# Idaho Commission for Libraries Out-of-School Time Planning & Programming Grants 2022-23: External Evaluation Summary

Introduction and Background

To support out-of-school time (OST) programs focused on mitigating lost school time and unfinished learning for youth in Idaho, Idaho Out-of-School Network (ION), Idaho Commission for Libraries, and Idaho STEM Action Center developed a unique partnership. With ESSER III—the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund grant program authorized under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act funds granted to the Idaho State Department of Education and administered by the Idaho State Board of Education, the 3 agencies coordinated, developed, and delivered grant programs to create opportunities for all types of OST programs. ION and partners commissioned this work to determine the value of programs implemented and partnerships born from this investment in Idaho.

The goals of the OST Planning & Programming grants included:
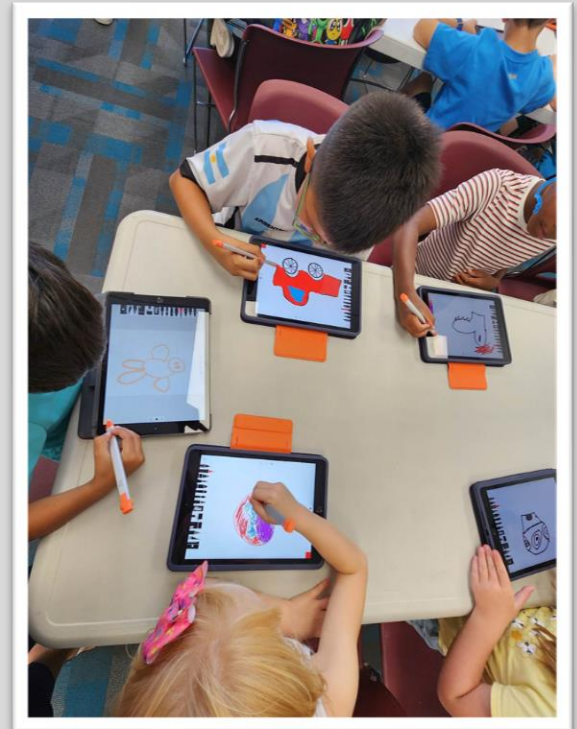
Strengthening the role of libraries as community educators addressing learning loss by implementing high-quality, evidence-based OST learning and/or summer programs	*Building the institutional capacity of libraries by increasing staff participation in training and professional development opportunities focused on OST and/or summer program best practices*	*Addressing the academic, social, and emotional needs of Idaho's K-12 students facing learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with special emphasis on the disproportionate impact on underrepresented student subgroups*

ICfL OST Funding Sources

OST Planning Grant	OST Programming Grant
Larger grant amounts to support OST enrichment activities and included a **community asset map requirement**	**Smaller grant amounts** to support OST enrichment activities
Total of **$120,000** in funding granted to **6 libraries**	Total of **$94,000** in funding granted to **33 libraries**

