


PrairieCat

Welcome and Introductions

Please introduce yourself

- ☐ Name and Library Name
- ☐ New to the library?
- ☐ New to the director position?
- ☐ New to PrairieCat?



138 PrairieCat Members

Library Type

104 Publics
31 Schools
3 Academic/Special

Membership

82 Fully Participating
22 Basic Online
34 Union List

Membership Levels

CIRCULATING

Fully Participating Members

All member functionality within the software

Voting members and may hold any office

Patrons have full access to the benefits of the ILS

CIRCULATING

Basic Online Members

All basic circulating, cataloging and online catalog functionality within the software

Voting members and may hold any office.

Patrons have full access to the benefits of the ILS.

Union Listing Members

Contribute their holdings to the database for resource sharing activities only

Limited use of functionality within the PrairieCat software

Use staff-initiated holds to request materials for their users from other PrairieCat libraries

Patrons of the library are not included as part of the patron database of the ILS

Union listing members have four representative who vote at Delegates Assembly.

Resource Sharing



C O N S O R T I A



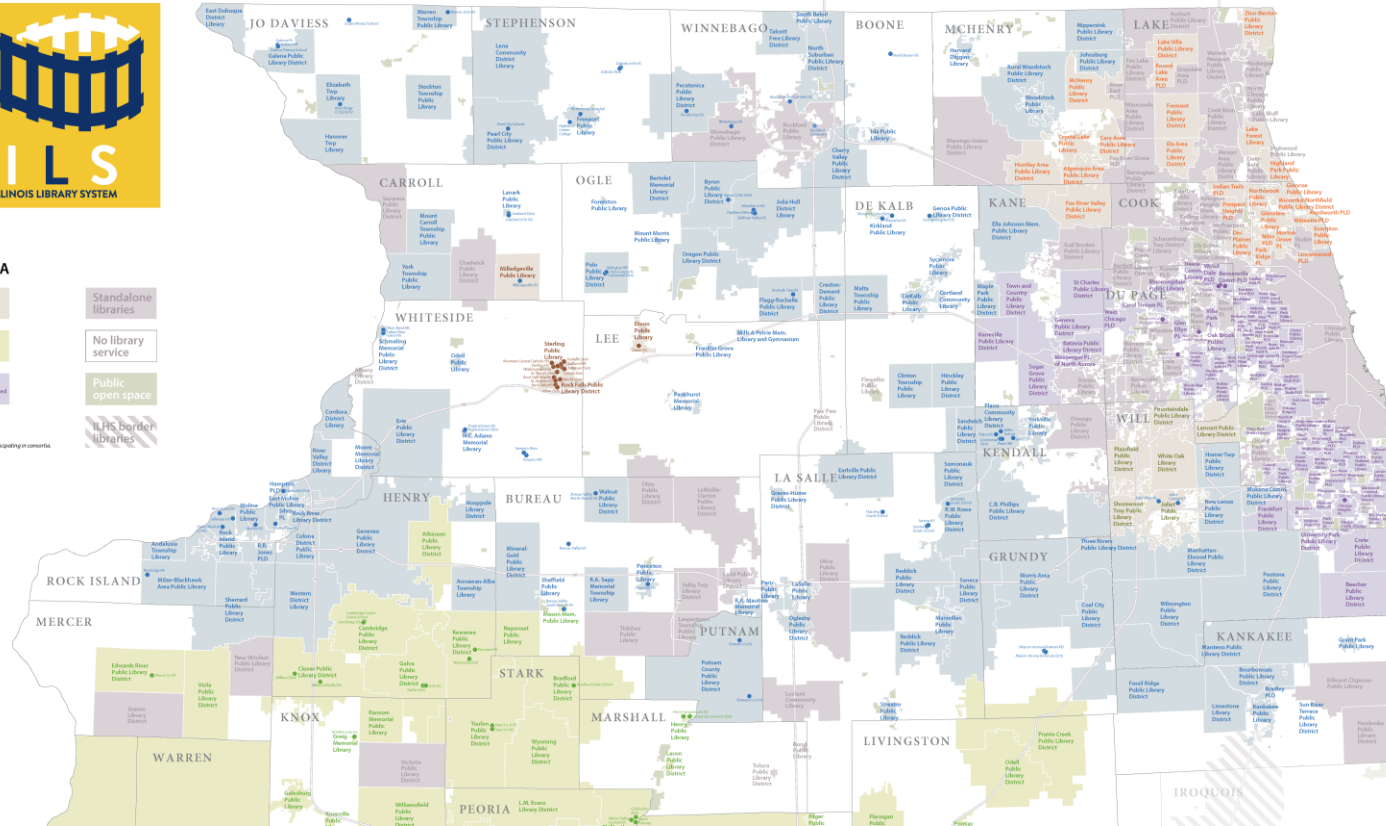
● Colored dots identify individual institutional members participating in consortia

Standalone libraries

No library service

Public open space

ILHS border libraries



Resource Sharing



1.2 MILLION
BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORDS



5.1 MILLION ITEM
RECORDS

What is the difference between PrairieCat and RAILS?

