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Provides leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing

Federal Legislative Updates

On June 25, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to consider [eliminating the E-Rate program](#), an essential source of broadband funding for libraries and schools. American Library Association (ALA) President Maria McCauley recently [wrote about the importance of retaining E-Rate](#) for American Libraries. She reports that nationally, “73% of public libraries and 96% of public schools rely on E-Rate discounts – totaling more than \$2 billion annually – for internet connectivity.” The American Library Association is encouraging supporters to share the importance of the program with Congress, since E-Rate is a congressionally mandated program. You can learn more at ALA’s [Show Up for E-Rate campaign page](#). The Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition continues to host a series of [webinars and events](#) on E-Rate if you’d like to learn more.

Federal book banning bills continue to circulate in the Senate, with the American Library Association calling special attention to [S. 4925](#). They describe the bill as “dangerously broad, withholding critical school funding for the mere mention of transgender people or nudity.” More can be found at the American Library Association’s [Show Up for Our Libraries](#) page.

Illinois Legislative Updates

There was a meeting of the Illinois Library Association’s (ILA) Public Policy Committee on July 14. I was away at the time of the meeting, but RAILS Board Member Emily Porter (who has been added to the committee for a three-year term this year) was in attendance. July 1 begins the new fiscal year for this committee, and Paul Mills, Director at the Fountaindale Public Library District, will serve as this year’s Chair for the PPC. In addition to Emily Porter, Amy Franco, Jeanne Hamilton, Carol E. Hogan-Downey, Scott Pointon, and Tim Prendergast also joined the committee.

The ILA Public Policy Committee is currently [accepting legislative proposals](#) to be considered by the committee for the 2027 legislative session. Proposals are due on Monday, August 3, and the committee will meet on Monday, August 3, to consider proposals for further action. The PPC will finalize its recommendations to the Executive Board at its August 25 meeting. The ILA Executive Board will then consider the PPC legislative agenda at its September 17 Board Meeting.

RAILS at the ALA Annual Conference

We were excited to be able to connect with some RAILS members at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago on June 26–29. This is always a great opportunity to share with colleagues from across the country, and we heard many compliments about the work of the RAILS staff, as well as more about the most pressing concerns of libraries of all types.

At ALA eBook Friday, RAILS E-Content Specialist Anna Behm presented on the transition of the eRead program to the Palace Project when Baker & Taylor unexpectedly ceased operations last year. I also had the opportunity to present on Illinois’ efforts towards eBook legislation. In addition to the conference itself, I was able to attend a full-day workshop on IMLS grants dedicated to disaster planning and resiliency, and I’m hoping that RAILS can support future efforts towards

better-prepared Illinois libraries in the years to come. I was also fortunate to be able to join then-ILA President Carolyn Ciesla and ILA President-Elect Rene Leyva on a tour of the Obama Presidential Center with the current ALA and PLA Executive Boards. Special thanks to Chicago Public Library Commissioner Chris Brown for the invitation to participate in this unique opportunity to see the Center and the spectacular Chicago Public Library Branch within it.



RAILS staff spent time connecting with our members, negotiating with vendors, and learning more about the most pressing issues facing libraries today. Thanks to the RAILS Board for their support that allows for this important learning and connection.

RAILS models best practices in equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy and Grievance Procedure

RAILS has recently updated a new draft ADA Policy and Grievance Procedure. On June 24, the RAILS Policy Committee voted to recommend the new policy for approval to the full RAILS Board at the July meeting. I'm looking forward to discussing this with you further at the July meeting.

RAILS assists member libraries in preparing for the future

Strategic Planning Workshops with RAILS Board and Executive Team

Thank you to the RAILS Board (June 30) and the RAILS Executive Team (June 23) for your work during two long-form workshops surrounding the next version of the RAILS Strategic Plan in June. In both meetings, the discussion was very thoughtful and innovative, and I am confident that it will help to result in a strong draft plan and updated vision statement to come before the Board. We will continue to discuss next steps for the strategic planning process at our July meeting.

