
REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD

UNIVERSAL SERVICE COMMITTEE MEETING

March 13th, 2026 | 1:00 pm

Minutes

1. Welcome and Call to Order– Catherine Yanikoski, Committee Chair
Yanikoski called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm
2. Roll Call of Committee Members
Kreml called roll of the members.
Present:
Catherine Yanikoski, Chair – ESi
Jenny Cutshall – RAILS Burr Ridge
Angela Campbell – RAILS Coal Valley
Rob Parks – RAILS East Peoria
Emily Porter – Talcott Free Library
Brooke Sievers – RAILS Burr Ridge
Alissa Williams – RAILS East Peoria

Absent:
Michelle Roubal
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
Guests in Burr Ridge: Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Renya Kreml (designated note taker) – RAILS
Guests on Zoom: Kate Niehoff, RAILS
4. Public Comments – Committee Chair
There were no public comments.
5. Consent Agenda – (action requested) Committee Chair
 - 5.1. Adoption of the Agenda
 - 5.2. Approval of the RAILS Board Universal Service Committee Minutes of December 5th, 2025Sievers moved, and Parks seconded the adoption of the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.
6. Unfinished Business – (discussion only)

6.1 Community College Survey Results

Filapek presented the results of the Community College Survey. The response rate was on par with the previous survey. Several of the non-responders were Chicago City Colleges. Most colleges offer some form of a resident library card (the City Colleges were the exception). Most colleges do not track public library affiliation. Due to this fact, it is impossible to gauge the benefit provided to the Unserved patrons. Several colleges indicated they would be willing to participate in a follow-up discussion.

38% of institutions do not advertise that district resident cards are available. If they do, it is primarily through social media or library websites. Committee members pointed out that some public libraries refer their Unserved patrons to community college libraries. There is a great variety in the level of access to services that colleges allow the resident cardholders. Only two libraries reported having an IGA.

Filapek suggested that the Data Team could create an overlay of community colleges vs. unserved populations. Yanikoski suggested that colleges could include resident card information in their printed course catalogs, which are sent to all district residents.

6.2 2024 Universal Service Plan – Action Item Assignments

Filapek shared a list of action items previously specified by the committee. He invited the committee members to consider whether they would like to work on an action they feel strongly about. He pointed out that #1 – Analyze data from IRS/ ISL would be a labor-intensive and potentially costly project, which will need to be carefully considered before embarking on it.

Other items are currently in progress, but there are some, like #7, that RAILS possibly could contribute to. The final actions relate more to developing educational materials for the libraries. Yanikoski stated that it has been at least 18 months since the committee looked at the action items, and it might be a good idea to review them again, maybe in the next meeting. Porter pointed out that it might be more effective to approach legislators and the public with a specific proposal of how to address the Unserved situation in Illinois and try to garner support for it from various state organizations.

7. New Business – (discussion only)

7.1. Illinois Legislative Update

Filapek gave a brief legislative update on the library-related bills in process. House Bill 4261, which might increase funding for library grants, and HB3411, to appropriate funds for the establishment of a permanent grant supporting Open Educational Resources, are in process. Lastly, HB5236 - Digital Library Protection Act – is currently in committee and has a hearing date. Harris will be one of the witnesses at this hearing. She encouraged libraries to fill out witness slips in support of that bill. The bill supporters are consulting and cooperating with other states that passed similar laws.

7.2. Review of Previous Legislative Efforts

Filapek briefly reviewed the legislative proposal from 2019. It was intended to make mergers and incorporating unserved areas easier for libraries. ILA's PPC did not select this proposal as a priority at the time.

Williams shared that in her area, there are many small libraries that might benefit from merging. It might be a way to use library funds more effectively.

7.3. Non-Resident Card Regulations

Filapek referred to the Action Item #8 – Simplifying Non-Resident Card Laws and Rules. The meeting packet included a memo and examples of administrative rules guiding the process of non-resident cards. He pointed out that there is a lot of confusion around those rules. Even the libraries concerned sometimes do not have clarity about who is eligible for their non-resident cards. It might be helpful to educate libraries regarding those administrative rules, and to work towards making the rules themselves more transparent.

The group discussed the meaning of "non-resident" versus "reciprocal borrower" and how it applies to purchasing library cards, as well as the function of limited use "access cards". It would be helpful to have a resource that could determine which addresses should use which local library. Referring to the county tax bills might provide the necessary information. Non-resident taxpayer cards were also discussed. Another idea to consider would be advocating for subsidies for lower-income Unserved patrons to cover the cost of library cards. The difficulty of obtaining reliable demographic and property information to calculate the cost of non-resident cards was also discussed.

8. Meeting recap and agenda building for the next RAILS Board Universal Service Committee Meeting

The Committee will revisit the Universal Service Committee Plan and Action Items at the next meeting. Williams suggested that the committee work on a legislative proposal to submit to ILA in July.

9. Adjournment

Yanikoski adjourned the meeting at 2:44 pm.