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## **Idaho Future Fund Aims to Address Education Funding Shortfalls**

**Idaho** — The Idaho Future Fund, established in 2015 by an anonymous couple in Blaine County, is pleased to announce the recipients of its 2024 grant cycle. This year, the Fund will distribute nearly \$300,000 to nonprofit organizations across Idaho, aiming to bridge critical gaps in educational programs from preschool through 12th grade.

The Idaho Future Fund was created to address the increasing challenges faced by educational institutions due to the decline in adequate funding models to support the needs of Idaho's school districts. These grants will enable organizations to sustain, expand, and create essential educational programs.

### **Grant Categories and Objectives**

The grants fall into four main categories:

1. **Preschool Access:** Supporting organizations that provide pre-kindergarten education for children who would not otherwise have access.
2. **Charter Schools:** Funding charter schools that offer alternative education models and demonstrate improved quality of education.
3. **Public Schools and Public School Libraries:** Assisting public schools and libraries in need of funding for critical programs affected by budget cuts.
4. **Supplemental Educational Programs:** Supporting programs that supplement existing public school offerings, such as after-school tutoring and summer learning initiatives.

## Recipients

### East Region, \$69,000 total awarded to 5 organizations

- **United Way of Southeastern Idaho, Inc. (Power County):** \$15,000 to maintain and expand preschool scholarship efforts, providing approximately 100 scholarships to ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) families.

Other recipients in the East region include:

- Bear Lake School District No. 33 Education Foundation (Bear Lake County): \$20,000 for after-school programs.
- Bonneville Joint School District #93 (Bonneville County): \$1,000 for updated curriculum materials.
- County of Power, Class A School District 318 (Power County): \$18,000 to provide scholarships to attend preschool.
- Madison School District #321 (Madison County): \$15,000 to support early childhood reading.

### North Region, \$78,000 total awarded to 5 organizations

- **Panhandle Alliance for Education Inc. (Bonner County):** \$3,000 awarded a grant to support the Ready to Read program, benefiting first grade students in the Lake Pend Oreille School District.

Other recipients in the North region include:

- Mullan School District #392 (Shoshone County): \$20,000 to support preschool staffing in Mullan.
- Priest Lake Community Education Foundation, Inc. (Bonner County): \$15,000 to support preschool and Kindergarten ready programs in Priest Lake.
- St. Maries Joint School District #41 (Benewah County): \$20,000 for teacher training in reading intervention.
- United Way of North Idaho (Kootenai County): \$20,000 for preschool access for ALICE families.

### South Central Region, \$93,000 total awarded to 6 organizations

- **The Advocates for Survivors of Domestic Violence, Inc. (Blaine County):** \$20,000 awarded a grant to provide sliding-scale early learning scholarships for low-income preschool children at the Thrive Kids community center in Hailey.

Other recipients in the South Central region include:

- Children's Museum of the Magic Valley (Cassia County): \$10,000 for STEAM programming.

- Lincoln County Youth Center (Lincoln County): \$15,000 for summer educational programming.
- Reading & Math Inc. (Twin Falls County): \$15,000 to provide match funding for reading tutors.
- The Space Idaho, Inc. (Blaine County): \$15,000 to connect students to after-school tutoring.
- YMCA of Twin Falls, Inc. (Twin Falls County): \$18,000 to support preschool and after school care.

### **Southwest Region, \$58,000 total awarded to 4 organizations**

- **Giraffe Laugh, Inc. (Ada County):** \$20,000 awarded a grant to support the opening of two new preschool locations in Boise and Kuna, providing access to early childhood education for underserved communities.

Other recipients in the Southwest region include:

- Breaking Chains Academy of Development Inc. (Canyon County): \$20,000 for program expenses.
- Friends of Idaho Public Television Inc. (Ada County): \$10,000 for Storytime in a Box program.
- Payette Lakes Community Association, Inc. (Valley County): \$8,000 help with childcare needs in the McCall area.

### **The Need for Support**

Idaho's K-12 schools continue to face significant funding challenges, exacerbated by the pandemic. Despite a historic 16.4% increase in state general fund spending for public schools during the 2023 legislative session, schools could still face a shortfall of \$115 million without a temporary rule by the State Board of Education<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>. This gap threatens to cut positions and increase class sizes statewide<sup>1</sup>. Compounding the issue, Idaho is shifting back to an attendance-based funding model after temporarily using enrollment-based funding during pandemic<sup>1</sup>. This transition is straining resources, as many districts face declining enrollments, leading to funding gaps and difficult decisions for school administrators. Addressing these persistent challenges is crucial to ensure quality education for all Idaho students. The Idaho Future Fund seeks to alleviate these challenges by providing targeted support to ensure that all children in Idaho have access to quality education. To learn more about the Idaho Future Fund, to contribute, or to establish your own area-of interest fund, please contact us at [info@idahocf.org](mailto:info@idahocf.org) or visit: [www.idahocf.org](http://www.idahocf.org).

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For 35 years, the Idaho Community Foundation has helped Idahoans make their communities even better through philanthropy. If you want to support the nonprofits,

schools, recreational opportunities and more that make your community special, please contact us at [info@idahocf.org](mailto:info@idahocf.org) or visit: [www.idahocf.org](http://www.idahocf.org).

Article Sources:

1. [Idahonews.com](http://idahonews.com), [Idaho schools could see a major shortfall in K-12 funding \(idahonews.com\)](http://idahonews.com)
2. [Idahoednews.org](http://idahoednews.org), [Special education: Idaho's \\$66 million problem \(idahoednews.org\)](http://idahoednews.org)
3. [Gov.idaho.gov](http://Gov.idaho.gov), [Financial support for K-12 education grows 10.5-percent during pandemic | Office of the Governor \(idaho.gov\)](http://Gov.idaho.gov)