Illinois State Library Press Conference at Cicero Public Library

On June 23, I was honored to attend an event at the Cicero Public Library where Secretary of State and State Librarian Alexi Giannoulias announced \$27 million in grants to libraries across Illinois through per capita, equalization aid, infrastructure improvements, and security upgrades. Also in attendance (L-R) are Illinois State Library Director Greg McCormick, Chicago Public Library Commissioner Chris Brown, Representative Lisa Hernandez, Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, Cicero Public Library Director Sandra Tomschin, Springfield's Lincoln Library Director Gwen Harrison, Fossil Ridge Public Library District's Director Rene Leyva, AISLE Executive Secretary Carolyn Kinsley, and Aurora Public Library Director Michaela Haberkern. The full press release from the Secretary of State's Office can be found [here](#).



Leads alongside member libraries to develop and strengthen Illinois library community

Illinois State Library Advisory Committee (ISLAC) Meeting on July 23

The next ISLAC meeting is scheduled in Springfield on Thursday, July 23. I hope to be able to share more with you at our meeting next week.

E-Book Advocacy Update

RAILS staff and many other Illinois participants participated in the ALA eBook Interest Group's [eBook Friday event](#), which reviewed the state of the digital library market. The event was also covered by publication [Words & Money](#) if you would like to learn more.

RAILS will participate in a webinar for the Michigan Library Association on efforts related to eBook Advocacy in August. In addition, a panel that was submitted to the Michigan Library Association's Annual Conference on eBook advocacy has been accepted. The program will also include a look at Minnesota's efforts.

Lyrasis Board Orientation Meeting on July 9

I had the opportunity to attend the Lyrasis Board Orientation meeting on July 9, my first meeting after my recent appointment to the Board of Directors. In addition to serving on the Board, I have accepted a committee appointment on their Budget and Finance Committee. The next meeting will be September 28-29 in Chicago.

Looking Ahead to August

- **August Service of the Month topics – LLSAP Services and Catalog Support with Anne Slaughter**
- **Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act Report from FY2026**
- **RAILS Six-month Investment Portfolio Review**
- **Annual review of the Fiscal Accountability Policy**



This Month at RAILS – July 2026

THE TOP THREE

In response to board member feedback, we provide brief talking points each month to help you spread the word about specific RAILS programs/services. Here are this month's top three:

It's RAILS 15th Birthday!

RAILS was officially formed on July 1, 2011 as part of a statewide initiative combining five predecessor systems into a multitype regional library system across 27,000 square miles serving 7.9 million people. That's 15 years of bringing libraries together, supporting resource sharing, and helping communities thrive.

"Illinois has a well-deserved reputation as a leader in library resource sharing. Our success is built on the strong, enduring partnerships between the Illinois State Library, regional library systems, and libraries of every type across the state. We are very proud of this milestone and grateful to the members, partners, and staff who have made it possible." – RAILS Executive Director, Monica Harris

There will be many opportunities to celebrate with RAILS throughout the year as we acknowledge 15 years of collaboration, innovation, and service to libraries.

Changes in Delivery

Effective June 15, adjustments were made to the reporting structure at the Bolingbrook Delivery Service Center to better balance supervisory responsibilities across the Delivery Services management team. As part of this change, Bob Cummings assumed supervisory responsibility for the Bolingbrook sorting staff while continuing to oversee the Rockford delivery team, helping to create a more equitable distribution of management responsibilities and support operational efficiency. Bob will be alternating days between these two locations going forward.

eRead Illinois

The eRead Illinois renewal period concluded at the end of June. As of June 3, 308 public, academic, and specialized libraries have renewed their participation. All 551 school library members will be automatically renewed for one year at no cost while The Palace Project team continues development and testing of web-based access and school library authentication. Fourteen libraries have not renewed their participation in eRead Illinois for FY27.



Provides leadership in ensuring sustainable, equitable resource sharing

Enhance sharing of knowledge and best practices

RAILS Attends 2026 AMA Chicago Palmer Marketing Awards

RAILS Executive Director Monica Harris, Associate Executive Director Joe Filapek, and Digital Marketing & Communications Specialist Ola Gronski attended the 2026 American Marketing Association (AMA) Chicago Palmer Marketing Awards at the House of Blues on June 16 in Chicago. Together, they accepted the AMA Chicago Palmer Marketing Award in the not-for-profit category for RAILS's IMLS Advocacy efforts. The full list of winners are listed on the [AMA Chicago website](#).



