

REQUEST FOR FUNDING UNDER THE AMERICAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009

AGENCY: IDAHO COMMISSION FOR LIBRARIES

PROJECT: Job Seeking @ Your Library

- A. Amount: \$467,000
- B. Title and section: Division A, Title XIV, State Fiscal Stabilization Fund
- Section 14002(b)(1), State Allocations (General, 18.2% of the state allocation)
 - May qualify under Section 14001, Fiscal Stabilization funds for Outlying Areas, as determined by the Secretary of Education
- C. Requirements and deadline for application: Secretary of Education will determine the time, manner, and information required for applications. The Governor must submit all applications on behalf of a state. Recipient states must file annual reports as determined by the Secretary. (from The Council of State Governments, "The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009: A Guide for State and Local Governments")
- D. Other requirements:
- Spending limitations: none identified
- State match: none identified
- % limitations: none identified
- Timeframe: none identified
- E. Date federal funding ends: Funds not sub-granted or otherwise committed within 2 years must be returned to the Secretary of Education.
- F. Need for additional spending authority: The Commission would require additional spending authority for FY2009 funds deposited in 0348, the federal fund.
- G. Need for additional state employees: None; the project will be implemented with existing staff and through the existing LiLI web portal and grants process.
- H. Project plan: Job Seeking @ Your Library

Over the past year, the national news has documented the increased use of public libraries during these hard economic times. Idaho library statistics confirm that this increase is a spike in a 10-year upward trend. Nearly three-quarters of job seekers now use the Internet to seek employment, in part because this is the only way to apply for many job opportunities. Every public library in Idaho provides computers and Internet access free of charge to the public. In many Idaho communities, the public library is the only provider of free access.

Aiding job seekers through a variety of employment services is a role more and more libraries are taking on as Idahoans visit them as part of their job search or skills-building strategy. In a recent survey, Idaho library staff identified the following as services being requested:

- Resume-writing books, tutorials, and assistance
- Assistance with online job applications
- Job databases and other online job-finding resources
- Materials on successful interviewing
- Career handbooks
- College handbooks and continuing education opportunities
- Exam proctoring
- Computer skills training

Job Seeking @ Your Library consists of 3 components which, collectively or individually, will improve Idahoans' ability to locate job opportunities, improve workplace skills, and get hired by making services that support those goals more widely and consistently available throughout the state.

- eCIS. To assist Idahoans with their job search needs, the Commission for Libraries will purchase statewide access to the Department of Labor's Electronic Career Information System (eCIS). This comprehensive, computerized information resource for career exploration and planning is available online through schools and the regional offices of the Department of Labor. Individuals not currently enrolled in school or not able to access a regional office must pay \$19.95 to access the service. The Commission will make the resource available without charge for 1 year through 150 Idaho library facilities and via the existing Libraries Linking Idaho (LiLI) Portal at www.lili.org. Department of Labor staff is available to provide introductory training for library staff.

Cost: \$96,000

Project start date: within 2 months

Estimated completion date: 1 year from start date

Exit strategy: One-time funds will provide unlimited access to any Idahoan for 12 months. Users creating an account within those 12 months will have continued use of the service for 6 years. Usage statistics collected during the project will be used to determine libraries' interest in continuing the access with local funds from existing budgets through a group subscription to the service.

- LearningExpress Library. The Commission will make the LearningExpress (LE) Library available to all Idahoans for two years through the Libraries Linking Idaho (LiLI) Portal at www.lili.org. LE Library is a web-based learning solution with a comprehensive collection of test-preparation tools, skills-building materials, and career resources. It has over 700 online practice tests and interactive skills-building tutorials that can help Idahoans hone their 21st century skills needed by Idaho employers. Web-based training in use of LE Library is part of the package.

Cost: \$221,000

Project start date: within 3 months

Estimated completion date: 2 years from start date

Exit strategy: One-time funds will provide unlimited access to the learning database for 2 years. Usage statistics collected during that time will be used to determine libraries' interest in continuing the access with local funds from existing budgets through a group subscription to the service.

- To complement these two statewide resources, the Commission will offer a competitive mini-grant program for one-time projects for employment services that meet the unique needs of their communities. Many libraries are already assisting their users with finding jobs, creating resumes, and submitting applications. This project component will enable libraries to expand and/or extend employment services to the increased number of users requesting them.

Cost: \$150,000

Project start date: within 1 month

Estimated completion date: variable, up to 2 years depending on local needs

Exit strategy: Funds will be used to expand existing services to assist individuals with their job search needs with skills-building workshops, curriculum design, and the tools and materials needed to assist with resume writing, interview skills, and redefining one's career. Libraries utilizing the funds will identify sustainability efforts to continue the services with local funds beyond the program period and no expectation of continued state- or federal-level support funds.

Submitted via e-mail on 3/4/09 by:

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