RAILS
REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM

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Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act Talking Points
June 2023

Introduction

On June 10, 2022, the Illinois General Assembly enacted PA 102-1088 creating the Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act. The Act requires public library districts and other units of local government to file a report with the county board with recommendations regarding efficiencies and increased accountability.

Some RAILS members have asked for guidance in reporting how their library has achieved greater efficiency as a result of their RAILS membership. The following talking points are designed to help with this effort. It is up to each individual library whether they choose to use any of these talking points. There is no requirement in the Act to include information on the benefits of library system membership.

Additional information on the Act is available in the [Policy & Human Resources Guidance for Libraries section](#) of the RAILS website, including an FAQ and a sample library report template, both prepared by the Ancel Glink law firm.

The talking points below provide general information about the benefits of different RAILS programs/services, followed by a statement that libraries can fill in with their library name and information on their participation in those programs/services.

Supporting/Expanding Resource Sharing

No one library can afford to purchase all of the materials its patrons need. RAILS supports six shared online catalogs. A shared online catalog allows patrons from participating libraries to search all participating library catalogs in a single search. 437 libraries belong to one of these six consortia.

- ----------------- Library is a member of the ---------- consortium. Our library patrons have access to the holdings of ------ libraries. They can request materials to be delivered to our library via the RAILS Delivery service.

RAILS offers grants to help libraries join one of these six shared online catalogs. RAILS has awarded $1,839,076.76 in grants to 73 libraries to help them join a shared online catalog.

- ------------ Library received a $-------------- grant from RAILS in -------- (year) to help us join a shared online catalog.

RAILS' Find More Illinois service connects participating standalone and shared online catalogs. Anyone can search the holdings of all of these catalogs in a single search. Users from participating libraries can locate and request materials from libraries across Illinois to be delivered to their home library. 57

libraries participate in Find More Illinois, giving users access to approximately 2,113,499 items from libraries of all types and sizes, including specialized materials.

- ------------ Library participates in Find More Illinois.

RAILS delivers millions of items between Illinois libraries each year. The library mail rate for sending a single book through the United States Postal Service is approximately $3.47 for the first pound, and an additional .66 cents for each additional pound, showing the great value RAILS delivery brings to member libraries.

- ----------- Library receives approximately --------- items through RAILS delivery each year at no charge to our library.

Sharing E-Resources

RAILS' eRead Illinois Axis 360 service is a cooperative program that expands access to e-books for Illinois residents. Currently, approximately 24 college and university, 284 public, 478 school, and 6 specialized libraries participate. Over 439,000 items were circulated via eRead Illinois Axis 360 in the last year.

- ------------ Library participates in eRead Illinois, and our library patrons read -------- e-books and audiobooks in the past year.

Through RAILS' Inkie.org program, anyone in the state can create and publish an e-book at no charge. 325 e-book projects have been created since the program began in 2019.

- ------------- Library users have created ---------- e-books through this program.

RAILS' Explore More Illinois program allows library cardholders from across the state to reserve free and discounted admission, parking, and gift store purchases from a wide variety of Illinois cultural and recreational attractions. Currently, 422 Illinois libraries participate and there are 66 attractions.

- ---------- Library participates in Explore More Illinois and our patrons have made ------ reservations through the program thus far.

Collaboration/Networking

RAILS makes it possible for staff from 3,699 libraries across a 27,000 square mile area to share possible solutions to common challenges, as well as best practices. This prevents every individual library from having to recreate "the same wheel."

RAILS has a total of 56 email discussion lists, including lists on a wide variety of topics and for almost every staff position at a public library. A total of approximately 76,500 messages have been exchanged

via these lists since February 2012. The list for library directors is the most popular, with 40,500 messages.

- -------------- Library staff use ---------- RAILS email lists to share ideas and solutions to common challenges.

The networking group directory on the RAILS website features over 96 groups that meet in person or via Zoom to share ideas and best practices.

- ---------- Library staff participate in ------------ of these networking groups.

RAILS has awarded $62,313.98 in Multitype Collaborative and Partnership grants to help libraries work on collaborative projects to benefit library users.

- ---------- Library received a $--------- grant in ---------- (year).

Continuing Education/Consulting

RAILS offers a variety of in-person and virtual continuing education (CE) workshops to help library staff keep their skills up to date and to stay on top of the different trends affecting library service. RAILS has offered over 1,004 CE events with 37,908 attendees since 2013. Many of these programs are recorded and are available for viewing via the RAILS CE Archives on the RAILS website.

- Staff from ------------ Library have attended --------- RAILS CE programs.

RAILS offers Continuing Education Event grants to help libraries plan educational programs of interest to library staff. RAILS has awarded $144,219 in CE Event grants since 2014.

- ------------- Library received a $------------- CE Event grant from RAILLS in --------.

All Illinois public libraries can use RAILS' FOIA/OMA hotline to receive free assistance from an attorney with basic questions on the Freedom of Information Act or Open Meetings Act. This saves each individual library from having to pay an attorney to answer the same basic questions. The hotline has been used approximately 625 times since it began in 2016.

- ------------ Library has used the FOIA/OMA hotline ------ times.

Discounts to Help Libraries Save Money

RAILS currently offers more than 50 group purchases/discounts to help libraries save money on e-resources, training, library supplies and furnishings, and more. RAILS has saved libraries over $3.5 million since 2019.

- ------------- Library has saved over $---------- through the RAILS discount program.

AND/OR

- ------------- Library has taken advantage of over --------- RAILS discounts.