



Idaho Commission for Libraries State Strategic Plan FY2018 - FY2021 Updated June 2017

INTRODUCTION

The Idaho Commission for Libraries' (ICFL) work revolves around library development. We work with the library directors, staff, and trustees of Idaho's publicly-funded libraries to provide library services that meet the changing information needs of Idaho's citizens. We provide Talking Book services to all Idahoans who are unable to read standard print. We are also the state repository for state documents. Unless otherwise specified, the state strategic plan applies to all types of libraries.

MISSION

The Idaho Commission for Libraries assists libraries to build the capacity to better serve their communities.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT / KEY EXTERNAL FACTORS

The Idaho Commission for Libraries has utilized federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) along with matching state funds to operate the agency. If funding for LSTA is reduced or eliminated, the ability to carry out ICfL's mission would be in jeopardy. About one-third of the Commission's budget is funded annually by IMLS and includes eleven positions and nearly all of ICfL's programs.

The Commission recently had an independent [evaluation of Idaho's implementation of the 2013-2017 LSTA plan](#), conducted by Carsen Block and Himmel and Wilson Consultants, and updated our federal five-year plan. This independent study showed that overall the Commission met the goals and achieved the targets outlined in the federal plan. The independent consultants conducted five focus group sessions, 20 one-on-one interviews with Commission development staff and library directors from all regions of the state, and surveyed library staff using an online survey tool. The consultants also provided recommendations, in addition to those gleaned from the above mentioned feedback, that were used in creating this plan.

Each program lead at the Commission seeks feedback on a regular basis to improve programs. Most of the program consultants have annual work plans that tie into the strategic plan. The Read to Me program, for example, conducted “Town Hall” meetings with library staff throughout the state and online in 2016 and used that information to inform their annual planning. The Talking Book Service contracted with a telephone polling service to solicit feedback from over 2,500 patrons in 2017 and are using that data, along with work done on a regular basis with the Talking Book Service Advisory Committee, to fine-tune their annual planning.

The Commission’s foremost source of information about the need for information and library services for the citizens of Idaho is the Idaho library community. The Commission development staff has ongoing interaction with library directors, staff, and governing boards during site visits, training sessions, and regional or consortia meetings. This informal input and feedback is also integrated into our discussions and planning.

All advisory groups and development staff were asked to participate in creating this plan. As in everything they do, we requested advisory group members take a statewide perspective for the exercises. Advisory groups that were part of the planning included the Talking Book Service Advisory Committee, Special Projects Library Action Team (SPLAT), Library Leadership Advisory Committee (LiLAC), and the LiLI Steering Committee. These groups incorporate evaluation and planning as part of their ongoing missions, but were asked to provide feedback and ideas based on the strategic planning.

Each ICfL program requires an annual evaluation and review of the evaluation data to determine if the programs are meeting their intended needs and so improvements can be made. As part of continuous improvement and results-based management, the Commission has also contracted with independent evaluator and Boise State University literacy instructor Dr. Roger Stewart to conduct research and evaluation studies every year since 2009. Examples of evaluation research for the Read to Me early literacy program and school library development programs, for example, can be found at <http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/read-to-me-resources#evaluation>. These results are not only shared among ICfL staff, but in many cases shared with colleagues in other state library agencies.

As a result of the needs assessment, this plan strengthens current successful initiatives and moves us in new directions that will support the role of libraries in addressing five goals, including two that focus on crucial state and community priority areas.

Goal 1: Build the institutional capacity of libraries to better serve their communities, is further supported by data from the [FY2015 Idaho Public Library Statistics](#). The following chart shows the gap in public libraries between those with ALA-MLS librarians on staff vs. those without.

Public Library Size	# of libraries in that category	Number without ALA-MLS staff	Percentage without ALA-MLS
Over 10,000	29	10	34%
5,001 - 10,000	16	14	89%
2,501 - 5,000	16	13	81%
1,000 – 2,500	21	21	100%
Under 1,000	21	19	90%
Totals	103	77	75%

While many public library directors and other staff without MLS degrees have received some training in library practices, many in smaller public libraries are new to the profession and appreciate the variety of continuing education options and consulting services available through the Commission. Those needs have also been identified and rank high for Idaho’s school library personnel. Surveys and work in the field show approximately 99 percent of elementary school library staff are noncertified paraprofessionals, often without access to a district school library coordinator to help with professional development and planning for the needs of students and teachers. The Commission’s School Library Consultant creates an annual training plan that builds on previous training while providing basic library skills for those new to school libraries each year. She has also worked to provide train-the-trainer models for district coordinators.

