

NEWS RELEASE

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Grant for Idaho Libraries' Summer STEM Programs

BOISE, Idaho – The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) received a \$30,000 grant from the STEM Action Center to facilitate the learning of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) by Idaho youth, during the summer, through school and public library outreach.

A portion of the funding was awarded as micro-grants to 32 libraries for their STEM outreach, which brings learning opportunities to where the kids are. The grant will also provide libraries with STEM-related books and materials for initiatives such as “Summer STEM from You Library,” which often complements existing Library in the Park outreach efforts.

Libraries throughout Idaho help curtail the “summer slide” of learning loss by offering reading and education programs within their buildings, as well as out in the community, through such partnerships as those with summer nutrition programs, parks and recreation departments, and community organizations. So, even when school is out of session, youngsters still have plenty of learning opportunities -- many of which are as close as their community center.

The summer break from school can allow kids time for greater exploration of topics, such as STEM, that they might not be able to fit into their schedules during the school year. STEM-related skills and knowledge are important to ensuring Idaho’s long-term economic prosperity. Employers require the critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and innovation that STEM helps to develop and foster.

Idaho State Librarian Ann Joslin said, “It is crucial for youngsters to continue reading and learning in the summer to maintain the achievements they made during the school year. And to help ensure that more kids arrive at school in the fall on track to progress in their education, Idaho librarians find ways to reach Idahoans where they are -- whether that is within the library’s four walls or at the neighborhood park.”

The value of today’s libraries continues to grow and deepen. In Idaho, use of the materials, programs, and resources found in the state’s libraries has increased dramatically, particularly in the past five years. In fiscal year 2014, Idaho libraries had the 5th highest per capita circulation of children’s materials and attendance at children’s programs in the nation. Attendance at young adult programs ranked 7th per capita and has grown 139 percent over the past five years.¹

Libraries have evolved from places known only for research, reading, and reflection, to becoming the community’s bustling hub of innovation, education, and engagement.

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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>.

Source: ¹State of Idaho: 2015 Idaho Public Library Statistics