



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

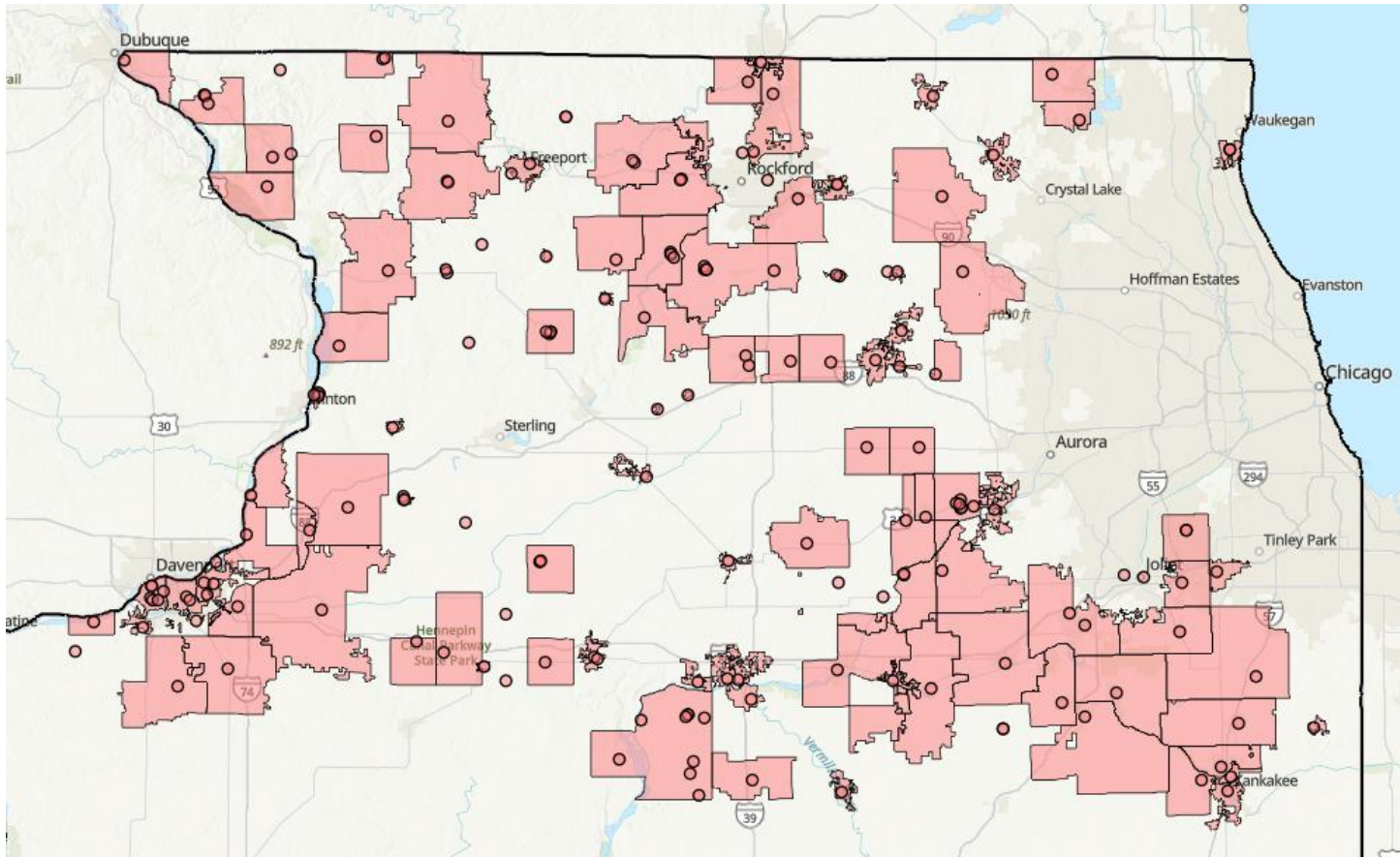
Contribute their holdings to the database for resource sharing activities only

