



## **State Strategic Plan FY2021 - FY2024 Updated June 2020**

### **INTRODUCTION**

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. The Commission is overseen by a five-member board. While services and library resources have evolved since the agency was formed in 1901, work continues to focus on providing the best library services that will meet the changing information needs of Idaho's citizens.

### **MISSION**

The Idaho Commission for Libraries assists libraries to build the capacity to better serve their communities.

### **NEEDS ASSESSMENT / KEY EXTERNAL FACTORS**

The Commission's foremost source of feedback about the need for information and library services for the citizens of Idaho is the Idaho library community. The Commission's development staff has ongoing interaction with library directors, staff, and governing boards during site visits, training sessions, and regional or consortial meetings. Each program lead at the Commission seeks feedback on a regular basis to improve programs and services. In 2019, after feedback received from our Futures Camp, the agency embarked on a Listening Tour. We held virtual and in-person sessions listening with our customers, increasing the ease of sharing comments via a webform, and are actively soliciting suggestions for improvement. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been in frequent contact with the library community and recognize the need to support new service models for libraries and for expanded ways to access information and resources.

As a result of ongoing needs assessment, this plan strengthens current successful initiatives and directs the Commission in addressing five goals.

**Key External Factors:** The Idaho Commission for Libraries has utilized federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds, administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), along with matching state funds to operate the agency. A reduction in or elimination of LSTA funding would jeopardize the ICfL's ability to carry out its mission. About one-third of the Commission's budget is funded annually by the IMLS and includes eleven positions and nearly all of the ICfL's programs. Other key factors and a summary of some of the needs are provided under the applicable goal areas.

**Goal 1: Build the institutional capacity of libraries to better serve their communities** is further supported by data from the FY2019 Idaho Public Library Statistics. Approximately 74 percent of Idaho libraries do not have ALA-MLS librarians on staff. While many public library directors and other staff without MLS degrees have received some training in library practices, many in smaller public libraries are new to the profession and particularly appreciate the variety of continuing education options and consulting services available through the Commission. And those same needs have been identified as crucial for Idaho's school library personnel. Surveys and field interactions show that nearly all elementary school library staffers are noncertified paraprofessionals, often without access to a district school library coordinator to help with professional development and planning for the needs of students and teachers. Each year, the Commission's School Library Consultant creates a training plan that builds on previous training while providing basic library skills for those new to school libraries.

Idaho's access to broadband internet is not keeping up with demand, especially in rural communities. The annual [2018 Speedtest U.S. Fixed Broadband Performance Report by Ookla](#), released on December 12, 2018, ranks Idaho 47th out of the 50 states for mean download speeds with fixed connections (with Montana, Wyoming, and Maine trailing behind us), while their [2019 Mobile Performance Report](#) ranks Idaho 38<sup>th</sup> for average download speeds when using mobile connectivity. BroadbandNow [currently lists Idaho as the 39th most connected state](#) based on percentage of population with access to 25+ Mbps broadband. The Commission was able to hire its first full-time Broadband Consultant in FY2017 and is seeing that pay off in terms of consulting services for E-rate and the Education Opportunity Resource Act (EOR) and technology planning assistance to smaller public libraries.

*(Sources for Goal 1: Public Library Statistics FY 2019, Ookla Fixed Speedtest, 2018, <https://www.speedtest.net/reports/united-states/>. Ookla Mobil Speedtest 2019, <https://www.speedtest.net/reports/united-states/#mobile>*

**Goal 2: Support the role of libraries in preparing Idahoans to be college and career ready** addresses one of the state’s most pressing needs and aligns with Governor Brad Little’s number one priority to promote a strong public education system in Idaho that prepares our students for lifelong learning and future careers. The Commission and the Idaho library community, along with countless businesses, agencies, and other organizations, have been hard at work toward the achievement of this statewide priority. Meeting this goal will require focused effort, investment, and improvement at all levels of our education system. Idaho public libraries should be recognized for the role they play in ensuring that more children enter kindergarten with early literacy skills, for providing positive learning experiences for students during the summer and other out-of-school time, and in supporting student learning through library resources and the guidance of trained librarians. Additionally, Idaho schools with strong school library programs make a significant difference in student achievement.

Commission staff members have increased efforts to ensure that more libraries offer STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programs and resources through the popular Make It programs and Summer STEM from your library resources. Our partnership with the STEM Action Center has strengthened these offerings and ensured that all those who are interested in creating Maker Spaces and more can offer those throughout the state.