- PrairieCat is a consortium of 138 libraries that share an integrated library system (ILS).
- The PrairieCat member libraries each have an intergovernmental agreement (legal contract) with the other PrairieCat members to share services and the ILS.
- PrairieCat libraries pay PrairieCat membership fees which cover about 75% of the costs of operating the ILS.
- PrairieCat receives a grant from RAILS to provide support and services to the member libraries which covers the remaining costs. RAILS uses a grant from the Illinois State Library to cover the costs in its budget for supporting PrairieCat.
- RAILS membership is required to be a PrairieCat member.
- The Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) is one of three state-funded regional library agencies in Illinois (the other two are Illinois Heartland Library System and the Chicago Public Library).
- RAILS is primarily funded by a grant from the Illinois State Library, an office of Secretary of State and State Librarian.
- RAILS has approximately 1,300 members, representing more than 4,200 individual library facilities, and has other shared consortia like PrairieCat.
- 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.
- There are no membership fees to belong to RAILS, but all RAILS members must re-certify their membership each year.

What does PrairieCat do?

Manages Sierra and Vega products for member libraries.

Communicating with Innovative and other vendors

Troubleshooting problems

Assisting with cataloging

Database maintenance and cleanup

Updating circulation settings

Training members

Managing notices and alerts

Communicating and resolving issues

Managing catalog add-ons

What doesn't PrairieCat do?

These are some of the library support services we get frequent questions about:

- ☐ Manage delivery services (RAILS)
- ☐ Provide Continuing Education Credits
- ☐ Manage L2 (RAILS)
- ☐ Facilitate Networking Groups
- ☐ Find More Illinois (RAILS)
- ☐ Explore More Illinois (RAILS)
- ☐ eRead Illinois (RAILS)
- ☐ Overdrive/Ebooks (OMNI)