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

[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

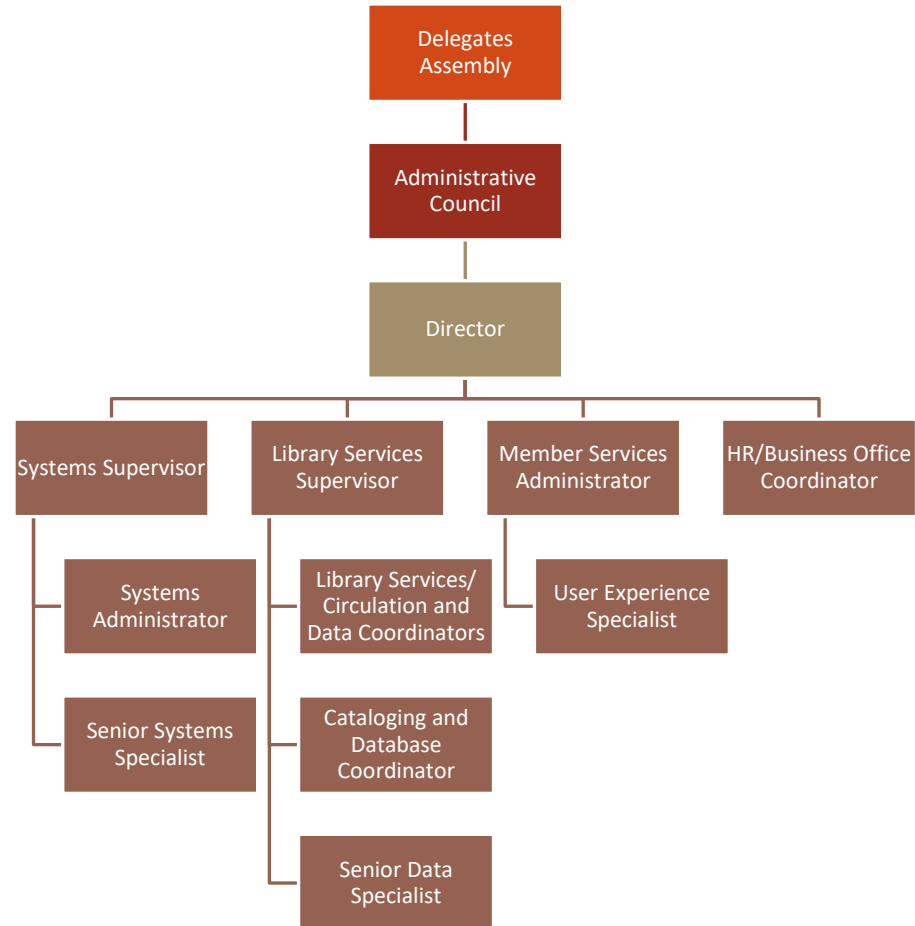
Managing catalog add-ons

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, July 29, 2026 10:30am to 12pm
- ❑ [See website for details](#)
- ❑ Meetings Sites:
 - ❑ New Lenox Public Library District
 - ❑ Freeport Public Library
 - ❑ Ida Public Library
 - ❑ RAILS Coal Valley Videoconference Room
 - ❑ Online via Zoom

Attendance is required for Fully Participating and Basic Online members.