Idaho’s access to broadband Internet is not keeping up with demand, especially in rural communities. According to content delivery network Akamai’s latest State of the Internet Report, Idaho had the slowest Internet connection speeds in the nation with an average speed of 12.0 Mbps, less than half that of the fastest state of Delaware with an average speed of 25.2 Mbps. The Commission was able to hire its first full-time Broadband Consultant in FY2017 and have already begun seeing that pay off in terms of consulting services for E-rate and the Education Opportunity Resource Act (EOR), and in assisting smaller public libraries with technology planning.

(Sources for Goal 1: Public Library Statistics FY 2015, [Akamai’s State of the Internet Report](#), June 2016.)

Goal 2: Support the role of libraries in preparing Idahoans to be college and career ready, addresses one of the state’s most pressing needs. In 2010, the Idaho State Board of Education set a goal that 60 percent of Idaho citizens between the ages of 25 and 34 would have a postsecondary degree or certificate by the year 2020. The Idaho Commission for Libraries and the Idaho library community immediately joined countless businesses, agencies, and other organizations who are working toward this statewide goal. Reaching the 60 percent goal will require focused effort, investment, and improvement at all levels of our education system. Idaho libraries should be

recognized for the role they play to ensure more children enter kindergarten with early literacy skills, in providing positive learning experiences for students during the summer and other out-of-school time, and supporting student learning through library resources and the guidance of trained librarians. Use of Idaho public libraries has never been higher. In fiscal year 2015, there were more than 8.6 million visits to Idaho public libraries. In fiscal year 2014, Idaho libraries had the 5th highest per capita circulation of children's materials and attendance of children's programs in the nation. Attendance at young adult programs ranked 7th in the nation per capita, increasing 139 percent in the past five years. Many credit the increased use by teens to the Commission's "Make It at the Library" program, which launched five years ago.

While there are many positive indicators, there is still much work to be done. Idaho lags behind the rest of the country on several key educational markers:

- Idaho ranks 50th in the proportion of students who graduate from high school on time and go directly to college and 49th in per-student spending.
- More than 7 in 10 students (77%) attend schools receiving Title 1 funds.
- Since 1993, the Hispanic student population in Idaho has more than doubled, from 16,697 students to 48,855 in 2014. The recent increase in the Hispanic population matters because a large achievement gap exists between Hispanic students and non-Hispanic students and between low-income students and higher-income students.
- In reading and math, more than 6 in 10 of Idaho 4th and 8th graders have not reached the level of "proficient," as defined by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
- Idaho's high school graduation rate now stands at 78.9 percent, ranking below the national average of 83.2 percent.
- Idaho is one of seven states that provide no state funding for preschool or any other early education programs.
- Idaho school districts are not required to offer kindergarten programs, nor are children required to attend kindergarten. The compulsory starting age for education in Idaho is seven years old.
- Only 35 percent of three- and four-year-old children in Idaho are enrolled in some form of preschool or enriched day care. The national average is 47 percent.
- In the fall of 2013, only 54 percent of Idaho kindergarteners were ready to read upon entering school based on the Idaho Reading Indicator scores. Fewer than half (45%) of low-income kindergarteners and fewer than one-third (29%) of Hispanic kindergarteners were ready to read when entering kindergarten.

(Sources for Goal 2: Idaho State Board of Education; Public Library Statistics FY 2015; Public Library Survey Data, 2014, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Idaho Education Field Guide, 2015; Idaho Statesman and Idaho Education News reports 2015-2016)

Goal 3: Ensure equitable access to information and library services for Idahoans with disabilities, those in rural communities, English-language learners, people living in poverty, and other underserved communities, addresses the challenges of providing access to all Idahoans by removing barriers to information. Many of the statistics cited in the second goal are tied to the large number of Idahoans who are living in poverty. Nearly half (49%) of all K-12 students were eligible for free or reduced lunch in 2015. Idaho's mountainous and vast area make communication, traveling, and increasing access to broadband connectivity a challenge. In 2016-2017, 10.5 percent of Idaho students were receiving special education services.

