

V. Federal Fund

B. Program, American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 – information item

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 was signed into law on March 11. It designates \$200 million in pandemic response funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). This is the largest single increase in IMLS's 25-year history.

Of the \$200 million, \$178 million is allocated for state library administrative agencies (SLAs). Idaho's allotment of the ARPA funding will be approximately \$2.4 million and will help support Idaho libraries' efforts to keep students learning and adults earning. Some of the funding will also be utilized to address the need for equitable access to broadband and quality digital content.

Funds need to be spent and reported on by September 30, 2022. We can not start spending them until after July 1, 2021. The legislature will need to reopen the ICfL budget for FY2022 to authorize the spending authority to accept approximately \$2.3 in ARPA funds. They could do this as soon as April 9, 2021. Our budget did make it through both the Senate and House side of the Legislature and pulling it back on their agenda is not ideal, but necessary considering the timing of the award.

Preliminary plans for spending the funds include subgranting approximately \$1 million and opening it to public, school, academic, and tribal libraries to support student learning and adults earning. Grants will be awarded in two "rounds" – the first round in July and the second in October. Construction costs, food, general library marketing and promotion and apparel are not allowable expenditures with ARPA funds, but other costs including public access computers, personnel, programs, and services are allowable under the initial grant guidelines. The ICfL staff plan to hire some temporary employees with ARPA funds, including a full-time bilingual (Spanish/English) and bicultural project coordinator, and a ten hour per week person to help with e-book collection development, and possible one or two more part-time temporary staff to assist with digital inclusion efforts. Staff are currently working on plans for utilizing the remaining ARPA funds to support existing efforts that build the capacity of libraries to better serve their communities.

The pandemic response package also includes funding for academic, public, and school library-eligible programs, including the Emergency Education Connectivity Fund through the federal E-rate program.

See the American Library Association (ALA) fact sheet for more information about these programs at

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/libfunding/fed/American%20Rescue%20Plan%20Act%20of%202021%20ALA%20Summary.pdf>