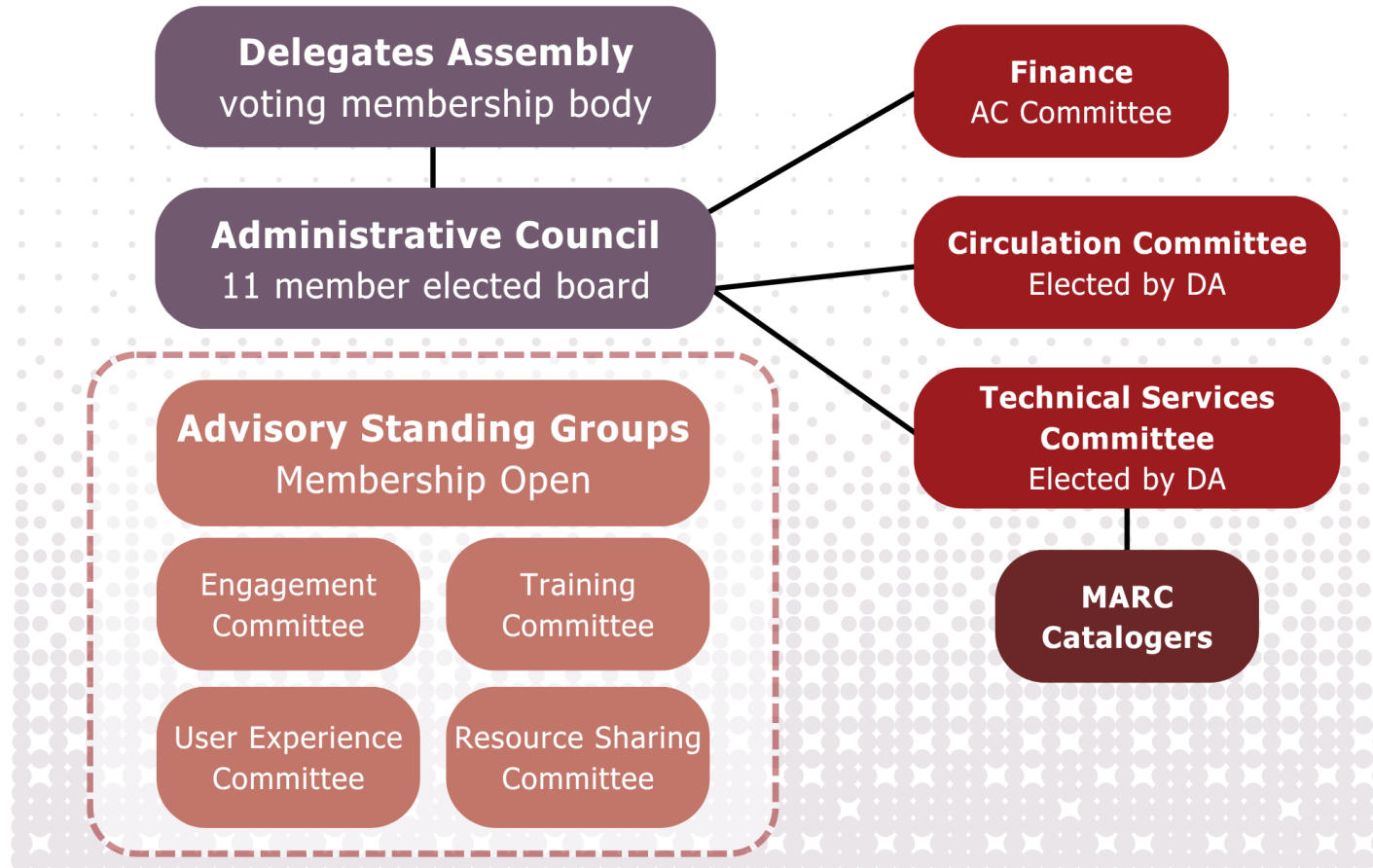
PrairieCat must meet quorum among the in-person meeting locations around the PrairieCat service area.

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

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

Member Events | IPLAR Sessions

Laura Keyes, the Library Program Specialist at the Illinois State Library has added several new sessions to the L2 Events Calendar. These are IPLAR Open Office Hours and you are welcome to attend and ask questions about the IPLAR. I've attended several of Laura's sessions and they are excellent!

