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.
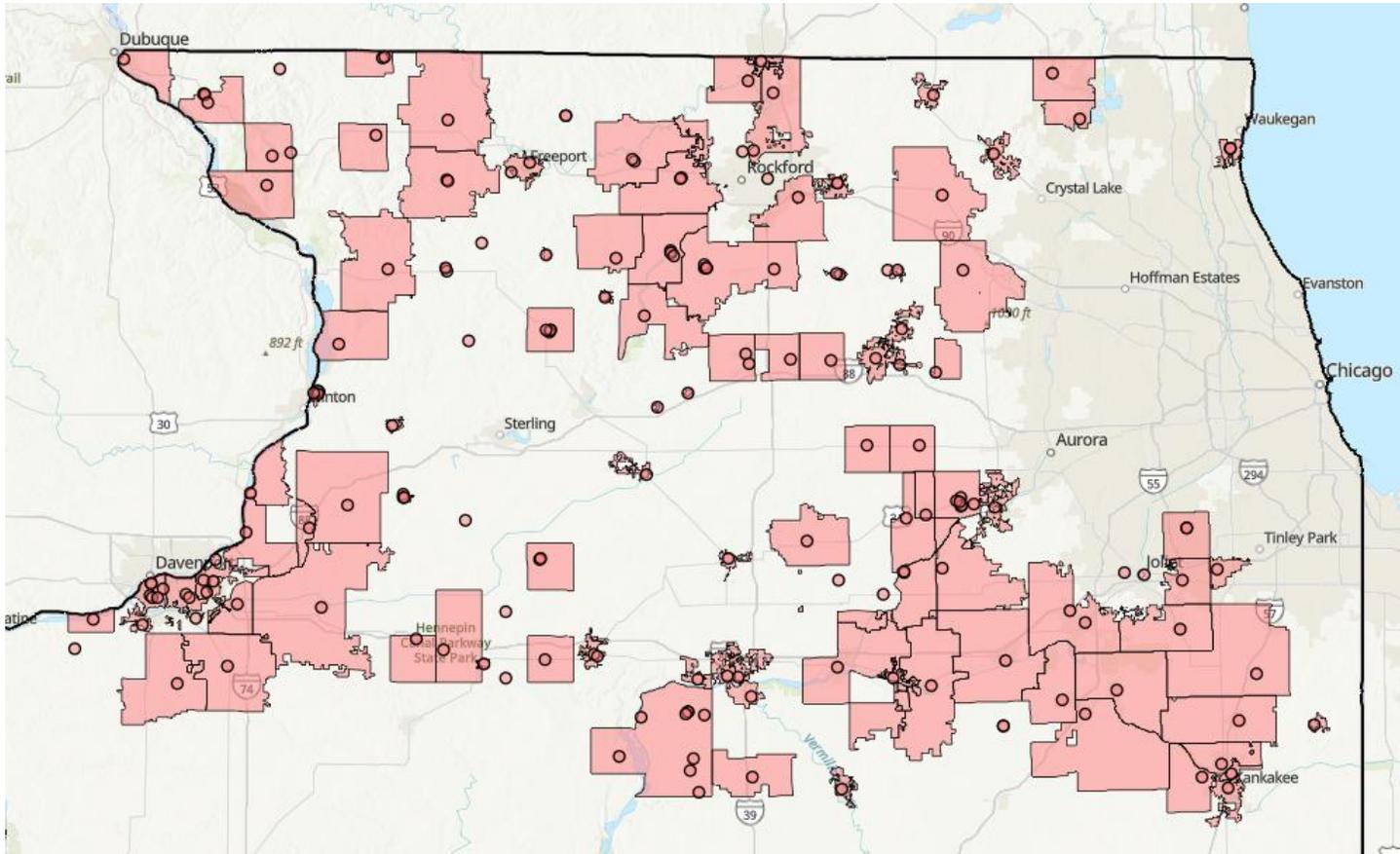
Resource Sharing

RAILS interactive resource sharing map

Resource Sharing

1.2 MILLION BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORDS

5 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)

❑ Manage L2 (RAILS)

❑ Facilitate Networking Groups

❑ Find More Illinois (RAILS)

❑ Explore More Illinois (RAILS)

❑ eRead Illinois (RAILS)

❑ Overdrive/Ebooks (OMNI)

