



# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT GUIDE

UPDATED January 2026  
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026

Posted in compliance with  
5 ILCS 140/4

# Freedom of Information Act Guide

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## About Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)

RAILS is a regional library system, a government agency that provides services to libraries in the northern and west-central areas of the state of Illinois.

We serve approximately 1200 academic, public, school, and special library members, which have a total of more than 4000 library facilities in a 27,000-square-mile area.

Although the city of Chicago is within our boundaries, and a number of our member libraries are located in Chicago, the Chicago Public Library constitutes a separate library system. Members have several opportunities to network with each other through email lists, networking groups, member updates, and at networking events.

We are governed by a Board of Directors, elected by member libraries.

Library systems are established by state law (75 ILCS 10/, the Illinois Library System Act). Funding for Illinois Library Systems is provided through the Illinois State Library and the Secretary of State, with funds appropriated by the Illinois General Assembly.

RAILS was formed in 2011 from a merger of the Alliance, DuPage, Metropolitan, North Suburban, and Prairie Area library systems.

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## Our Mission

We Connect Libraries

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## Our Vision

Thriving libraries are essential to all who learn, live, or work in Illinois.

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## Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) Website

[www.railslibraries.org](http://www.railslibraries.org)

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## Operating Budget

The total amount of our operating budget for FY2026 is \$16.9 million, with an additional special revenue budget of \$1.1 million and a capital projects budget of \$.7 million. Funding sources are the State of Illinois and member libraries.

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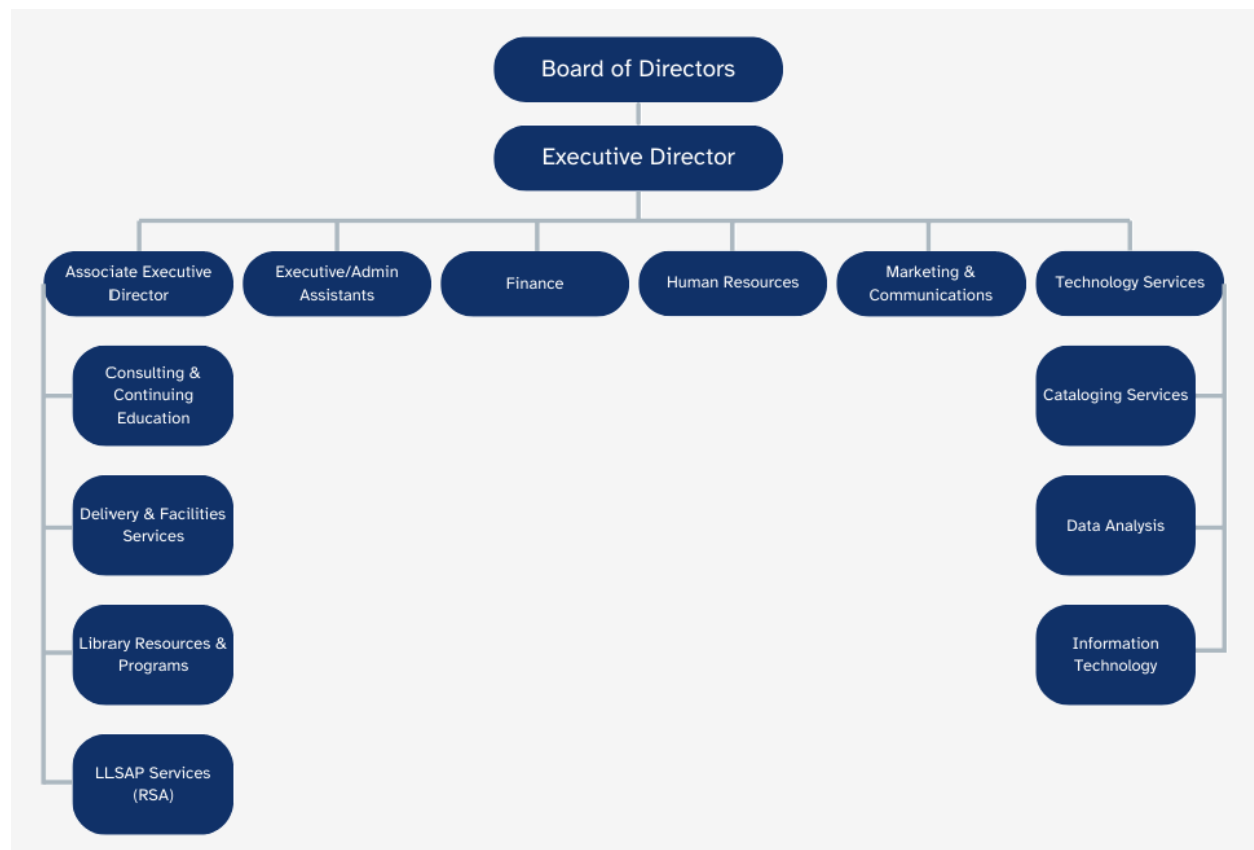
## Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) Locations

The primary office is located at 125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527. Branch offices are located at 715 Sabrina Drive, East Peoria, IL 61611; 4717 Colt Road, Rockford, IL 61109; 220 W. 23rd Avenue, Coal Valley, IL 61240; and 1000 W. Crossroads Parkway, Bolingbrook, IL 60490.