These sessions are available from the **Illinois State Library**

[Tuesday, June 23, 2026 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm](#)

[Wednesday, June 24, 2026 9:30 am – 10:30 am](#)

[Monday, July 20, 2026 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm](#)

[Friday, July 24, 2026 11:00 am – 12:00 pm](#)

PrairieCat is also offering **PrairieCat IPLAR Q&A** sessions focused on gathering your Sierra-specific statistics for the IPLAR:

[Monday, June 15, 2026 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm](#)

[Wednesday, July 15, 2026 10:00 am – 11:00 am](#)

[Tuesday, August 11, 2026 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm](#)

Member Events | Upcoming

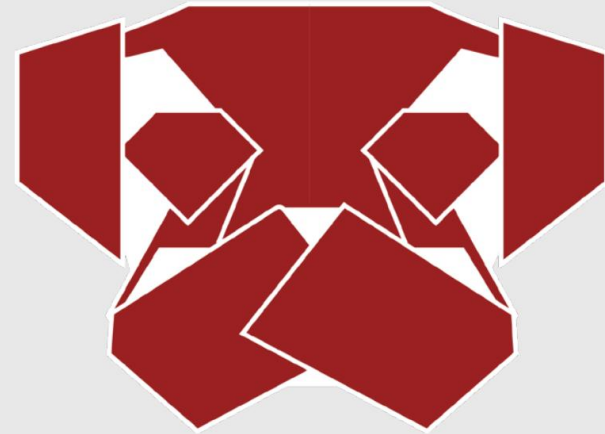
PrairieCat Ask Me Anything with PrairieCat Director

Monday, June 15, 2026 10 to 11pm | [Online via Zoom](#)

Join PrairieCat Director Carolyn Coulter for an open house to ask any questions you might have related to PrairieCat. This is an informal virtual meeting with the opportunity to discuss what's going on at PrairieCat, share your feedback, and ask questions.



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.

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](#)

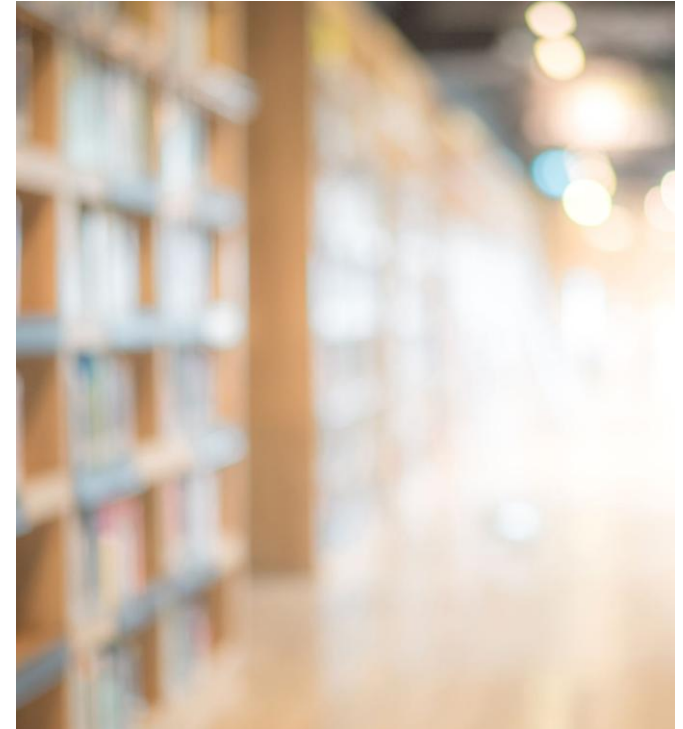
[Library Service Map](#)

