

Fact Sheet 2008



LIBRARY WORKERS: FACTS & FIGURES

The Numbers

- In 2007, there were 215,000 librarians, 113,000 library assistants, and 52,000 library technicians.¹
- Between 2004 and 2014, the number of librarians is expected to increase by 4.9%, while library technicians increase by 13.4% and library assistants by 12.5%. Total employment in the U.S. is expected to increase by 13% over this period.²
- These projections for library workers are all lower than the previous projections for 2002–2012, when the number of librarians was expected to increase by 10.1%, while the number of technicians increased by 16.8% and the number of library assistants by 21.5%.³ But the overall trend of jobs for librarians growing more slowly than those for library technicians and assistants is the same.
- This is a trend: Work once performed only by librarians is now performed by support staff. In a recent American Library Association Support Staff Interests Round Table (ALA SSIRT) survey of 212 library support staff, 73% stated that they are now performing tasks previously performed by Masters of Library Science (MLS) librarians at their library, or have the same or similar duties as MLS librarians at other institutions.
- Furthermore, the current population of librarians is aging; 58% of librarians in the U.S. are projected to reach the retirement age of 65 between 2005 and 2019.⁴
- Forty percent of library directors plan to retire between 2007 and 2016.⁵

Employment

- Most librarians work in school and academic libraries. About one-fourth work in public libraries. The remainder work in special libraries or as information professionals for companies and other organizations.
- More than two out of 10 librarians work part-time. Public and college librarians often work weekends and evenings, as well as some holidays. School librarians usually have the same workday and vacation schedules as classroom teachers. Special librarians usually work normal business hours, but in fast-paced industries such as advertising or legal services, often work longer hours when needed. This applies also to library technicians.⁶
- More than half of all library assistants are employed by local government in public libraries; most of the remaining employees work in school libraries. Nearly half of all library assistants work part-time.⁷

Diversity Among Library Workers

- Librarians, technicians, and assistants are predominantly white. Librarians are mainly between the ages of 45 and 55, and assistants are more likely to be under 35 years old. According to an ALA report, there is a persistent lag in diversity with under-represented minorities and few people with disabilities.⁸
- In 2006, 12.8% of all librarians were minorities: 6% were black or African American, 4.1% were Hispanic or Latino, and 2% were Asian.⁹
- Minorities accounted for 31.7% of all library assistants in 2007, up from 20.9% in 2004: 8.7% were black or African American, 10.4% were Asian, and 12.6% were Hispanic or Latino. Library technicians in 2007 composed of minorities: 11.9% were black or African American, 4.1% were Asian, and 9.9% were Hispanic or Latino.¹⁰
- Among members of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), 14.1% of the professional staff is composed of minorities. Asian/Pacific Islanders account for 6.3% of the professional staff, blacks or African Americans for 4.8%, Latinos or Hispanics for 2.7%, and American Indian/Alaskan natives for 0.3%. The number of minorities in managerial or administrative positions in the largest U.S. academic libraries is far lower: 4.1% are directors, 6.3% are associate or assistant directors, and 10.2% are branch librarians.¹¹
- The percentage of minorities varies significantly between geographical regions. Minorities make up 20.9% of professional employees in ARL libraries in the South Atlantic Region, while composing 2.7% of professionals in the East South Central ARL libraries.¹²
- The number of librarians is aging: between 1990 and 2000, the number of librarians under age 35 and between ages 35–44 has consistently decreased. The only age group to grow was 45–54, which rose by 28%.¹³

Women's Work

Library workers have been, and will continue to be, mostly female.

