
DATE: May 14, 2026
TO: RAILS Board of Directors
FROM: Joe Filapek, Associate Executive Director
SUBJECT: Strategic Plan Update

We will include a brief strategic plan update each month for the RAILS Board of Directors as we move through the process for the remainder of the year.

As part of our strategic planning process, we recently completed a major phase of information gathering and member engagement. Our member survey concluded on April 22, and we were pleased to receive nearly five hundred responses from across the RAILS membership. The strong participation provides valuable insight into member priorities, challenges, and opportunities that will help shape the development of our strategic plan refresh.

In addition to the survey, our strategic planning consultant, Cindy Fesemeyer, completed a series of interviews and focus groups designed to gather feedback from a broad cross-section of stakeholders. This work included interviews with leadership from 12 Illinois library partner organizations, as well as focus groups organized by library type and stakeholder category. Focus groups included representatives from small public libraries, large public libraries, academic libraries, school libraries, special libraries, and RAILS stakeholders, including former committee and board members.

The results of both the member survey and the interviews and focus groups will be discussed at the Strategic Planning Steering Committee meeting on May 18. Board members will have the opportunity to review the survey findings and a summary of the interviews and focus groups in advance of the Board Strategic Planning Workshop scheduled for June 30.

We look forward to discussing more at our meeting on Friday.