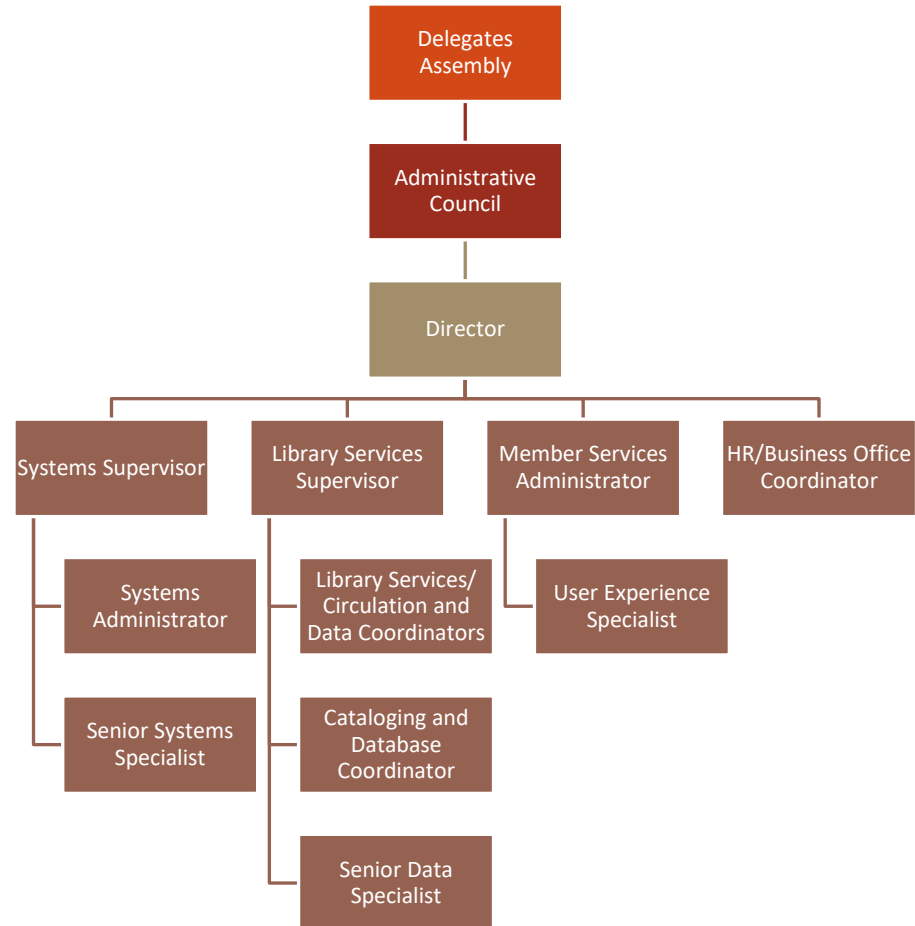
PrairieCat Terms

- LLSAP – local library system automation program – an Illinois term for a consortium that is partially supported by an Illinois library system (e.g., RAILS).
- ILS – integrated library system – also known as a library management system (LMS) – a unified computer system for a library or group of libraries, used to track items owned, orders made, bills paid and patrons who have borrowed. An ILS usually comprises a relational database, software to interact with that database, and two graphical users interfaces – one for patrons, one for staff. Separate software functions within the ILS can be called modules.
- Innovative – the vendor that supplies the software for PrairieCat's integrated library system.

PrairieCat Terms

- Syndetics Unbound– reader’s advisory information available in Vega Discover that provides series information, similar authors and titles, reviews and more.
- IPA Innovative Phone Alerts – PrairieCat uses IPA to make automated calls to patrons for holds pickup and overdue notices; and a Telephone Renewal System so patrons can call in to renew materials at 888-542-7259.
- eCommerce – the ability for patrons to pay fines and fees via My Account in the public catalog. Member libraries are reimbursed quarterly for eCommerce payments.
- PrairieCat Email – each library location has a PrairieCat email account in Microsoft 365 that PrairieCat uses to distribute paging lists, member notices and reports.

PrairieCat Organization



Governance

Administrative Council

- ❑ 11 Elected Members
- ❑ Monthly Meetings

Delegates Assembly

- ❑ 104 Representatives from Circulating Libraries
- ❑ 4 Union List Representatives
- ❑ Quarterly Meetings

Delegates Assembly

What is a Delegate?

Each Fully Participating and Basic Online member library appoints its chief administrator or another staff member to act as the Delegate on the Delegates Assembly. The Delegate may also designate, in writing, an alternate to vote in their absence. The four Union List member representatives are also voting members of the Delegates Assembly.

When does Delegates Assembly meet?

Delegates Assembly meets quarterly in July, October, January, and April on the last Wednesday of the month. The PrairieCat fiscal year budget is passed at the April meeting. Registration details are listed in L2 and on PrairieCat website.

Do delegates need to attend every Delegates Assembly meeting?

Delegates Assembly attendance is a membership requirement for Fully Participating members, Basic Online members, and the four Union List representatives per the IGA and Bylaws.

Non-Attendance Fine

If a Delegate or Alternate for a member does not attend **at least two meetings in one fiscal year** that member will be charged \$150.00 per PrairieCat bylaws. This rule is in place to assure that membership attends and we have sufficient quorum to carry out business.

Delegates Assembly

Upcoming Delegates Assembly

- ❑ Wednesday, July 30, 2025 10:30am to 12pm
- ❑ [See website for details](#)
- ❑ Meetings Sites:
 - ❑ New Lenox Public Library District
 - ❑ Freeport Public Library
 - ❑ Princeton Public Library
 - ❑ RAILS Coal Valley Videoconference Room
 - ❑ Online via Zoom

Attendance is required for Fully Participating and Basic Online members.