- Most students of library science are women. Women comprise 80.2% of ALA-accredited Master's of Library Science enrollment. Gender distribution is more equal for the Master's of Information Science degree, where men constitute 51.8% of all students.¹⁴
- In 2006, women accounted for 84.2% of all librarians, 87.9% of all library assistants, and the vast majority of library technicians.¹⁵
- An ARL survey found 63.9% of research librarians are female; 36.1% male. Among research library directors, women are in the majority (55.8%).¹⁶
- While men accounted for only 15.8% of librarians in 2006, they accounted for 47% of library directors in academic settings and 35% in public libraries.¹⁷

“Women's Work”, Women's Pay

Pay inequity remains a persistent and pervasive problem in our society. In 2007, median weekly earnings for women were 80.1% those of men. For most women of color, the earnings gap is even larger: African American women earned just 70 cents for every dollar earned by men in 2007. Hispanic and Latina women earned just 62 cents for every dollar men earned. Only Asian American women's earnings were closer to parity with men's: in 2007, they earned 95% that of all men. However, they earned 78% as much as Asian American men.¹⁸

- In 2005, the median annual earnings of a woman with a bachelor's degree were almost 31% (or \$15,911) less than that of a similarly qualified man, according to Census Bureau data. A woman with a master's degree earned 32% (or \$21,374) less than a man with a master's degree; a woman with a doctoral degree earned more than 29% (or \$22,824) less than a similarly qualified man.¹⁹
- Workers in predominantly female occupations earn less than others with similar qualifications, experience and responsibility who work in fields that are predominantly male. This is certainly the case for library workers.
- In 2006, new MLS graduates from ALA-accredited programs who worked in academic libraries earned an average annual salary of \$42,186; for new graduates working in public libraries, the mean annual salary was \$40,026.²⁰ In contrast, the average starting salary for a database administrator with a master's degree in computer science was \$67,460. This profession is more than 70% male.²¹
- The median hourly earnings of librarians in 2007 were \$24.51 (an annual wage of \$52,850 for those working full-time); the median hourly earnings of similarly qualified computer systems analysts were \$35.14 (an annual wage of \$75,890), those of electrical engineers were \$38.10 (\$82,090 a year), and those of computer software engineers were \$39.97 (\$85,660 a year). These (mostly male) professionals have education and responsibilities comparable to those of librarians.²²
- The median hourly wage of library technicians was \$13.31 in 2007 (an annual wage of \$29,040 for those working full-time);²³ comparatively, the 2007 median hourly wage for mechanical engineering technicians was \$22.73, while that of medical records and health information technicians was \$14.08. Paralegals earned \$21.63 an hour.²⁴
- Library assistants had median hourly earnings of \$10.71 (amounting to \$23,750 annually for full-time work) in 2007, while loan interviewers and clerks earned \$15.23 (\$33,220).²⁵

The Wage Gap

In addition to library workers being poorly paid because they are predominantly female, those library workers who are women may well be paid less than those who are men.

