

**VII. State Librarian's Report**  
**A. Operations – Information Item**

---

Financial Literacy Grant Application

The Commission was invited by the American Library Association to apply for a “smart investing @ your library” grant it co-sponsors with the FINRA Foundation. The foundation only grants funds to 501(c)(3) organizations so LYRASIS, a multi-state library cooperative, is serving as the applicant and the fiscal agent for the project.

Project Title: Smart Investing @ Your Library: Investing in Idaho's Future  
Amount Requested: \$ 54,100

The Commission will partner with the College of Southern Idaho, twelve public libraries, the University of Idaho Extension Service, and several other organizations in a 2-year project to bring much needed financial education to residents in an eight-county region in south-central Idaho in which over 50% of the residents have income below 200% poverty level.

---

As part of the wrap up of the BTOP “online @ your library” grant project, we asked the directors of the 55 libraries who participated in the broadband and computer upgrades to reflect on the project. Of the 55, 38 responded to the online survey. Following are selected positive comments from the survey.

**Did you get what you need? - Additional comments?**

- What we received has helped this library provide better service to its patrons and community.
- We actually ended up getting 7 new laptops -- two more than expected! They are used daily by patrons of varying ages, and for many different reasons. We had a few hurdles changing internet service providers and getting the E-Rate in place, but things seem to be working out now. The E-Rate discount helps tremendously.
- Equipment and services are AWESOME!!! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts -- from the entire community!!!
- In retrospect the program was amazing.

**How much of a burden on you or your library were the administrative requirements of this grant project? - Comments?**

- I was pleased that the administrative requirements were a lot less than I had anticipated considering the size of the grant. That was one of our main concerns before joining the project. I think great care and thought was put into keeping everything reasonable.
- This has been such a blessing that a little inconvenience is totally worthwhile.

**What worked, what didn't? Because the project was conceived and executed on a short timeframe, much of what we did evolved as we moved forward. Please let us know what worked, for you and your library, and what didn't (!). - Please elaborate:**

- The amount of public information that was broadcast on television helped out patrons become better library users. The amount of training that we received helped the library staff become more familiar and able to handle the changing technology needs of our library users. The fact that there was help through Basecamp and other resources was extremely beneficial to the library.
- E-rate training was good. Jan always knows the answers I need. We really appreciated the IYC [Idaho Youth Corps]. We had great digital coaches. ... Love the online resources.
- Absolutely loved the trustee training.
- Overall, there were a lot of good tools and a lot of information to share. I think the project went well and our library definitely benefited for being part of it. ... Jan's e-rate training and continued support are life savers! She makes it all easy and worthwhile.
- ... the project was well worth it. We got hugely increased bandwidth at both libraries and enough new PCs we saved tens of thousands of dollars in replacement PC costs.
- I felt like I had to do very little to enjoy all the new equipment and services. Government grants are usually a very time consuming and hair-tearing-out experience. This was not. Thank you for all you did.
- The Network Check-ups were great! We do not have much access to tech support on a regular basis. Having an expert come in and look over our set up put our minds at ease! Thank you!
- I was very impressed with all that was offered as part of this grant - good quality in quick fashion.
- The E-Rate training was one of the most important components for me ... we have multiple vendors to work with, and library branches located in portions of three counties. E-Rate is complicated and the process would have been overwhelming without the initial training and the ongoing support we receive from Jan Wall. The second most valuable piece was the Network checkups.

**Maybe there were unexpected benefits that came from participating in this project? - Please tell us of unexpected benefits for you or your library:**

## Board Document 13-38

- The unexpected benefit is that with more resources available in this small rural area we are gaining more and more patrons and the use of the library remains steady even though times are tough.
- The biggest unexpected benefit was the trustee/director training and the iPads, Nooks, and Kindle we received. It has helped us train staff about e-books and prepare them for the future. Also, we had never thought about getting laptops. We thought we were maxed out because of our internal wiring and wall space.
- Patrons love the new computers and our new service is more reliable. I guess none of this is unexpected however.
- Because of the added number of computers more CSI college students are able to take their tests here and not drive to Twin Falls.
- Frontier continues to improve our service at an affordable price--now up to 40 [Mbps] and improved phone service at \$65 less a month than we were paying for 14 [Mbps] & much less in phone service.
- Obviously, getting all the new equipment has been a big boon. It delayed the ordeal of sourcing new equipment, ordering it, and dealing with vendors for a year for me. Having all the public PCs the same is really nice, too. Prior to the BTOP grant, we had four different PCs in use in the public area and were facing adding a fifth "flavor". Now we only have two different machines to deal with.
- We saw a tremendous increase in the ILLs to other libraries and from other libraries. Also, patrons from other libraries visit our library more often now that we have wireless and increased computer capacity.
- The support we received was very helpful. Jan's help with e-rate was invaluable. Kevin was very helpful with the new requirements for policies. We were prompted, reminded, given the help we needed during the whole process.
- Patrons in the communities we serve are more aware of what their local library can offer. Wireless hotspots are being well used, patrons are accessing e-media resources now that library connection speeds can support them, and they're taking advantage of the online resources that are available.
- I believe faster computers and internet helped some of our patrons find jobs and give them an opportunity to further their education. ... Many people became more aware of the services that public libraries offer them in difficult times. ... Because of the project I see our library moving in a new direction with technology.
- We would have never thought to negotiate such a great rate for so much bandwidth.