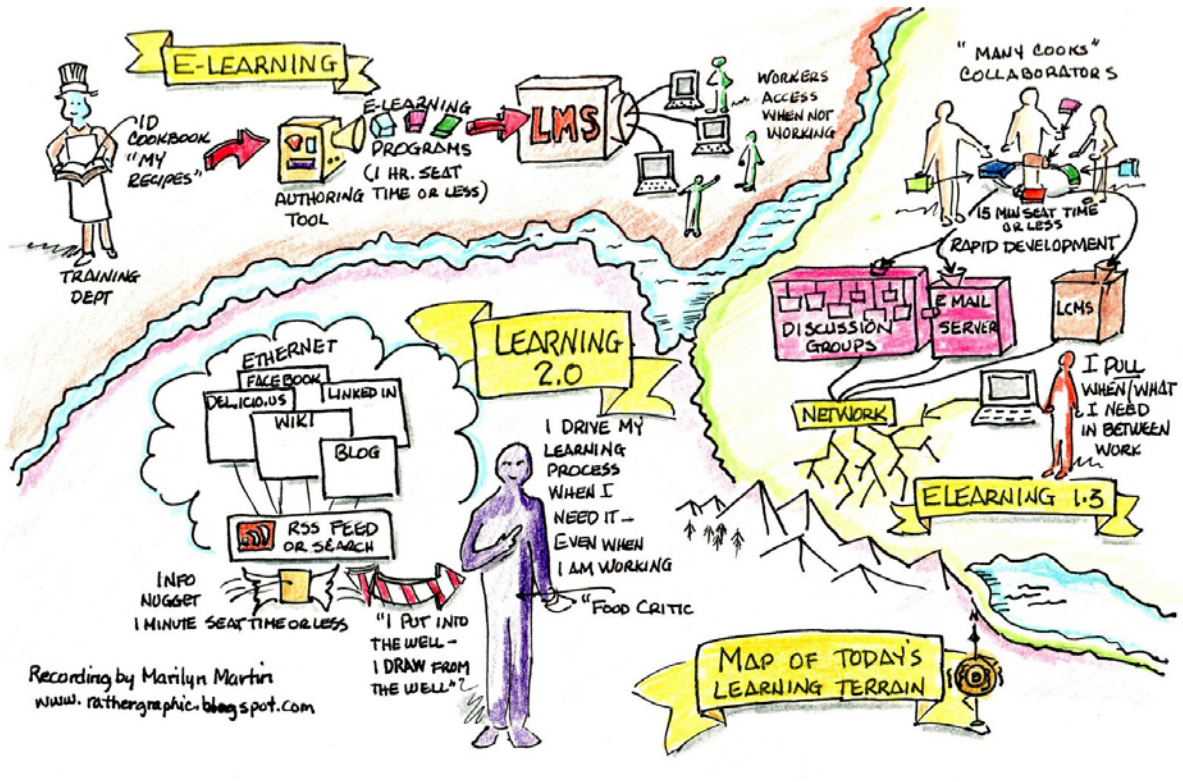


**Idaho Commission for Libraries**  
**Continuing Education Action Plan**  
**2010-2012**



**Summary:**

Sustainability of Idaho library services in an atmosphere of innovation and change requires that library workers have the skills and knowledge necessary to keep their libraries vital and vibrant within their individual communities. This fact makes continuing education crucial to all activities supported by the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICFL).

The ICFL Continuing Education Action Plan serves as a snapshot of the systematic training and continuing education activities provided for the Idaho library community which includes a wide-range of publicly-funded entities – public, academic, school and special.

To compile this document, ICFL conducted surveys of the agency staff and the library community, as well as convened a Continuing Education Advisory Group to review the current professional development needs of the Idaho library community and trends in library services. This informal data combined with the 2003 state-wide study entitled Idaho State Library Recommendations for Statewide Continuing Education Plan 2003-2006, prepared by Sandra Nelson for the Idaho State Library, were used to formulate the following three-year Continuing Education Action Plan for 2010-2012.

With changing knowledge and skills needed by library workers to successfully serve their communities, it becomes increasingly difficult to develop a specific three-year plan for continuing education. Along with this challenge is the coordination and delivery of continuing education activities supporting statewide resources and projects. Time and commitment to continuing education is – and has been – a challenge throughout the Idaho library community. Promoting continuing education as an essential component of one’s job is crucial for the Idaho library community, so library staff can remain abreast of new trends and technology in order to keep their libraries vital and vibrant within their communities.

ICFL is dealing with these challenges in a variety of ways.