Can't Shelve This Clip Continues to Go Viral

On June 8, [Upworthy posted an article](#) about RAILS's [viral Can't Shelve This clip](#). On June 10, Roland Smith, the author mentioned in the clip, [shared the article on his Facebook page](#). On June 30, Senator Cory Booker shared the video on his [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [TikTok](#), and [Twitter](#) accounts. As of this writing, the clip has 1.4 million views and 128K likes across RAILS's social media accounts.

Can't Shelve This Season Two Finale

In "Last Times at Normal U-High," RAILS Data Analyst Janette Derucki and IHLS Director of Membership & Outreach Leah Gregory visit University High School in Normal, Illinois for a behind-the-scenes look at a standout school library and the people who bring it to life: librarian Amy Brokaw and students Suhm and Anuraag. The episode is available on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [YouTube](#), and more.

2011 Rewind Photo Series

To celebrate RAILS's 15th anniversary, RAILS Digital Marketing & Communications Specialist Ola Gronski collected submissions from staff with photos and blurbs about what they were doing in 2011—the year RAILS was formed. The post was shared on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#), encouraging followers to share what they were up to as well.

Conferences & Webinars: Jessica Silva

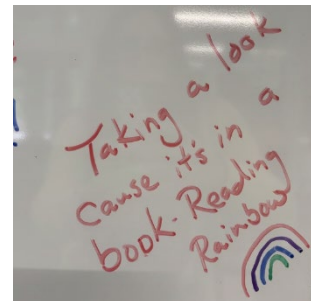
- On June 9, 2026, Jessica hosted RAILS Online Roundtable: Library Demographics edition with RAILS data intern, Yolanda Everson. There were 40 participants from all over RAILS territory, and they had great feedback and questions for Yolanda and the library demographics project.
- Jessica presented virtually on June 25, 2026, for Amy Brokaw's TCH 416 class of students in library school. 12 students attended, and Jessica shared RAILS resources, the RAILS job board, and information about Illinois librarianship and the My Library Is... grant.
- Jessica attended the ALA annual conference June 26-29 and was able to work at the RAILS booth and connect with many members.

Networking Groups: Jessica Silva

- Jessica attended LIRE's networking group meeting virtually on Friday, June 12.

Site Visits

- Jessica attended LIRE's networking group meeting virtually on Friday, June 12.
- Jessica visited North Central College on June 3, 2026, with Ola Gronski and was able to meet with all North Central College staff (about six staff members), tour the library, and share RAILS resources.
- Jessica visited College of Lake County on June 10, 2026, with Ola Gronski and met with the College of Lake County library director, toured the library, and shared RAILS resources.
- Jessica visited Malcolm X College library on June 16, 2026, and was able to meet with three library staff, tour the library, and share RAILS resources with library staff.



Other

- Ongoing planning of the Illinois School Library Workers Symposium with the committee.
- Ongoing ILA conference committee work.
- Jessica attended the Lake Villa Public Library Great Lawn outdoor area ribbon cutting on Sunday, June 7, 2026.



Leverage economies of scale to provide greater purchasing power

RAILS members can find information, trial access, and pricing on all deals and discounts by logging into the [RAILS Deals & Discounts page](#).

In June, the Deals & Discounts team finalized EBSCO orders and renewals for public and school library resources to supplement the Illinois State Library statewide database package, the largest deal managed by RAILS. Planning and preparation start over six months in advance, and the team does hundreds of reach-outs to member libraries from March to May. This year, 870 subscriptions were processed with 156 public and school libraries participating, at just over \$900,000 in orders, a 3% increase over last year.

The Deals & Discounts team attended the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference from June 26 to June 29. The team held meetings with numerous partner vendors and visited more than 25 additional existing and potential partners at the conference. Goals included learning about new offers and features, discussing existing and future partnerships, and sharing information about participation in the RAILS Virtual Vendor Fair, which will be held in January/February 2026. In addition, the Deals team explored potential new print material vendor partners to continue to respond to needs expressed by member libraries.