During the 2022-23 school year, ICfL library programs served

18,920 community members

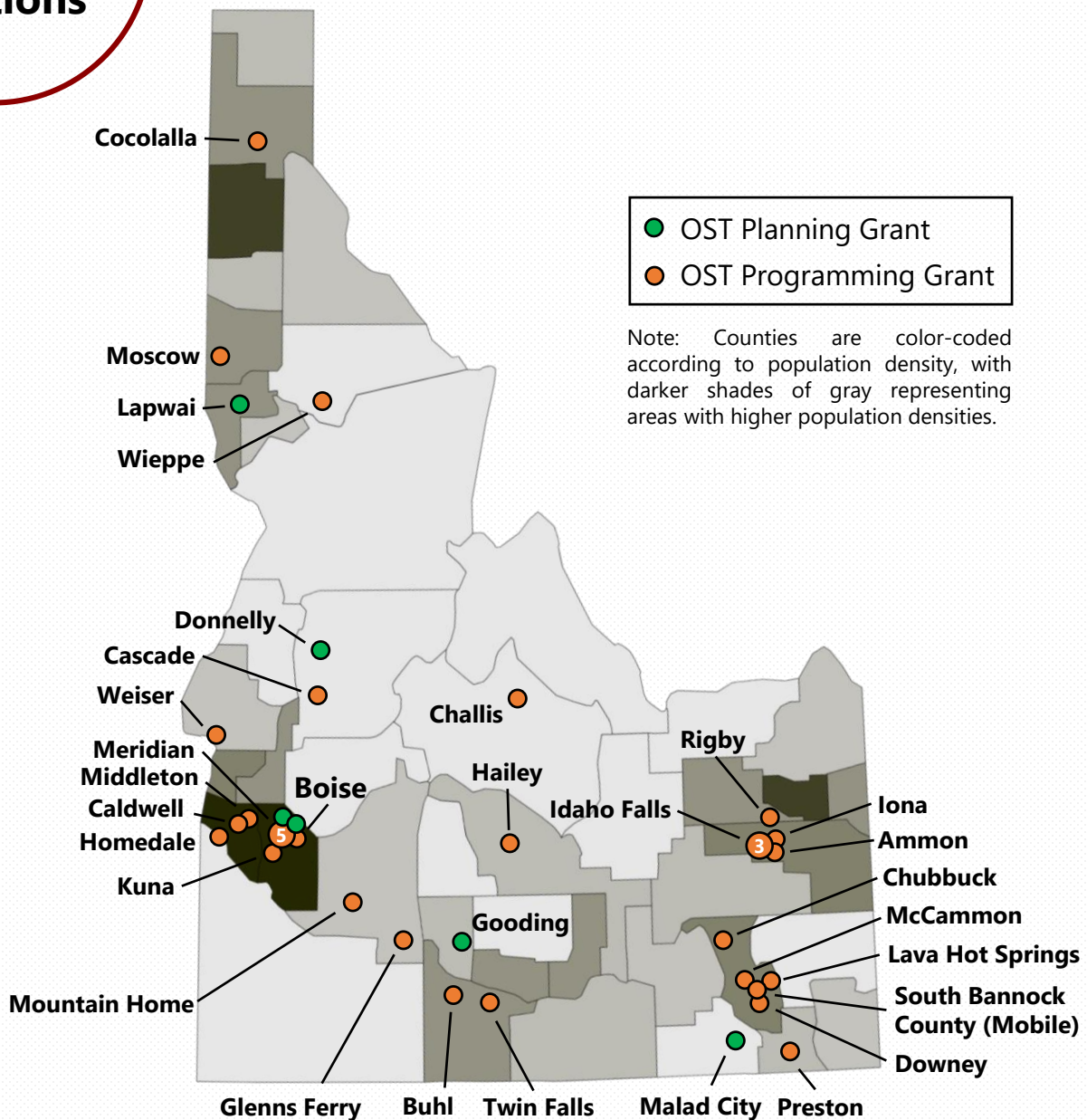including children, youth, and adult family members.

All OST grantees utilized the *ION Building Blocks of Out-of-School Time Quality Guide* to support the development and implementation of their OST program offerings. The Building Blocks are designed to help OST programs understand and identify strengths and areas of improvement in their program to better serve youth and families. The library grantees selected one Building Block area to focus on for the 2022-23 school year. To guide library teams in aligning their OST programming with their selected Building Block focus area, ION provided opportunities that allowed program leaders and staff to participate in the following activities:

➢ Attend online professional development webinars
➢ Create quality improvement and professional development plans
➢ Conduct a self-assessment based on the Building Blocks

ICfL OST Grantee Locations

This map shows the locations of the ICfL OST Planning grantees, denoted by green circles, and Programming grantees, denoted by orange circles. A complete list of the ICfL programs is provided in the Appendix of this report (page 10).

Legend:
- ● OST Planning Grant
- ● OST Programming Grant

Note: Counties are color-coded according to population density, with darker shades of gray representing areas with higher population densities.