- The continuing education action plan supports the agency strategic plan and is updated annually to provide flexibility within an organized process.
- “Libraries as learning organizations” philosophy is promoted to encourage individuals to view learning as an essential part of any library position.
- Competencies are identified for all library workers to assist managers and library leaders in creating continuing education programs.
- Guidelines for planning and scheduling continuing education are used to avoid over scheduling and duplication of activities.

**Mission:**

ICFL assists libraries to build the capacity to better serve their clientele.

**Purpose:**

The Continuing Education Action Plan outlines the means by which ICFL's mission will be incorporated through ongoing educational support for the Idaho library community who are striving to sustain Idaho library services in an atmosphere of innovation and change.

The Continuing Education Action Plan supports the four Strategic Issues from the ICFL Strategic Plan 2000-2012.

- SI #1: How do Idaho libraries strategically position themselves to actively create and embrace the future?
- SI #2: How do Idaho libraries develop and sustain services valued by digital natives?
- SI #3: How do Idaho libraries create and promote a vital identity?
- SI #4: How do Idaho libraries sustain an infrastructure that provides services in an atmosphere of innovation and change?

**History:**

The history of ICFL's training and continuing education activities goes back to 1988 when the Idaho State Library contracted with Consulting Librarians Group to produce its first long-range plan for continuing education. The project was initiated and first CE Consultant hired in 1989. Three years later the State Library hired the Library Development Solutions consulting firm to evaluate the first three years of planned continuing library education and to write a plan for the next three years (1992-1994).

Following an interim two-year plan (1995-1996), the Continuing Education Advisory Committee approved another three-year plan (1997-1999). In December of 1999, another strategic plan (2000-2002) with a much broader approach was developed.

In 2003, Sandra Nelson was contracted to review the existing continuing education program and develop recommendations. This statewide assessment was conducted through key informant interviews, surveys and focus groups. The resulting report, Recommendations for Statewide Continuing Education Plan 2003-2006, served as the basis for the Continuing Education Plan which has been in place since 2004.

As change is always a constant, in 2006 the Idaho State Library became the Idaho Commission for Libraries to reflect the development focus of the agency. Also during this time, staffing changes made it difficult to provide consistency in implementation of the Continuing Education Plan.

The current consultant, hired in March 2008, was charged with reviewing the current ICFL Continuing Education Plan and developing a new three-year action plan for 2010-2012. A statewide advisory group was pulled together to provide input in regard to current professional development needs and future issues facing the Idaho library community. This advisory group was comprised of individuals from academic, school, public, urban and rural libraries representing all areas of the state.

### **Data Gathering and Documentation:**

This three-year action plan is based upon input from ICFL development staff, the Idaho library community, ICFL Continuing Education Advisory Group, and the Idaho State Library Recommendations for Statewide Continuing Education Plan 2003-2006. As a means of preparing this continuing education action plan the following documents were also reviewed:

- Idaho Commission for Libraries Strategic Plan 2009-2012 found on the ICFL website at <http://libraries.idaho.gov/doc/strategic-plan>
- Libraries Linking Idaho (LiLI) Work Plan for 2009 at <http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/lili-steering-committee>
- Idaho's Regional Library Networks: A Study of the Trends and Success Factors; Includes Suggested Activities for Building, Sustaining, and Expanding Idaho's Networks. Prepared by Gina A. Persichini, Networking Consultant and Erin McCusker, Field Consultant, August 19, 2003. (<http://libraries.idaho.gov/files/regional-networks.pdf>)
- Idaho Library Association Strategic Plan, Annual Report 2007. Approved 11-09-07. See <http://www.idaholibraries.org/node/252>
- Library Science & Technology Act - Strategic Issues, LSTA Purposes, and Vision of Idaho Libraries in 2020. See Idaho State Plan <http://libraries.idaho.gov/doc/idaho-state-plan-fy2008-2012>

After reviewing the documentation and anecdotal information, the CE Consultant discovered the continuing education needs of the Idaho library community as stated in the previous plan are still relevant today. Targeting roles rather than types of libraries, is the common denominator of this action plan which serves as a road map for meeting professional development needs within the Idaho library community. Methods of delivery and content will be adjusted to reflect the use of new technology and the changing face of the Idaho library community.

**Format:**

The ICFL Continuing Education Action Plan is formatted with the following building blocks:

**Action Issues:**

- Action Issues are the key questions to be addressed during the life span of this action plan. The goals, strategies, and activities provide the pathway to reach the desired end results to address these questions.

**Goals:**

- Goals represent the “end states” which will be the evaluative indicator that an action issue has been addressed. The goals in this plan are stated as declarative sentences to answer the specific action issue question.