PrairieCat Organization
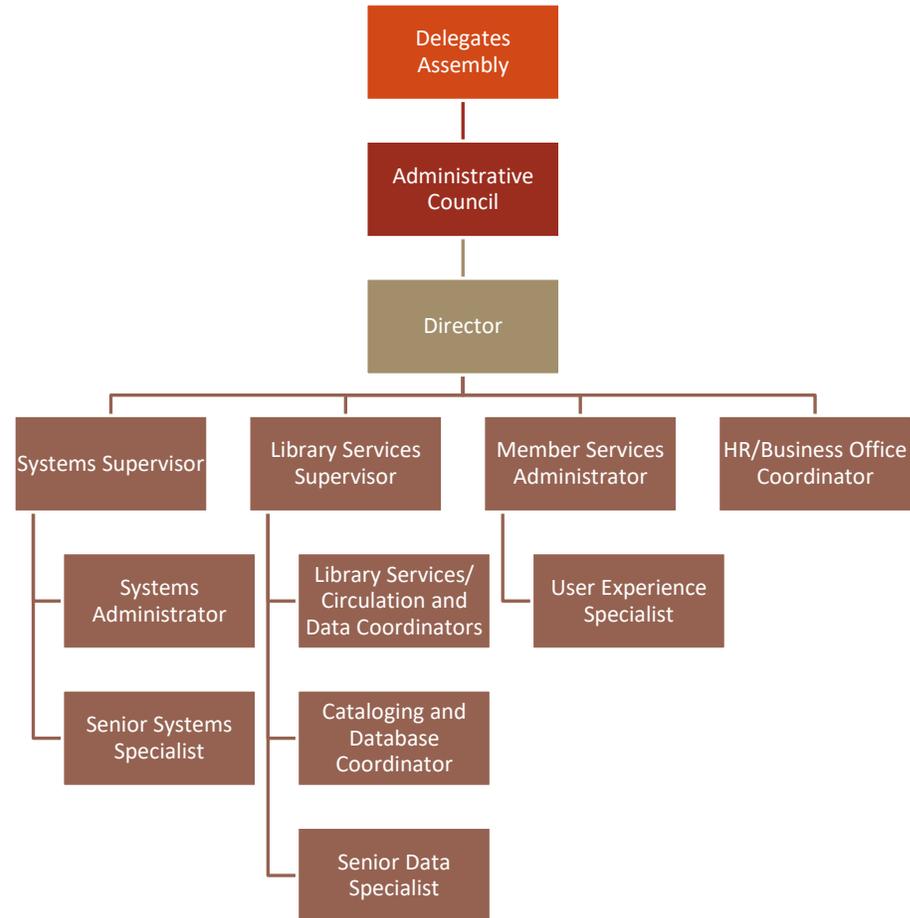
Governance

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 members attend, and we have sufficient quorum to carry out business.