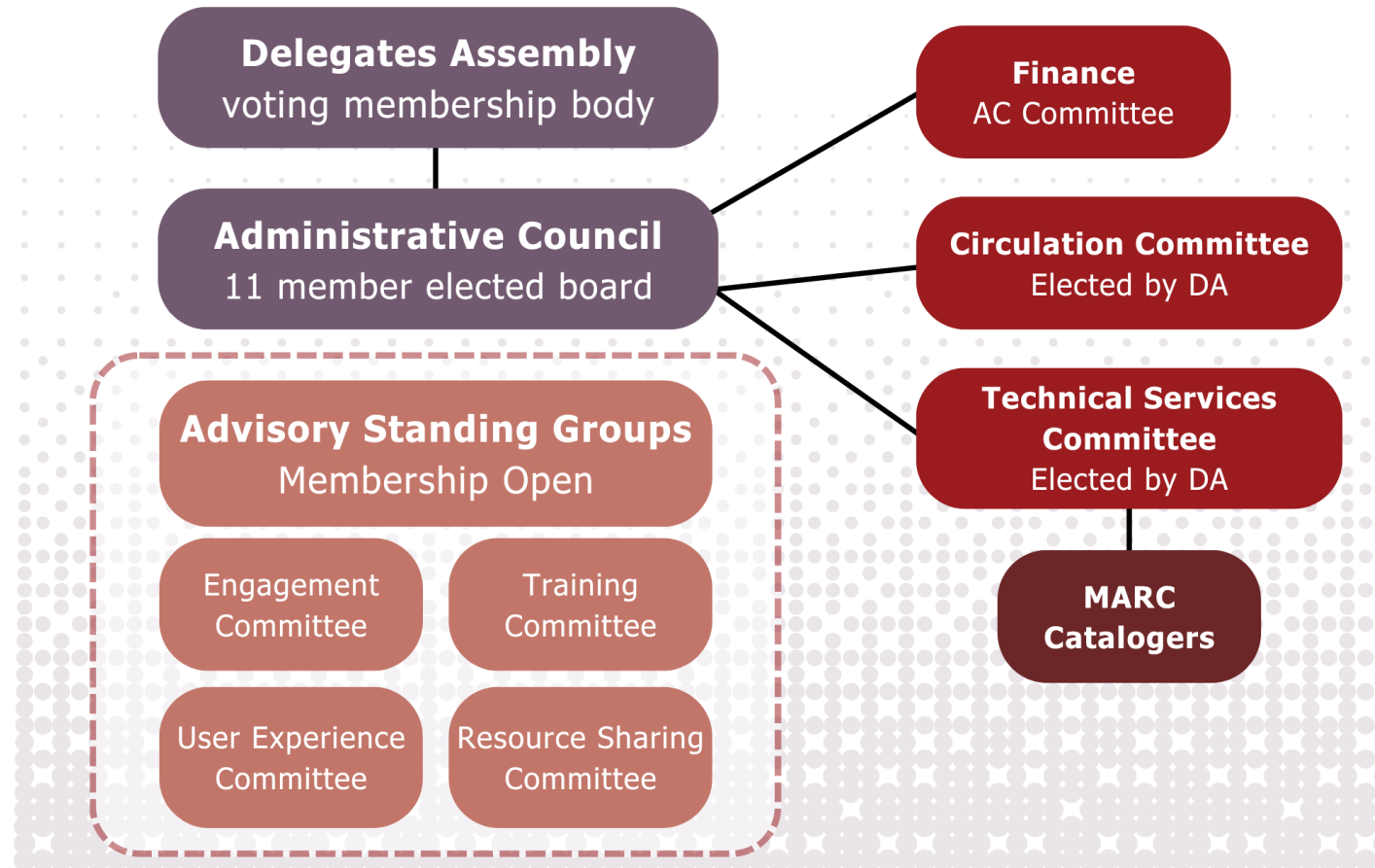
PrairieCat must meet quorum among the in-person meeting locations around the PrairieCat service area.

Compliance Reminder

Responsibilities of Member Libraries

- Complying with PrairieCat policies and procedures as detailed in the IGA, Bylaws, General Policy Manual, Circulation Policies and Procedures Manual, and Technical Services Policies and Procedures Manual
- Twice a year, Administrative Council reviews member compliance report regarding:
 - **OCLC membership**
 - **Adding items to PrairieCat**
 - **Lending materials on PrairieCat**
 - **Item Entry Certification**

PrairieCat Committees



Budget and Finance

Elements of PrairieCat member fees (circulating libraries):

Per library fee-flat fee. Basic Online members pay approximately 70% of the Fully Participating member amount.

“Usage” fee, made up of three-year averages of circulation, patron, and item counts

Annual reserves contribution. Basic Online members pay approximately 70% of the Fully Participating contribution

Annual hosting fee, again with Basic Online paying 70% of the Fully Participating amount

Union Listing Fees:

A per library fee that is approximately 25% of the fully participating library fee

A reserves fee that is approximately 25% of the fully participating library fee

Special Projects



Vega Discover Catalog

Visit TalentLMS for training courses
Find your library's customized catalog url on the Quick Library Lookup



Mobile App

70 members have opted in to Innovative's Vega Mobile app



PUG Day 2025

Professional development and training for library staff.
[September 26, 2025](#)
[East Moline, IL](#)



Director Resources

[RAILS CE Archive – Directors Essentials](#)

[RAILS CE Archive – Compliance with the Open Meetings Act](#)

[FOIA and OMA Training](#)

[Library Service Map](#)