**Strategy:**

- Strategies describe the pathways for reaching the desired goals to answer each action issue. Strategies are not bound by time and not likely to change much during the lifetime of the plan. In this plan they are listed as one word or short phrases.

**Activity:**

- Activities are specific actions designed to change behavior in order to achieve the “end states” described in the goals.
- The same or similar activities may be found under several goals under multiple target audiences. This duplication shows how the activities and various target groups are inter-related throughout the Idaho library community.
- The title of the staff with primary or ultimate responsibility is listed for each activity. Many activities indicate two or more staff members with responsibilities which demonstrates the collaborative approach ICFL uses in providing quality continuing education.

**Action Issues:**

The following action issues identify the critical continuing education questions to be addressed within the Idaho library community to promote an atmosphere of innovation, flexibility, and change during this three year plan.

The first question addresses the ICFL infrastructure required to create and deliver the continuing education and training for the library staff as identified in the remaining three questions. These target audiences have evolving training and continuing education needs, some of which have not yet been identified.

1. How will ICFL provide organized, efficient, relevant and quality continuing education activities to meet the needs of the library community?
2. How will library directors and managers obtain the management and political skills necessary to manage their libraries while championing the role of libraries within an ever-changing environment?
3. How will library staff including media specialists obtain the essential knowledge and skills to provide excellent library programs and information services within their communities?
4. How will public libraries' trustees effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities within the local community as well as within the larger context of national library trends?

**Goals:**

The identified goals provide an answer for related action issue questions. This declarative statement describes the visualized “end result” following the implementation of the strategies and activities.

1. How will ICFL provide organized, efficient, relevant, and quality continuing education activities to meet the needs of the Idaho library community?
  - A. A current action plan outlining practical continuing education and training for the library community is always available.
  - B. High-quality continuing education events in relevant, prioritized subject areas are provided in a timely manner.
  - C. A collaborative effort with other agencies provides access to expanded, relevant continuing education opportunities.
  - D. Appropriate delivery methods make it easy for people to participate in continuing education and training opportunities.

2. How will library directors and managers obtain the management and political skills necessary to administer their libraries while defending the role of libraries within an ever-changing environment?
  - A. Library directors and managers effectively administer Idaho libraries.
  - B. Library directors and managers build partnerships to advocate for local, state, and national resources.
  - C. Library directors and managers serve as effective leaders within their communities.
  - D. Library directors and managers co-create flexible, innovative organizations.
  
3. How can library staff including media specialists obtain the essential knowledge and skills to provide excellent library programs and information services within their communities?
  - A. Library staff including media specialists provide high-quality services or programs to a diverse population.
  - B. Library staff including media specialists co-create flexible, innovative organizations.
  
4. How will public libraries' trustees gain knowledge of their roles and responsibilities within the local community as well as within the larger context of national library trends?
  - A. Trustees and library directors understand the legal responsibilities and roles of trustees in Idaho's library community.
  - B. Trustees advocate for library funding at the local, state, and national levels.
  - C. Trustees support library ideals within an ever-changing environment.

**Evaluation:**

Ongoing evaluation of the continuing education plan is conducted in order to maintain an effective and valuable plan. Three specific reasons are listed here:

- To decide whether to continue or discontinue specific training activities.
- To gain information on how to improve future training activities.
- To determine the contributions of Idaho Commission for Libraries' continuing education efforts to the agency's mission.

**Criteria:**

The plan will be considered a success if the following criteria are met:

- Annual activities are either completed or modified on schedule.
- Grant funds for local continuing education projects are used.
- Positive changes in behavior attributed to participation in the activities are reported.
- Increases in skills and knowledge attributed to participation in the activities are reported.
- Positive changes in library services attributed to participation in the activities are reported.
- Targeted audiences report the activities designed specifically for them have met their expectations.

Additional criteria to measure success will include

1. Libraries take a leadership role in shaping community development. (Directors/Managers)
2. Library staff will make greater use of the resources available through LiLI. (Library Staff)
3. Library staff will make greater use of the resources available through WebJunction Idaho. (Library Staff)
4. All public libraries in Idaho will have a current strategic plan. (Directors/Managers)
5. Library staff will have the skills they need to provide high-quality services or programs. (Library Staff)
6. Library use will remain stable or continue to rise in communities which are becoming more diverse. (Library Staff)
7. Library trustees will be effective advocates for library funding at the local, state and national levels. (Public Library Trustees)
8. Libraries that undertake a funding or districting campaign will be successful. (Directors/Managers)
9. School library staff will develop skills to effectively enhance student success. (Library Staff)

**Methods:**

Measuring the success of the plan is an integral part of each workshop and activity provided throughout the state. An annual summary of the evaluations will be compiled.