



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 25-2339, **Version:** 1

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### PROPOSED RESOLUTION

#### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO PROVIDE EQUITY FUND GRANT AWARD TO REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM (RAILS)**

**WHEREAS**, in November 2021, the Cook County Board of Commissioners passed Resolution No. 21-5542 creating a special purpose fund for Equity and Inclusion (“Equity Fund”) dedicated to addressing historical disparities and disinvestment communities that are marginalized or have experienced other social and economic disparities; and

**WHEREAS**, through the Equity Fund, intentional investments from government resources are allocated to address historical and continued disparities and disinvestment, (as defined in the Equity Report) and to bring advocates, service providers, and other partners to the table as thought partners and decision-makers; and

**WHEREAS**, Resolution 24-5299 provided for the Office of the Cook County Board President (“President’s Office”) to receive an allocation of \$850,000 in Equity Funds to support the utilization of digital navigators as part of its broader Digital Equity Action plan; and

**WHEREAS**, public libraries serve as digital hubs in communities, often providing the only access to computing devices and the internet in Cook County households and are ideally positioned to address gaps in digital access and knowledge disparities through public wi-fi and computing centers, device lending programs, digital skills classes, workforce development and learning resources and one-on-one help; and

**WHEREAS**, the President’s Office seeks an Implementation Partner to lead the design and implementation of a Digital Navigator Network for suburban Cook County libraries; and

**WHEREAS**, Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) is a Regional Library System, a government agency established by state law (75 ILCS 10/, the Illinois Library System Act) and funded by the Secretary of State through the Illinois State Library to “encourage cooperation among all types of libraries in promoting the sharing of library resources, including digital resources;” and

**WHEREAS**, RAILS is headquartered in Cook County and serves approximately 1250 private, public, school, and university library agencies in the northern and west-central areas of the state of Illinois, including all public libraries in Suburban Cook County; and

**WHEREAS**, RAILS’ core services include interlibrary delivery, continuing education and consulting resources for library employees and trustees, shared catalog and cataloging support, e-content services, networking opportunities for library employees, and targeted grant funding; and

**WHEREAS**, as a trusted partner to our member libraries, and in collaboration with Cook County and other stakeholders, RAILS will facilitate the design and implementation of a model for a Digital Navigator Network that serves Cook County residents through their public libraries.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners hereby approves the issuance of an Equity Fund Grant Award to RAILS in the amount of \$850,000 for the design and implementation of a County-supported, library-led Digital Navigator Network that will improve library services and create stronger

connections among public libraries and County government.