Our partnership with the State Board of Education will allow libraries in rural communities to assist Veterans and other adults seeking higher educational opportunities and careers. The ICfL is an active partner in the statewide Preschool Development federal grant administered by the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (Idaho AEYC).

While there are many positive indicators, there is still much work to be done. Idaho often fails to meet its own education goals and lags behind the rest of the country on several key educational markers:

- 68 percent of Idaho’s 4th graders did not achieve the Reading Proficiency level.
- Idaho’s high school graduation rate in 2019 stands at 80.7 percent, well short of the state’s goal of 87.3 percent and ranks 43rd in the nation.
- Of the high school graduates, only 41.9 percent of these Idahoans go on to some form of higher education or formal training. This rate remains largely unchanged from the prior four years and places Idaho at 44th in the nation.
- Only 36 percent of three- and four-year-old children in Idaho are enrolled in some form of preschool or enriched day care. The national average is 48 percent.

- Hispanic students accounted for 18 percent of enrollment in Idaho K-12 public schools during the 2018-2019 school year. The recent increase in the Hispanic population is particularly relevant, as a large achievement gap exists between Hispanic students and non-Hispanic students which is related to the gap between low-income students and higher-income students.

(Sources for Goal 2: [Idaho Educational Data](#), [Ed Trends Report](#), [Hispanics: An Overview](#), [Idaho Kids Count 2019](#))

**Goal 3: Ensure equitable access to information and library services for Idahoans with disabilities, those in rural communities, English-language learners, people living in poverty, and other underserved communities** addresses the challenges of providing access to all Idahoans by removing barriers to information. Many of the statistics cited in the second goal are tied to the large number of Idahoans who are living in poverty. In 2019, 42.9 percent of all K-12 students were eligible for free or reduced lunch. Nearly 600,000 Idahoans live in rural communities. Students in rural schools performed consistently worse than students attending urban and suburban schools. Idaho's vast and mountainous area make communication, traveling, and increasing access to broadband connectivity a formidable challenge.

According to December 2017 Census Bureau reports, Idaho leads the U.S. as the fastest growing state. A forecasting model developed by the Idaho Department of Labor suggests Idaho's population will grow at three times the national rate between now and 2025 – and many of the new residents will be retirees moving to the state. The forecasting model predicts that Idaho's population will grow 15.3 percent from 2015 to 2025, reaching 1.9 million. The model also suggests an increasing urbanization trend in Idaho, with more than two-thirds of the population growth expected to occur in Ada, Canyon, and Kootenai Counties. By 2025, this model forecasts an increase in the percentage of Idaho's population living in urban counties from 70.6 percent to 74.3 percent.

According to the 2019 [Hispanics: An Overview](#), published by the University of Idaho's McClure Center for Public Policy and Research, Hispanics make up 13 percent of Idaho's population and participate in the labor force at a higher rate than non-Hispanics, although 20 percent of Idaho Hispanics were living below the poverty level.

If information becomes available only in certain areas or only to those who can afford it, our economy and the basic foundations of our democracy, as well as each individual's quality of life, are at risk. This plan helps address some of the barriers that are currently limiting access for all Idahoans.

(Sources for Goal 3: [Idaho State Lunch Eligibility Data](#), [United States Dept of Agriculture Idaho State Department of Education, \*Statewide Study on Education & the Economy: Idaho\*](#), and [McClure Center for Public Policy and Research](#) )

**Goal 4: Support the role of libraries in economic and employment development** is a relatively new area of focus for the Commission and one that ties into our support of Idaho’s education system and Goal #2. Idaho’s unemployment rate reached a record high of 11.5 percent in April 2020, following several years of low rates. Many Idahoans struggle to find employment and often turn to their local library staff for help when applying for unemployment benefits and jobs online, preparing résumés, and locating job postings.

In the long term, if we don’t have more high school students pursue post-secondary education options, Idaho will have an under-supply of educated workers. Studies show at least 60 percent of jobs nationwide will require a post-secondary credential in the years ahead. The lack of qualified workers in Idaho may cause businesses to stagnate or leave the state in search of a better educated workforce and keep downward pressure on wages. Additional data to support this goal include:

- Eighteen counties experienced unemployment rates above the 11.5 percent state rate for April 2020.
- Idaho’s *per capita* income is 79 percent of the national average and ranks 43rd in the U.S.
- Idaho is losing competitiveness in high complexity industries due to a limited pool of skilled workers.
- The 2018 United Way report shows 40 percent of Idahoans are living in poverty or are asset limited, income constrained, employed (ALICE).
- Projections for “Hot Jobs” in Idaho include nurses, software developers, physicians’ assistants, and information security analysts.