The first RAILS Virtual Vendor Fair will be held on January 28, 2027. The event will feature brief presentations from RAILS Deals & Discounts partner vendors, as well as information sharing about product and service offerings and exclusive discounts. An interest survey was sent to partner vendors in late June, and so far 14 have agreed to participate. On Friday, February 5, RAILS Deals & Discounts will partner with the LACONI Technical Services Section for a follow up event, offering an Acquisitions Round-Up focused on print material and AV vendors.

Presentations, Webinars, and Conferences, Networking Groups

On June 16 and July 8, Monica Harris, Leila Heath, and Anna Behm attended the ILA PPC eBook subcommittee meetings to continue discussions and action plans around supporting HB 5623: The Digital Library Protection Act. The bill remains under legal review in the Senate, and the group discussed actions to help move the bill forward in the fall.

In support of the ILA eBook legislative efforts, the RAILS Data and E-Content teams continued work on the E-Content Annual Expenditure Survey, which was sent to all Illinois public libraries on May 1. Efforts in June focused on collecting missing data and verifying data. The team will now focus its efforts on the analysis and narrative.

National E-book Law and Policy meeting, June 3, Leila Heath, Anna Behm, Monica Harris

The group, led by Kyle Courtney, comprises librarians from Illinois and across the country who are interested in legislative solutions to fair e-book pricing.

ConsortiaManager, Data Management & Accessibility

On June 16, Leila Heath and Jenny Taylor, Associate Director of E-Resources at CARLI, met to discuss issues and procedures pertaining to consortial group purchasing.

The RAILS VPAT Team met on June 5. The committee includes RAILS staff, staff from member libraries, and staff from SWAN, who maintain and update the RAILS VPAT repository web site, <https://railslibraries.org/econtent/vpat>. The site houses Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) and Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) documents to assist member libraries with their evaluation of research databases and other digital products provided through third-party vendors. The VPAT Team is currently working on a review and updating project to ensure that every VPAT document posted was updated within the last year. Newer documents more accurately reflect the current accessibility status of digital products. So far, 246 of the 305 VPATs have been updated since early 2026. The team will continue to work with vendors to obtain the newest documents leading up to the April 2027 compliance deadline for larger libraries to meet accessibility standards.

On June 17, Maggie Thomann attended a presentation titled *Designing Accessible Slide Decks* from Niche Academy. Presenter Melissa Wong shared how to use layout and reading order to create a slide deck that is compatible with screen readers.

Online High School Programs

RAILS offers two online high school programs for libraries: Career Online High School (implemented Spring 2016) and Gale Excel (implemented Spring 2024). Stats for both programs are listed below:

Career Online High School (COHS) Stats as of July 1, 2026 (Program implemented Spring 2016)

Scholarships Awarded	Total Graduates	Current Number of Students in the Program	RAILS Graduation Rate/National Rate
533	306	44	63%/53%

Gale Excel Stats as of July 1, 2026 (Program implemented Spring 2024)

Scholarships Awarded	Total Graduates	Current Number of Students in the Program	RAILS Graduation Rate/National Rate
99	49	47	93%/53%

Gates Marquez met with Gale Excel staff during the ALA Annual Conference in June to discuss the progress of online high school programs administered through participating RAILS public libraries and plans for continued collaboration in the future.

Gates Marquez, Leila Heath, and Joe Filapek attended Rockford Public Library's Adult Online High School (AOHS) graduation at the beautiful Coronado Theatre on Wednesday, June 10. Over 80 graduates walked the stage in decorated caps and gowns to the cheers of over 600 family members, friends, and community members. The graduation was a huge celebration of achievement for the entire community, with commencement speakers noting how much the AOHS program has grown in Rockford and how it continues to bring in more scholarship funders and increase capacity for even more students going forward. The event was a wonderful demonstration of how AOHS is creating positive ripple effects in the community by empowering students and their families to achieve their educational and life goals with the support of their local public library.

At the RAILS Board meeting on June 18, Gates Marquez gave a presentation about Explore More Illinois as the service of the month. Gates provided an overview of the program and highlighted the growth in unique user logins and pass reservations in 2025 and illustrated how those trends continue in 2026. They also noted upcoming priorities for Explore More Illinois, including the addition of IHLS libraries and attractions, discovery solutions for the growing attraction list, and negotiating increased access to high-demand attractions.

