

V. FEDERAL FUND

B.2. Program - Welcoming Libraries Grant Report – Information Item

The Welcoming Libraries Grant (WLG) funds activities which improve “Equity, Diversity and Inclusion” (EDI) in Idaho libraries and better serve a community’s underserved groups of children. The WLG is funded at \$5,000 annually from the agency’s federal LSTA appropriation. In FY22, with an additional \$5,000 in private funding from the Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (BUUF), the grant award amounts were increased from \$500 to \$1,000 each; therefore, 10 grants of \$1,000 each, for a total of \$10,000, was available for request by Idaho libraries.

The Welcoming Libraries Grant has four goals:

1. To increase school and public libraries’ understanding of the specific communities they serve, gaps in their services, and how the library can help address these gaps.
2. To increase the amount of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) resources a school or public library has available and ensures they are easily accessible.
3. To help library patrons find library resources that both reflect their experiences (mirrors) and that teach them about those who are different from themselves (windows).
4. To support school and public library staff as they work to make their library spaces more welcoming and accessible to all; To better serve underserved children with diverse, equitable and inclusive books, programming, and resources.

In December, the ICfL staff received eight applications totaling \$8,000 and no applications were declined. The remaining balance of \$2,000 in BUUF funds was set aside for other, to be determined, equity, diversity, and inclusion work.

Public and school libraries may apply for a WL grant, proposing activities in at least one of the following six allowable activity areas, with a focus on children’s services (ages 0-18):

- Professional development (PD) for library staff to improve their understanding of any number of EDI-related topics - i.e. library services for patrons with autism, how to conduct a diversity audit, universal design principles. (PD is a required activity for all grantees.)
- Community assessment, focus group, and/or interviews to gain a better understanding of those they serve and those who are underserved; Identify gaps in services and resources.
- Conduct a diversity audit of a portion of the library's collection (this may include an audit of the library’s marketing plan and displays). Purchase titles to fill identified gaps.
- Conduct a diversity audit of the library's storytime curriculum, including featured books, songs, and craft activities. Purchase storytime resources to fill identified gaps.
- Create or modify an existing children’s program to meet the needs of every child - i.e. Sensory Storytime or adaptive programming hours before/after standard program.

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- Improve the accessibility of the library’s physical or virtual spaces to better meet the needs of users - i.e. library signage in Spanish, captioned videos or sign-language during virtual storytimes, noise-canceling headphones, fidget seats.

ICfL staff conduct an orientation meeting with all grantees at the start of the grant period, to review requirements, encourage grantee sharing, and highlight the EDI-related resources gathered and shared on the grant webpage. A Training Summary Report is due by February 19 to ensure the staff training happens before spending decisions are made. Final Reports are required by April 30.

Awarded Applicants	
Library Name	Award
Ada Community Library	\$1,000
Burton Elementary School (Madison School District)	\$1,000
Cascade Public Library	\$1,000
Challis Public Library	\$1,000
Franklin County District Library (Larsen-Sant)	\$1,000
Lewiston City Library	\$1,000
Meridian District Library	\$1,000
Midway Elementary School (Jefferson School District)	\$1,000
8 Grantees	\$8,000

Grant Project Summaries:

Ada Community Library – Diversity audit of non-English books, sensory supports (equipment) and kits for neurodivergent children, and wellness (mental health) kits for teens.

Burton Elementary School (Madison School District) - Sensory supports (equipment) and books for specific library hour for K-4th students (22) in district’s Developmentally Appropriate Classroom (DAC).

Cascade Public Library - Diversity audit of children’s and YA sections of collection and purchase of new titles for identified gaps; immersive, diversity-related VR experience with afterschool program participants.

Challis Public Library - Diversity audit of entire collection, beginning with the children’s section, and purchase of new titles for identified gaps; staff participate in Library Journal’s diversity audit course.

Franklin County District Library (Larsen-Sant) - Increase services for children with developmental disabilities (“Books, Friends, and Fun” program), sensory equipment, and inviting spaces (adjusted lighting/sound).

Lewiston City Library - Improve accessibility to alternative forms of literature for patrons with disabilities and those that fall into the digital divide with the purchase of VOX books and unique listening space.

Meridian District Library – Creation of sensory kits/bins for neurodivergent patrons or any circumstance; delivery of sensory storytime program at Boys & Girls Club and developmental preschool partners.

Midway Elementary School (Jefferson School District) - Diversity audit of collection and purchase of new titles for identified gaps; sensory supports and books for children on the autism spectrum.