PRAIRIECAT
Is it PrairieCat or RAILS?

PrairieCat	RAILS
Sierra ILS and Vega	Delivery Services
Interlibrary Loan	Group Purchasing & Vendor Discounts
Training	Continuing Education
Cataloging Services	Grants
eCommerce & Fines Paid	E-Content
Mobile App (optional)	Library Directory and Learning Calendar (L2)
Statistics & Reports	Find More IL & Explore More IL
Member Fees	No Membership Fee
support.prairiecat.info	**railslibraries.org**

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What are the differences between PrairieCat or RAILS?

PrairieCat		RAILS
PrairieCat is a consortium of 138 libraries that share an integrated library system (ILS). PrairieCat is an Illinois Intergovernmental Instrumentality, a government agency. Member libraries each have an intergovernmental agreement (IGA legal contract) with the other PrairieCat members to share services and the ILS.	Organization Type	RAILS is a regional library system, a government agency that provides services to libraries in the northern and west-central areas of the state of Illinois. RAILS one of three state-funded regional library agencies in Illinois (the other two are Illinois Heartland Library System and the Chicago Public Library).
PrairieCat is governed by two bodies. The Delegates Assembly, which is a membership body with a delegate from each circulating member and the four Union List representatives. PrairieCat is also governed by a 11-member board called the Administrative Council, elected by the library delegates.	Governance	RAILS is governed by a 12-member board, elected by member libraries.
PrairieCat is a multitype system serving 138 member libraries including academic, public, school, and special libraries. Two levels of membership use the system for circulation and patron empowerment features. The third level, Union List, only uses the system for ILL through staff-initiated holds.	Membership	RAILS is a multitype library system serving more than 1,250 libraries, including academic, public, school, and special libraries.
All member libraries must comply with requirements as defined in the IGA and organization Bylaws. Note, RAILS membership is required to be a PrairieCat member.	Membership Requirements	All member libraries must comply with requirements as defined by Administrative Code Rules, Illinois Library System Act (23 III.Admin. Code 3030.200).

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PrairieCat		RAILS
PrairieCat manages the ILS (Sierra and Vega Discover) for member libraries. That includes cataloging and database management, reports, notices, training, communicating with Innovative and other vendors. PrairieCat also provides continuing education, and shared technology through ecommerce and optional mobile app.	Services	RAILS not only supports resource-sharing and shared catalogs like PrairieCat, but also provides delivery, consulting, continuing education, grants and group purchasing and vendor discounts. RAILS also supports programs like Explore More Illinois, Find More Illinois, eRead Illinois, and My Library Is.
PrairieCat receives a grant from RAILS to provide support and services to the member libraries, which covers approximately 30% of PrairieCat costs. RAILS uses a grant from the Illinois State Library to cover the costs in its budget for supporting PrairieCat.	Funding	RAILS receives most of its budget through the Illinois State Library, a part of the Illinois Secretary of State's Office.
PrairieCat libraries pay PrairieCat membership fees which cover about 70% of the costs of operating the consortium. The Delegates Assembly approves the budget and member fees, which are based on a formula.	Fees	RAILS members do not pay dues to be part of the system.
PrairieCat has 12 full-time staff that maintain and support the system and administer the organization.	Staff	RAILS has around 80 staff members based out of five locations around northern Illinois. Around half of RAILS' staff members are involved with interlibrary loan delivery services.
The website is a great starting point and provides links for the help desk and online forms: **support.prairiecat.info** PrairieCat encourages members to submit tickets through the help desk system for issues and questions.	Contact Us	Visit the RAILS website for more information about services provided and contact details: **railslibraries.org**