

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: May 11, 2020

Information Contact:

Donna Eggers, Public Information Officer, Idaho Commission for Libraries
208-954-2177 / donna.eggers@libraries.idaho.gov**Federal Funding Coming to Idaho Libraries this Summer**

BOISE, Idaho -- The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) is a federal bill that 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. This summer, the ICfL is slated to receive and administer Idaho's portion of the CARES funding, which is \$161,477. The funding will be made available to libraries in the Gem State through a grant application process, which is currently open. In Idaho, public and special libraries, which include tribal, military, corrections, and archive, are eligible to apply for the funding.

The CARES funding is to be used to address digital inclusion and related technical support in the context of workforce development and/or broadband availability. Libraries could also use the funding for personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies to enable staff and the public to safely utilize library spaces, services, and technology.

Idaho State Librarian Stephanie Bailey-White said, "More than ever, our libraries are a trusted source of online information, entertainment, and tools for everything from applying for unemployment or a new job to researching business opportunities. But too many in our state lack adequate internet connectivity at home and are, thus, unable to access digital resources. This CARES funding will help bridge that digital divide for Idahoans throughout the Gem State."

Many public libraries in Idaho have increased their digital offerings for patrons during the COVID-19 crisis when so many people are at home and spending more time on a device. In addition to a library's regular electronic offerings, such as e-books, e-audiobooks, digital magazines, movies, TV shows, music, and research material, many libraries in Idaho have added online storytimes and links to educational and other resources, like STEM activities, digital field trips, and zoo webcams, along with locally relevant information about services and conditions in their area.

To enable people to access what they need from one convenient place, libraries have also compiled resources and information related to employment, small businesses, job training, and the development or sharpening of workplace skills and knowledge.

For more about the Idaho library grants, visit: <https://libraries.idaho.gov/covid-info/#cares-act>.

For more on the CARES funding, visit: <https://www.ims.gov/news/federal-government-invests-50m-museums-libraries-address-digital-divide-during-covid-19>.

--###--

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>.