The work ICfL staff has done partnering with the Idaho Department of Labor in recent years has laid the groundwork for libraries to begin formalizing plans to support economic and employment development.

(Sources for Goal 4: [Idaho Department of Labor, \*Statewide Study on Education & the Economy: Idaho\*](#), [ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Idaho, 2018 United Way Report](#); [University of Idaho Extension: Idaho Indicators](#))

**Goal 5: Model responsible and effective government practices** addresses the way staff continuously work to improve operations. Planning, budgeting, and implementing services are accomplished by aligning resources and priorities to maximize the value of both public and private funding.

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives build on the capacity-building work the Idaho Commission for Libraries is known for and are based on extensive and ongoing needs assessment and continuous improvement processes. Performance measures and benchmarks were developed by project leads based on needs in the library community and expected outcomes.

### **Goal 1. Build the institutional capacity of libraries to better serve their communities.**

- Strategy 1: Improve the library workforce.
  - Objective 1.1.1: The Continuing Education Consultant and Program Consultants will develop continuing education programs for library staff and trustees on an annual basis.
  - Objective 1.1.2: The Field Consultants will provide ongoing consulting services for public library staff and trustees.
  - Objective 1.1.3: The Continuing Education Consultant, along with other Library Consultants, will provide relevant and timely online webinars and professional development opportunities annually.
  - Objective 1.1.4: The Continuing Education Consultant and Grants Officer will provide grants for first-time conference attendance, formal library education support, group training, and leadership development annually.
  - Objective 1.1.5: The Program Supervisor will enhance the summer internship program to provide creative opportunities for young people to explore library careers, including the possibility of creating an official apprenticeship program.
  - Objective 1.1.6: The Emerging Trends Consultant and other staff will develop and deliver support to library staff in their service to adults annually.
  - Objective 1.1.6: An internal team will develop a plan to better serve Academic library staff.
  -
- Strategy 2: Improve the libraries' technological infrastructure.

- Objective 1.2.1: The Broadband Consultant will provide broadband consulting and E-rate and Idaho Education Opportunity Resources Act (EOR) support on an ongoing basis.
- Objective 1.2.2: The Broadband Consultant will provide technology guidance and resources through a variety of means, including the Broadband Toolkit Improvement Program (BTIP), online technology guides, and presentations online and at regional and statewide conferences.
- Objective 1.2.3: The Broadband Consultant will develop statewide partnerships and seek opportunities to expand library technology infrastructure.

Strategy 3: Improve library operations.

- Objective 1.3.1: The State Data Coordinator will collect and share Idaho library statistics annually.
- Objective 1.3.2: The Volunteer Coordinator will facilitate training on the effective use of volunteers to build library capacity on an ongoing basis.
- Objective 1.3.3: The Librarian position will support [STACKS], Idaho's state publication repository program, annually.
- Objective 1.3.4: by June 2021, the Northern Idaho Field Consultant and Grants Officer will implement a Best Practices Toolkit Improvement Plan and grant program for the public library community to use in planning, staff and trustee development, orientation, advocacy, and as a catalyst for conversation

Performance Measures for Goal 1:

- 80 percent of library staff and trustees participating in continuing education programs will indicate they have made changes in their library procedures or services as a result of training activities.  
*Benchmark:* 82 percent reported changes were made in FY2019.  
*Additional output measures:* Events sponsored each fiscal year. Number of participants.
- The number of libraries with improved access to broadband will increase annually.  
*Benchmark:* Percentage of libraries with broadband speeds greater than 10 Mbps. Percentage of E-rate libraries with broadband speeds of 100 Mbps or greater.

- The number of interlibrary loans requested through ShareIdaho will increase or maintain annually. Note: LiLI Unlimited underwent a major restructuring and was renamed ShareIdaho in FY2018.
- Idaho libraries will see increased use by Idahoans.  
*Benchmark:* 8,291,157 visits to public libraries were reported in FY2019 (a 1.49 percent increase over last FY).  
1,027,183 Idahoans of all ages attended public library programs in FY2019 (a 1 percent increase over last FY).