Delegates Assembly

Upcoming Delegates Assembly

❑ Wednesday, April 29, 2026 10:30am to 12:30pm

❑ See website for details

❑ One in-person location at Senica's Oak Ridge Golf Club in LaSalle, IL
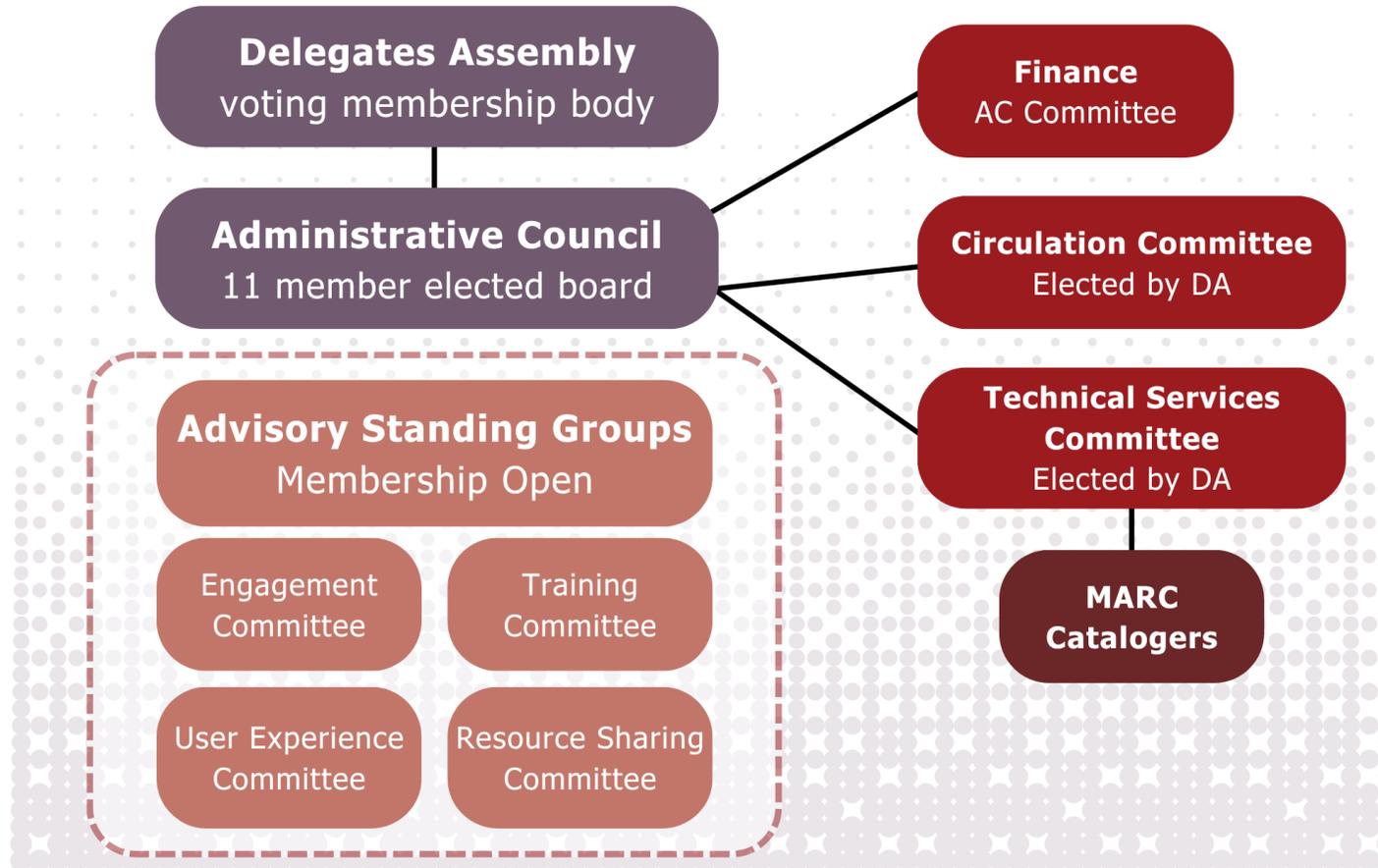
❑ Lunch provided by PrairieCat after the meeting

Attendance is required for Fully Participating and Basic Online members.

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

Delegates Assembly
voting membership body

Administrative Council
11 member elected board

Finance
AC Committee

Circulation Committee
Elected by DA

Technical Services Committee
Elected by DA

MARC Catalogers

Advisory Standing Groups
Membership Open

Engagement Committee

Training Committee

User Experience Committee

Resource Sharing Committee

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

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

Budget and Finance

OCLC
Membership in OCLC Required

OCLC Fees – Circulating Members – OCLC fees are incorporated into the PrairieCat fees

OCLC Fees – Union List Members – Billed directly

eRead Illinois
Circulating Members – Voted to join as a consortium – Billed directly by RAILS

Mobile App
Circulating Members – Opt in (currently 71 members participate) – Billed directly

Special Projects

Vega Discover Customizations

Visit TalentLMS for training courses

Find your library's customized catalog url on the Quick Library Lookup

Mobile App

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

Q&A Training Sessions

Live Zoom Sessions

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, April 8, 2026 | 11:30am to 12:30pm

