

**Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)
Revised Resource Sharing Policy**

I. INTRODUCTION

A primary mission of the Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) is to support, facilitate and promote resource sharing between RAILS member libraries and between libraries across the state of Illinois and beyond.

Resource sharing is vitally important in the current Illinois fiscal environment. Every RAILS member faces the challenge of making the most of limited resources. Since all libraries share the common goal of offering the highest quality service to library patrons possible, it is to the advantage of all that every RAILS member share resources with other RAILS members to the widest extent possible.

Illinois Administrative Code, 23 IL ADC 3030.35 (b), requires participation in several kinds of resource sharing activities as a condition of full membership in a library system. The Illinois Library System Act, 75 ILCS 10/1, encourages cooperation among all types of libraries in promoting the sharing of library resources. Reciprocal borrowing, reciprocal access and interlibrary loan are all components of resource sharing. It is expected that each RAILS member library will participate in resource sharing as completely as possible within any organizational or legal limitations that may be necessary.

The purpose of this policy is to specify resource sharing requirements for all RAILS member libraries and to indicate the role of RAILS in resource sharing. The goal of this policy is to ensure that all library patrons within the RAILS area have access to the library resources they need. This is a general policy and is not meant to cover every situation that may arise. When specific issues develop between libraries that are not covered by this policy, members are encouraged to work with each other to come up with agreeable solutions, keeping in mind the goal for each RAILS member to participate in resource sharing as completely as possible.

Libraries that belong to consortia, including but not limited to Local Library System Automation Programs (LLSAPs), are expected to meet the requirements of the RAILS Resource Sharing Policy. These libraries may also have separate agreements between them as long as those agreements comply with the RAILS policy.

Any changes to this policy are subject to approval by the RAILS Board of Directors and the Illinois State Library.

II. GENERAL RESOURCE SHARING REQUIREMENTS

A. Responsibilities of All RAILS Member Libraries

1. Each member library has the responsibility of locally meeting as many of its patrons' needs as possible. Resource sharing is intended as a way to help supplement the local library's collection and should not be used as a substitution for financial support and collection management on the local level.
2. Each RAILS member library shall participate in resource sharing as completely as possible and shall only impose restrictions as required by organizational or legal limitations.
3. To facilitate resource sharing among RAILS libraries, all RAILS member libraries shall include their resource sharing policies as a part of their library's record on the Library Learning (L2) website and other applicable electronic platforms such as OCLC and shall keep those policies up-to-date.

B. Responsibilities of RAILS

1. The RAILS Director of Membership Development and Resource Sharing shall coordinate, monitor and guide all system resource sharing activities and answer member questions regarding resource sharing.
2. RAILS shall promote the value of resource sharing to all member libraries and shall encourage members to be as generous as possible in their resource sharing policies and procedures.
3. RAILS shall encourage and support resource sharing through activities such as delivery and training for system members in areas directly related to resource sharing.
4. RAILS shall distribute current state and system resource sharing policies to members via the RAILS website and other means as appropriate.
5. RAILS shall maintain the L2 website and shall provide assistance and instruction to members in posting their resource sharing policies to the L2 website.

III. RECIPROCAL BORROWING

Definition: 23 IL ADC 3030.10 – Reciprocal Borrowing: The right of a person holding a valid library registration card from a full member public library or a library system, to borrow on site from all the other public libraries that are full members of the library system without using interlibrary loan mechanisms.

A. Responsibilities of All RAILS Public Libraries

1. All RAILS public libraries shall provide reciprocal borrowing to any person in good standing who has a valid library account with a RAILS public library in Illinois.
2. Each RAILS public library member is encouraged to share as widely as possible. Given that there may be situations where libraries need to impose reasonable restrictions in order to meet the demands of local taxpayers and residents, the lending library may restrict reciprocal borrowing but not set to zero. Restrictions shall only be imposed as absolutely necessary and all restrictions must apply equally to all reciprocal borrowers.
 - a) Libraries may choose to use the following guidelines for restricting reciprocal borrowers: If 30% or more of a lending library's annual circulation is to reciprocal borrowers from all libraries and/or if any individual library's reciprocal borrowing accounts for more than 15% of a lending library's annual circulation, then the lending library may restrict reciprocal borrowing (but not terminate or set to zero). Libraries shall review circulation figures on an annual basis and make adjustments to reciprocal borrowing restrictions as appropriate. Any restrictions or exclusions imposed because of the overall 30% circulation or 15% individual library criteria outlined in this section must be applied equitably among all reciprocal borrowers.
 - b) When imposing loan restrictions on reciprocal borrowing, libraries shall post this information as a part of their resource sharing policies on the L2 website.