Idaho's population is growing at a rapid pace. The state's population increased by a million people in the past 50 years and continues to outpace the U.S. growth rate. A new forecasting model developed by the Idaho Department of Labor suggests Idaho's population will grow at three times the national rate between now and 2025 – and nearly all the new residents will be retirees moving to the state. The forecasting model predicts that Idaho's population will grow 15.3 percent from 2015 to 2025, reaching 1.9 million. The model also suggests an increasing urbanization trend in Idaho, with more than two-thirds of the population growth expected to occur in Ada, Canyon, and Kootenai Counties. By 2025, it shows the share of Idaho's population living in urban counties increasing from 70.6 percent to 74.3 percent.

According to the 2017 ["Hispanic Profile Data Book for Idaho"](#) published by the Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Idaho Hispanics make up 12 percent of Idaho's population and 18 percent of K-12 public school students. Hispanics accounted for 30 percent of the state's population growth between 2010 and 2015 and 42% of K-12 public school enrollment growth between the 2010-11 and 2015-16 school years. In terms of education, Idaho Hispanic students are less proficient in basic subjects and less prepared for college and career than non-Hispanics, based on standardized test scores. Students in the English Learner program score the lowest on standardized tests. Compared to non-Hispanics, Hispanics in Idaho have higher unemployment and poverty rates. They also have lower average annual wages and household income.

If information becomes available only in certain areas or only to those who can afford it, our economy and the basic foundations of our democracy as well as each individual's quality of life is at risk. This plan helps address some of the barriers that are currently limiting access for all Idahoans.

(Sources for Goal 3: Idaho State Department of Education, Idaho Department of Labor via [Spokesman Review article](#), and Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs)

Goal 4: Support the role of libraries in economic and employment development, is a relatively new area of focus for the Commission and one that ties into our support of Idaho's education system and goal #2. While Idaho's unemployment rate is relatively low right now, many Idahoans struggle to find employment and often turn to their local library staff to help apply for jobs online, get help preparing resumes, and locate job postings. In the long-term, if we don't have more students pursue post-secondary education options, Idaho will have an under-supply of educated workers. Studies show

at least 60 percent of jobs nationwide will require a post-secondary credential in the years ahead. The lack of qualified workers in Idaho may cause businesses to stagnate or leave the state in search of a better educated workforce and keep a downward pressure on wages. Additional data to support this goal includes:

- Through 2024, the Idaho Department of Labor forecasts total employment growth to be on track to exceed labor force growth by 49,000 people. Idaho's rural counties tend to be hit hardest.
- Total employment in Idaho's urban counties grew more than twice as fast as the population of the state's rural counties. According to the Idaho Department of Labor, from January 2006 to December 2016, total employment in rural counties grew by 10,824 – just under five percent, while urban counties increased their total employment by 49,943, or 10.6 percent.
- In 2016, Idaho had 21,000 people making minimum wage or less, representing about 4.6 percent of all hourly wage earners in the state. The nationwide average is 3.3 percent and Idaho ranks the ninth highest in the nation. Of those Idahoans making the minimum wage or less in 2015, 61 percent were women.
- Idaho Business for Education (IBE) conducted a survey of 466 employers in 2015. The survey showed Idaho's business leaders say about 43 percent of workers will need to have bachelor's degrees or advanced degrees by 2018.
- The top three emerging degree areas for Idaho employers are computer science/technology, business and economics, and engineering.

The work ICfL staff have done partnering with the Idaho Department of Labor in recent years, has laid the groundwork for libraries to begin to formalize plans to support economic and employment development.

(Sources for Goal 4: Idaho State Board of Education, 2014; Idaho Department of Labor presentation, 2017; Idaho Education Field Guide, 2015)

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives build on the capacity-building work the Idaho Commission for Libraries is known for and are based on extensive and ongoing needs assessment and continuous improvement processes. Performance measures and benchmarks were developed by project leads based on needs in the library community and expected outcomes.

Goal 1. Build the institutional capacity of libraries to better serve their communities.

