

RAILS Board Universal Service Committee Meeting

September 12, 2025

RAILS Burr Ridge and Videoconference Sites
125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527 | 630.734.5000

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Yanikoski called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. She noted that this was the first meeting of the committee in the new fiscal year. The committee has gained two new members: Emily Porter and Rob Parks.

2. Roll Call of Committee Members

Kreml called roll of the members.

Present:

Catherine Yanikoski, Chair – RAILS Burr Ridge
Jenny Cutshall – RAILS Burr Ridge
Angela Campbell – RAILS Coal Valley
Emily Porter – Rockford University
Brooke Sievers – RAILS Burr Ridge

Absent: Rob Parks, Michelle Roubal, Alissa Williams

3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements

Guests in Burr Ridge: Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Renya Kreml (designated note taker) – RAILS. On Zoom: Kate Niehoff (RAILS), Scott Pointon (White Oak Library District).

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

5. Consent Agenda – (action requested) Committee Chair

5.1. Adoption of the Agenda

5.2. Approval of the RAILS Board Universal Service Committee Minutes of June 13th, 2025

5.3 Approval of the RAILS Board Universal Service Committee meeting schedule for FY 2026

Sievers moved, and Cutshall seconded the adoption of the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Unfinished Business – Joe Filapek

6.1 Updates from committee members on the 2024 Universal Service Plan

Filapek highlighted the new interactive RAILS resource sharing map. Among many available overlays, it has the ability to display areas of the state without library service, which is of interest to the Committee.

He also shared that RAILS had recently had its legal counsel review and update intergovernmental agreement (IGA) templates provided for district and municipal libraries. Joe also mentioned the statewide databases as one way to provide some level of service to the Unserved. According to the Illinois State Library (ISL), the homepage for these databases, known as IRIS, will soon become functional.

6.2 Review draft of the Community College Survey

Filapek reviewed a flowchart of the proposed Community College Library Survey. The discussion centered on clarifying questions about public library usage and community college library access policies, with concerns raised about how to phrase questions that accurately reflect community college library practices. The team acknowledged variability in current practices and planned to follow up with community college staff to better understand access policies and potential usage data tracking. The group also discussed refining survey questions to improve engagement and clarity, particularly focusing on how to phrase questions about community college library services and resident access. Emily suggested rephrasing questions to be more positive and proactive, while the team agreed to add more specific questions about intergovernmental agreements and library services. They also discussed the need to follow up with community college library representatives through focus groups or gatherings to understand survey responses better. They agreed to share the survey with Michelle Roubal for her community college perspective.

6.3 ILA Annual Conference Session progress

Filapek gave an update about the “One Million Unserved in Illinois” panel session to be presented at the ILA conference on trustee day, October 15th. The panelists will be Harris, Filapek, Roubal, and Yanikoski. They will present the history of universal library service, IGAs, the role of community college libraries, and current initiatives. The goal is to build awareness and to energize librarians to support universal service in Illinois.

7. New Business – Joe Filapek

7.1. Illinois Legislative Update

Filapek noted the recent passage of Public Act 104-36, which allows libraries to offer quarterly or biannual payment plans for non-resident library cards, and encouraged members to participate in upcoming ILA legislative meetups to discuss the Unserved issue with legislators.

7.2. Serve the Unserved: Legislative Proposal

Pointon presented his proposal for establishing universal library service in Illinois, which would charge County Governments to examine and develop solutions in collaboration with the Illinois State Library. This proposed legislation would mandate that all areas currently unserved by a public library gain access to public library services within 4 years. The group discussed the challenges of implementing such a proposal, including the need for legal expertise to draft legislation and the potential resistance from areas currently not paying library taxes, as well as

the need for ILA support for the proposed legislation. They explored the possibility of using the State Library's involvement to help guide the process. The four-year implementation timeline to allow counties to study and address unserved areas was considered a good approach. solutions that would be both effective and politically viable.

8. Meeting recap and agenda building for the next RAILS Board Universal Service Committee Meeting
The Committee reviewed the proposed community college survey, worked on planning the ILA session, received a legislative update, and heard Scott Pointon's proposal on introducing legislation to create universal library service in Illinois. Items proposed for the next agenda were a summary of the ILA session and an overview of the results of the community college survey. Other suggestions were inviting a representative from the Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS), having Grant Halter give an overview of the new, interactive RAILS Resource Sharing map, and having updates on the tasks the committee members are working on.
9. Adjournment
Yanikoski adjourned the meeting at 2:14 pm.