3. Card issuing libraries are responsible for losses as required by Illinois Administrative Code (23 IL ADC 3030.50 B). However, if the lending library chooses to work with the card issuing library on alternative means to resolve the loss, the home/card issuing library of the patron responsible for the loss may work with the lending library to resolve the issue in a manner consistent with the lending library's policy. As a part of this process, RAILS public libraries shall:
 - a) Hold a reciprocal borrower personally and financially responsible to the lending library for all fines and other fees resulting from overdue, lost or damaged materials.
 - b) Assist with retrieval of delinquent materials borrowed by verifying patron information for one of its registered borrowers upon request.
 - c) Assist with collecting payment for bills incurred by one of its registered borrowers for lost/damaged items as legal limitations and internal library regulations allow.
 - d) Honor any request by a lending library to mark a patron's account as delinquent or to place a stop/block on a patron's account at the patron's home library for unpaid bills related to lost or damaged items obtained via reciprocal borrowing. If the patron's home library refuses to honor the request, then that home library shall be responsible for paying the bills incurred by the patron for lost or damaged items provided that the lending library sends the bills to the home library within one year of the infraction. The library requesting the block shall provide notification when the block is no longer needed and may be removed.
 - e) Contact the home library when in doubt about a patron's delinquency status.
4. All RAILS public libraries shall include their library's reciprocal borrowing policies as a part of their library's record on the L2 website and shall keep those policies up-to-date.

B. Responsibilities of RAILS Academic, School, and Special libraries

1. When institutional regulations allow, all RAILS academic, school and special libraries are encouraged to permit reciprocal borrowing of items from their collections to a patron in good standing with a valid Illinois public library card. As necessary, the library will check the status of the patron account with the home library before circulating materials.
2. All RAILS academic, school and special libraries that choose to participate in reciprocal borrowing shall follow relevant reciprocal borrowing policies established by RAILS.
3. All RAILS academic, school and special libraries shall include their library's reciprocal borrowing policies as a part of their library's record on the L2 website and shall keep those policies up-to-date.

C. Responsibilities of RAILS

1. The RAILS Director of Membership Development and Resource Sharing shall coordinate, monitor and guide the Reciprocal Borrowing Program (RBP) and answer member questions about the program.
2. RAILS will regularly review current practices for collecting, reporting and publishing RBP statistics to ensure that member needs in this area are being met.

3. RAILS shall maintain the L2 website and shall provide assistance and instruction to members in posting their reciprocal borrowing policies to the L2 website.

IV. RECIPROCAL ACCESS

Definition: 23 IL ADC 3030.10 – Reciprocal Access: The means by which the library resources of all member libraries of a library system are made available to all constituents within the system area. These means may include some necessary and reasonable restrictions, approved by a library system board, as, for example, by information passports, interlibrary loans, photocopy service, reference service, use on site and courtesy cards.

A. Responsibilities of All RAILS Libraries

1. Each RAILS member library shall:
 - a) Participate in the reciprocal access program by making its library materials available to patrons of other member libraries in the least restrictive way possible, except:
 - 1) Contractual arrangements for licensed or proprietary databases/e-resources may limit the use of such databases/e-resources to registered cardholders.
 - 2) Non-public libraries may place reasonable restrictions on physical access to their facilities and materials by patrons of other libraries.

B. Responsibilities of RAILS

1. The RAILS Director of Membership Development and Resource Sharing shall coordinate, monitor and guide the reciprocal access program and answer member questions about the program.

V. INTERLIBRARY LOAN

Definition: ILLINET Interlibrary Loan Code, Illinois State Library (2008) – Interlibrary loan is the process by which a library requests material from, or supplies material to, another library. The purpose of interlibrary loan is to obtain, upon request of a library user, material not available in the user's local library.

A. Responsibilities of All RAILS Libraries

1. All full members of RAILS shall comply with the most current ILLINET Interlibrary Loan Code.
2. All RAILS member libraries should post their interlibrary loan policy as a part of their library's record on the Library Learning (L2) website. These policies shall include contact information, reimbursement costs for lost materials, the formats of materials the library will and will not lend, as well as photocopy policies.

B. Responsibilities of RAILS

1. The RAILS Director of Membership Development and Resource Sharing shall coordinate, monitor and guide the interlibrary loan program and answer member questions about the program or refer the member to someone who can answer the question.
2. RAILS shall support interlibrary loan through the timely, efficient delivery of materials through the system's delivery service and by providing training for members in areas directly related to interlibrary loan.
3. RAILS shall maintain the L2 website and shall provide assistance and instruction to members in posting their resource sharing policies to the L2 website.