[Annual Library Certification](#)

[Public Libraries | IPLAR Information](#)

[IL State Library Grant Programs](#)

Communication and Logins

L2 login

Create your own
Used to log in to PrairieCat Website

Talent LMS login

Create your own
Different from L2/PrairieCat website

Sierra login

A mix of shared and
individual or “named” logins

PrairieCat Mailing Lists

support.prairiecat.info/mailling-lists

PrairieCat Newsletter

<http://eepurl.com/bW-ILD>

Facebook @PrairieCatLibraries

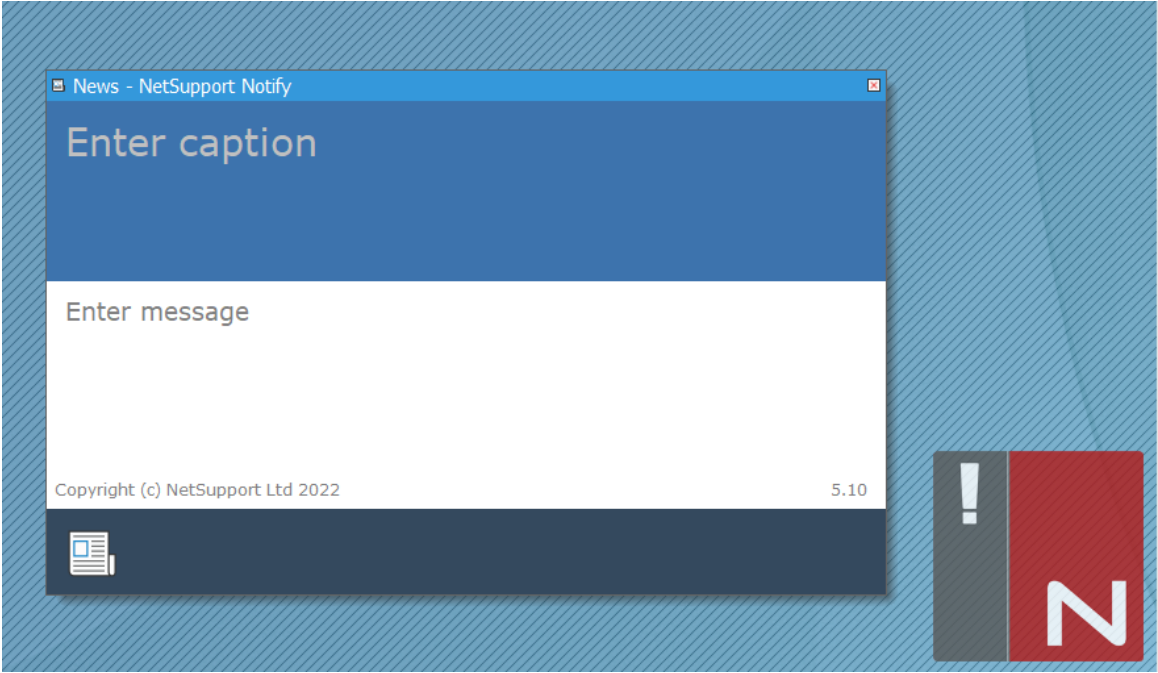
PrairieCat Mailing Lists

support.prairiecat.info/mailling-lists

	PrairieCat Email Subject Categories
CRITICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• System-wide, unplanned, critical issue• Sent to all PrairieCat primary mailing list subscribers• Concurrently sent to NetSupport Notify subscribers
ALERT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• System-wide, planned issues• Sent to all PrairieCat primary mailing list subscribers• Concurrently sent to NetSupport Notify subscribers as needed
UPDATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report on an ongoing issue or project (critical or non-critical)• Non-critical issues—updated weekly• Sent to all PrairieCat primary mailing list subscribers
NEWS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member news• General announcements
TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Announcements of new training sessions• Reminders about upcoming training• Tips & Tricks
REPORTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Announcements when reports and statistics are posted, with action steps
BRIEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Executive summaries from governance and committee meetings

NetSupport Notify

[Desktop Notification System](#)



Websites

PrairieCat Specific

PrairieCat Website

<http://support.prairiecat.info>

PrairieCat Help Desk

<http://helpdesk.prairiecat.info>

PrairieCat Email (notices and paging lists)

<https://login.microsoftonline.com/>

Talent LMS Training

<https://prairiecat.talentlms.com/>

Other

RAILS

<http://www.railslibraries.org>

RAILS Delivery Help Desk

<https://railslibraries.org/delivery>

Upcoming RAILS CE events

<https://railslibraries.org/education>

Library Learning (L2)

<https://librarylearning.org/>

Illinois State Library

<https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/library/>



Quick System Status: ● Sierra ● Encore ● eCommerce



Help Desk



PrairieCat staff are available to assist employees of member libraries.