On June 22, Leila Heath and Gates Marquez followed up with Cabell King, Special Projects Administrator for the State of Illinois and Illinois Literacy Foundation Manager, about the state's upcoming Alternative Methods of Credentialing (AMOC) pilot with a group of select public libraries. The pilot libraries have been selected, and those agreements are being finalized with the state. Formal announcement of the pilot program and orientations with the libraries are anticipated before the end of the year. Leila and Gates will continue coordinating with Cabbel and communicating with libraries to support this effort as more details are finalized.

Seek greater efficiencies, innovations, and enhancements to delivery services

Delivery

Effective June 15, adjustments were made to the reporting structure at the Bolingbrook Delivery Service Center to better balance supervisory responsibilities across the Delivery Services management team. As part of this change, Bob Cummings assumed supervisory responsibility for the Bolingbrook sorting staff while continuing to oversee the Rockford delivery team, helping to create a more equitable distribution of management responsibilities and support operational efficiency. Bob will be alternating days with these two locations going forward.

Work collaboratively to identify and support shared catalog solutions and expand resource

Find More Illinois Update

Eric Bain and Barb Miller participated in the SHAREit user group meeting via Zoom on June 2.

Barb Miller attended the ALA conference in Chicago from June 26 to June 29.

Barb, Leila Heath, Joe Filapek, and Monica Harris met with the Soutron Executive team. Program sessions attended included ethical use of AI, Imposter Syndrome, and Academic and School Library Partnerships.



Libraries Participating in Find More Illinois as of July 2026

Academic	Public	School	Special	Total
11	71	12	1	95

Find More Illinois total transactions (loans and borrows)

Time Period	Number of transactions
June 2026	1,463
Fiscal Year to Date	17,240

Find More Illinois catalog

Time Period	Number of items in shared catalog
June 2026	8,265,925*

**A-G is working to resolve a MARC record uploading issue that has impacted the items in the shared collection at the time of this report.*

eRead Illinois & Inkie.org Update

Leila Heath and Anna Behm met regularly with the team from Palace Project to discuss progress with platform/app development, onboarding individual instances of K-12 libraries, and eRead Illinois collection development on the Palace Project.



The eRead Illinois renewal period concluded at the end of June. As of June 3, 308 public, academic, and specialized libraries have renewed their participation. All 551 school library members will be automatically renewed for one year at no cost while The Palace Project team continues development and testing of web-based access and school library authentication. Fourteen libraries have not renewed their participation in eRead Illinois for FY27.



Anna Behm attended the American Library Association's annual conference in Chicago from June 26-28. Anna, Leila Heath, Gates Marquez, and Monica Harris attended E-Book Friday and heard engaging presentations from the Urban Libraries Council, the Book Ops team, Readers First, and various states that are pursuing e-book legislation. Monica presented to the group on Illinois e-book legislation efforts in Illinois and Anna presented on the transition of the eRead program from Boundless to the Palace platform.

Anna spent some time at ALA staffing the RAILS booth and enjoyed chatting with the library professions who stopped by. Anna, Leila Heath, Monica Harris, and Joe Filapek met with Michael Atwood from Lyris to discuss the status of the eRead Illinois platform transition and future development. Anna and Leila also participated in a Palace Project User Group meeting. Anna and Leila met with the team from Biblioboard to check in on statewide initiatives and plans. They also met briefly with representatives from CloudLibrary, Hoopla, Ingram, and Library One to check in and hear about e-content offerings and platforms.

eRead Illinois Checkouts

Time Period	E-Books	Audiobooks	Total
June 2026	7,873	14,831	22,260
Fiscal Year to Date	140,415	162,387	302,802
Since the Palace Project Migration	59,670	80,140	139,810

Inkie.org and the Inkie.org Library

Inkie.org Library Views

Time Period	Number of Views
June 2026	558
Fiscal Year to Date	17,733*

**Discrepancy in inkie.org library stats due to backend platform changes - currently being examined in order to verify/resolve.*

Explore More Illinois Update

In June 2026, Explore More Illinois welcomed the Centennial Aquatic Center (Park Ridge) and Go Ape Zipline and Adventure Park (Western Springs).

