

Project Abstract under ESF REM Absolute Priority 1 – *Inspire Idaho*

We know two things about the coronavirus’ impact on Idaho. First, while the direct health impact is currently below the national average, the virus will eventually fully impact every state. In Idaho this June, new cases continue to increase at double digit, and in some places, triple digit rates. Second, while the state’s demography is different than many other places, the impact on our communities has been and will continue to be significant. Idaho’s rural population and vast geography make our coronavirus challenges daunting. To help meet the growing digital divide and the expanding learning gaps COVID-19 is perpetrating on our most vulnerable students, the Idaho State Board of Education proposes to launch *Inspire Idaho* – a microgrant program to help families access connectivity, devices and online learning opportunities for their children. The primary goal of the program is to provide microgrants to approximately 18,000 needy and vulnerable students.

The State Board will establish *Inspire Idaho* through a public-private partnership with the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Family Foundation (JKAF), and the education nonprofit Bluum. [REDACTED]

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the delivery of resources to needy families this year, initial grants will be made by October. In subsequent years, grants will be awarded in the spring to provide resources

in time to mitigate summer learning loss. Further, to support early childhood education, *Inspire Idaho* will also make resources available to children as young as age four. Families will be able to draw down their allocation over time and will have up to three years to expend all microgrant dollars to acquire eligible educational goods and services.

Finally, it is hoped that *Inspire Idaho* can serve as a model for how other rural states can successfully implement a microgrant program.