In January 2013, at the ALA Midwinter Meeting, the Rare Books and Manuscript Section Bibliographic Standards Committee (BSC) charged the DCRM(B) for RDA Revision Group to move rare materials cataloging forward in terms of harmonization with RDA. The formation of this new editorial group was recommended by the DCRM-RDA Task Force, which had submitted its final report to BSC in October 2012.

At the June 2013 ALA Annual Meeting in Chicago, the DCRM(B) for RDA Revision Group and the Bibliographic Standards Committee discussed a change of approach for developing an RDA-compatible version of DCRM. Rather than working on the DCRM(B) (Descriptive Cataloging for Rare Materials (Books)) text in isolation, the revision group proposed to work on a consolidated DCRM based on RDA, incorporating guidelines for all formats in the DCRM suite in a single text.

At, and after, the June 2014 ALA Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, the group determined that rather than a complete stand-alone version of DCRM for RDA, a task force could be formed to draft a more concise set of cataloging guidelines consisting of rules for rare materials cataloging only where deviation from RDA was necessary or where RDA required elaboration. This approach was modeled on the Library of Congress Program for Cooperative Cataloging Policy Statements.

In 2016, the task force decided to formally name their guidelines the RBMS Policy Statements (RBMS PS), in alignment with the naming conventions of other RDA policy statements. The idea was that the RBMS PS would be an altogether new text. Although the policy statements would be informed by existing DCRM manuals, they would not be considered a revision of DCRM.

At ALA Annual 2017, the Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials Task Force submitted an initial draft of the RBMS Policy Statements and disbanded. The responsibility for the work of completing and publishing the RBMS PS then passed onto the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee. Initial community review of the draft guidelines took place in the form of online discussions of specific on the DCRM-L e-mail list from November 2017 to March 2018. However, due to the RDA Toolkit Restructure and Redesign (3R) Project taking place, which meant that all RDA Toolkit content was frozen, the policy statements couldn’t be published within the RDA Toolkit as initially intended and a detailed review of the guidelines by the Rare Books Community had to be put on hold as well.

A Beta version of the new RDA Toolkit was finally released in June 2018. However, the product was far from being complete and none of the policy statements included in the full RDA Toolkit had been included in the Beta version, either. The changes were also far more substantial than first anticipated. Due to the ongoing development of the RDA Beta Toolkit, the BSC RBMS PS Sub-group decided to suspend work on the RBMS PS content until a fuller version, with a stable English text was available. However, the decision was taken that initially only policy statements for books (and possibly serials) would be released, instead of releasing RBMS PS for all formats (apart from manuscripts) covered in the original DCRM manuals as first envisaged, and to collaborate with other communities to finish the policy statements for cartographics, graphics, and music at a later stage.

Even though the latest release of the RDA Beta Toolkit (April 2019) now includes the stabilized English language version, there are still a lot of uncertainties as it is still not clear what form the policy statements in the new RDA Toolkit will take. So currently work on the RBMS PS is still suspended until the RBMS PS Sub-group has more information from ALA Publishing on this.

Catalogue and Index
The RDA Steering Committee has created an RDA Policy Statement Working Group which is expected to publish some guidance on policy statements soon. At the ALA annual conference in June 2019, the future form of the RBMS Policy statements, in light of the substantial changes embodied in RDA’s recent revision, was discussed at various open meetings. These discussions revealed a preference for providing a revised RDA-compatible Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (DCRM) on the rbms.info website, with links to the DCRM revision from RBMS Policy Statements in the RDA Toolkit. The RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee has therefore decided to work towards DCRM (Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials) as an integrated resource, with brief RBMS Policy Statements within the Toolkit that link to a more detailed, freely available document residing outside the Toolkit. However, it still remains to be seen whether this form is possible or not. In the interim, the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee acknowledges the need for cataloguers to continue creating records for rare materials while their institutions may have opted to switch over to cataloguing in RDA. To address that need, the committee has published a set of recommendations regarding the use of DCRM and RDA, which can be found at http://rbms.info/dcrm/rda/.