

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**ICfL Awards \$200,000 to School Libraries throughout Idaho**

**BOISE, Idaho** -- The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) awarded \$200,000 to 43 elementary school libraries throughout Idaho for the 2017 - 2018 school year. The ICfL received the \$200,000 from the Idaho state legislature and awarded the funds in the form of mini-grants, for amounts between \$3,000 and \$5,000, each.

For 28 of the elementary school libraries, the funds will be used for the purchase of books and to facilitate a change in their school's policy that would allow the youngest students the opportunity of checking books out to take home. For 15 of the elementary school libraries, the funds will be used for the purchase of books and to keep the library open during the summer.

The goals of the grant program are: to increase the amount of reading done in homes of children in developmental preschool programs, kindergarten, and first grade; to increase access to age-appropriate, quality, fiction and nonfiction titles in elementary school libraries; and to increase the number of children reading on grade level.

The 2012 "Idaho Public Elementary School Library Study: Children's Access to Books," conducted by Boise State University literacy professor Dr. Roger Stewart, determined that just over a quarter of Idaho public elementary school libraries received \$100 or less from their school to purchase new books during the 2011 -2012 school year.

With book budgets that typically range from \$100 to \$1,000 per year and an average book cost of more than \$17 each, the majority of Idaho's public school libraries are unable to provide enough fiction and non-fiction books to meet the needs of Idaho's students.

State Librarian Ann Joslin said, "A child's educational foundation is established early, and the amount of reading done in the home is the single most important factor in the development of a child's literacy skills. But too many of our youngest Idahoans are at a disadvantage in this critical area because their elementary school lacks the resources to provide current, quality, age-appropriate books for their students to either read at school or take home."

Idaho libraries help youngsters curtail the "summer slide" of learning loss by offering reading and education programs within their buildings, as well as through outreach events in the community -- many of which are as close as the neighborhood park.

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The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) builds the capacity of more than 850 public, school, academic, and special libraries to better serve their communities through statewide programming, continuing education, online resources, and building library community. To learn more about the ICfL, visit: <http://libraries.idaho.gov>.