



October XX, 2021

A Message from State Librarian Michael Scott on Online Resources and Tools

Greetings!

With fall officially upon us, I wanted to send out an update on the online resource offerings from the State Library and share a couple of positive developments related to library materials purchasing and Bridges.

First, thank you for attending webinar trainings last month and getting Brainfuse HelpNow up and running in your libraries! We are excited to offer this homework help and tutoring resource at no cost to public libraries this fiscal year and hope it provides value to your patrons.

Online Resources Update

We've received some questions about the process of obtaining additional online resources for public libraries. Staff have been working on this behind the scenes, but the sudden windfall in the form of the American Rescue Plan Act funding diverted some duties and pushed back timelines on some plans for resources.



To recap: this fiscal year, in addition to Brainfuse HelpNow, we renewed Foundation Directory Online for public libraries and OCLC FirstSearch membership for public and academic libraries; these are all available at no cost. We pursued library discounts for a prominent online training tool; however, the vendor was not willing to offer any discounts and we were unable to reach an agreement. Over the summer, we also issued an RFP for an online encyclopedia resource, but unfortunately did not receive any proposals. We are still looking at a business directory service and hope to have an RFP posted for that in the next month. Finally, instead of pursuing a database for legal forms, we are moving forward with developing a new website for the public with legal resources specific to Iowa and hope to have that available sometime next year.

We may pursue further resources in the future; however, at this time we have no plans for additional ones beyond those listed above. We tried to think broadly to identify resources that would benefit the most libraries, but we know one size does not fit all. Some libraries have expressed interest in a specific general reference database, but state purchasing rules prevent us from picking and choosing a certain vendor or product. In this case, we believe it is best to give libraries the ability to choose their preferred vendor and resource since we do not have that control at the state level.

We certainly encourage you to contact and work with vendors for individual contracts on any other resources you think would benefit your community.

New State Master Agreement

The State of Iowa has entered into a master agreement with Baker & Taylor for library materials and processing. A master agreement allows Iowa governmental agencies (including public libraries) to take

advantage of the contract terms without having to go out for bid or shop around for the best deal. The type of RFP issued was for one vendor to be awarded the master agreement which is why there are no other state contracts with other vendors for library supplies or textbooks.

The Baker & Taylor master agreement allows for discounted pricing on books, audiobooks, DVDs/Blu-Rays, and CDs as well as discounts on physical book and media processing. There are additional perks related to tracking publisher inventory, new release calendars, collection development tools and a dedicated sales consultant to assist libraries. Find out more:

[Iowa Baker & Taylor website](#)

Bridges News

Now on to some exciting Bridges news: I'm pleased to report that the State Library has used a portion of our American Rescue Plan Act funding to purchase the magazine package from OverDrive for one year!

This gives all Bridges libraries access to over 3,000 magazine titles available as unlimited simultaneous use without circulation limits. We encourage you to promote this collection to your patrons. Check out the treasure trove of free marketing materials for libraries at the link below to get started:

[OverDrive Marketing Materials](#)

That's all for this update. Thank you again for the important work you do and I hope you have a wonderful fall and holiday season! Please reach out with any questions or feedback to me or any other State Library staff member.

Sincerely,

[Michael Scott](#)

State Librarian

P.S. You can find more information about all of the online resources and tools available to Iowa libraries on our website:

[Online Resources and Tools for Libraries](#)

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