PrairieCat At a Glance
FY24

MEMBERS

83 FULLY PARTICIPATING
MEMBER LIBRARIES

2 academic libraries

76 public libraries

5 school agencies

20 BASIC ONLINE MEMBER LIBRARIES

17 public libraries

3 school agencies

35 UNION LISTING
MEMBER LIBRARIES

11 public libraries

23 school agencies

1 corporate, medical, or other
special libraries

TOTALS: 138 MEMBER LIBRARIES

2 academic libraries

104 public libraries

31 school agencies

1 corporate, medical, or other
special libraries

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Fully Participating Member – a library that has use of all member functionality within the PrairieCat software. Fully Participating members are voting members and may hold any office.

Basic Online Member – a library that has use of all basic circulating, cataloging and online catalog functionality within the PrairieCat software, but not all of the modules available to Fully Participating members. Basic Online members are voting members and may hold any office.

Union Listing Member – a library that contributes its holdings to the database for resource sharing activities only and has limited use of member functionality within the PrairieCat software. The Union Listing members select four members to be the group's representatives at governance meetings. Each of the four representatives have voting privileges at Delegates Assembly meetings.

DATABASE FACTS (7/1/23)

329,824 patrons

5,129,702 items

1,219,011 bibliographic records

RESOURCE SHARING FACTS (7/1/23)

4,791,640 items circulated

652,101 interlibrary holds filled

546,338 reciprocal borrowing transactions between PrairieCat libraries

GOVERNANCE

The affairs of PrairieCat are managed by the **Administrative Council,** an eleven member board elected by the members. The Council sets policy, receives and approves recommendations from standing groups, oversees fiscal operations, and makes recommendations to the Delegates Assembly for purchases over $20,000 outside the approved budget.

The **Delegates Assembly** of PrairieCat consists of a representative from each Fully Participating and Basic Online Member as well as four Union Listing representatives. The Delegates Assembly provides input to help shape Administrative Council decisions, approves the budget, approves new members, approves the PrairieCat strategic plan, and votes for open seats on the Administrative Council.

PrairieCat Vendor/Software

Vendor: Innovative

Staff client: Sierra

Public catalog: Encore

PrairieCat Staff

Roy Arey, Senior Systems Specialist

Magda Bonny, Library Services Manager

Carolyn Coulter, Director

Chelsey DeSplinter, Administrative and Human Resources Assistant

Andrew Hettinger, Systems Manager

Jason Jensen, Systems Coordinator

Melissa Landis, Library Systems and Data Coordinator

Matt Maturo, Systems Coordinator

John Slanicky, Library Systems and Data Coordinator

Elizabeth Smith, Training & Outreach Coordinator

Sandy Tedder, Cataloging Coordinator

Ed Zanelli, Senior Data Specialist

PrairieCat Brief History

Prairie Area Library System (PALS) was formed in 2004 by the merger of the Heritage Trail Library System (HTLS), the Northern Illinois Library System (NILS) and the River Bend Library System (RBLS). Originally, PALS staff served four library shared catalogs, Heritage Automated Libraries (HAL), Northern Illinois Catalog (NIC), NILSCatT (a CD-Rom union list catalog for non-circulating members), and Quad-Cities Libraries in Cooperation (Quad-LINC).

PrairieCat was formed in 2007 by the merger of HAL, NILSCatT and Quad-LINC. Some of the former NIC libraries also migrated to PrairieCat at that time, along with a group of previously standalone libraries. PrairieCat was originally on a SirsiDynix Symphony system using IBistro for the public catalog. PrairieCat also briefly used AquaBrowser as a catalog overlay.

In December 2011, nineteen libraries in the Quad-Cities area pulled out of PrairieCat to form RiverShare. In June 2012, six libraries in the Joliet area pulled out of PrairieCat to form Pinnacle Library Cooperative. In May 2016, the eight Illinois public libraries previously in RiverShare rejoined PrairieCat. In May 2019, the eight former NIC libraries went live on PrairieCat.

PrairieCat migrated to Innovative's Sierra platform in July 2012. PrairieCat added the Basic Online level of membership in 2013 which has encouraged a number of Union List members to move up to fully circulating on the system. FY15 was the first year where the fully circulating members of PrairieCat outnumbered the Union List members.