PrairieCat Libraries Mobile - Quarterly Check-In and Q&A | **Zoom**

Tuesday, May 5, 2026 | 10am to 2:30pm

PrairieCat Resource Sharing Summit | **DeKalb Public Library**

Wednesday, June 10, 2026 | 10am to 2pm

Book Doctor Workshop by Demco | **Moline Public Library**

PUG DAY

PrairieCat Users Group Day

Virtual Conference

September 24 & 25, 2026
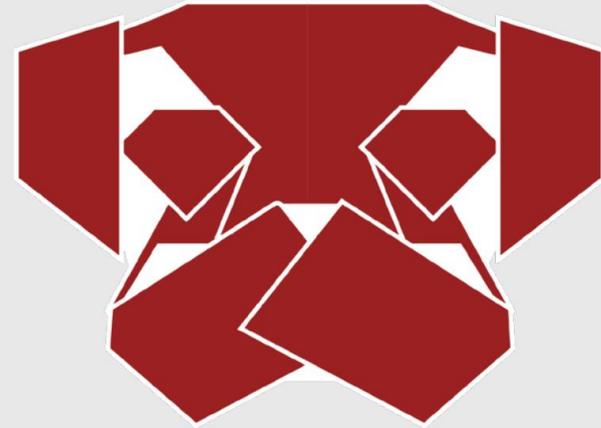
PrairieCat Users Group Day (PUG Day) is an annual event dedicated to professional development, networking, and continuing education for member library staff. PUG Day will alternate each year from in person to virtual.

PUG Day 2026 Virtual

Date: Thursday, September 24 and Friday, September 25, 2026

Where: Virtual via Zoom Sessions

Program details and registration information will be shared when finalized.

Submit program proposals

Directors University 2026 | Save the Date

Monday, Aug 10, 2026 - Thursday, Aug 13, 2026

Directors University Core

Bloomington-Normal, Illinois

This professional development is intended for first-time directors and directors new to Illinois from public libraries of all shapes and sizes.

Director Resources

RAILS CE Archive – Directors University On Demand

FOIA and OMA Training

Library Service Map

Annual Library Certification

Public Libraries | IPLAR Information

IL State Library Grant Programs

School District Library Grant Program
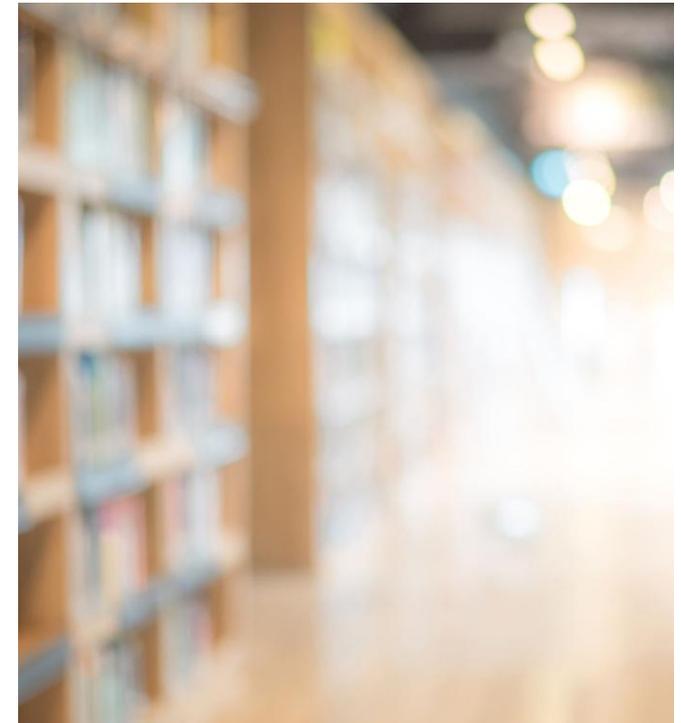
Communication and Logins

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/mailing-lists

PrairieCat Newsletter
http://eepurl.com/bW-ILD

Facebook @PrairieCatLibraries

PrairieCat Mailing Lists
support.prairiecat.info/mailing-lists

NetSupport Notify
Desktop Notification System

PrairieCat Email Subject Categories

CRITICAL
- System-wide, unplanned, critical issue
- Sent to all PrairieCat primary mailing list subscribers
- Concurrently sent to NetSupport Notify subscribers

ALERT
- System-wide, planned issues
- Sent to all PrairieCat primary mailing list subscribers
- Concurrently sent to NetSupport Notify subscribers as needed

UPDATE
- 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
- Member news
- General announcements

TRAINING
- Announcements of new training sessions
- Reminders about upcoming training
- Tips & Tricks

REPORTS
- Announcements when reports and statistics are posted, with action steps

BRIEF
- Executive summaries from governance and committee meetings

News - NetSupport Notify

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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/

PrairieCat Website

SUPPORT.PRAIRIECAT.INFO

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 to submit and track tickets

- Submit issues / requests through the Forms on the support site

- Access this by going to the direct website or the Support Site and clicking a link

PrairieCat

🏠 Support Center Home   📄 Open a New Ticket   📄 Check Ticket Status

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.

