

Engaging Public Libraries in Community Health Information and Services

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Public libraries promote community health*

59% help patrons identify health insurance resources

58% help patrons locate and evaluate free health information online

48% help patrons understand specific health or wellness topics

23% offer fitness classes

18% bring in healthcare providers to offer limited healthcare screening services

The Opportunity

NN/LM PNR provides **free staff continuing education** and other resource support to information organizations and their communities through a free membership model (states served include Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington).

Public libraries are a **priority membership population**, though their participation is somewhat low compared to other member organizations.

This project engaged **public library staff members in Idaho** directly to learn more about their **experiences with or priorities for providing health information to their communities**, in order to support NN/LM PNR in customizing services and outreach most relevant to public libraries.

The Process

Implement a recruitment strategy to ensure Idaho public library staff participation.

Develop participant and facilitator materials for online focus groups and interviews.

Conduct three online focus groups and four telephone interviews with Idaho public library staff.

Analyze participant input.

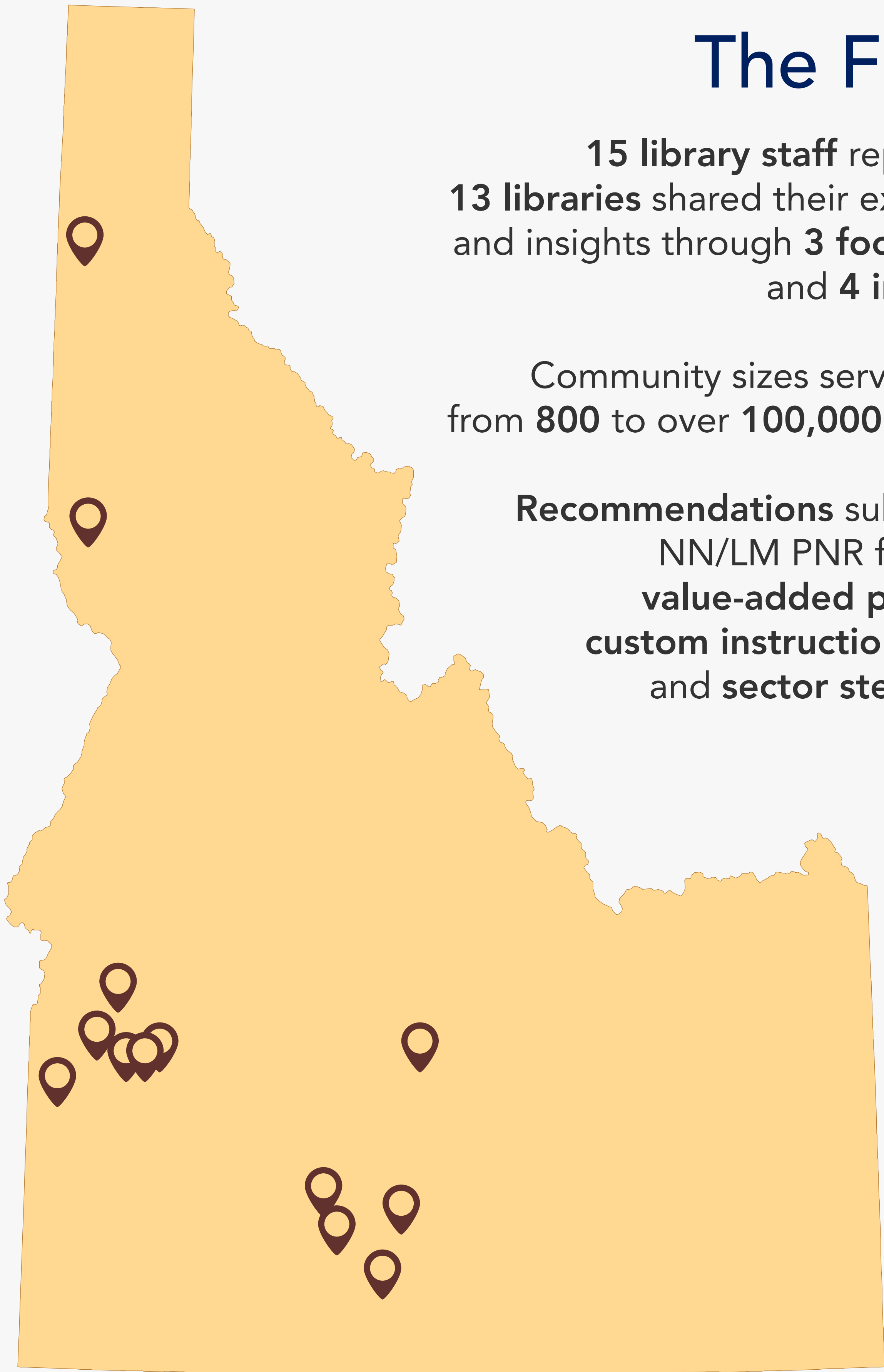
Develop written recommendations for NN/LM PNR to engage public libraries effectively.

Library Voices

"I think picking a topic, say Alzheimer's [or] PTSD, and getting into specific national to local effective paths including bibliographies, might be great."

"There's this digital literacy kind of divide, and like the hospitals are, I don't know, maybe not catching on to that, and so libraries have to help those users who don't have those digital literacy skills, just to see their own medical information."

"I'm also really aware that our library needs to become more important to people in our community who may not even be able to get here anymore, because as they age they just don't get out, so I'm just very aware of that and trying to service the community better."



The Future

15 library staff representing **13 libraries** shared their experiences and insights through **3 focus groups** and **4 interviews**.

Community sizes served ranged from **800** to over **100,000** members.

Recommendations submitted to NN/LM PNR focused on **value-added promotion, custom instructional design** and **sector stewardship**.