

Summer Reading: *Or, How Do I Avoid the Summer Slide?*

Did you know that kids who do not continue reading over the summer can lose up to two months of the reading gains they achieved during the school year? This especially affects low-income children. Almost all of Idaho's public libraries offer some type of summer reading program to help keep the children in their communities keep reading during the summer months.

Idaho does not currently have a statewide summer reading program. Each library designs, implements, and funds its own program to meet the needs of its community. Summer reading programs are often referred to as "SRP" in ICfL communications.

Nuts and Bolts

- Idaho is part of the Collaborative Summer Library Programs (CSLP), a national collaborative of states that designs and provides low-cost, high-quality programs, resources, promotional materials, and incentives. Each year, **the ICfL provides membership to all Idaho public libraries.**
- In October or November, **the ICfL sends a CSLP program manual and incentive catalog to each library that has submitted the previous year's summer reading report** (see Evaluation, below). Libraries can request the format of the manual in the spring or just automatically receive the traditional package containing a paper copy and three identical DVDs. The manual includes programming ideas and artwork for early literacy, children, teens, and adults.
- **The ICfL offers opt-in outreach programs that libraries can apply for separately.** These are called "Bright Futures" outreach opportunities and currently include School Visits, School Partnerships, Reaching Underserved Children, and Little Libraries. Applications generally open January 1 and close March 20 each year. See the Summer Reading website for more details and applications links.
- In January or February, **the ICfL sends three posters with the CSLP slogan and artwork** to each library that has submitted the previous year's Summer Reading report. You can use these to begin promoting your library's Summer Reading Program.
- **The ICfL cannot provide prizes and incentives with federal dollars;** however, we do apply for a Fred Meyer Corporation grant each year, and if we receive those funds, we purchase a small number of paperback books for each library that has

submitted the previous year's Summer Reading report. These are referred to as "Fred Meyer Books," and libraries do not need to apply for them separately. The ICfL is typically notified about the grant in the spring. The grant award is not guaranteed, and libraries should not rely on these books for prizes.

- **The ICfL does not provide Summer Reading funds.** Libraries used budgeted funds, additional funds from Friends groups, and solicited donations to fund programs. The earlier you begin assembling your budget, the better.
- **All libraries must submit a final report at the conclusion of its Summer Reading Program, even if your library does not host an SRP.**

Evaluation

The Summer Reading support provided by the ICfL is funded with LSTA dollars, and the ICfL is required to report about how the funds were used and the impact that was made. Therefore, we ask each library to submit a report about its SRP.

- **Reports are due by September 15.** The link to the report can be found on the ICfL's Summer Reading website.
- **If your library did not host an SRP, you still need to submit a report.** You only fill out the first question, "Did your library host a Summer Reading Program this year?" with Yes or No.
- **Because the ICfL pays CSLP membership and provide a program manual for each library and branch, each branch must submit a separate report.** Check with the other branch managers to determine how participation will be tracked and reported.
- **You can see a preview of the Summer Reading report on our SRP website.** This will tell you what information to collect as you are planning your SRP.
- **One of the questions on the report asks whether your participation outputs increased, decreased, or remained the same.** You may need to search for the participation information from the previous year, so begin early.
- **A spreadsheet to keep track of your participation outputs each year is available on the ICfL's Summer Reading Resources page,** along with additional information about evaluation and a template to survey your patrons.

- **If you fail to submit an SRP report, your library will not be eligible for the upcoming year’s program manual, posters, or Fred Meyer books, and may affect your eligibility to apply for Bright Futures programs.**

Timeline

- **October or November:** Programs manuals are shipped to each library and branch library that has submitted an SRP report for the current year. Open it immediately and begin planning!
- **December 1:** First order deadline for CSLP incentive catalog. The materials should arrive by March 1.
- **December through February:** Contact schools to discuss SRP promotion and partnerships. Do not wait until March or April!
- **January 1:** Applications open for Bright Futures Outreach Opportunities.
- **January through March:** Continue planning, securing presenters, *etc.*
- **March 20:** Bright Futures applications close.
- **April through May:** Promotion in schools and community. Finalize programs and presenters.
- **June through August:** Summer Reading Programs. Dates vary by community.
- **September 15:** Summer Reading Report Due.

Important Links

- For program support offered by the ICfL, see <https://libraries.idaho.gov/summer-reading/>,
- For best practices, resources, research, templates, planning timelines, and more, see <https://libraries.idaho.gov/summer-reading/summer-reading-resources/>,
- For questions about Summer Reading, contact Staci Shaw at Staci.Shaw@libraries.idaho.gov or at 208-639-4178.