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## Staff

We have approximately the following number of persons employed: 95 (91 full-time & 4 part-time)



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## Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) Board of Trustees

The following organization exercises control over our policies and procedures: The Reaching Across Illinois Library System Board of Directors, which meets most months at various locations.

President: Gwen Gregory (June 2026)  
Vice President: Catherine Yanikoski (June 2028)

Treasurer: Amanda Kowalcze (June 2027)  
 Secretary: Jean Carroll (June 2026)  
 Ethics Officer: Jennifer Cutshall (June 2027)  
 OMA: Jennifer Hovanec (June 2026)  
 FOIA: Alex Vancina (June 2026)  
 Trustee: Monica Caldicott (June 2026)  
 Megan Gove (June 2028)  
 Ron Holohan (June 2027)  
 Roberta Parks ( June 2028)  
 Emily Porter ( June 2027)  
 Carolyn Sennett (June 2027)  
 Karen Voitik (June 2027)  
 Yolande Wilburn (June 2028)

## Committees

### Advocacy Committee

No Term Limits  
 RAILS Lead: Monica Harris  
 Chairperson: Jean Carroll  
 Board Members: (2 minimum)

- Monica Caldicott
- Ron Holohan
- Emily Porter
- Carolyn Sennett
- Karen Voitik
- Yolande Wilburn

Members:

- Stephanie Nissen

Ex Officio:  
 Board President, Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Dan Bostrom

### Consortia Committee

No Term Limits  
 RAILS Lead: Anne Slaughter  
 Chairperson: Alex Vancina  
 Board Members: (One additional)

- Megan Gove

Members:

- Elizabeth Clarage, CARLI Rep
- Martin Kong, CARLI Alternate
- Kate Hall, CCS Rep

### Policy Committee

One-Year Term  
 RAILS Lead: Monica Harris  
 Chairperson: Catherine Yanikoski  
 Board Members: (5)

- Jennifer Cutshall
- Jennifer Hovanec
- Amanda Kowalcze
- Carolyn Sennett

Ex Officio:  
 Board President, Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Sam Daly

### Nominating Committee

One-Year Term  
 RAILS Lead: Monica Harris  
**Chairperson: Alex Vancina**  
 Board Members: (one additional)  
 RAILS Members: Four

### Resource Sharing Committee

Two-Year Term  
 RAILS Lead: Joe Filapek  
 Chairperson: Jennifer Hovanec  
 Board Members: (one additional)

- Karen Voitik

Members:

- Jennie Mills, Pinnacle Rep
  - Matt Hammermeister, Pinnacle Alternate
  - Michelle Krooswyk (PrairieCat Rep)
  - Carolyn Coulter, PrairieCat Alternate
  - Jennifer Slaney, RRLC Rep
  - Kendal Orrison, RSA Rep
  - Larisa Good, RSA Alternate
  - Aaron Skog, SWAN Rep
  - Laura Van Cleve, SWAN Alternate
  - Rebecca Malinowski, CCS Alternate
- Ex Officio:
- Board President, Cassandra Thompson (IHLS), Anne Slaughter (RAILS)

#### Executive Committee

President: Gwen Gregory  
 Vice President: Catherine Yanikoski  
 Secretary: Jean Carroll  
 Treasurer: Amanda Kowalcze  
 At Large Seat: Yolande Wilburn

- Dr. Marlo Barnett, Term Expires: June 2026
- Guillermo Gasca, Term expires: June 2026

#### Universal Service Committee

No Term Limits  
 RAILS Lead: Joe Filapek  
 Chairperson: Catherine Yanikoski  
 Board Members: (2 minimum)

- Jennifer Cutshall
- Roberta Parks
- Emily Porter

#### Members:

- Angela Campbell
- Michelle Roubal
- Brooke Sievers
- Alissa Williams

Ex Officio: Board President, Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Kate Niehoff

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### Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

The Reaching Across Illinois Library System adheres to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 ILCS140/1 et.seq., which is the principal Illinois statute governing the inspection of public records. The Act requires that public bodies make available for inspection or copying all public records to any person, with limited exceptions.