[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/mailling-lists

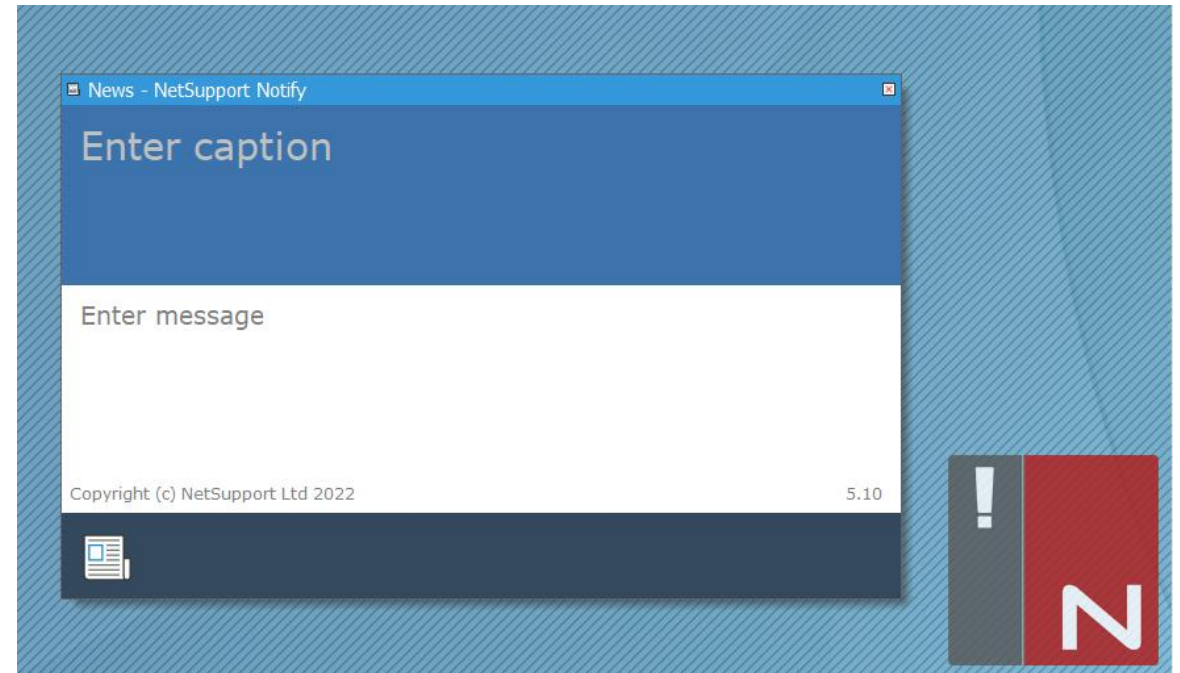


PrairieCat Email Subject Categories

CRITICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">System-wide, unplanned, critical issueSent to all PrairieCat primary mailing list subscribersConcurrently sent to NetSupport Notify subscribers
ALERT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">System-wide, planned issuesSent to all PrairieCat primary mailing list subscribersConcurrently 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 weeklySent to all PrairieCat primary mailing list subscribers
NEWS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Member newsGeneral announcements
TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Announcements of new training sessionsReminders about upcoming trainingTips & 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  Vega Discover  eCommerce  Mobile App

My Bookshelf will become My Account Portal

Manage checkouts, holds, reading history, fines,
saved searches, bookmarks, and more



Check it out in Vega Discover starting May 5th, 2026

Help Desk for Library Employees



PrairieCat staff are available to assist
employees of member libraries.

**Library users needing assistance with the
PrairieCat catalog, please contact your
home library.**

Phone: (877) 542-7257

[Contact Help Desk](#)

PrairieCat Website

[SUPPORT.PRAIRIECAT.INFO](https://support.prairiecat.info)



Quick System Status: ✓ Sierra ✓ Vega Discover ✓ eCommerce ✓ Mobile App

Home > Help Desk

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

- View
- Access control
- Edit
- Unpublish
- Outline
- Delete
- Revisions

Help Desk

Contact Help Desk

PrairieCat staff are available to assist employees of member libraries.

Library users needing assistance with the PrairieCat catalog, please contact [your home library](#).