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.
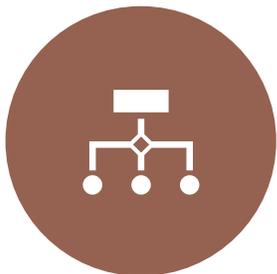
System Services | Reports
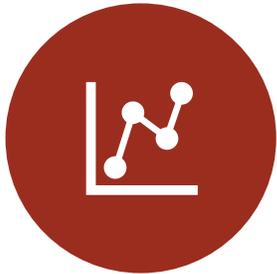
Monthly statistical reports are posted on the support website

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
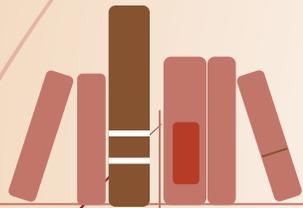
Complete prerequisites and series of 6 Item Entry Courses
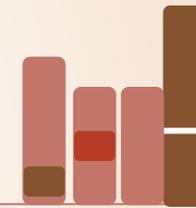
Temporary Tech Login

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
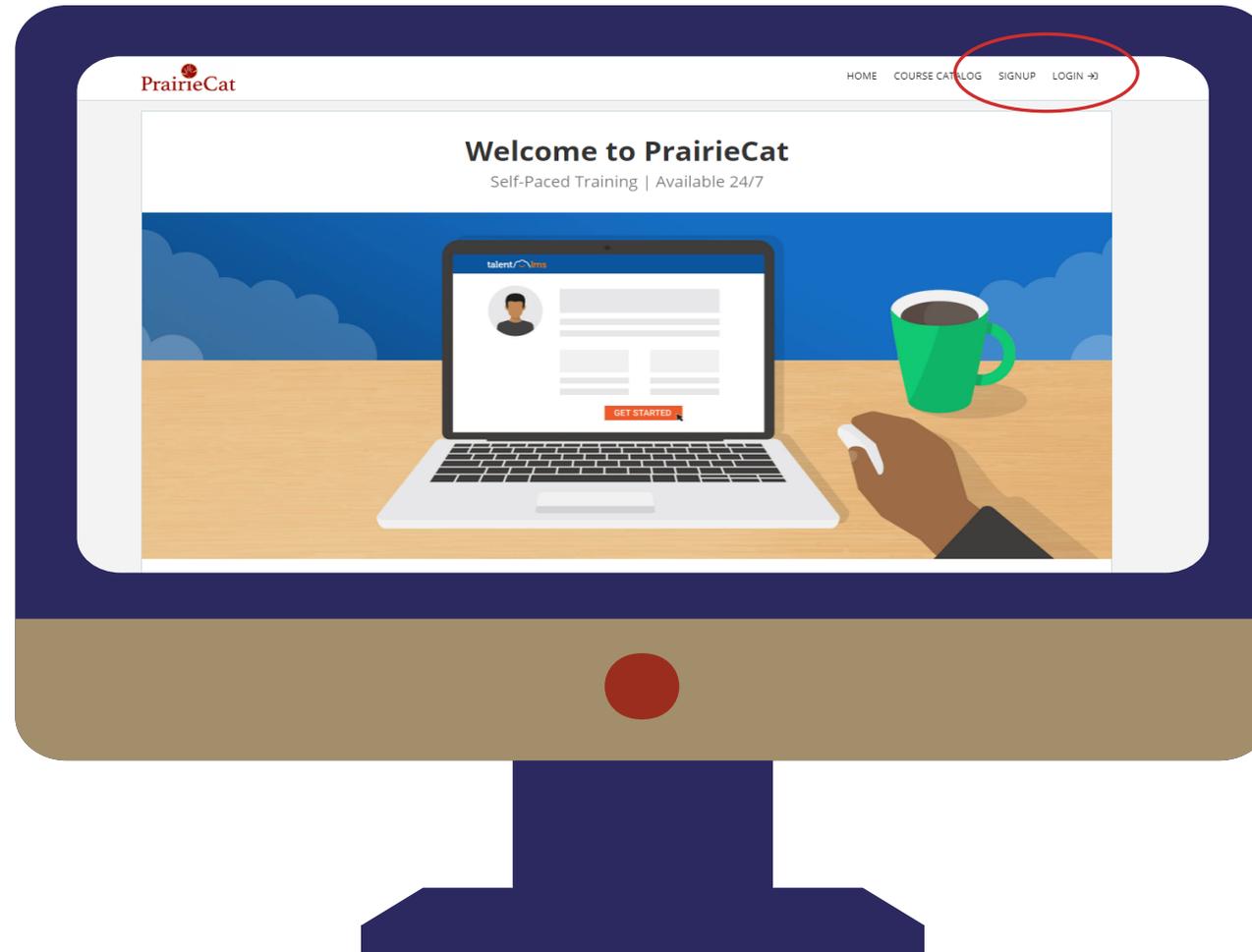
Self-paced

