



**NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release: September 17, 2020

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**\$2 Million in CARES Funding Going to Idaho Libraries  
to Boost Broadband 24/7 in Small/Rural Communities**

**BOISE, Idaho** -- The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) has been granted \$2 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding that was received by the State of Idaho and administered by the Idaho Department of Commerce.

The ICfL's award is for "Rural Libraries Connecting Idahoans via Wi-Fi Hotspots." The funds will be used for the purchase of equipment and related internet and broadband services in order to boost the broadband capability of public libraries in communities of fewer than 10,000 people. The grantees will make the library's public Wi-Fi available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All 51 public libraries in Idaho that applied for grant funding will receive an award.

The initiative will provide reliable, open, wireless internet access in Idaho's smallest, most rural communities. The public libraries' existing broadband service will be utilized with the new state-of-the-art network equipment provided and installed as part of the grant. The improved technology is capable of symmetrical gigabit speeds, including indoor and outdoor wireless access points.

Idaho State Librarian Stephanie Bailey-White said, "As the pandemic has illuminated, reliable, high-speed internet is a critical component of business, education, entertainment, and interaction. The \$2 million CARES grant will help Idaho's small, rural libraries provide essential digital access, 24/7, in communities where the public library may be the only source of internet connectivity."

Idaho is one of the lowest-ranking states for broadband availability, with 40 percent of the population lacking access and 20 percent reporting no home access.\*

The Idaho Department of Commerce was awarded \$48.9 million in federal coronavirus relief funds for 102 projects across Idaho that support improved broadband infrastructure, equipment, and services.

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The grantees are: Aberdeen District Library; Ada Community Library, Hidden Springs and Star branches; Armoral Tuttle Public Library (New Plymouth); Bellevue Public Library; Benewah County District Library, Tensed and Tri-Community (Fernwood) branches; Boise Basin Library District (Idaho City); Buhl Public Library; Camas County District Library (Fairfield); Clark County District Library (Dubois); Clearwater Memorial Public Library (Orofino); DeMary Memorial Public Library (Rupert); Donnelly Public Library District; Elk River Free Library District; Franklin County District Library (Preston); Garden Valley District Library; Glens Ferry Public Library; Gooding District Library; Hagerman Public Library; Hailey Public Library; Hansen Community Library; Homedale Public Library; Kellogg Public Library; Kimberly Public Library; Lost Rivers District Library, Arco and Howe branches; Mackay District Library; McCall Public Library; Middleton Public Library; Midvale District Library; Oakley District Library; Ola District Library; Oneida County District Library (Malad); Payette Public Library; Pierce District Library; Plummer Public Library; Priest Lake District Library; Rigby Public Library; Salmon River Public Library (Riggins); Shoshone Public Library; South Bannock District Library, Downey, Lava Hot Springs, and McCammon branches; St. Maries Public Library; The Community Library (Ketchum); Weiser Public Library; Wendell Public Library; West Bonner Library District, Blanchard and Priest River branches; and the Wilder District Library.

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The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) builds the capacity of the more than 850 public, school, academic, and special libraries in Idaho to better serve their communities through: statewide programming and resources, like Read to Me and Libraries Linking Idaho (LiLI); consulting; continuing education; partnerships; and aid to underserved populations, such as the visually impaired through the Talking Book Service. For more information, visit: <https://libraries.idaho.gov>.

\*Source: IMLS Indicators Workbook: Economic Status and Broadband Availability and Adoption, 2019