Agenda Item 8.1
125 Tower Drive
Burr Ridge IL 60527
630.734.5000
Fax: 630.734.5050
railslibraries.org

DATE: November 9, 2026

TO: RAILS Board Consortia Committee

FROM: Anne Slaughter, Director of Technology Services

SUBJECT: OCLC Services in Illinois

At its September 2026 meeting, the Illinois State Library Advisory Committee (ISLAC) discussed the Illinois State Library's upcoming procurement process resulting from the expiration of its current statewide contract with OCLC. The current, long-established Group Services model bundles OCLC's cataloging and interlibrary loan services with a variety of additional services, under terms negotiated on behalf of all ILLINET libraries. Additionally, the Illinois State Library subscribes to the FirstSearch and WorldCat Discovery platforms on behalf of all ILLINET libraries. ISLAC's discussion included the possibility that, as it develops, the process may involve an exploration of alternate models. Factors such as varying use patterns across different library types, affordability, pricing discrepancies, consortial perspectives, and other resource sharing options were discussed.

The Illinois State Library has accepted RAILS' invitation to attend the February 8, 2027 Consortia Committee meeting to share about their process and answer questions. To help prepare for this conversation, we hope to learn more about your current needs and experiences with OCLC. The topics listed below are potential starting points, but we invite an open-ended discussion of questions, concerns, benefits, and support needs that may arise for you in connection with the process or a possible transition.

Consortium & Member Library Perspectives

- Which of OCLC's services are essential to your organizations and/or member libraries?
- Have needs or use patterns changed over time?
- Have libraries shared any affordability issues or other OCLC-related concerns with you?
- Are you aware of alternatives to any services currently reflected in the Group Services contract or FirstSearch/WorldCat Discovery subscription that may suit your needs?

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Potential Models

- What services or other considerations might you prioritize if there were changes to the current Group Services model?
- Would your consortium prefer to negotiate its own contract directly with OCLC? What support might you need?

Data Analysis Needs

- Does your consortium have data that might help inform an investigation of use patterns or needs?
- Is there additional data that might be useful to you?
- Is there any data analysis support or other help that RAILS could provide?