



RAILS Report – Resource Sharing Committee

RAILS Strategic Planning

RAILS' strategic planning consultant recently provided an initial draft of objectives aligned with the organization's four strategic goals. Following some refinement by RAILS staff, these draft objectives were discussed with the Strategic Plan Steering Committee on September 9. The draft strategic plan will next be shared with RAILS members and staff in early October for broader feedback through digital crowdsourcing on Padlet. RAILS remains on track to present a draft of the completed strategic plan to the RAILS Board at its November meeting.

RAILS Member Update

The most recent RAILS Member Update was held on September 9. A recording of the event can be viewed from the RAILS YouTube channel. The event featured three brief presentations highlighting key issues and developments affecting Illinois libraries. Joseph Wender of the Schools, Hospitals, & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition will provide an update on E-Rate and its importance to libraries. Erin Monforti of Ancel Glink will review new Illinois laws impacting libraries, while RAILS staff Leila Heath and Barb Miller will provide an update on Find More Illinois and its ongoing development.

Upcoming Annual Conferences

The 2026 Illinois Library Association (ILA) Annual Conference will be held October 6–8 at the Peoria Civic Center in Peoria, with this year's theme, *"Fired Up & Ready to Go: For All Illinois Libraries!"* The conference will bring together library professionals from across Illinois for educational sessions, networking, and opportunities to share ideas and best practices. The 2026 AISLE Conference will be held November 12–14 at the Westin Chicago Lombard in Lombard, with the theme *"Stronger Together."* The AISLE conference will offer professional learning and featured speakers including author Candace Fleming and book expert Jonathan Hunt. We look forward to seeing members at the RAILS booth during both state conferences.

Find More Illinois Update

RAILS is excited to announce the rebranding of the Find More Illinois program. The new brand expresses the idea of connections between libraries. Vibrant colors and a series of rings represent the participating libraries and exemplify the program's emphasis on collaboration and resource sharing across Illinois. Participating libraries will receive a package of rebranded printed materials. Watch for more downloadable and printable promotional resources on the Find More Illinois website.





Federal Legislative Updates

The FCC has officially published its new proposals for E-Rate in the Federal Register, opening the public comment period. These proposals include the possible elimination of this crucial program. ALA is encouraging libraries to use their template to submit formal comments by Tuesday, October 13, to remind the agency how heavily our communities rely on E-Rate discounts. To help keep our membership informed and engaged, we are hosting SHLB Executive Director Joseph Wender at our RAILS Member Update on September 9.

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

The ILA Public Policy Committee finalized its recommendations to the Executive Board regarding its legislative priorities during its August 24 meeting. The ILA Executive Board will then consider the PPC legislative agenda at its September 17 Board Meeting. Paul Mills, Chair of the ILA PPC Committee, will also join us at our November 12 RAILS Member Update to share the updated legislative priorities with the RAILS membership.

Two bills directly impacting Illinois libraries were signed into law by Governor JB Pritzker this month:

Public Act 104-0683: Amends the Jury Act and Jury Commission Act to require employers with more than 25 employees to compensate staff at their regular rate of pay during jury service.

Public Act 104-0808: Requires public institutions, including libraries, to prominently display contact information for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline in patron-accessible spaces

Both statutory requirements take effect on January 1, 2027. To assist member libraries with compliance and operational readiness, RAILS partnered with legal counsel at Ancel Glink to develop comprehensive guidance memos, which have been distributed via the RAILS Directors listserv. Erin Monforti of Ancel Glink joined us for our September 9 Member Update to share these changes with the RAILS membership. As the Illinois Library Association (ILA) Public Policy Committee continues to track post-session legislative developments, RAILS will maintain a proactive approach by issuing additional legal guidance as needed.

CCDNN Update

This summer, the Cook County Digital Navigator Network planning team is putting together a roadmap for the next year. So far, the accomplishments of the team include:

- Formed a 15-member Guiding Team of enthusiastic, engaged peer leaders
- Designed and completed a \$62,000 Mini-Pilot grant program, supporting 23 under-resourced libraries
- Held 4 listening sessions with 70 library workers from 49 libraries



- Captured and synthesized a treasure trove of information, feedback, and ideas from our libraries
- Confirmed that we are breaking ground on critical, industry-wide challenges facing public libraries

This is only after one year of working together. The next steps include continuing to work toward the vision of strengthening the digital equity ecosystem by supporting the capacity of library professionals and library institutions to meet their communities' digital navigation needs. Activities will include:

- Finalize program element selection & resource allocation decisions
- Priority level, appropriate scale, budget & funding, timeline, personnel solutions
- Broaden communications
- Establish Countywide interactive communication channel
- Share progress, stories, and Mini-Pilot accomplishments
- Work with UIUC iSchool on research that will inform careful planning for direct funding programs
- Engage with partner(s) to develop training curriculum

Illinois State Library Advisory Committee (ISLAC) Meeting

The ISLAC meeting originally scheduled for July 23 was cancelled. The next meeting is scheduled for September 24. Discussion at that meeting will include a focus on OCLC as well as an overview of Find More Illinois to the committee. The Illinois State Library has also asked for discussion on what issues that RAILS would like to see ISLAC or the State Library address on behalf of libraries.

E-Book Advocacy Update

At the August 19 meeting of the Illinois Library Association Public Policy Committee eBook Subcommittee, RAILS staff members Janette Derucki and Anna Behm presented preliminary findings from our comprehensive Illinois eBook Data Study. This research directly supports our ongoing advocacy surrounding HB 5236 by capturing eContent spending across the state. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of Janette, Anna, and Ola Gronski, the study achieved a 93.6% response rate, representing data from 601 of Illinois' 642 public libraries. The findings—which detail total, average, and median eContent expenditures alongside collection allocation percentages—will be published in the coming months via targeted infographics developed by the RAILS Communications team.

EBSCO: Make the Most of Your Resources Webinars

To support member libraries in making the most of their EBSCO resources, the Deals team is partnering with EBSCO to host webinars for public and K-12 libraries on August 20 and September 23. Participants will learn about updates to the EBSCO user interface, using EBSCOadmin and Experience Manager customization tools to manage their accounts, and strategies for promoting their EBSCO resources to their patrons. These sessions will help libraries get the most value from the resources they subscribed to as part of the RAILS EBSCO Supplemental Resources group purchase.



E-Content Programs

RAILS Director of Library Resources and Programs Leila Heath and RAILS E-Content Specialist Anna Behm continue to meet regularly with the team from Palace Project to discuss progress with onboarding libraries and transferring the eRead Illinois collection to the Palace Project. The Palace Project team transferred all of the perpetual and 26-checkout titles in libraries' individual Unbound collections to the Palace Project in July. The team is working on transferring libraries' time metered titles. The team has also made great progress onboarding eRead Illinois K-12 libraries to the Palace Project platform. As of August 8, a quarter of the 550+ school libraries are completely onboarded to The Palace Project, over half have provided their onboarding information, and nearly all have been contacted by The Palace Project team.

CE Event Grant Applications Open

Applications are open for RAILS CE Event Grants of up to \$2000. Networking groups, consortia, and individual libraries are encouraged to apply, as long as the event is open and accessible to all RAILS members. You don't need to be a director or manager to apply; library staff at all levels are welcome to submit a proposal. Special consideration will be given to applications that focus on innovative topics relevant to libraries or introduce new and emerging approaches to library services. The deadline to apply is Monday, October 5.

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.