Map labels: Cocolalla, Moscow, Lapwai, Wieppe, Donnelly, Cascade, Weiser, Challis, Rigby, Meridian, Middleton, Hailey, Iona, Caldwell, Boise, Idaho Falls, Ammon, Homedale, Chubbuck, Kuna, McCammon, Gooding, Lava Hot Springs, Mountain Home, South Bannock County (Mobile), Downey, Glenns Ferry, Buhl, Twin Falls, Malad City, Preston

Evaluation Topics, Data Collection, and Limitations

In Spring 2023, the UEPC conducted two virtual focus groups with library staff overseeing the OST Planning and Programming grants to discuss program design and implementation, successes, and challenges. The staff who attended the focus groups represented 8 of the 39 ICfL OST grantees (21%), including 3 of the 6 Planning grantees and 5 of the 33 Programming grantees. The focus group participants represented Clearwater Co., Gooding, Heritage Middle School, Idaho Falls, Meridian, Oneida, Pepper Ridge Elementary, Rocky Mountain High School, and South Bannock libraries. Each focus group lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, and the conversations were recorded and transcribed. The UEPC also reviewed ICfL grant requirements, applications, and OST Planning and Programming grantee interim and final progress reports to inform the evaluation. All data sources are listed in the figure below.

| Library staff focus groups | Grant requirements and applications | OST Programming grantees' interim progress reports | OST Planning and Programming grantees' final progress reports |
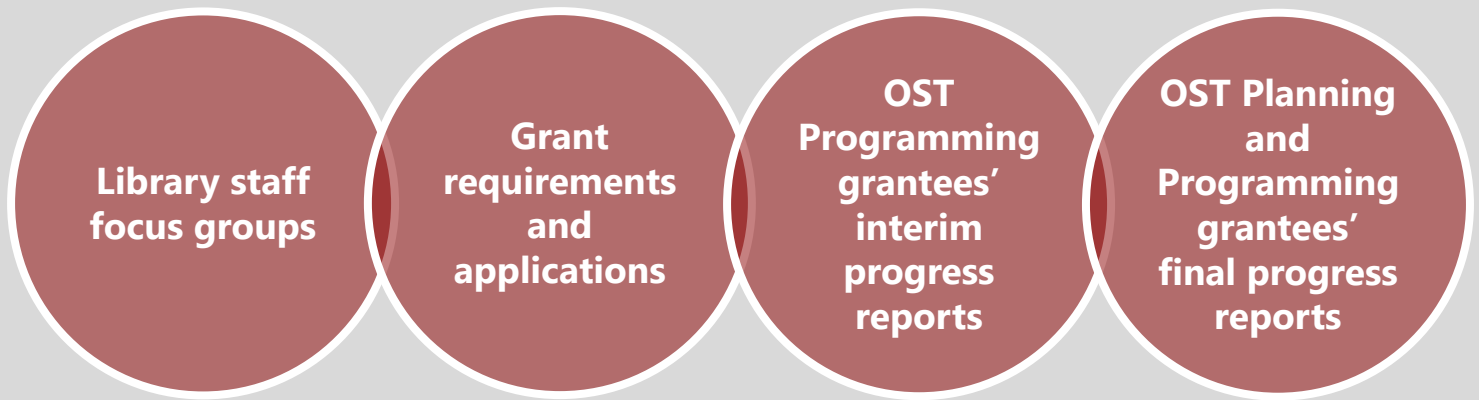
It is important to note that all data was self-reported by library grantees. The findings from this evaluation are limited and may not be representative of library teams that did not participate in the focus groups.

Report Organization

In the remaining sections of this report, key evaluation findings are presented based on the data collected related to both Programming and Planning grantees. Findings are organized by the three primary evaluation topics: program design and implementation, successes, and challenges. We also offer data-driven considerations for ongoing and future implementation of ICfL OST grant programs. Below is an index of the report content.

Program Design & Implementation

Challenges

Successes

Considerations

Findings

The following findings represent themes that emerged across data sources from ICfL Programming and Planning grantees who participated in the evaluation. The findings are organized by the three evaluation topics: program implementation, successes, and challenges. Examples of supporting data, such as quotes from focus groups and program report data, are included with each finding.

