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DATE: November 14, 2026

TO: RAILS Board of Directors

FROM: Monica Harris, Executive Director

SUBJECT: 8.5 Advocacy Committee Charge Revision

At the October 15 RAILS Board Advocacy committee meeting, the group discussed the potential development of a formalized RAILS Advocacy framework. This framework would be used to explore consistent processes for RAILS around advocacy practices like board statements, responding to public calls for comment, and other forms of advocacy that might involve the RAILS Board or Executive Director.

The Advocacy committee determined that a logical next step might involve creating a working group that could work with the RAILS staff on a potential framework before having it considered by the RAILS Advocacy Committee and ultimately the RAILS Board.

In your packet you will see draft update of the charge of the Advocacy committee that would update the charge to allow for the formation of a Working Group. The language in this updated charge reflects existing language around the formation of working groups in the Consortia and Resource Sharing committees.

I would like to ask the Board to consider approving this change to the charge at our November meeting so that the working group, as identified by the Advocacy committee, can move forward. I look forward to further discussion at the meeting.

RAILS Advocacy Committee

Membership

Committee members:

- A minimum of 2 RAILS Board members
- At least one staff member from a RAILS academic library (may or may not be RAILS Board member)
- At least one staff member from a RAILS public library (may or may not be RAILS Board member)
- At least one staff member from a RAILS school library (may or may not be RAILS Board member)
- At least one staff member from a RAILS special library (may or may not be RAILS Board member)
- At least two public library trustees (may or may not be RAILS Board members)
- RAILS Executive Director (ex officio)
- RAILS Associate Executive Director (ex officio)
- RAILS Director of Marketing & Communications (ex officio)

Quorum and Voting

A quorum consists of the majority of voting members.

Charge

The purpose of the RAILS Board Advocacy committee is to:

> Identify issues and challenges affecting all types of libraries (academic, public, school, and specialized); work with partners to initiate local, regional, and/or statewide advocacy efforts to help resolve these issues/challenges; and encourage library staff and trustees to participate in and/or support these advocacy efforts as appropriate.

Such issues/challenges may include:

- Demonstrating the value and importance of all types of libraries
- Supporting and promoting funding initiatives for all types of libraries
- Promoting collaboration between different types of libraries to advance library-related initiatives
- Working with the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE) to support and advocate for school libraries, including enforcing the requirement for a certified school librarian in every school
- Working with the Illinois Association of College and Research Libraries (IACRL) to advocate for and support academic libraries
- Working with the Special Libraries Association, Illinois chapter (SLA-IL) to advocate for and support special libraries
- Supporting and advocating for traditional library values (resource sharing, net neutrality, intellectual freedom, etc.)

- Developing messaging, talking points, and other resources library staff from all types of libraries and public library trustees can use when speaking about library issues and challenges to funders, supporters, legislators, and other stakeholders
- Supporting and promoting the RAILS My Library Is… campaign and other RAILS programs/activities

The committee will work collaboratively with the ILA Public Policy Committee and Advocacy Committee, and may attend meetings or act in a liaison role for RAILS to these committees. Committee members will report back on important issues identified at these meetings that the advocacy committee might address.

Committee members will attend advocacy events offered by RAILS, ILA, ALA, and others as appropriate.

Committee members will work with AISLE, IACRL, SLA-Illinois, and other statewide partners to represent and promote the value of all types of libraries. Committee members representing the four library types will provide advice and direction on particular issues/challenges for their library type that the committee might address.

Committee members will work to educate trustees and staff at RAILS member libraries about important issues and encourage them to take action on these issues as appropriate.

Working Groups

After the Advocacy Committee determines the need for a working group, the committee shall develop and approve a charge for the working group that includes guidelines for membership and the time period. Working group membership need not be limited to Advocacy Committee members.

The Advocacy Committee chairperson will appoint working group members and designate the group's chairperson. Members serve for the entire period of the working group.