Gates Marquez, Maggie Thomann, Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, and Leila Heath met with Quipu, EMI's platform software vendor, during the ALA Annual Conference to discuss progress with accessibility updates and the continued development of Quipu's ePASS software.



Most Popular Attractions – Downstate & Suburban Cardholders in June 2026

Attraction	Location	Reservations Made
The Morton Arboretum	Lisle	579
Cantigny	Wheaton	241
Griffin Museum of Science and Industry	Chicago	139
Winnetka Park District Swimming Beaches	Winnetka	115
Chicago Botanic Garden	Glencoe	111

Most Popular Attractions – Chicago Cardholders in June 2026

Attraction	Location	Reservations Made
Art Institute of Chicago	Chicago	600
Field Museum	Chicago	538
Brookfield Zoo Chicago	Brookfield	500
Griffin Museum of Science and Industry	Chicago	360
The Morton Arboretum	Lisle	233
Chicago Children's Museum	Chicago	233

Libraries Enrolled in Explore More Illinois as of July 1, 2026

System	Publics	Community Colleges	Total
RAILS	351	4	355
IHLS	114	1	115
CPL	1	n/a	1
Totals	466	5	471

Attractions in Explore More Illinois as of June 1, 2026

Attractions	75
Total Attractions in 2025	83

Reservations Made in Explore More Illinois in June 2026

Organization	June 2026
RAILS/IHLS	2,109
CPL	3,376
Total	5,485

Assist member libraries in preparing for the future

RAILS Staff Attend ALA Conference

21 RAILS Staff members attended the 2026 American Library Association Conference in Chicago, IL for four days of education, staffing the RAILS booth, meetings with partners, presentations, and networking with the library community.



Future-focused professional development and member engagement efforts

RAILS Academy



Top 5 Most-Viewed Tutorials — June 2026

Tutorial	Views	% of Total
Basic Spanish for Library Staff	618	9.4%
How to Handle Angry Customers	431	6.5%
Supervisors: Communication Skills	275	4.2%
Supervisors: Delegating	268	4.1%
NoveList for Youth Services	253	3.8%

Continuing Education Events

Recent CE Events

- **“Creating a Learning Culture Around Technology”** webinar, June 15
- **“Legal Research for Beginners”** webinar, July 1
- **“Trustee Training: Library Advocacy”** webinar, July 10
- **“Dealing with Difficult Board Members”** webinar, July 15

Upcoming CE Events

- **“Cataloging Streaming Videos, Blu-rays and DVDs with RDA and MARC21”**, webinar series, August 20 & 27
This two-part webinar covers how to catalog video resources using RDA rules and OLAC best-practice recommendations. Presented in the context of the original RDA Toolkit, it is not intended as training for the new “official” RDA Toolkit, though many of the practices remain applicable and key differences will be highlighted.
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- **“Library Building Basics & Facility Management Full-Day Workshop”**, Orland Park Public Library, July 21
This full-day workshop will equip library staff with the practical knowledge to understand, maintain, and plan for their facilities with confidence. Participants will explore how buildings and their systems work, maintenance and capital improvement planning, technology infrastructure, sustainability and efficiency, and emergency preparedness.
- **“Managing Digital Collections”**, webinar, July 28
At most public libraries, digital collections grow more popular every year, but while they offer many opportunities, they are also increasingly complicated and expensive to manage. This session will review best practices for digital collection development, as well as how to implement them.