Program Design & Implementation

Finding #1 – Grantees offered a wide range of OST program options for children and youth in their communities. The most common program activities involved educational games, STEM/STEAM programming, 3D printing projects, homework support, and reading enrichment programs, including Idaho Battle of the Books, which is a reading incentive program. The libraries developed unique and innovative OST activities in areas such as health and fitness, outdoor education and recreation, and life skills. Some libraries also offered job skills development for high school students.

*With the funding from this grant, we were able to bring our outreach to the students. **A few examples include organizing a lunchtime coding class to a Title I elementary school** that included an introduction to coding.org as well has hands on coding. (OST Planning Grant Final Report)*

OST Planning and
Programming Grantees provided

251 tutoring programs that served 1,247 children and youth

during the 2022-23 school year.

*Partnering with {local} school district for virtual reading and math tutoring and assistance. **This virtual and passive component allowed all elementary schoolers access to library technology tutoring and educational games directly related to what they were learning in the classroom.** (OST Programming Grant Final Report)*

*We're going forward. We're doing more. We're seeing what works and what doesn't. It's a constant, do we need to revamp this? Why isn't this working, or what made this so successful? **I do think that we'll just move forward, hoping to carry out more really good opportunities for the kids to connect, to learn, but to learn in a hands-on way**. (Library Staff Focus Group)*

*There is a lack of out-of-school learning opportunities in the {area}, especially for teens and for low-income families. COVID-19 effected those families even harder than families above poverty level. If families are unable to afford necessities, it is highly unlikely that they would be able to pay to send their children to an afterschool program or pay for a special class. COVID-19 also stopped or put restrictions on many after school programs or special learning opportunities in general. **Through this grant, we were able to offer free, enriching classes that taught teens important life skills they will be able to use in the future.** (OST Programming Grant Interim Report)*

***It's just getting kids engaged and getting them learning, getting them connecting with each other.** That was a huge part of it, is just giving them a safe space with learning opportunities and connection opportunities. And things they're interested in so that they have a voice. (Library Staff Focus Group)*

Finding #2 – Grantees considered community need when implementing OST options. Library teams gathered input from participants and their families through informal discussions and feedback surveys. Grantees also considered how OST enrichment activities could bolster efforts to mitigate learning loss related to COVID-19.

Due to our geographical location, afterschool programming is very challenging and limited for the youth in our community. Before {the pandemic}, we had more opportunities for students to be involved in programs after school, but those opportunities have become less... This has caused a lot of our students to not have the opportunity to interact with peers outside of school hours and we have seen many issues arise due to this. **This program has helped bring a diverse group of youth who normally would not interact with each other for a fun innovative program that every youth can relate to. It has helped the youth in the area with communication, building relationships outside of school and provided opportunities [for] something that every youth could be proud of**. *(OST Programming Grant Interim Report)*

This grant helped us meet the needs of our community by **allowing us to offer learning programs for free in a safe, positive space.** *(OST Programming Grant Interim Report)*

Funding from this grant has made a huge impact in how we could meet the needs of the youth in our community. *Our children don't have access to transportation to the nearby communities for activities and so we create them at the library in our after school program. (OST Planning Grant Final Report)*

This grant helped to meet the needs of youth in our communities by providing resources to get their homework done. They are especially helpful to families on the go that might not have homework supplies available. This addressed the impact of COVID-19 on underserved student groups by making this resource available to all students in the district and providing library information and supplies many *students may not have at home. (OST Programming Grant Interim Report)*

This funding helped meet the needs of the youth in our community by providing a variety of weekly learning opportunities. There is no structured programs or places for kids to go in the community once school is out. **These programs gave them a chance to continue to learn in a fun, safe environment. It also gave them a place to have more social interaction with each other.** *(OST Programming Grant Interim Report)*

Finding #3 – Some libraries provided important support for students on Fridays, especially in communities with four-day school weeks.