Available 24/7

Free Training

Instructor Help

Contact Info

Carolyn Coulter, Director

Carolyn.coulter@prairiecat.org

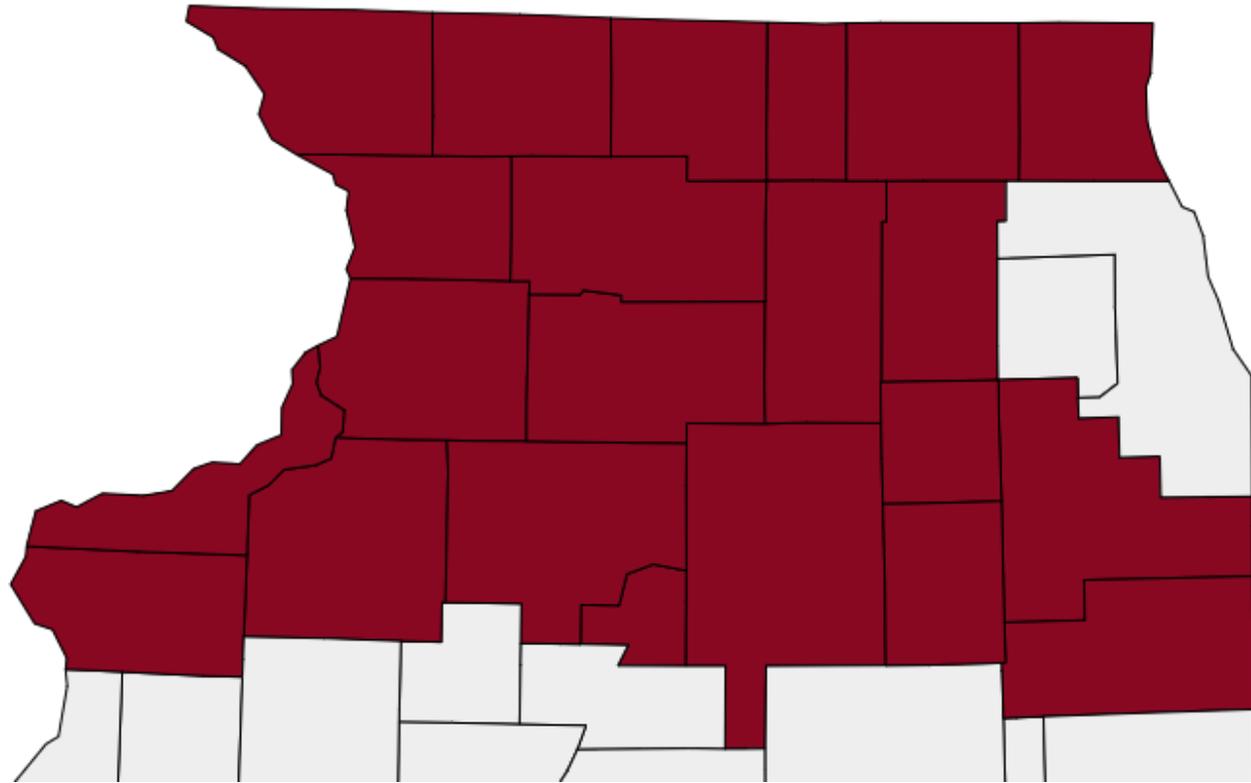Elizabeth Smith, Member Services Administrator
elizabeth.smith@prairiecat.org

Any questions

Member Sharing