

**VI. General (state funds), Miscellaneous Revenue,
and Library Services and Improvement Funds**

A. Finances – FY2025 Budget Request Line Item – Action Item

The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) will prepare its FY2025 budget request in accordance with the Idaho Division of Financial Management's (DFM) budget development manual. The ICfL's request will be submitted for initial feedback by July 28, 2023. The following line item is recommended by ICfL staff:

Summer STEM from Your Library: Ongoing funds of \$40,000 would cover up to 70 Summer STEM grants each year and provide additional support and materials for grantees. The ICfL would request \$35,000 in Trustee & Benefit (T&B) for the grant portion and \$5,000 in Operating Expenditures (OE) for support and materials.

The Summer STEM from Your Library program provides Idaho youth the opportunity to engage with STEM during the months they are out of school. Participating libraries receive a \$500 micro-grant to provide STEM programming during the summer, as well as yard signs, books, and STEM supplies. Many libraries use this grant to try STEM programming for the first time. Since the program began in 2017, 99 public libraries and 31 school libraries have received this grant. It is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis to 65 to 70 libraries each year. While attendance varies from year to year and has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, an average of 51,154 Idaho youth have attended a STEM program funded by the Summer STEM grant each year – for an average cost of \$0.78 per child each summer (excluding the pilot year).

The grant program was largely supported by the Idaho STEM Action Center for seven years. The agency provided between \$35,000 and \$50,000 each year for grants and materials. The ICfL contributed \$7,000 to \$10,000 each year in STEM books for grantees. Due to a change in agency priorities and funding mechanisms, the Idaho STEM Action Center has indicated it is no longer able to fund the Summer STEM grant. A budget line item will ensure this successful summer program remains available to Idaho libraries.

The grant has numerous impacts for libraries and their communities:

- The grant program empowers library staff who are initially intimidated and unsure about using STEM concepts. Libraries report that they continue to offer STEM programs throughout the year after trying them during the summer.
- Non-curriculum STEM programs help children engage with STEM in ways that spark their interests. This creates enthusiasm for STEM outside of the classroom. A staff member from the Community Library Network's Bookmobile reported, "My favorite success

moments are when children have really become excited about a topic, and they want to dive even further into it. For example, when we did a 3D printing program and a handful of kids came back over and over for another opportunity to use Tinkercad and explore 3D design, or when the light clicks, and a child really understands how circuits work and they begin to explain it to other children with enthusiasm.”

- Libraries in rural communities report that the funds allow them to bring in STEM-related presenters – an option that would not be available otherwise. The Troy Library in the Latah County Library District reported, “Patrons were very excited to have educational performers in our rural small town park. Both presenters have extensive experience and gave high-quality presentations, with lots of great science facts. It was very engaging and made science exciting and accessible to everyone. Bringing unexpected performers to small rural communities is very impactful.”
- The Summer STEM grant also serves as an introduction to the grant process for many libraries. Because it is not a competitive grant, libraries have less anxiety about applying. The application and final reports are very simple. Each year, a few new libraries receive the grant, and they have rarely received a previous grant from the ICfL. This year, Camas County Public Library, Filer Public Library, and Leaders School in Leadore were all first-time Summer STEM grant recipients.

Suggested motion: I move that the FY2025 agency budget request be approved as described in Board Document 23-64, with an ongoing increase of \$40,000 in the ICfL’s appropriation for the Summer STEM from Your Library grant program, and that the State Librarian be authorized to adjust the request as may be required by the Division of Financial Management or the Legislative Services Office.

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