What I did, we have four-day school weeks here, so I did ours on Friday and I just did a fun little project to introduce a concept and then challenged them to come up with like, name me some dinosaurs and some things about them. *And then I did some homework helping tips. I also opened up the computers for them and had them reserved so that they could work on homework or educational games or stuff like that. (Library Staff Focus Group)*

The {Area} School District decided to only have school Monday-Thursday for the school year 22-23. All the kids are out of school on Friday. Sadly parents still had to work on Fridays. The Library decided to hold a STEM and Maker-station art classes. (pre k- 5th grade) We had many volunteers that were local certified teachers to run both classes. We held STEM and Maker-station art classes 2 or 3 times a month. STEM went from 11-12 and the Maker Station went from 1-2:30. The {local churches} stepped in and provided lunch and entertainment for these kiddos from 12-1. They were at the Library from 11-2:30, 3.5 hours. **Their parents knew they were in a safe place, having fun learning some cool stuff and they were being fed. "The peace of mind" for each parent was worth a million dollars, one parent told us. Parents have already started asking us if we will do it**. *(OST Programming Grant Interim Report)*

Successes

Finding #4 – The OST Planning and Programming grants supported libraries in expanding their programs, including the types of offerings and how many children and youth were served. Libraries also reported being able to expand their Battle of the Books programs.

16,938 children and youth

were served by the ICfL Planning and Programming grantees in the 2022-23 school year.

This grant allowed us to provide opportunities for students who may not be otherwise involved in school activities like sports to engage with one another in low stakes settings. Most of our "crafternoons" were designed to be hands on, yet simple activities that students could complete while just hanging out and chatting with one another. (OST Programming Grant Interim Report)

We put together 650 Homework Helper Kits to pass out to the elementary schools in our district. These come in a colorful pouch with a library label on it, containing tape, glue, stapler, ruler, highlighter, scissors, eraser, #2 pencil, pencil sharpener and bookmark with homework tips. We passed these out when we visited the schools with our bookmobile and handed them out to each class. The teachers and students were very excited to receive them. (OST Programming Grant Interim Report)

*This funding was crucial in the library being able to offer the 3D design program to our after-school program. A majority of our attendees to the program come from single parent households, parents who are in-between jobs, or families that struggling financially. **This program allowed us to offer them a learning opportunity and service that they weren't able to find elsewhere, and for free.** When an attendee joined the program for the first time, it was common for them to ask how much it would cost. The relief and excitement they showed when they learned it was free was amazing to see. (OST Programming Grant Interim Report)*

*The funding provided by this grant played a pivotal role in enabling us to support ongoing learning and facilitate meaningful interactions within our community on a regular basis. **As a result, we were able to foster a culture of reading, critical thinking, and cognitive discussions, empowering students to thrive academically while addressing the challenges posed by learning loss.** (OST Programming Grant Interim Report)*

The two biggest learning enrichment programs that we added were kids cooking and after school tutoring. We have had wonderful success with both programs. The cooking program teaching many skills such as math, measurement, working together, hygiene..., science/chemistry, and cooking skills. We have seen wonderful success with this program. (OST Programming Grant Final Report)

The funding has allowed us to form new partnerships and strengthen existing relationships with partners. The majority of the children whom we serve are from low-income families whose situations were made more dire by job loss and health complications of family members due to the pandemic. (OST Programming Grant Interim Report)

Finding #5 – Several grantees reported expanding their community partnerships to provide additional OST program options.

*We have a small community, but not everyone is willing to help out if it is not an activity associated with sports, we have a hard time getting support. **The asset map helped us identify what businesses and resources will help us,** and those that are not so willing. **This helps us streamline our efforts to get outside community support.** We also were able to identify what areas each business or asset is interested in helping with as we do our programming. (OST Planning Final Report)*

*The most important lesson that we learned was to **reach out to more than one partner or business if you are going to offer different opportunities for the youth to learn new skills or have new experiences**. (OST Programming Grant Interim Report)*

*I think that the best piece of advice I could pass on is to **use experts in your community to help with your programs.** It may seem obvious, but if you have a topic for a program, reach out to local businesses or organizations related to that topic to see who can be a presenter for your program. Working with community partners can pose its own challenges, but the benefits definitely outweigh the drawbacks. **We were able to offer programs we never would have been able to without using the presenters.** (OST Programming Grant Interim Report)*

Finding #6 – Grantees appreciated the support and flexibility provided by the ICfL and ION grant teams.