VI. NONRESIDENT CARDS AND NONRESIDENT BORROWING

A. Responsibilities of RAILS Public Libraries

1. As required by State administrative rule 23 IL ADC 3050.20, each public library board of trustees shall annually review its nonresident fee policy and take action to decide whether to issue nonresident library cards during the next 12 month period.
2. At that time, the board shall also determine and adopt the fee formula and fee.
3. Within 30 days of board action, the public library shall notify RAILS of the action taken, effective dates, and fee formula.
4. In order to report nonresident fee program information to RAILS, each library should visit the RAILS website and complete the Nonresident Card Participation Update Form.

B. Responsibilities of RAILS

1. RAILS shall provide a Nonresident Card Participation Update Form, to facilitate the collection of nonresident fee program information from its member libraries.
2. RAILS shall maintain an up-to-date list on its website indicating which libraries participate and do not participate in the nonresident borrowing program. This list shall also be available in print upon request and available for public inspection at the regional library system headquarters.

VII. ENFORCEMENT OF RAILS RESOURCE SHARING POLICIES

A. Responsibilities of All RAILS Libraries

1. All RAILS libraries shall post their resource sharing policies as a part of their library's record on L2.
2. Individual RAILS libraries are responsible for informing other member libraries of any failure to observe their library's resource sharing policies.
3. RAILS libraries are expected to work out disputes between themselves as a first course of action.

4. A library may restrict or suspend service to any library that disregards its policies. Such action requires written notification to the suspended library, specifying the terms and duration of the suspension. A copy of all documentation regarding suspensions should be sent to RAILS.
5. Should violations continue to occur, a library may request assistance from RAILS. The request must be submitted to RAILS in writing and a copy should go to the library allegedly committing the violations.

B. Responsibilities of RAILS

1. The RAILS Director of Membership Development and Resource Sharing shall oversee resource sharing operations and assist with policy enforcement as necessary.
2. RAILS will assist libraries that are unable to solve disputes regarding enforcement of resource sharing policies by helping to clarify and interpret RAILS policy.
3. Violations of this policy may result in loss of full RAILS member status and related system services until a library is able to once again comply with the legal requirements established for full members of a library system. RAILS will inform the library in question about the violation(s) and steps that must be taken to comply with full member requirements.

VIII. DEFINITIONS

Extended Circulation: The process by which a patron places a hold in a shared online catalog in order to borrow materials from another library. The participating libraries may or may not allow pick-up points other than the patron's home library. Reimbursement for materials lost during extended circulation may be covered by an agreement among consortium members.

Full Member Library: A library that meets the criteria for full library system membership as defined by the RAILS Board. These criteria are posted on the RAILS website. A full member is eligible to receive all services RAILS provides.

Home Library: The library that is located within the taxing district of the patron's residence. This library issues an account for the patron that includes the patron's name and address. The patron has also supplied the proper documentation as required by the library.

Good Standing: A valid library account that has not been blocked. Each library is responsible for determining the requirements for good standing and blocking patrons that do not meet those requirements.

ILLINET Library: A library that is a member of an Illinois regional library system.

Interlibrary Loan: Definition: ILLINET Interlibrary Loan Code, Illinois State Library (2008) – Interlibrary loan is the process by which a library requests material from, or supplies material to, another library. The purpose of interlibrary loan is to obtain, upon request of a library user, material not available in the user's local library. ILLINET libraries may not assess fees for the loan of materials to other ILLINET libraries, excepted as noted in Sections VI and VII of the Interlibrary Loan Code (2008).

L2: The Library Learning website (L2) serves as the official membership directory for RAILS and other library systems in the state of Illinois. Each member library should enter and update its own L2 information, including contact information, staff information and up-to-date resource sharing policies.

Nonresident: An individual residing in Illinois who does not have his or her principal residence within the territory of a public library service area. A nonresident without tax-supported library service is eligible to purchase access to library service from the nearest public library as specified in the Illinois Administrative Rules at <http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/libraries/nonresident.html>

Nonresident Library Card: A library card/account purchased from a participating public library by an individual residing in an area not taxed for public library service.

RBP: Reciprocal Borrowing Program. The formal name for the program in which a patron physically travels to a public library outside of his or her taxing district in order to borrow materials owned by a library that is not the patron's home library.

Reciprocal Access: Definition: 23 IL ADC 3030.10 – Reciprocal Access: The means by which the library resources of all member libraries of a full member library system are made available to all constituents within the system area. These means may include some necessary and reasonable restrictions, approved by a library system board, as, for example, by information passports, interlibrary loans, photocopy service, reference service, use on site and courtesy cards.

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Registered Borrower: A library patron who possesses an account. The library account includes a patron's name and address and the patron has supplied the proper documentation as required by the library.

Valid Library Account: A patron account that has not been stopped, blocked, or expired. As a minimum, library account information should include name, address and expiration date of the account.