- Strategy 1: Improve the library workforce
 - Objective 1.1: The Continuing Education Consultant and Program Consultants will develop continuing education programs for library staff & trustees on an annual basis.

- Objective 1.2: The field consultants will provide ongoing consulting services for public library staff.
- Objective 1.3: ICfL staff will facilitate leadership development opportunities for library staff and trustees via leadership groups and other hands-on leadership-building techniques.
- Strategy 2: Improve the libraries' physical and technological infrastructure
 - Objective 2.1: The Broadband Consultant will provide broadband consulting and E-rate and Idaho Education Opportunity Resources Act (EOR) support on an ongoing basis.
- Strategy 3: Improve library operations
 - Objective 3.1: The Technology & Access Services Consultant will launch ShareIdaho, Idaho's revamped resource sharing program, by August 15, 2017 and provide regular progress reports to management.
 - Objective 3.2: The Data Coordinator/Field Consultant will collect and share Idaho library statistics annually.
 - Objective 3.3: The Library Consultant for the Underserved will provide support for the Volunteer Match program, facilitate volunteer capacity-building training, and access results in FY2018.
 - Objective 3.4: The Library Consultant for the Underserved and Support Staff Supervisor will support adult turnkey programs (i.e. Let's Talk About It, Financial Literacy programs) annually.
 - Objective 3.5: The Librarian position will support [STACKS], Idaho's state publication repository program, annually.

Performance Measures for Goal 1:

- 80 percent of library staff and trustees participating in continuing education programs will indicate they have made changes in their library procedures or services as a result of training activities.
Benchmark: 87.7% reported changes were made in FY2016.
Additional output measures: Events sponsored each fiscal year (33 in FY2016). Number of participants (948 in FY2016).
- The number of libraries with improved access to broadband will increase annually.
Benchmark: Percentage of libraries with broadband speeds greater than 10 Mbps (38.8% in FY2015, 49.5% in FY2016). Percentage of E-rate libraries with broadband speeds of 100 Mbps or greater (24 of 69 libraries participating or 35% as of June, 2017).

- The number of interlibrary loans requested through LiLI Unlimited (renamed ShareIdaho in FY2018) will increase by two percent annually. *Benchmark: 93,200 in FY2016.*
- Idaho libraries will see increased use by Idahoans. *Benchmark: 8,657,494 visits to public libraries were reported in FY2015.*

Goal 2. Support the role of libraries in preparing Idahoans to be college and career ready.

- Strategy 1: Improve users' formal education
 - Objective 1.1: The School Library Consultant will provide consulting and training opportunities to school library staff annually.
 - Objective 1.2: The School Library Consultant will facilitate access to library mini-grants to improve student learning annually.
- Strategy 2: Improve users' general knowledge and skills
 - Objective 2.1: The Read to Me team will support Read to Me early literacy turnkey programs annually.
 - Objective 2.2: The Read to Me team and School Library Consultant will minimize the summer slide by supporting library summer reading programs in public and school libraries annually.
 - Objective 2.3: The Make It team will support Make It at the Library and other out-of-school programs and training annually and leverage outside support when possible.
 - Objective 2.4: An internal team (CE & School Library Consultant and others) will develop and deliver library programs that support 21st Century learning skills (i.e. digital, financial, information literacy, etc.) annually.
 - Objective 2.5: The Youth Services Consultants will develop and support turnkey programs aimed at beginning readers through young adults annually.
- Strategy 3: Improve users' ability to discover information resources
 - Objective 3.1: An internal team will develop promotional efforts to publicize LiLI Databases and other information resources annually.
 - Objective 3.2: An internal team will develop partnerships with other agencies and organizations to coordinate and leverage college and career ready programs and services and reach more Idahoans.
- Strategy 4: Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources
 - Objective 4.1: The Technology & Access Services Consultant will provide support and training for the LiLI Databases statewide on an ongoing basis.
 - Activity 4.2: The Youth Services Consultants and School Library Consultant will support access to online books through statewide contracts and promote access to Open eBooks annually.

Performance Measures / Benchmarks for Goal 2 include:

- Library summer reading participation will increase by 3 percent annually.
Benchmark: 83,952 youth participated in summer learning programs in FY2016.
- Use of the LiLI Databases will increase annually.
Benchmark: The LiLI Databases were accessed 3,423,505 times in FY2016.

