



YOUR VOTE. YOUR VOICE.

2025 RAILS BOARD ELECTION GUIDE



Every year, RAILS holds elections for its 15-seat board of directors. The members of the RAILS Board work together to shape the future of the library system and the services we provide to our members. All library types are represented on the board, with each term lasting three years. Board members may serve a maximum of six consecutive years, then wait an additional two years before running to re-join the board.



OPEN SEATS

This year, there are six seats up for election:

- Two public library trustee seats (3 years)
- One public library trustee seat (2 years)
- Two at-large seats (3 years)
- One specialized library seat (3 years)

The two-year public library trustee seat is open due to a vacancy on the RAILS Board of Directors. The board decided against filling this vacancy by appointment, opting to wait until the spring election to allow the voters to decide.



What does RAILS seek in terms of representation?

RAILS is deeply committed to promoting and fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion, and we believe that it is very important to have a board that reflects the diversity of the RAILS membership in terms of race, ethnicity, age, geographic location, staff position, and other factors.

NOMINATIONS

The election for these seats will be held in May 2025. The terms for each position are:

- Three-year seats: begin July 1, 2025; ends June 30, 2028
- Two-year seat: begins July 1, 2025; ends June 30, 2027

We ask Board Members to attend and actively participate in 11 board meetings per year, either in person or virtually at a RAILS service center or videoconference location. For more information on other duties and responsibilities, view the [RAILS Board Member Job Description](#).

Can I nominate myself?

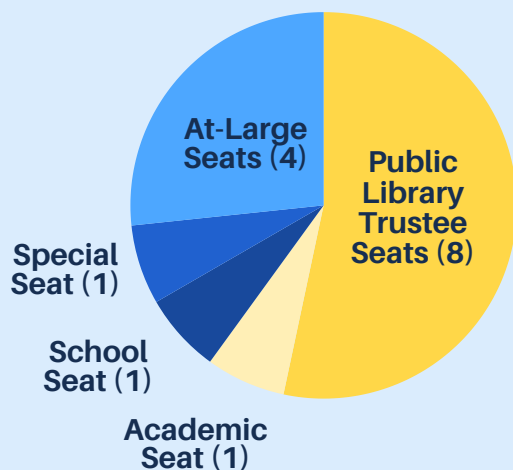
Yes. Self-nominations are encouraged.

Open: Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Close: Friday, April 18, 2025

What is the role of the RAILS Nominating Committee?

The Nominating Committee shall make every effort to recruit a diverse, equitable and inclusive roster of candidates for the RAILS board so that the board will truly represent, as much as possible, the diverse membership of RAILS libraries and their communities. The call for nominations will be publicized to the Members of the System and any Member may propose names for the Nominating Committee's consideration.



Why is the RAILS Board structured like this?

The Illinois Library System Act states that a majority of the RAILS board must be made up of public library trustees (75 ILCS 10/5).

VOTING

Voting is an important part of the membership experience. Choosing board members gives each agency a say in the future direction of RAILS.

Opens: Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Closes: Friday, May 23, 2025



Who can vote?

Each RAILS member library may cast only one ballot on behalf of the library agency. A library agency is the school district or main building, rather than the individual school building or library branch. This is because membership is held at the agency level (i.e. organizational).

Each library designates one person who will vote; generally, it will be either the library director or board president.

You may vote on all seats, regardless of your library type.

How do I vote?

The designated person who votes on behalf of the library agency must have a Library Learning (L2) account to log in to the RAILS website and access the ballot.

What if my organization accidentally votes multiple times?

In this situation, RAILS reaches out to the agency to confirm which vote is the official vote. We will delete the unofficial vote(s).



How can I learn more about the candidates?

In addition to publishing candidate photos and bios, RAILS creates short videos to allow voters to get to know the candidates. These are available on the RAILS YouTube page.

What do I do if I don't know who votes?

If you don't know who votes in your organization, the best thing to do is ask! It's possible that people in higher positions aren't aware that they can vote. Making sure that they are exercising this important right of system membership is crucial.

If you have an opinion on a candidate but are not in a decision-making role, you are encouraged to contact your supervisor. Make them aware of why voting is important.



Academic Libraries

In academic libraries, typically the library director votes. In some cases, this is the Dean of Libraries. In smaller libraries, this could be the University or College Librarian or someone designated by the organization.



Public Libraries

Typically voting for public libraries is done by the library director. In some cases, voting is done by the library director in consultation with the library board.



Special Libraries

Many special libraries are staffed by only one or two people. This makes it much easier to decide who votes.



School Libraries

In school libraries, the decision is a bit more difficult. Because RAILS membership is held at the agency level, that means a large school district has the same voting power as a small private school: one agency, one vote.

That means that school districts with large numbers of staffed school libraries may have a difficult time figuring out who votes.

The potential individuals who might vote for a typical school district are the Director of Curriculum, Director of Libraries, Paraprofessional, Principal, School Librarian, or the Superintendent.

One important factor is identifying the person in your organization who has an L2 account and can vote.



How do I talk to my supervisor about voting?

In any conversation with a supervisor, we encourage you to ask questions such as:

- Who voted last year (if at all)?
- Who, within your organization, has the most contact with the library system?
- What issues/priorities matter most for your organization regarding system representation?



Who can I talk to if I have questions?

Please reach out to Dan Bostrom, RAILS Director of Marketing & Communications, dan.bostrom@railslibraries.org or 630.734.5152 with any questions.



Your Vote = Support

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our election process. As a public body, RAILS relies on the engagement of staff and trustees from our member libraries to help drive our work forward. Your vote matters and shapes the future of RAILS.



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