[Submit a Ticket](#)

Phone: (877) 542-7257

Known Issues

Status

- All
- Open

Issue	Added	Updated	Status
Vega Issues - Public Web Browser	02/23/2024 - 2:47pm	05/23/2024 - 2:08pm	Open

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



 [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



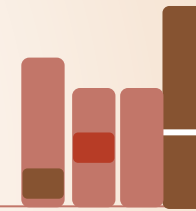
Receive temp login to practice adding items

Talent LMS
Practicum



Complete final course by submitting examples of item records you created

Certification



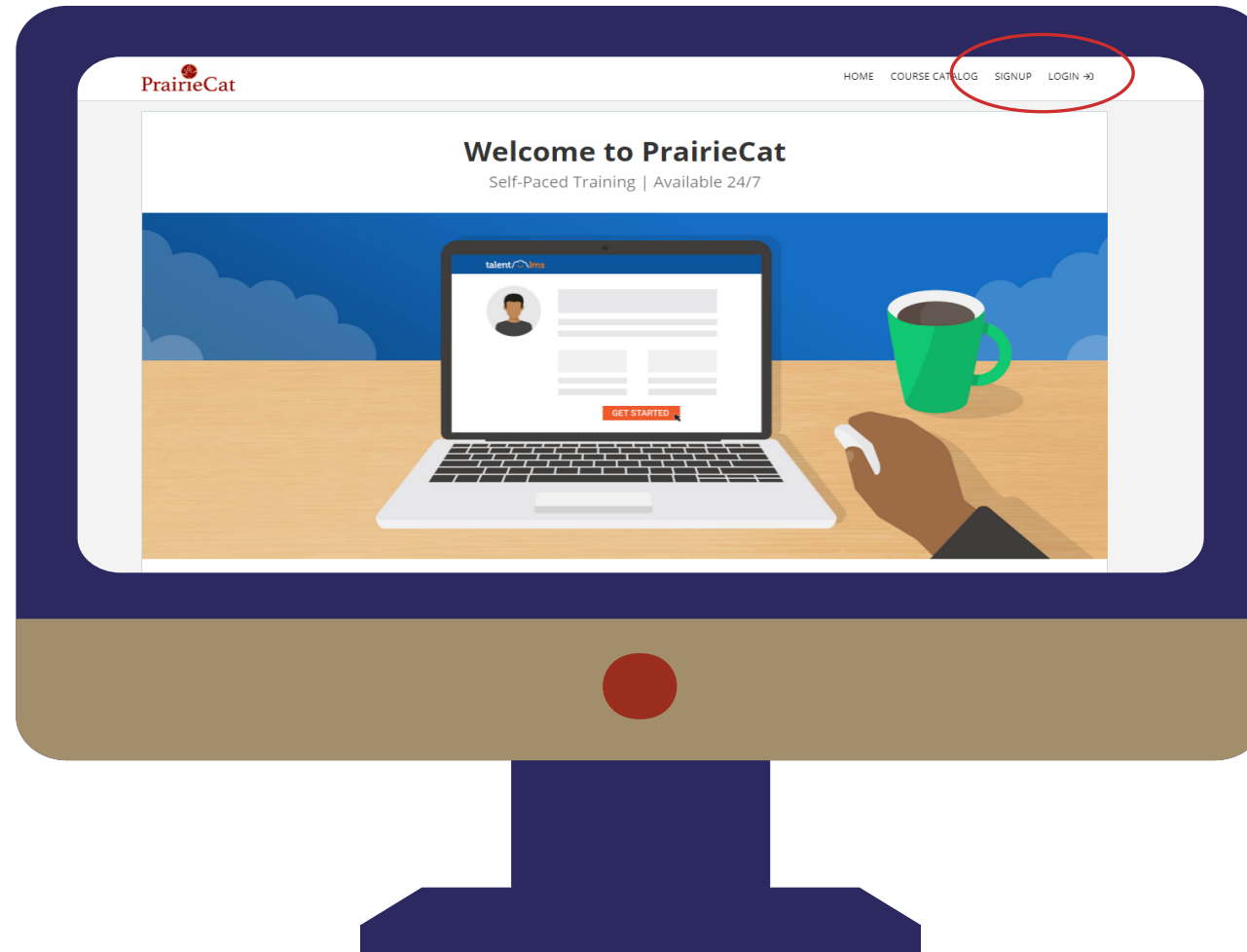
After completing practicum, your named tech login is made permanent