Goal 3: Ensure equitable access to information and library services for Idahoans with disabilities, those in rural communities, English-language learners, people living in poverty, and other underserved communities.

- Strategy 1: Improve users' general knowledge and skills
 - Objective 1.1: The Talking Book Services staff will improve access to Talking Book Services for those who aren't able to read standard print.
 - Objective 1.2: The Read to Me team will support outreach services (particularly Read to Me & Summer Reading) for those who face barriers getting to libraries.
 - Activity 1.3: Program staff will develop partnerships with other agencies and organizations to coordinate and leverage programs and services and reach more underserved Idahoans.

Performance Measures / Benchmarks for Goal 3 include:

- There will be an annual increase in the number of Idahoans registering for Talking Book Services.
Benchmark: In FY2016 678 new users were registered for Talking Book Services.
Outputs: Number of Talking Book Services Patrons (FY2016, 3,679).
Talking Book Services Circulation (186,960 in FY2016).
- The number of youth participating in library outreach programs will be maintained or increase annually.
Benchmark: In FY2016, 3,700 children participated in the My First Book outreach program. In 2016, 55,449 youth participated in Summer Reading Outreach.

Goal 4: Support the role of libraries in economic and employment development.

- Strategy 1: Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support
 - Objective 1.1: The Program Supervisor will initiate and cultivate partnerships with Department of Labor, Department of Corrections, Idaho Rural Partnership, University of Idaho Extension Service, and other organizations to develop plans for better employment support via libraries.
- Strategy 2: Improve users' ability to use and apply business resources
 - Objective 2.1: The Program Supervisor and CE Consultant will provide continuing education opportunities for library staff focused on economic and employment resources and programs.
 - Objective 2.2: The Program Supervisor will launch a library-focused outreach effort to connect the Idaho business community with local library resources by October 30, 2019.

Outcomes for Goal 4 include:

- 80 percent of library staff attending continuing education programs focused on this topic will report they are better prepared to facilitate access to economic and employment resources.
Benchmark: No training has been done in this area in the past three years and no benchmark has been established.
- A minimum of 20 libraries will implement outreach plans to connect to the Idaho business community by 2021. Benchmarks have not been established for this objective area.

Goal 5: Model responsible and effective government practices.

- Strategy 1: Align resources and priorities to maximize the value of both public and private funding.
 - Objective 1.1: All staff will integrate agency values into all initiatives and activities both within and outside the agency: continuous improvement, learning organization, customer services, collaboration, relationships, and library ideals on an ongoing basis.
 - Objective 1.2: Management team will invest in professional development and leadership opportunities for agency staff on an ongoing basis.
 - Objective 1.3: All staff will foster innovation, flexibility, and results-oriented planning for effective and efficient programs and services for the agency's clientele on an ongoing basis.
- Strategy 2: Increase the awareness of Idaho libraries as essential community resources in the 21st century.

- Objective 2.1: The ICfL Communications Team and Public Information Specialist will develop and implement a strategic, intentional approach to communicate a consistent message about the value libraries contribute to Idaho.
- Strategy 3: Implement practices and processes to comply with the Executive Order on Cybersecurity.
 - Objective 3.1: The Administrative Manager and IT Staff will develop a plan for and monitor progress of implementation of EO 2017-02 in partnership with the Office of the Chief Information Officer.

TIMELINE

This plan was intended to support the Idaho library community over the next four years and is supported with annual project plans. Each goal area will be addressed each year. Each year we will review all funded projects and evaluate progress in each of the goal areas and programs based on the evaluation plan.

EVALUATION PLAN

The Idaho Commission for Libraries will continue to use a combination of techniques to evaluate the success of the activities in meeting our goals and project priorities:

- Evaluate all projects that include public and library staff instruction or content creation and planning and evaluation using outcomes-based assessment questions.
- Monitor activities and sub-grant projects. Commission projects are evaluated by an appropriate method chosen by the lead consultant. Sub-grant projects are evaluated through interim and final narrative and financial reports.
- Conduct surveys or assessments as needed.
- Incorporate outcome-based and/or independent evaluations for appropriate projects.