to nonautomated libraries. Continue to promote the growth of FMI, including developing new recruitment strategies and collaborating with CARLI to add I-Share members who wish to participate. Continue onboarding CCS libraries into the FMI program. 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. Evaluate and revise the FMI participation fee structure to ensure ongoing value to members of all types and sizes. Establish a FMI user group and/or committee working group to incorporate member feedback into the fee structure, as well as to assist with providing insights into recruitment, program enhancements, and best practices for participants Continue to offer IHLS the opportunity to participate in FMI.	23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 8) 23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 9) All apply to FMI section
	Support High-Quality Cataloging 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.	23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 5) 23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 6) Both apply to entire section

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Continue support and consulting in cataloging-related activities for eRead Illinois and Find More Illinois. Via partnership with IHLS' Cataloging Maintenance Center (CMC), support new catalog mentoring program to help libraries develop new skills and best practices. Explore the possibility of becoming a member of the Library of Congress' Program for Cooperative Cataloging/Name Authority Cooperative Program. If the RAILS budget allows, establish a cataloging internship plan. Continue offering World Language Cataloging Services Program as detailed below.	
	eRead Illinois Boundless 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. Network with e-content managers in Illinois and nationwide to share and stay abreast of new developments and initiatives.	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 3) 23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 4) All apply to entire eRead section
	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) 23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 6)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Continue offering group purchase pricing on BiblioBoard products for self-published authors.	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	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 b)1)
	Provide current information on available resources for IHLS to share with their member libraries.	
	Explore More Illinois (EMI)	23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)
	Work with CPLS and IHLS to rebrand the program to reflect participation of libraries statewide. 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 b) 1)
	Continue to grow/expand the number and types of participating attractions. Collaborate with CPLS and IHLS to recruit attractions.	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.	
	Other E-Resources Initiatives	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1)
	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)
	Continue to stay abreast of E-Content initiatives, such as the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) and Illinois Digital Heritage Hub.	23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) 23 ILAC 3030.215 a) 3) G)

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Support progress related to the License to Read Act, making it possible for the Secretary of State to negotiate favorable pricing for e-books and e-audiobooks for libraries.

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.

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.

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.

Recruit attractions for Explore More Illinois of interest to an ethnically and culturally diverse audience. | 23 ILAC 3030.215 d) 2)

23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 5)

23 ILAC 3030.215 c) 3)

23 ILAC 3030.215 b) 1) |