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Salaries & Pay Equity

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Librarians Fight for Higher Salaries

By **Valerie Nye**

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A salary survey conducted by the New Mexico State Library staff in the summer of 2005 found that workers employed by the State Library are severely underpaid. The 2005 study, titled "Pay Inequity at the New Mexico State Library: Study and Recommendations," can be found online at: www.stlib.state.nm.us/files/NMSLSalaryReport.pdf

The pay inequity study reports that in the last year and a half there has been a 30% turnover rate in Library staff and since July 2002 there has been a 50% turnover rate. This rate of turnover at the State Library is more than double the rate of turnover throughout state government. The study also reports that high turnover rates at the State Library have cost the State of New Mexico nearly one million dollars since 2002.

A startling fact documented in the study is that 35 State Library staff members meet the basic qualifications for food stamp eligibility, and 3 of these employees have master's degrees. The study states, "Given that most State Library employees work in Santa Fe with its high cost of living, many of these people... seek additional jobs in order to meet basic expenses and to maintain a reasonable quality of life."

The study also found, "New Mexico State Library salaries are the lowest in the library profession statewide, and among the lowest for state libraries nationwide." Among the recommendations included in the pay inequity study is the request to move all librarian classifications to the midpoint of the current salary scale, at a cost of \$243,731.

State Librarian, Richard Akeroyd, has been very supportive of staff efforts to improve wages at the Library. Since his arrival at the State Library in 2003, he has worked within the constraints of State government to try to bring about salary equity for State Library employees. The survey reports, however, "The administration of the Library has exhausted all of the accepted procedures offered by New Mexico State Personnel Office and those of the Department of Cultural Affairs for well-deserved salary increases."

While State Librarians and State Library employees have long been aware of these difficult salary issues, getting political recognition for salary improvements outside of the agency has been difficult.

Stuart Ashman, Secretary of the Department of Cultural Affairs, was called to task on November 17th by Senator Luciano "Lucky" Varela, Chair of the Legislative Finance Committee. During a budget hearing for the Department of Cultural Affairs, Senator Varela admonished Secretary Ashman for discouraging employee participation in the budget hearing process and strongly suggested that a plan be developed to address the severe pay inequities at the State Library.

Librarian Salaries 2005

Revised Survey Yields Broader Results

By Denise M. Davis and Jenifer Grady

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The 2005 salary survey represents a break in the methodology used for the 1982-2004 surveys. For a number of years ALA members and researchers have asked for state-level salary data instead of—or in addition to—regional data. The 2005 survey was designed to meet that need.

The sample of public and academic libraries was stratified by region AND at the state level. We invited public libraries that serve populations under 10,000 people to participate in the now Web-based survey and tripled the total sample 340%, to 4,343 from 1,275 in 2004. This larger and more inclusive sample will support more accurate comparisons for managers developing salary ranges and job seekers weighing their employment options.

Meeting the request for this change in the survey methodology required mutual effort, and we are pleased to report that the overall response rates for states were higher than expected. Especially significant was the response rate for the small and very small public libraries that had never participated and may have been surprised at their inclusion. The response was an impressive 51.5% for small libraries and 51.4% for very small libraries. Since the majority of public libraries, we conveyed the importance of their salary data in the survey.

In addition to the increased sample size and stratification changes, the 2005 survey also reports actual salaries rather than adjusting for an academic year of fewer than 12 months; in past surveys, they were prorated to correct for the shortage of months.

Salary data for states with response rates of 50% or higher by type of library and position is included. In addition, some salary data is suppressed to maintain confidentiality of responses by state - especially predominantly rural states. For instance, in one state with only two large public libraries, director salaries were suppressed because it would have been possible to identify the salary of an individual.

The survey retains the six position categories and the regional salary tables. State-level data is presented in each section by position, and follow the regional salary table. Although the highest single salary for a director was in a university, in all six categories salaries were usually highest in very large public libraries. A vast range was found between minimum and maximum salaries for non-supervising librarians in all sizes of public and academic libraries; in universities, the span begins at \$14,000 and tops off at \$175,500.

Results

A total of 24,814 salaries were reported, with a mean of \$53,779 and a median of \$50,274. In the past, the salaries reported in this table have been compared to previous year's *ALA Librarian Salary Survey*. They have also been compared to the increase or decrease in salaries for all "civilian workers" for the same time period as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in their *Employment Cost Index*. But making a comparison between this and previous years would be inappropriate because of the cumulative changes to the methodology of the 2005 survey.

The regional trend of maximum and minimum salaries continues to mirror other economic measures. For *academic* libraries, the North Atlantic region had the maximum salaries 50 percent of the time, followed by the Southeast 28 percent of the time. In the first case, it means that in nine of the eighteen academic tables, the maximum salary was attributed to the North Atlantic region. The Great Lakes & Plains and the Southeast regions accounted for the lowest salaries, having the minimum salaries in six of the eighteen

tables.

For *public* libraries, the North Atlantic region again had the maximum salaries 50 percent of the time, or in fifteen of the total thirty regional tables for public libraries. The Southeast region accounted for the minimum salary.

| Salary by Position, 2005 | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Title | Regional Salary (Mean) |
| Director | 78,054 |
| Deputy/Associate/Assistant Directors | 60,729 |
| Department Heads / Coordinators/ Senior Managers | 55,833 |
| Managers/Supervisors of Support Staff | 44,324 |
| Librarians who do not supervise | 47,246 |
| Beginning Librarians | 36,486 |
| Source: <i>ALA Survey of Librarian Salaries, 2005</i> | |

Denise M. Davis is the Director of the ALA Office for Research & Statistics; Jenifer Grady is the Director of the ALA-Allied Professional Association. The full report is \$70 (\$63 for ALA members) and can be ordered by mail from ALA Order Fulfillment, P.O. Box 932501, Atlanta, GA 31193-2501; by phone (1-866-746-7252); by fax (1-770-442-9742); or online at the [ALA store](#).

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