*...We started one way and we decided that to reach more people we needed to do something else. **[ICfL staff] have literally been so supportive of that, and willing to just let us give it a try and see how it goes.** (Library Staff Focus Group)*

***This was a wonderful grant that will allow us many years of programming.** I felt that the [ICfL] grant {team} did a wonderful job of letting us know what was expected. (OST Planning Grant Final Report)*

*The programmatic resources provided by ICfL were helpful in the implementation of the grant. **Using the ION building blocks helped to provide a framework for focusing the goals of the grant.** (OST Planning Grant Final Report)*

*I like the fact that even if I don't reach out, [ICfL staff] do. "How are you doing? What can we do to help?" **I've had to make a few adjustments along the way, so they're really flexible about what works for you and what works for your population, your demographics**. (Library Staff Focus Group)*

*We found all the training courses for this grant to be beneficial. **Meeting with other youth facilities was beneficial to see how they engaged with youth using the Building Blocks. One of the most beneficial things we learned was about intentional programming and using youth voices.** We did additional continuing education about youth voices in ION because we found it so important. This allowed us to have a more focused process while implementing this grant. (OST Planning Grant Final Report)*

*Working with ICfL on this project has been **extremely beneficial to us and the youth in our communities**. (OST Planning Grant Final Report)*

Challenges

Finding #7 – Grantees faced some challenges in garnering support from library staff and administration for expanded OST offerings. Additionally, some focus group participants discussed not knowing which OST activities children and youth would enjoy, and others had difficulty implementing programs with the space and materials that were available.

*Trying to find activities that are easily challenging for the teens, but easy enough that a parent could help with the child. That was another [challenge]. But a lot of them, the little kid things, the big kids don't get to do that stuff much. **So that was one of [my challenges], finding an activity with a range of ages.** (Library Staff Focus Group)*

I had some roadblocks from my administration. Like, "I have a vision and this is what it's going to be," and they're like, "No." I'm like, "I have the funds. I don't need your money. You just have to say, 'yes, you can do it'." Yeah. So from the other perspective, it was the administration wasn't giving me the access, the go ahead to. (Library Staff Focus Group)

*Just the program design, probably. **Challenges around that, that had to do with the space, but also had to do with the materials...** So just trying to think of some ways that kids can interact with different materials to the same end goal, if that makes sense... We are actually in the nonfiction section of the library, so we're dealing with art supplies and water, and there's books in there. So that was challenging. (Library Staff Focus Group)*

Finding #8 – Most grantees expressed concerns about sustainability and their ability to continue their expanded OST offerings without ongoing grant funds.

Without the funds we would not have been able to do these program at all. We would not have been able to purchase homework helper games. Due to Covid-19 anyone who was in school during the pandemic lost some ground in their educational studies. We are serving all the community with homework helper games and many STEM books we also purchased. (OST Programming Grant Final Report)

*[My challenge is that] I won't be able to redo that [Battle of the Books reading program] unless I get other grants. **We are a nonprofit, so we're working on getting some donations for that, if I can't do another grant.** (Library Staff Focus Group)*

*Without grants, **I won't be able to purchase future Idaho Battle of the Books.** (Library Staff Focus Group)*

Considerations for Ongoing and Future Implementation of ICfL OST Grants

Findings from this evaluation of the ICfL OST Planning & Programming grants for the 2022-23 school year emphasized the expansion of OST program offerings to meet the needs of children and youth across Idaho. Some grantees faced challenges in developing OST programming that engaged students within the library spaces, in addition to concerns about the sustainability of expanded OST program offerings. As ICfL and library teams enter the 2023-24 school year, we offer the considerations below as possible strategies to support the ongoing development and implementation of OST offerings in libraries.

