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RAILS Board Universal Service Committee Meeting

December 5th, 2025, | 10:00 am

RAILS Burr Ridge and Videoconference Sites

125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527 | 630.734.5000

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome and Call to Order
Yanikoski called the meeting to order at 10:03 am. She welcomed a new member of the committee, Rob Parks.
2. Roll Call of Committee Members
Present: Jenny Cutshall, Michelle Roubal, Brooke Sievers (Burr Ridge), Catherine Yanikoski (ESi), Rob Parks, Alissa Williams (East Peoria), Emily Porter (Rockford University)
Absent: Angela Campbell
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
Guests in Burr Ridge: Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Kate Niehoff, Renya Kreml (designated note taker)
- RAILS. On Zoom: Grant Halter, Gwen Gemmell – RAILS.
4. Public Comments
There were no public comments.
5. Consent Agenda
 - 5.1. Adoption of the Agenda
 - 5.2. Approval of the RAILS Board Universal Service Committee Minutes of September 12th, 2025
Sievers moved, and Roubal seconded the adoption of the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.
6. Unfinished Business
 - 6.1 Community College Survey Updates
Filapek gave an update on the Community College Survey. Modifications have been made based on feedback from the previous committee meeting and from several Community College librarians. After the survey was finalized, it was distributed among the Community Colleges in the RAILS service area. It is too early yet to have the results back – the deadline for responses is the end of January 2026. The Communications team will help spread the word to encourage as much participation as possible. Filapek expects to have survey data available to share with the Committee at the next meeting, in March.
He also reported that he contacted the Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS) to gauge their interest in extending the survey to colleges in their service area. They expressed interest but were not ready to act due to the leadership transition. They will readdress in early 2026.

In response to a question, Roubal explained that community colleges typically employ a holistic collection development philosophy, encompassing popular materials, streaming content, and children's literature, although access and borrowing policies may vary.

The group also discussed the potential for community colleges to participate in Find More Illinois, with Joe noting that, currently, only academic institutions are listed; however, upcoming meetings with community college libraries may expand this network.

6.2 ILA Annual Conference Session Review

Filapek and Harris shared about the panel session devoted to the topic of the Unserved in Illinois, which took place during the ILA conference in October 2025. The session went well, with a good turnout and many questions for the panelists. Aaron Skog suggested including library consortia in the effort to resolve this issue. Many listeners expressed interest in the work of the Universal Service Committee. Filapek will also present on the same topic during RSA Day in 2026.

The possibility of conducting a webinar to reach a wider audience was also suggested.

Members also pointed out the need for educational resources for libraries listing diverse options for offering services to the unserved. There was also a thought of revisiting a previous legislative proposal that was rejected by PPC but might be relevant now due to a different committee makeup. The conversation also touched on potential solutions, such as consortia cards and intergovernmental agreements, to incrementally improve access, including a potential consortia funding model for a statewide card system. There was also a question about what could be changed within administrative rules, for example, how libraries calculate and report the cost of non-resident cards, which might be helpful.

6.3 Updates from Committee Members on Their Tasks from the 2024 Universal Service Plan

Filapek reviewed the topics the committee members had expressed interest in. He invited the new committee members to express their interest in working on some of the plan's action items. Roubal proposed creating a poster session on the topic to be presented at the Network of Illinois Learning Resources and Community Colleges (NILRC) conference.

7. New Business

7.1. Illinois Legislative Update Filapek gave an overview of the legislative meetups, which concluded earlier that week. He pointed out that there are many library-related issues that need the attention of legislators (such as IMLS funding issues, the cost of e-books, and OER), so it is challenging to fit the Unserved conversation in as well. He and Harris had some good conversations with legislators and even explored the possibility of having them visit RAILS facilities.

7.2. Overview of the RAILS Resource Sharing Map

Halter gave a presentation of the newly released, interactive RAILS Resource Sharing Map. This map can be updated regularly, and new features will continue to be added. He also shared a map of public library areas and Unserved areas. He expects to have the map of community colleges available by spring 2026. Members expressed the need for the demographic of the Unserved areas to be able to market directly to them.

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8. Meeting recap and agenda building for the next RAILS Board Universal Service Committee Meeting – Committee Chair
Yanikoski suggested revisiting the definition of universal service and the Unserved at the next meeting, since it has been some time since the RAILS board issued its statement on that topic. The committee will also review the results of the community college survey and familiarize themselves with the 2020 legislative proposal.
 9. Adjournment – Committee Chair
Yanikoski adjourned the meeting at 11:42 am.