

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: September 1, 2020

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**\$2 Million in CARES Funding Available to Idaho Libraries
to Boost Broadband in Small Communities**

BOISE, Idaho -- The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) has been awarded two \$1 million grants through the Idaho Broadband Grant program administered by the Idaho Department of Commerce, which utilizes federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding received by the State of Idaho.

The ICfL's awards are for "Rural Libraries Connecting Idahoans via Wi-Fi Hotspots." 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 state-of-the-art network equipment the grant recipients will receive. The improved technology is capable of symmetrical gigabit speeds, including indoor and outdoor wireless access points.

The first \$1 million grant will be awarded to public libraries serving communities of fewer than 3,000 people. The second \$1 million grant will be awarded to Idaho public libraries serving communities of fewer than 10,000 people.

The grant application deadline is September 9, 2020. For more information, visit:

<https://libraries.idaho.gov/2-million-available-to-idaho-public-libraries-to-boost-broadband-in-small-communities/>.

In many small and/or rural communities throughout Idaho, the library serves as the primary source of internet access for the area's residents. 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.*

Idaho State Librarian Stephanie Bailey-White said, "We appreciate the work done by the Governor's Coronavirus Financial Advisory Committee to identify key broadband infrastructure needs and the inclusion of grant funding for Idaho's public libraries as they strive to better meet those broadband needs for Idahoans in our state's smallest, most rural communities."

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 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