Phone: (877) 542-7257

[Contact Help Desk](#)

News

PrairieCat Closed - Labor Day

We will be closed on Monday Sept. 4th in Observance of Labor Day. No phone or one line support will be available...

Calendar

PrairieCat Back to School Session

Tue, Sep 12 2023, 12:30pm - 3:30pm
[Learn More](#)

Members

PrairieCat Users Group (PUG) Day

Friday, September 29, 2023

In-person event at Waubensee Community

PrairieCat Website

support.prairiecat.info



[Help](#) [L2 Calendar](#) [Log out](#)

[Members](#) [News](#) [Events & Meetings](#) [Services](#) [Training](#) [Resources](#) [About](#) [Staff Intranet](#)

Quick System Status: ● Sierra ● Encore ● eCommerce

[Home](#) > [Help](#)

Standard Support Hours

8:30 am - 5 pm | Monday-Friday

(877) 542-7257

Critical Phone Support Hours

5 pm - 9 pm | Monday-Friday

9 am - 5 pm | Saturday

12 pm - 5 pm | Sunday

Special Support Contacts

Billing issues:

Contact Carolyn Coulter

RAILS delivery issues:

railsdelivery@railslibraries.org

Help

[View](#)

[Access control](#)

[Edit](#)

[Unpublish](#)

[Outline](#)

[Delete](#)

[Revisions](#)

Library users: Please contact [your home library](#) for assistance with the PrairieCat catalog.

Contact Help Desk

PrairieCat staff are available to assist employees of member libraries.

[Submit a Ticket](#)

Phone: (877) 542-7257

Known Issues

Status

There are no known issues at this time. Visit the issue queue for a complete list of previous issues.

☐ Any

Need help? Ask
the Help Desk

PrairieCat Help Desk

When to Call | Critical issue | 877.542.7257

Addressed during business hours and after hours on-call support

- ☐ A service is down (Sierra, Ecommerce, Vega Discover etc.)
- ☐ Circulation is impacted
- ☐ Unable to perform key job functions

When to Open a Ticket | Standard issue | Submit a help desk ticket

Addressed during business hours

- ☐ Questions and troubleshooting
- ☐ Report issue
- ☐ System changes (for example, IP address changes)
- ☐ Integrating new services
- ☐ Report request

support.prairiecat.info/help

Ticket Portal

- This is the main hub of the ticket system
- Submit and Track tickets here
 - Submitting tickets through the Forms on the support site remains the same
- Access this by going to the direct website or the Support Site and clicking a link



Support Center Home



Open a New Ticket



Check Ticket Status

Welcome to the Support Center

In order to streamline support requests and better serve you, we utilize a support ticket system. Every support request is assigned a unique ticket number which you can use to track the progress and responses online. For your reference we provide complete archives and history of all your support requests. A valid email address is required to submit a ticket.

Open a New Ticket

Check Ticket Status

helpdesk.prairiecat.info

Circulation Services

Please open a Help Desk ticket if you need changes made to the circulation configuration in Sierra for your library. Examples of changes PrairieCat staff make regularly are:

- ☐ Loan rules and fine rate changes.
- ☐ Adjusting limits by format.
- ☐ Customizing date due slips, receipts or hold pickup wrappers.
- ☐ Adding self-checkout workstations.
- ☐ Adding days closed for holidays or special closings.
- ☐ Special projects such as remodeling or moving to a new building.
- ☐ Loan Rule Review – Not sure how your library's loan rules are setup? Put in a help desk ticket.

System Services | Reports

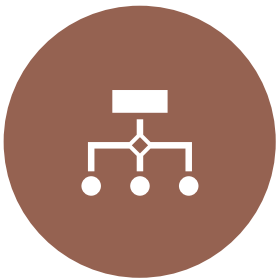


Monthly statistical reports are posted on the support website

Other reports include: eCommerce transactions, items that have been too long in a certain status, new item conversions, withdrawn items, problem holds, and more.



Members can also run their own reports using Decision Center or Create List (FP only).



PrairieCat staff can run custom reports when requested, or to do bulk updates on a group of records such as a group of item or patron records.

Submit a Help Desk ticket if you have a report need or assistance with updating records.



If you are having any issues connecting to PrairieCat services, please contact us at helpdesk.prairiecat.info or 877-542-7257.

