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DATE: March 4, 2026
TO: RAILS Universal Service Committee
FROM: Joe Filapek, Associate Executive Director
SUBJECT: Non-Resident Card Rules and Regulations

During our March committee meeting, we would like to spend some time discussing Illinois public library non-resident library cards and the administrative rules that govern them. Questions about non-resident cards continue to account for a significant portion of the inquiries we receive from member libraries, suggesting that there may be ongoing areas of confusion or inconsistent interpretation. For your reference, we have included several of the more relevant components of the applicable administrative rules with the meeting materials to help ground the discussion.

As part of this conversation, we would especially value the committee's perspective on a few questions:

- **What aspects of the non-resident card rules appear to be the most confusing or unclear for library staff and trustees?**
- **Are there particular situations or scenarios that frequently lead to misunderstandings or inconsistent application across libraries?**
- **What types of guidance, training, or resources might help library staff better understand and adhere to the applicable rules and law?**

Finally, looking more broadly at the future, we would also welcome the committee's thoughts on the policy framework itself: **If there were an opportunity in the future to amend the administrative rules governing non-resident cards, what areas might benefit from clarification or revision based on your experience?** Your feedback will help us better understand the challenges libraries face and consider how RAILS might support greater clarity and consistency across our membership.

Section 3050.60 Non-Resident Fee Formula

a) General Mathematical Formula

1) To determine the minimum non-resident fee, a local library should divide the library income from public property tax sources or its equivalent by the local population to determine the cost of service per capita. In the case of endowed libraries that receive no income from local tax sources of any kind and meet the requirements for library system membership, the endowed library may determine the minimum non-resident fee by dividing the amount of income it receives from non-tax sources that is required to qualify for per capita grants provided in Section 8.1 of the Illinois Library System Act by the local population to determine the cost of service per capita. All public libraries should then multiply the per capita figure by the average number of persons per household in the community to obtain the average cost per household on which to base a fee for a family card. The most recent federal census information available shall be used in determining population and household size.

2) Library income from local property tax sources excludes State and federal funds.

b) Tax Bill Methods

1) Non-Resident Taxpayer: The library tax rate or equivalent, including all special levies, is applied to the non-resident property owner's principal residence assessed valuation on an individual, case by case basis. The most recent property tax bill will be used. The property owner will pay the same amount as would be paid if the property were in the library service area.

2) Non-Resident Renter: The library shall either charge a minimum of 15 percent of the monthly rent as the annual non-resident fee, or devise its own formula. The local formula shall take into account the average local rent of the general community of the public library, the property tax rate, and the non-resident fee for residential homeowners. The library board shall annually determine the percent to be applied to non-resident renters. The renter shall provide to the public library a current rent receipt or a cancelled rent check for verification purposes.

Section 3050.20 Public Library Responsibilities

- a) The public library board of trustees shall annually take action to decide whether to issue non-resident library cards during the ensuing 12 months. At that time, the non-resident library card fee formula and fee, if applicable, to be used will be determined and adopted.
- b) The public library board of trustees shall notify the regional library system within 30 days after the action taken and effective dates and fee formula as determined in this Part.
- c) The participating public library shall continue to honor the non-resident library cards issued by the library for the full term of purchase.
- d) Participating public libraries shall cooperate with other participating area public libraries and the regional library system and adjacent regional library systems to determine the appropriate non-resident service areas as stated in Section 3050.25.
- e) Nothing in this Part requires a public library to participate in the non-resident library card program. Non-participation in the non-resident library card program does not preclude a public library from applying for and receiving grant funds from the Illinois State Library as long as the public library complies with requirements of the specific grant program.

Section 3050.25 Applying for a Non-Resident Library Card

- a) A non-resident shall apply for a non-resident library card at the closest public library. The factor for determining the closest public library shall be the residence of the non-resident. Non-residents shall apply at the participating public library in the school district in which the non-resident has his or her principal residence unless, due to the commonality of community interests, library services at another library that is physically closer may better serve the needs of the non-resident.
- b) If there are two or more public libraries in the school district in which a non-resident resides, the participating public libraries in that school district, in cooperation with the applicable regional library systems, shall determine the appropriate library service area for non-residents to make application for a non-resident library card.
- c) If there is no participating public library in the school district in which the non-resident resides, the applicable regional library systems that serve the school district shall, in cooperation with participating libraries in the general area of the school district, determine the non-resident service area. The factor to be used for determining a non-resident service area shall be the commonality of community interests that influence the activities of all the residents of the service area.

Section 3050.40 Options for Non-Resident Library Cards

- a) The public library board of trustees' policy for service to non-residents, including a description of the public library's service areas and methods of calculating fees (if the library participates), shall be available for public inspection at the library.
- b) A valid non-resident library card shall accord the non-resident cardholder all the services the issuing public library provides to its residents including reciprocal borrowing privileges.

Section 3050.50 Criteria for Non-Resident Library Cards

- a) The non-resident library card issued by a participating public library should include, at a minimum, the name of the library; the expiration date of the non-resident library card; and the words "Non-Resident". The non-resident library card shall be issued for 12 months subject to the exemptions in Section 30-55.60 of the Public Library District Act of 1991 [75 ILCS 16/30-55.60] and the Illinois Local Library Act [75 ILCS 5/4-7(8)].
- b) A local use only card may not be issued to a non-resident whether or not a library participates in the non-resident library card program.

Section 3050.70 Non-Resident Property Owner and Lessee

- a) *The non-resident fee shall not apply to a non-resident who, as an individual or as a partner, principal stockholder, or other joint owner, owns or leases property that is taxed for library service or is a senior administrative officer of a firm, business, or other corporation owning taxable property within the district, upon presentation of the most recent tax bill on that taxable property. [75 ILCS 5/4-7(12) and 75 ILCS 16/30-55.60(3)]*
- b) The library card shall accord the non-resident property owner or non-resident leasee cardholder all the services the issuing public library provides its residents, including reciprocal borrow privileges.