✓ **Continue to provide support to public and school libraries to build their capacity to develop and implement quality OST enrichment opportunities**

✓ **Support the development and expansion of intentional partnerships with schools and other community organizations to bolster OST enrichment programming**

✓ **Expand professional development opportunities for library staff to include more discussion on the process for gathering feedback from participants to inform program implementation**

✓ **Encourage the possibility of community partnerships and braided funding opportunities to address program sustainability**

Evaluation Next Steps

The UEPC will continue to partner with the ION and ICfL teams to better understand the implementation and outcomes of their OST and grant opportunities.

STUDENTS SHOWCASE STEM SKILLS AT IDX 2023
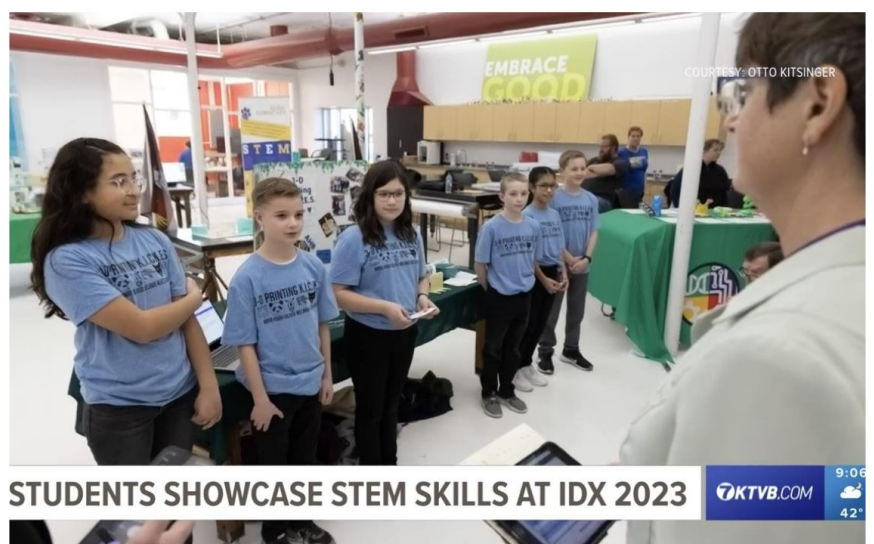
Appendix

2022-23 OST Planning Grantees

Library Name	Type of Library
Ada Community Library	Public
Donnelly Public Library District	Public
Gooding Public Library District	Public
Meridian Library District	Public
Oneida County Library	Public
Prairie River Library District	Public

2022-23 OST Programming Grantees

Library Name	Type of Library
Bonneville County Library District – Iona Branch	Public
Bonneville County Library District – Westside Branch	Public
Bonneville County Library District – Ammon Branch	Public
Buhl Public Library	Public
Cascade Public Library	Public
Centennial High School Library	School
Challis Public Library	Public
Clearwater Co. Library District	Public
Glenns Ferry Public	Public
Gypsy Jackson Memorial Library	Public
Hailey Public Library	Public
Heritage Middle School	School
Idaho Falls Public Library	Public
Kuna Library District	Public
Larsen-Sant Public Library	Public
Latah County Library District	Public
Middleton Public Library	Public
Mountain Home Public Library	Public
Owyhee High School Library	School
Pepper Ridge Elementary	School
Ponderosa Elementary	School
Portneuf District Library	Public
Rigby High School Library	School
Rocky Mountain High School Library	School
South Bannock Library District – McCammon Branch	Public
South Bannock Library District – Bookmobile Branch	Public
South Bannock Library District – Downey Branch	Public
South Bannock Library District – Lava Hot Springs Branch	Public
Southside Elementary	School
Syringa Middle School Library	School
Twin Falls Public Library	Public
Victory Middle School	School
Weiser Public Library	Public