Cataloging

SERVICES & ITEM ENTRY
CERTIFICATION

- ☐ Load new bibliographic records from OCLC within 48 hours of member request
- ☐ Provide original cataloging completed by PrairieCat Catalogers as part of PrairieCat membership benefits
- ☐ The PrairieCat Catalogers and certified member catalogers regularly perform database cleanup including
 - ☐ record merges and clean-up
 - ☐ adding content to bibliographic records
 - ☐ multi-volume clean-up and more

Visit Resources > Forms section of the support website to find the forms to report duplicate records or needed bibliographic record clean-up. Please report issues you see, so we can keep our database as clean as possible!

ITEM ENTRY TRAINING PROCESS

Talent LMS
Courses



Complete prerequisites and series of 6 Item Entry Courses

Temporary
Tech Login



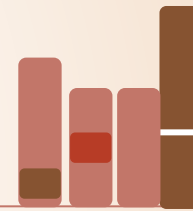
Receive temp login to practice adding items

Talent LMS
Practicum



Complete final course by submitting examples of item records you created

Certification



After completing practicum, your named tech login is made permanent



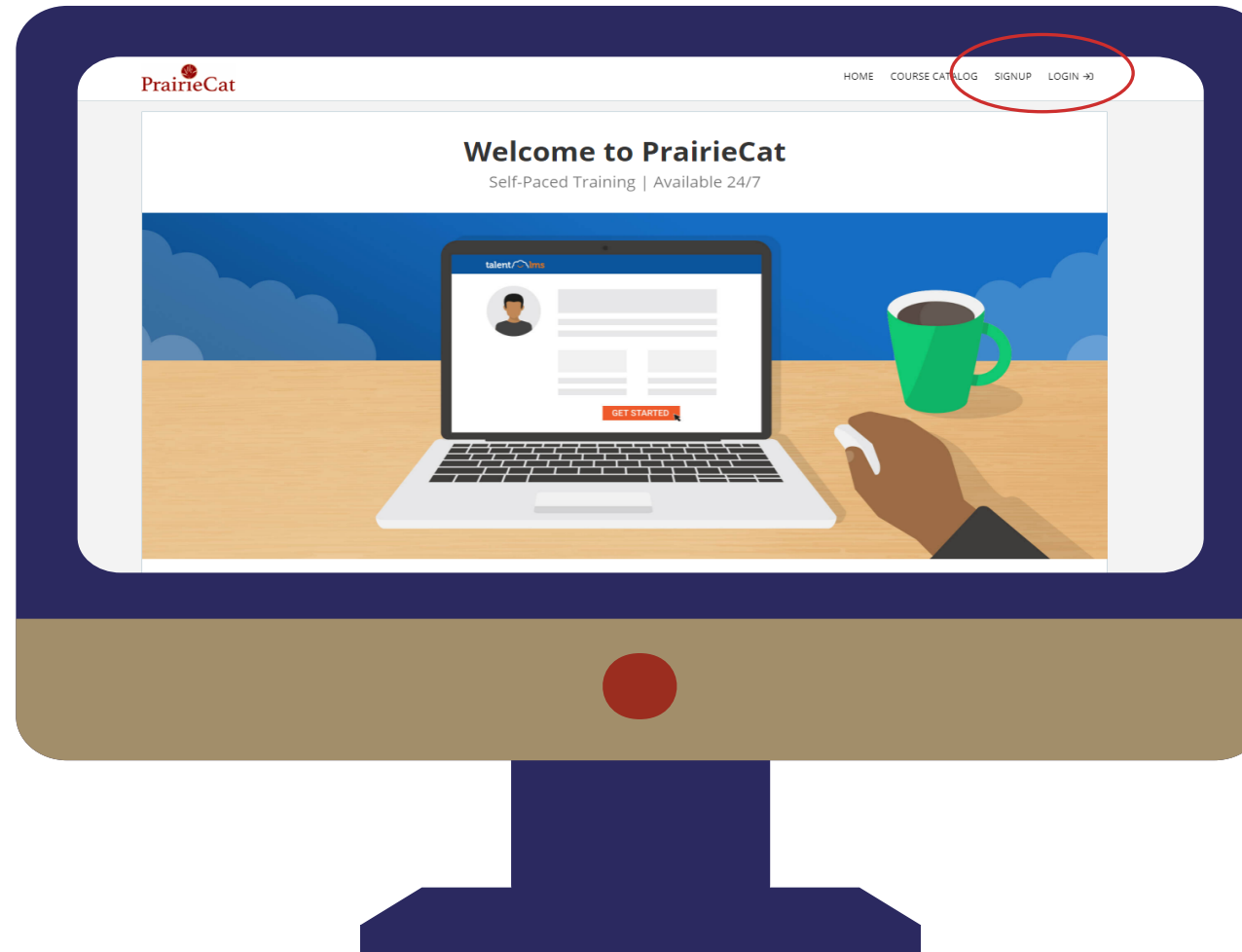
Training

- ❑ PrairieCat staff offer live, on-demand training for PrairieCat members.
- ❑ The core Sierra training classes are offered online via Talent LMS. Other more technical classes are offered on-demand via Zoom (and in-person when possible). [On-demand training form](#)
- ❑ The Sierra Navigation class is a prerequisite for all other Sierra classes.
- ❑ PrairieCat training events that are open for all members are listed in L2 and on the PrairieCat website.
- ❑ [Training Resources and Documentation](#) are posted on the PrairieCat support site. Log-in to access.

Training on Talent LMS

Self-paced

Available 24/7



Free Training

Instructor Help

Contact Info

Carolyn Coulter, Director

Carolyn.coulter@prairiecat.org

Elizabeth Smith, Member Services

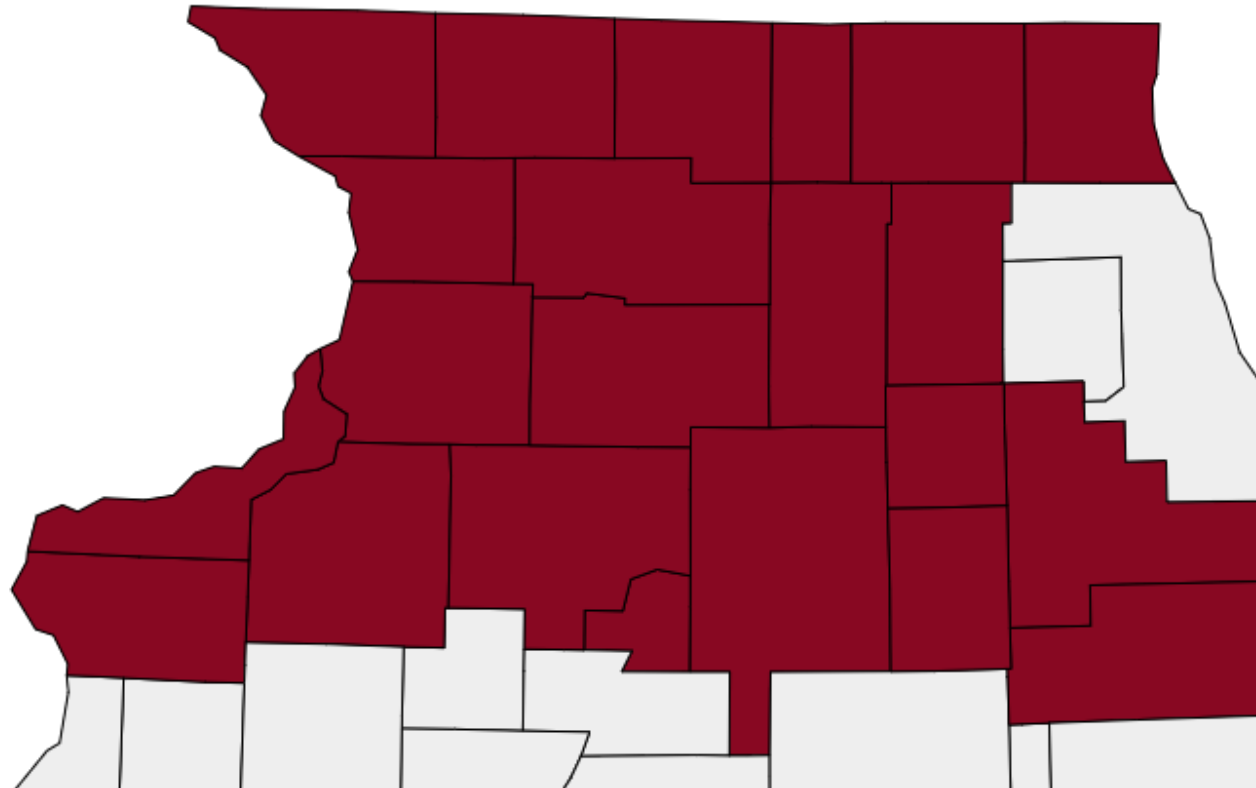
Administrator elizabeth.smith@prairiecat.org



PrairieCat



Any questions



Member Sharing