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

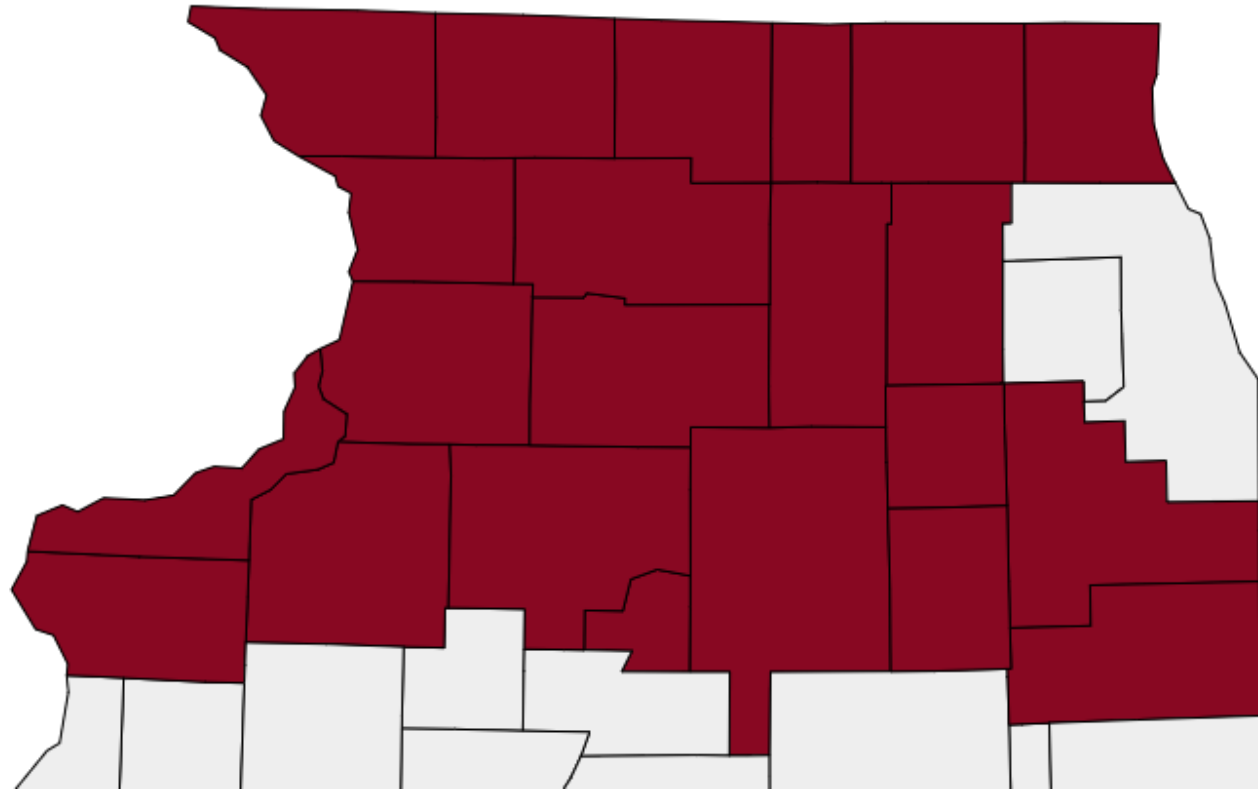
elizabeth.smith@prairiecat.org



PrairieCat



Any questions



Member Sharing
