
DATE: April 17, 2026
TO: RAILS Board of Directors
FROM: Joe Filapek, Associate Executive Director
SUBJECT: Freedom of Information Act Policy Review

At their March 25 meeting, the RAILS Policy Committee voted to recommend an updated FOIA policy for approval by the RAILS Board at their April meeting.

The current RAILS FOIA Policy was last updated in 2012. The primary goal of the revision was to create a policy that is less procedural in nature than the existing version. The updated policy reflects a more high-level approach that focuses on key principles and statutory compliance.

To complement this shift, the revised policy will be accompanied by a [RAILS FOIA Guide](#), which is already available on the RAILS website. This public-facing guide contains the detailed organizational and procedural information required under FOIA. Maintaining this information separately will allow RAILS staff to more easily update time-sensitive details, such as annual budget figures, staffing levels, and other required disclosures. This can be done on a regular basis without requiring formal policy revisions.

In addition to the structural changes, the revised policy includes updated language that more clearly affirms RAILS' authority to deny requests that are exempt from disclosure under applicable law (see paragraph 3). This clarification strengthens the policy's alignment with statutory provisions and reinforces RAILS' ability to appropriately manage FOIA requests.

The revised FOIA Policy has been reviewed by legal counsel and has been confirmed to comply with all applicable statutes.

A copy of the updated draft policy is included in your packet. We look forward to discussion and potential approval during the April board meeting.

RAILS Illinois Freedom of Information Act Policy

The Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 140/1, *et seq.* (FOIA) promotes transparency and accountability among public bodies by providing for public access to government records. It is the policy of Reaching Across Illinois Library Systems (RAILS) to acknowledge and comply with its obligations under FOIA. RAILS has designated the Executive Director and the RAILS Board FOIA Officer to serve as FOIA Officers and has developed and implemented administrative procedures to ensure compliance with FOIA. FOIA requests can be emailed to foia@railslibraries.org.

A request for RAILS records must be made in writing and should include the requester’s name, address and/or email address, and phone number. A request must specify whether the request is being made for commercial purposes and provide a clear description of the records being sought. If submitted by email, the request must be in the body of the email, rather than available by attachment or link.

Records may be inspected or copied. Inspection is available from 8:30 AM–5:00 PM at 125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527 under supervision of a RAILS employee. RAILS will respond to requests for copies of records within the statutory timeframes set forth in FOIA. While FOIA creates a presumption that records in the custody or possession of RAILS are open to inspection or copying, RAILS reserves the right to deny (in whole or in part) any request seeking records which are exempt from disclosure under Section 7 of FOIA.

RAILS charges fees for certain records requested in accordance with FOIA, which RAILS has determined to be reasonably calculated to reimburse its actual cost for reproducing and certifying public records and for the use of RAILS equipment to copy records:

Item(s)	Cost
Copies (black-and-white, letter/legal size)	\$0.15 per page
Copies (color/oversize)	Actual cost of reproduction
Certification	\$1.00 per document
Recording Media (disks, drives, etc.)	Actual cost to purchase medium
Statutory fees	Fee(s) otherwise provided by FOIA will be imposed at the rate(s) authorized

There will be no charge for the first 50 pages of letter or legal sized black-and-white copies, except for requests made for commercial purposes. When the services of an outside vendor are required to copy a record, the actual reasonable charges of the outside vendor will be charged as fees to the requester, notwithstanding the fees stated above.

More information regarding FOIA at RAILS can be found on the [RAILS Website](#).