



RAILS Report – Consortia Committee

RAILS Turns 15!

July 1, 2026, marked the 15th anniversary of RAILS' formation through the merger of five predecessor systems (Alliance Library System, DuPage Library System, Metropolitan Library System, North Suburban Library System, and Prairie Area Library System). Thank you to our consortial partners for your collaboration and excellent service to our shared member libraries during our first 15 years. We'll be celebrating this milestone throughout the year and look forward to many more years of partnership!

Resource Sharing Committee Update

The committee met on June 8, 2026. The group discussed upcoming committee vacancies and emphasized the importance of recruiting members who will represent a variety of library types, geographic regions, LLSAPs, and Find More Illinois participants. The committee also reviewed the results of the community college library survey and had a broad discussion of the role community college libraries can play in supporting resource sharing and access to the unserved. The group shared ideas on expanding awareness of community college library services to RAILS members and the potential of a targeted event focused on community college collaborations. The next meeting is on September 14, 2026.

Universal Service Committee Update

At its June 5, 2026, meeting, the RAILS Universal Service Committee discussed the RAILS Universal Service Plan and agreed to do a more thorough review of the plan and its action items during FY2027 to consider any proposed modifications. The potential of submitting a legislative proposal to the Illinois Library Association's Public Policy Committee around the unserved was discussed, but it is uncertain whether a proposal could be created in time to meet the August deadline.

The committee also received an update from the May 28, 2026, Illinois State Library Advisory Committee (ISLAC) meeting, where the State Library shared plans to convene meetings in the fall focused on non-resident cards and the unserved. Although participation may be limited to system staff, State Library staff, and ISLAC committee members, the Universal Service Committee discussed the potential for it to provide background information and insights for those conversations. The next meeting of the Universal Service Committee is on September 4, 2026.

RAILS Board Member Updates

Six new board members will be sworn in at the July 24, 2026, RAILS Board meeting. Gwen Gregory, Northern Illinois University, was re-elected to fill the Academic Library seat. Jennifer Cottrill, Midlothian Public Library, was re-elected to fill the At-Large seat. The three Public Library Trustee seats will be filled by new Board members Victoria Ferguson, Prairie Creek Library; Victor Hinojosa, Waukegan Public Library; and Rebecca Hunt, DeKalb Public Library. The School Library seat will be filled by Joanna Marek, La Grange South School District 105.



Member Update on September 9

RAILS' next Member Update is on Wednesday, September 9. Registration is available at <https://librarylearning.org/event/2026-09-09/rails-member-update>, and the agenda will be posted once finalized.

Can't Shelve This Episode Clip Goes Viral

On May 26, 2026, a [video clip](#) from episode 2.10 of *Can't Shelve This* went viral on Instagram! In the reel, library paraprofessional LuAnn Grimm (Oakwood Middle School) tells the story of how her former student won a bet with their college roommates after he texted LuAnn to see if she would remember the book series he loved when he was a junior high student. The comments were overwhelmingly positive, full of heartwarming stories from people of all ages remembering and thanking their school librarians.

RAILS Receives Marketing Industry Award

RAILS received the AMA Chicago Palmer Marketing Award in the non-profit category on June 16th. This award celebrates mission-driven campaigns that use thoughtful, integrated marketing to advance important causes and strengthen communities. RAILS was recognized for our 2025 advocacy efforts in support of Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funding.

Web Accessibility Deadline Extension

On April 20th, the U.S. Department of Justice issued an Interim Final Rule extending the web accessibility compliance deadlines for all public entities by one year. The new deadlines are April 26, 2027 for libraries serving populations over 50,000 and April 26, 2028 for smaller entities/special districts. To help member libraries prepare for the compliance deadline, RAILS continues to offer CE events focused on the issue, updated resources on the [RAILS Digital Accessibility Pulse Page](#), and a [curated collection of recordings on RAILS Academy](#) (login required).

IRIS Statewide Databases Update

[Illinois Reliable Information Sources \(IRIS\)](#) was recently [announced to the public](#) by the Illinois Secretary of State and State Librarian Alexi Giannoulis, who stated "this investment will ensure every Illinois resident has access to educational, professional and personal enrichment resources while helping libraries stretch limited budgets and better serve their communities." Libraries that have not yet established access can do so by contacting the Illinois State Library, and Illinois residents without access to library service can use IRIS through the Secretary of State website.

Digital Library Protection Act Advocacy

Illinois House Bill 5236, the Digital Library Protection Act, was advanced to the Senate after a unanimous vote in the House. Monica Harris traveled to Springfield to speak at the hearing. Though the legislative session ended without a Senate vote on the bill, the coordinated advocacy campaign was an exemplary statewide collaboration and successfully raised substantial public attention to the issue. Both the Chicago Tribune and Fox 32 Chicago have highlighted these efforts.