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### FOIA Officers

Executive Director:	Monica Harris ( <a href="mailto:monica.harris@railslibraries.org">monica.harris@railslibraries.org</a> )
Associate Executive Director:	Joe Filapek ( <a href="mailto:joe.filapek@railslibraries.org">joe.filapek@railslibraries.org</a> )
Trustee:	Alex Vancina ( <a href="mailto:alex.vancina@railslibraries.org">alex.vancina@railslibraries.org</a> )

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## Filling a Request and Fees

You may request the information and the records available to the public in the following manner:

- A. FOIA requests may be emailed to foia@railslibraries.org.
- B. Your request should be directed to the following individuals: Alex Vancina and Monica Harris, FOIA Officers.
- C. You must indicate whether you have a "commercial purpose" in your request.
- D. You must specify the records requested to be disclosed for inspection or to be copied. If you desire that any records be certified, you must specify which ones.
- E. To reimburse us for our actual costs for reproducing and certifying (if requested) the records, you will be charged the following fees: There is a \$1.00 charge for each certification of records. The first fifty (50) pages of black-and-white text, either letter or legal size, are free. There is a \$.15 per page charge for copied records over 50 pages. The actual copying cost of color and other-sized copies will be charged.
- F. If the records are kept in electronic format you may request a specific format and if feasible, they will be provided, but if not, they will be provided either in the electronic format in which they are kept (and you would be required to pay the actual cost of the medium only, i.e. disc, diskette, tape, etc.) or in paper as you select.
- G. The office will respond to a written request within five (5) working days or sooner if possible. An extension of an additional five (5) working days may be necessary to properly respond.
- H. Records may be inspected or copied. If inspected, an employee must be present throughout the inspection.
- I. The place and times where the records will be available are as follows: 8:30 AM until 5:00 PM, Reaching Across Illinois Library System Administrative Offices, 125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527

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## Records Immediately Available Upon Request

Certain types of information maintained by us are exempt from inspection and copying. However, the following types or categories of records are maintained under our control:

- A. Monthly Financial Statements
- B. Annual Receipts and Disbursements Reports

- C. Budget
- D. Annual Audits
- E. Minutes of the Board of Directors
- F. System Policies and Bylaws
- G. Adopted Ordinances and Resolutions of the Board
- H. Total Compensation Chart [PA 97-0609] current fiscal year

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## Records Retention

The Reaching Across Illinois Library System adheres to the guidance for retaining business records set out by the Local Records Commission through the State of Illinois.

### Categories of Public Records Maintained by the Reaching Across Illinois Library System

- 1 APPLICATIONS FOR AUTHORITY TO DISPOSE OF LOCAL RECORDS
- 2 ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTS
- 3 ADMINISTRATIVE CORRESPONDENCE
- 4 APPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT
- 5 APPRAISALS
- 6 ASBESTOS REMOVAL RECORDS
- 7 AUDITS
- 8 BANKING & INVESTMENT RECORDS
- 9 BIDS, SPECIFICATIONS, PROPOSALS
- 10 BOARD AND COMMITTEE PACKETS
- 11 BUDGETS
- 12 BUILDING & EQUIPMENT
- 13 CERTIFICATE OF LIABILITY INSURANCE
- 14 CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPT PROPERTY
- 15 COLLECTIONS AGENCY AND DELINQUENT ACCOUNT RECORDS
- 16 CONSTRUCTION RECORDS
- 17 CONTRACTS, LEASES, AGREEMENTS
- 18 DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN
- 18 DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN (electronic)
- 19 E-RATE
- 20 FINANCIAL RECORDS
- 21 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS AND DENIALS
- 22 GIFT & DONATIONS
- 23 GRANT RECORDS
- 24 ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM ANNUAL REPORT AND PER CAPITA
- 25 ILLINOIS MUNICIPAL RETIREMENT FUND OTHER
- 27 INSURANCE OTHER
- 28 INVENTORIES EQUIPMENT

29	JOB DESCRIPTIONS
30	LEGAL CASE FILES
31	LEGAL NOTICES, PRESS RELEASES, CERT OF PUBLIC
32	LIENS
33	MEMBERSHIP RECORDS
34	MINUTES AND AGENDAS
35	NEWSLETTERS AND BROCHURES
36	OPEN MEETING ACT AND FOIA TRAINING CERT
37	ORGANIZATIONAL RECORDS
38	O.S.H.A. LOGS
39	PAYROLL REPORTS OTHER
40	PERSONNEL OTHER
41	POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUALS
42	PROJECT REPORTS & SURVEYS
43	PROPERTY RECORDS
44	RECEIPTS, DELIVERY, POSTAL, CASH
45	STATE & FEDERAL TAX STATEMENTS
46	STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTEREST LISTS AND RECEIPTS
47	SYSTEM BOARD APPOINTMENTS
48	TAX EXEMPT CERTIFICATES
49	TIME RECORDS
50	TREASURER BONDS
51	UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION
52	US IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION FORM
53	WORKERS COMPENSATION
54	CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM RECORDS
55	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
56	QUESTIONNAIRES & SURVEYS
56	QUESTIONNAIRES & SURVEYS (ELECTRONIC)
57	SECURITY SURVEILLANCE RECORDINGS (electronic)
58	WAGE GARNISHMENT