
RAILS Report – Resource Sharing Committee

Illinois Legislative Updates

As previously reported, the ILA Executive Board has approved the following legislative priorities for this year:

- Increase Library System Area & Per Capita Grants and Public Per Capita & School District Grants by 20%
- Require Public Library Trustee Training
- Open Educational Resources funding grant
- Making eBooks Equitable and Accessible Provides leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing

Some new bills related to these priorities have begun to appear:

HB4261 would increase annual grants for public libraries in the state, school library grants, and the library system grants by 20% in order to reflect inflationary pressures since the last time the grant amount was raised. The library system grant is what funds operations at RAILS and the other two systems in Illinois. The bill, which was filed by Rep. Martha Deuter, has bipartisan support with ten additional cosponsors as of the time of this writing. If passed, this bill would be effective immediately.

HB3411 would appropriate \$3,000,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the Secretary of State for a recurring, permanent grant program for Illinois academic libraries. The grant would be applied to Open Educational Resources. This bill was filed by Rep Normal Hernandez and has five co-sponsors.

HB5236 (filed by Rep. Tracy Katz Muhl) and HB5279 (filed by Rep Nabeel Syed) would amend the Digital Library Protection Act to include more reasonable terms for libraries as it relates to eBook licenses. These provisions closely reflect those made in the 2025 legislation passed in Connecticut. RAILS staff Anna Behm, Leila Heath, and Monica Harris have worked closely with the eBook subcommittee of the ILA Public Policy Committee in order to address strategies and progress related to the support of better eBook terms for libraries.

RAILS Universal Service Committee Surveys Community College Libraries

At the direction of the RAILS Universal Service Committee, RAILS is surveying community college library members to better understand how they serve non-student residents within their districts, particularly those living in areas unserved by a public library. This survey updates a similar effort conducted by the RAILS Resource Sharing Committee in 2018. Responses were collected through mid-February, and results will be reported during the March Universal Service Committee meeting.

RAILS 2025 #DeliveryWrapped

RAILS staff worked together to compile FY25 delivery data for the annual #DeliveryWrapped social media post. Here's what was highlighted:

- In FY 2025, we saved our libraries \$247 million through interlibrary loan. That's more than Wicked: For Good's total opening weekend earnings.
- Our team delivered 1 dog. (IYKYK—and if you don't, check out Tyler's Delivery Diary.)
- In FY 2025, our drivers traveled 1,076,230 miles. That's Katy Perry traveling to space 8,679 times.
- Our busiest hub was Wheeling (XWH). They processed 25% of our total materials in FY 2025. That's over 2 million titles just for our north and northwest suburbs.

Find More Illinois Innovation

RAILS has engaged in preliminary conversations with neighboring states, particularly Wisconsin, about expanding interstate resource sharing through Find More Illinois and related statewide lending programs. Wisconsin's use of the same Autographics software (SHAREit) would make integration relatively seamless. While delivery logistics would need to remain within Illinois borders or operate on a cost-recovery basis, Wisconsin's existing cross-border sharing with Minnesota (Minitex) presents promising opportunities for broader regional collaboration. This also aligns with ongoing ISLAC conversations regarding statewide resource sharing possibilities.

RAILS Offers New L2 Onboarding Handout

RAILS created an L2 onboarding handout to help any library type acquaint staff with the Library Directory & Learning Calendar platform and the benefits of creating an account. Those with an L2 account can register for webinars and networking events, find colleagues at other libraries, view delivery information, and much, much more. A copy of this handout is included in the Resource Sharing Committee packet for our March meeting.

eRead Illinois: The Palace Project Update

Phase one of school library onboarding to The Palace Project took place in the third week of January. For this phase, The Palace Project deployed three instances in the app – one for eRead elementary schools, one for eRead middle schools, and one for eRead high schools. Every school library in eRead Illinois was given access to the eRead Illinois collection via one of these instances. Phase two of school library onboarding will start in the coming weeks and will involve deploying individual instances for all 550+ school libraries in eRead Illinois.

Anna Behm and Gates Marquez began reaching out to eRead Illinois school library members who cannot access the eRead Illinois collection via an app to discuss options and next steps. Leila Heath and Anna Behm met regularly with the team from Palace Project to discuss progress with the eRead Illinois transition.

New Advocacy Tools for eBooks and Audiobooks

On January 30, RAILS launched new e-book and audiobook advocacy tools to help share awareness of the challenges of the current licensing models for libraries related to ebooks and audiobooks. The graphics included were originally created to highlight the issues for the Illinois Library Association's Legislative meetups and were created by RAILS staff Anna Behm and Ola Gronski. The new downloadable tool can be shared across all social media platforms and includes a Canva template that allows libraries and library organizations to personalize the graphics with their own logos. Media coverage of these tools from ALA Direct and Words & Money also brought national attention to RAILS and this issue in the library community this month. We are thrilled to share this work with our colleagues across the country.

CARLI Leadership Transition

Laurie Blandino has been named the new CARLI Director and began serving in her new role on December 31. Laurie previously served as Executive Director and Associate Commissioner of LOUIS: The Louisiana Library Network.

Catalog Membership Grant Recipients

RAILS is excited to announce the selection of two libraries to receive RAILS Cataloging Membership Grants: Rolling Meadows Library (CCS) and Wauconda Area Public Library District (CCS). This grant aims to support resource sharing by making a library management system affordable for any library. These funds will cover the startup costs for these libraries to join a RAILS Local Library System Automation Program (LLSAP) consortium and expand the resources available to their communities.

RAILS Creates Cook County Library Taxing Infographic

In response to discussions with affected RAILS member libraries around delayed tax funding from Cook County, RAILS Digital Marketing & Communications Specialist Ola Gronski and Data Analyst Janette Derucki created an infographic document explaining the issue's impact on public libraries. The document explains how different types of public libraries are categorized (and prioritized) for emergency disbursements, as well as the number of suburban Cook County residents affected by this issue. This document has been shared with Cook County staff to better explain how Cook County public libraries are impacted by these delays.

Illinois State Library Survey

The Illinois State Library will be administering a survey to all Illinois libraries. The survey distribution will be staggered by library type and is currently scheduled as follows:

Academic & Special Libraries, sent on Thursday, Feb 26
Deadline: Friday, March 20

School Libraries, sent on Thursday, March 5
Deadline: Friday, March 27

Public Libraries, sent on Thursday, March 12

Deadline: Friday, April 3

Deals Email List Launch

The Deals & Discounts team launched email lists for public and K–12 libraries in January to provide RAILS members with updates about new and interesting RAILS deals and discounts for electronic resources, materials, supplies, and furniture. These email list subscribers will also have opportunities to suggest products, give input on services, ask questions, and connect with peers. The Deals email list for public libraries already has over 100 subscribers, and the K-12 email list has over a dozen.

EBSCO Supplemental Packages and Resources

Signup and renewal are now open for the 2026 EBSCO discounted packages and resources to supplement the free Illinois State Library Statewide E-Resource Package. The RAILS group purchase deal runs July 1–July 30 and is available to both school and public libraries.

With 155 libraries participating and nearly \$2 million in savings for RAILS libraries, this is one of the most popular and active deals that the RAILS Deals & Discount team manages, so planning starts early! This year, new offerings include Learn with NovelList Plus and “Ultimate” upgrades included in the Package offerings, which provide up to double the amount of content to the Premier or Complete versions of the same resources.