**Goal 2. Support the role of libraries in preparing Idahoans to be college and career ready.**

- Strategy 1: Improve users' formal education.
  - Objective 2.1.1: The School Library Consultant will provide consulting and training opportunities to school library staff annually.
  - Objective 2.1.2: The School Library Consultant will facilitate access to library mini-grants to improve student learning annually.
  - Objective 2.1.3: An internal team, in partnership with the State Board of Education, will provide training to library staff in rural communities to help residents seek and obtain higher education opportunities by June 2021.
- Strategy 2: Improve users' general knowledge and skills.
  - Objective 2.2.1: The Youth Services team will support Read to Me early learning programs and grant opportunities annually.
  - Objective 2.2.2: The Youth Services team will minimize the summer slide by supporting library summer reading programs in public and school libraries annually.
  - Objective 2.2.3: The Emerging Trends Consultant, along with other Consultants, will support Make It at the Library and other STEM-based out-of-school programs and training annually, leveraging outside support and partnerships when possible.
  - Objective 2.2.4: An internal team will develop and deliver library programs, trainings, and resources that support 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and future's thinking annually.
  - Objective 2.2.5: The Youth Services team will develop and support programs, professional development, and grants aimed at beginning readers through teens annually.
  -
- Strategy 3: Improve users' ability to discover information resources.
  - Objective 2.3.1: An internal team will develop promotional efforts to publicize LiLI Databases and other information resources annually.



- Objective 2.3.2: An internal team will develop partnerships with other agencies and organizations to coordinate and leverage college and career ready programs and services and reach more Idahoans.
- Strategy 4: Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources.
  - Objective 2.4.1: The LiLI Librarian will provide statewide support and training for the LiLI Databases on an ongoing basis.
  - Objective 2.4.2: The Youth Services Consultants and School Library Consultant will support access to online books, primary sources, and other resources annually.
  - Objective 2.4.3: The Emerging Trends Consultant will regularly identify and share library trends to help libraries make informed planning decisions for the ever-changing future.

Performance Measures for Goal 2:

- Library summer reading participation will increase by 3 percent annually.  
*Benchmark:* 108,934 youth participated in summer learning programs in FY2018; 107,458 youth participated in FY2017.
- Use of the LiLI Databases will increase annually.  
*Benchmark:* New databases were added to LiLI in FY2019 and new baseline stats will be collected.

**Goal 3: Ensure equitable access to information and library services for Idahoans with disabilities, those in rural communities, English-language learners, people living in poverty, and other underserved populations.**

- Strategy 1: Improve users' general knowledge and skills.
  - Objective 3.1.1: The Talking Book Service team will improve access to materials in alternate formats for those unable to read standard print.
  - Objective 3.1.2: An internal team will increase awareness about services for persons with disabilities and collaborate with agencies and organizations serving this clientele.
  - Objective 3.1.3: The Youth Services team will support outreach services for those who face barriers getting to libraries, targeting Spanish-language speakers and low-income residents.
  - Objective 3.1.4: Program staff will develop partnerships with other agencies and organizations to coordinate and leverage programs and services and reach more underserved Idahoans.

Performance Measures for Goal 3:

- The number of youth participating in library outreach programs will be maintained or increase annually.  
*Benchmark:* Number of children participating in the My First Book outreach program. Number of youth participating in Summer Reading Outreach.
- There will be an annual increase in the number of Idahoans registering for Talking Book Services.  
*Benchmark:* Number of new users registered for Talking Book Services.  
*Outputs:* Number of Talking Book Patrons. Talking Book Circulation.

**Goal 4: Support the role of libraries in economic and workforce development.**

- Strategy 1: Improve library staff's knowledge of economic and employment resources and programs.
  - Objective 4.1.1: The Program Supervisor and Continuing Education Consultant will provide continuing education opportunities for library staff focused on economic and employment resources and programs annually.
  - Objective 4.1.2: By 2021, the Program Supervisor and Continuing Education Consultant will develop a suite of turnkey training curricula on workforce development themes which library staffs can deploy in their libraries.
- Strategy 2: Facilitate increased awareness by library users of economic and employment support.
  - Objective 4.2.1: The Program Supervisor and Librarian will regularly update a curated suite of employment resources from partners which can be selectively and contextually applied in libraries.
- Strategy 3: Foster consideration by Idaho employers of library services and resources as key elements in sustainable business development.
  - Objective 4.3.1: The Program Supervisor will initiate and cultivate partnerships with state agencies, nonprofits, and businesses to develop plans for better employment support via libraries. Organizations could include: Department of Labor, Department of Corrections, Idaho Rural Partnership, State Board of Education, University of Idaho Extension Service, the Idaho Community Foundation, and others.
  - Objective 4.3.2: The Program Supervisor will identify by name a range of potential partners for libraries, identify exemplary models of partnering, and facilitate introductions annually.