- **“Sustainable Libraries”, webinar, July 29**
Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI) Coordinator Rebecca T. Miller will explore why sustainable thinking matters, what being a sustainable library looks like, and what “resilience” means in this context. She’ll discuss how libraries can work to identify potential hazards and threats to their communities as well as how an active sustainability mindset can support adaptation, mitigation, and recovery.
- **“Directors University Core,” Bloomington, IL, August 11 – 13**
DU is a collaboration between IHLS, ILA, ISL, and RAILS. It provides new public library directors with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the skills they need to better serve their communities. Training topics include library policies; human resources; legal issues; building maintenance; budgeting and finance; board relationships; state grant programs; and customer service.
- **“From Invisible Labor to Line Items: Budgeting for the Library Work That’s Actually Happening”, webinar, August 18**
Library staff de-escalate crises, navigate trauma, and perform skilled emotional labor every day, none of which shows up in budgets or job descriptions. This session draws from research on vocational awe, emotional labor, and service valuation to give library leaders concrete tools to make that invisible work visible. Participants will learn why circulation-based metrics inadvertently justify staff cuts, how voluntary tasks quietly become unpaid job expectations, and how to build new tracking categories that strengthen budget requests and job classifications. This isn't a wellness talk; it's a practical session for directors, managers, and HR staff who write board reports and advocate for staff positions.
- **Orland Park Public Library, July 21**
This full-day workshop will equip library staff with the practical knowledge to understand, maintain, and plan for their facilities with confidence. Participants will explore how buildings and their systems work, maintenance and capital improvement planning, technology infrastructure, sustainability and efficiency, and emergency preparedness.
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Leads alongside member libraries to develop and strengthen Illinois library community

Strengthen collaborative relationships with partner library organizations

July Partnership Meeting

RAILS has monthly meetings with representatives from the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE), Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS), Illinois Library Association (ILA), and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to discuss ways we can work collaboratively to support school libraries.

July meeting topics included:

- School staffing challenges
- Illinois school cell phone ban and potential impacts for school libraries
- Updates from the Illinois School Library Standards Toolkit Working Group
- Discussion of ISBE's recently released *Statewide Guidance on Artificial Intelligence in Schools*

Joe Filapek attended *The Library Insights Summit* on Friday, June 26, in Chicago. This was a one-day conference held in conjunction with the American Library Association Annual Conference that brought together librarians, publishers, authors, and other book industry leaders to explore issues affecting the discovery, distribution, and accessibility of library content. The program included community-specific breakout sessions and cross-sector discussions focused on strengthening partnerships, addressing emerging challenges such as AI, and shaping the future of library collections and reader access.

RAILS Staff & Service Center News

RAILS IT Update June 2026

- The IT team has started installing a Hearing Loop device in the Dierdre Brennan Meeting Room.
- Four desktop computers were replaced, finishing the RAILS computer refresh.
- A second display was set up in Burr Ridge for meeting room event information at the entrance. This reused television and stand were retired from the Dierdre Brennan Meeting Room.

Data Update June 2026

Data Analysis Internship 2026 and Project Launch

Yolanda Everson, Data Analysis Intern, concluded her six-month internship on June 30th. Yolanda created and published the [Anatomy of a Public Library dashboard](#), which combines core IPLAR data with demographic and language data from the American Community Survey for each public library service area. The Library Profiles shows core library data side-by-side with the community demographics highlight key aspects of a library's service area. The county comparison tool and peer library lists allow library staff to explore the data and identify libraries with data similar to their own. The Data Team will continue developing the dashboard in the future guided by Yolanda's project vision. We are grateful for the time Yolanda spent working for RAILS and the support she gave to the staff trivia team.

JUNE 2026

RAILS
DIGITAL MARKETING
BOARD REPORT



FOLLOWERS

total subscribers

Facebook +50

3,354

Instagram +1,542

4,891

LinkedIn +57

2,556

REACH

accounts shown our content

Facebook -46,127

24,545

Instagram +3,957

344,226

LinkedIn +243

3,497

VIEWS

times our content was seen

Facebook -52,473

72,211

Instagram -7,168

530,078

LinkedIn +234

7,297

ENGAGEMENT

reactions, comments, and shares

Facebook -2,602

2,821

Instagram +11,201

67,689

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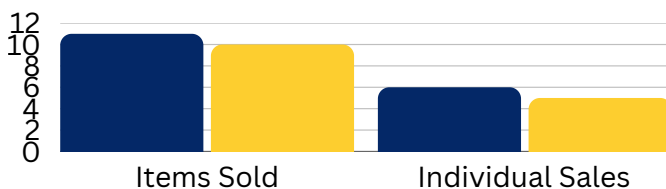
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