

Networking Group FAQ

February 2021

Networking groups share a common interest and are created and run by employees of our member libraries. RAILS does not oversee these groups, but the library system does offer resources for these groups and we're here to support these groups as much as possible.

Below is a list of frequently asked questions about RAILS networking groups. If you have additional questions or you'd like more information, please contact [Dan Bostrom](#), RAILS Member Engagement Manager, 630-734-5152.

What is the definition of a networking group?

A networking group is any formal or informal group that shares a common interest and is run by employees of RAILS member libraries. There is no requirement for minimum (or maximum) number of members. Presumably any group includes more than one person.

Are there any specific requirements from RAILS about networking group members?

Not really, but we do ask that at least *75% of the group's members should RAILS member libraries or employees of RAILS member libraries.*

Who can start a networking group?

Any employee from any RAILS member library.

What does it mean to be an official RAILS networking group?

RAILS makes benefits and resources available to networking groups that have meet the member requirement above and that create a listing in the [RAILS Networking Group Directory](#). To create a listing, employees must be logged in with their L2 username and password.

How often do networking groups meet?

Groups meet as often as needed. Some groups meet monthly. Others meet four times a year. While it is up to each individual group, we suggest meeting at least twice a year in order to keep your active.

Are there any requirements in terms of group management?

We do suggest that one person take the lead on organizing meetings. We typically refer to this person as the convener. Some groups rotate the convener on a yearly basis.

We also suggest creating an agenda and having someone keep notes. This allows you group to stay focused on the topics that impact your members.

What sort of benefits or services does RAILS provide to networking groups?

We're glad you asked! As a RAILS networking group, you have access to the following benefits:

- [Add your meetings and events to the Library Learning \(L2\) calendar](#); free events can use L2's registration system
- A RAILS staff member can attend your meeting to answer questions or talk about our projects and services
- Opportunity to apply for [grants for continuing education programs](#) organized by your group
- [Conference call accounts](#) to use for meetings
- [Zoom licenses to use](#) for meetings
- [Promotion of your group's activities](#) in our newsletter as appropriate
- Meeting space at RAILS facilities (suspended until further notice due to the pandemic)
- [Email list hosting](#)

Does RAILS offer file sharing services for networking groups?

We do not. Many of our groups utilize free services such as Google Drive or Dropbox to handle their file sharing.

I have heard that my group can get a RAILS-hosted email list. How do I do that?

You can! We first ask that you as a group consider using [RAILS public email lists](#) to communicate. Those are lists that are available to any employee from any RAILS library. Doing so allows more people to find your group. It also creates a better community for all members.

If you would rather communicate on a private RAILS-hosted email list, you will need a few things:

1. An email list admin – someone who is responsible for approving/rejecting new members
2. A name for your list
3. An email name for your list (i.e. @list.railslibraries.info)

Please note that your group must be an official RAILS networking group to obtain an email list.