Performance Measures for Goal 4:

- 80 percent of library staff attending continuing education programs focused on workforce development will report they are better prepared to facilitate access to economic and employment resources.
- By FY2021, 10 libraries will implement workforce development programs, trainings, and workshops in their libraries.
- In FY2021, at least 10 new libraries either link to the online curated set of resources or create their own set of resources on the library's website.
- Co-branded and co-facilitated business development opportunities among employers, partners, and libraries total at least 10 by the end of FY2021.

**Goal 5: Model responsible and effective government practices.**

- Strategy 1: Align resources and priorities to maximize the value of both public and private funding.
  - Objective 5.1.1: All staff will integrate agency values into all initiatives and activities, both within and outside the agency on an ongoing basis: continuous improvement, learning organization, customer services, collaboration, relationships, and library ideals.
  - Objective 5.1.2: Management team will invest in professional development and leadership opportunities for agency staff on an ongoing basis.
  - Objective 5.1.3: All staff will foster innovation, flexibility, and results-oriented planning for effective and efficient programs and services for the agency's clientele on an ongoing basis.
  - Objective 5.1.4: Management team will review existing positions to maximize opportunities to meet the goals featured in the strategic plan.
  - Objective 5.1.5: The Volunteer Coordinator will work with the ICfL's staff to identify tasks and will recruit and train volunteers to help achieve goals outlined in the strategic plan.
- Strategy 2: Increase the awareness of Idaho libraries as essential community resources.
  - Objective 5.2.1: The Public Information Officer will develop and implement a strategic, intentional approach to communicating the value that Idaho libraries contribute to their communities.
- Strategy 3: Implement practices and processes to comply with the Executive Orders (EO) on Cybersecurity and Red Tape Reduction Act.

- Objective 5.3.1: The Administrative Manager and IT Staff will monitor progress toward implementation of Cybersecurity EO 2017-02 in partnership with the Office of the Chief Information Officer.
- Objective 5.3.2: The agency Rules Review Officer will review the ICfL’s administrative rules to identify outdated regulations annually.
- Strategy 4: Collaborate with the State Controller’s Office to implement the Luma transition.
  - Objective 5.4.1: The Administrative Services Manager will oversee ICfL’s transition to SCO’s Luma Project by supporting specific module integration, system implementation, and program configuration.
  - Objective 5.4.2: The Administrative Services Team will support employee transition from a paper-centric accounting program to a cloud-based, multifunctional, digital system through individual engagement and staff training
  - Objective 5.4.3: The Administrative Services Manger will develop new and improved processes that embrace the new system’s capabilities, manage change and agency transparency, and bring resource savings to the statewide business process redesign.

Performance Measures for Goal 5:

- Since the 2019 Legislative Session, the ICfL staff has reduced 445 words from our single Administrative Rules Chapter. There are currently 7 restrictive words in the ICfL Rules which is a reduction from the previous 25. A total of 18 additional restrictive words or 72% were removed.

*Benchmark:* The word count in ICfL’s administrative rules went from 2,573 words after the 2019 Legislative session to 2,128 words in our current Administrative Rules, a decrease of 445 words or 17.29%.

**TIMELINE**

This plan is intended to support the Idaho library community over the next four years and is supported with annual project plans. All funded projects are reviewed and evaluated annually based on the evaluation plan.

**EVALUATION PLAN**

The Idaho Commission for Libraries will continue to use a combination of techniques to evaluate the success of the activities in meeting our goals and project priorities:

- Evaluate all projects and services using outcome-based assessment questions.
- Monitor activities and sub-grant projects. Commission projects are evaluated by an appropriate method chosen by the lead consultant. Sub-grant projects are evaluated through interim and final narrative and financial reports.
- Conduct surveys or assessments as needed.
- Incorporate outcome-based and/or independent evaluations for appropriate projects.