

NEWS RELEASE

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Idaho Libraries in Every Region of the State Receive Federal Funding

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho -- Idaho libraries in every region of the Gem State are receiving federal funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES). In total, 91 libraries in Idaho applied for and received \$83,200 in CARES funding through a competitive grant process.

In eastern Idaho, those libraries are: Aberdeen District Library; American Falls District Library; Bear Lake County Library (two branches) in Montpelier and Paris; Blackfoot Public Library; Franklin County Library District in Preston; Fremont County District Library in Ashton; Jefferson County District Library in Hamer; Lost Rivers Community Library District in Arco; Onedia County Library in Malad; Rigby City Library; Ririe City Library; Snake River School/Community Library in Blackfoot; Soda Springs Public Library; and the South Bannock Library District (bookmobile and three branches) in McCammon, Lava Hot Springs, and Downey. For the complete list of the Idaho libraries receiving CARES funding, visit <https://libraries.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/ICfL-CARESFunding-libraries20200617.pdf>.

The CARES funding is to be used to address digital inclusion and related technical support and/or for personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies.

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.* This funding will enable libraries to purchase such things as devices and electronic content, Wi-Fi hot spots for their patrons to check out, and Wi-Fi boosters to extend the library's internet signal beyond the library building.

Idaho State Librarian Stephanie Bailey-White said, "This federal CARES funding will greatly help libraries boost their internet connectivity and provide more electronic resources for their patrons." Bailey-White added, "As illuminated by the COVID-19 pandemic, our libraries are a trusted source of online information, entertainment, and tools, but too many Idahoans are unable to access those resources from home. The CARES funding will help bridge that digital divide in Idaho."

The CARES bill includes \$50 million for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) obtains its federal funding from the IMLS. In total, the ICfL received \$161,477 in CARES funding. The ICfL will continue to gather input from the Idaho library community before determining the best use of the remaining funds that were not directly requested by libraries through the grant process.

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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