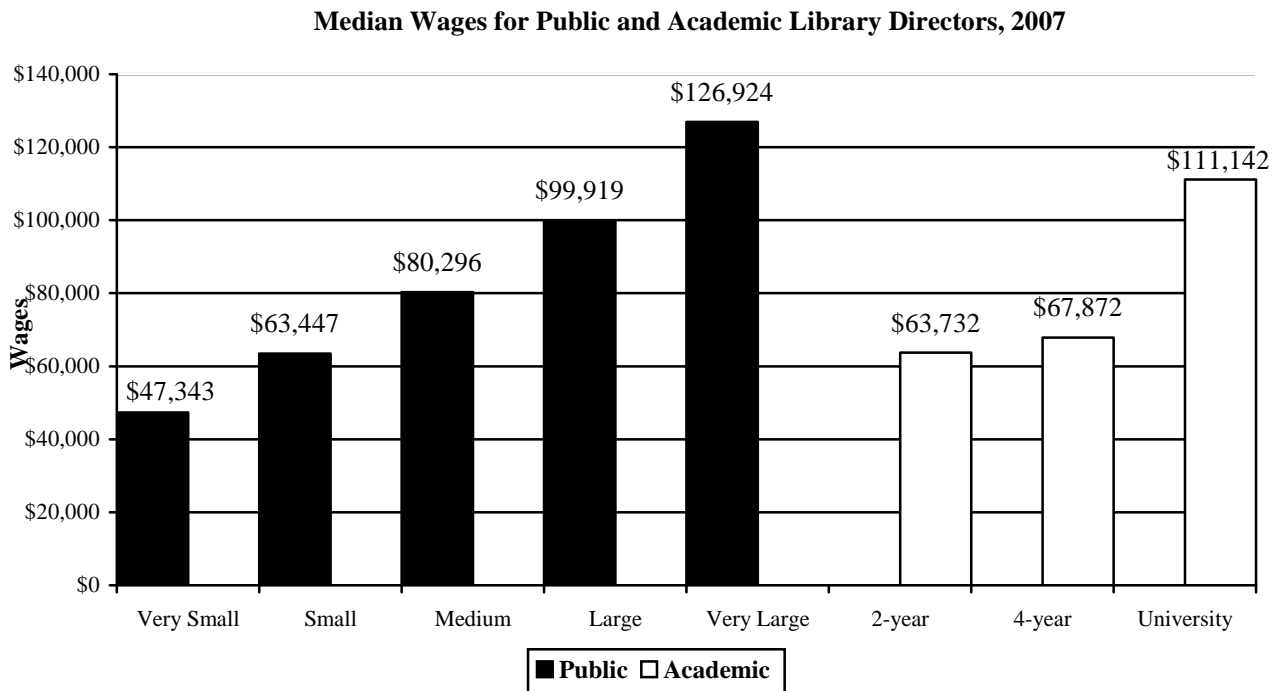
- In a 2007 survey of academic librarians, even when years of experience in a particular job category are equal, men still outpace women in salary by nearly 5%: \$66,041 for women and \$69,226 for men. On average, women have more years of experience than men, but still men's salaries are higher in all ten experience cohorts. This pattern is repeated for minority librarians. Again, the average salary of minority men is higher than that for minority women in all ten experience cohorts.²⁶
- The average salary for male directors in ARL libraries was higher than that of their female counterparts. The overall salary for women research librarians was 94.78% that of men in 2004–05, compared to 94.4% in 2003–04.²⁷
- In 2007, female librarians had median weekly earnings of \$846, compared to \$861 for both sexes combined. The weekly earnings data for men is not separately reported, due to the small number of workers in this category.²⁸
- While the rise of information science and technology is driving salaries up, the average starting salary for women remains lower, barely reaching \$40,000 in 2005.²⁹

Regional Variance in Salaries

- Nationally, the median annual wage for librarians was \$44,740 in 2005. However, librarians in the West and Southwest earned \$45,864, while librarians in the North Atlantic Region earned an annual median wage of \$47,315.³⁰
- The Southeast and Great Lakes and Plains Regions have salaries below the national median for library workers. These regions also have union membership rates below the national average. The West and Southwest and the North Atlantic, which have high union membership rates, also consistently have the highest median salaries for library workers.³¹
- Among public and academic librarians, the lowest median salaries were found in the Southeast region. This region includes states with the lowest unionization rates in the country, as well as several “right to work” states, such as Florida, Georgia, and Alabama.³²

Institutional Variance in Salaries

Library Director salaries depend on the type of library at which they work. In 2007, directors of very small public libraries (serving a population of less than 10,000) had median wages of \$47,343. In contrast, directors of very large public libraries (500,000 or more) made \$126,924. Differences exist between public and academic libraries as well. Directors of two-year colleges had median annual wages of \$63,732 while directors of university libraries made nearly \$111,142.³³



Benefits

- Nearly 12% of public libraries do not offer a pension and 17.4% do not offer retirement savings. Among academic libraries, 23.3% do not offer a pension and 20% do not offer retirement savings.³⁴
- Almost 40% of public libraries do not offer vision insurance and 16% do not offer dental insurance. Among academic libraries, 42.9% do not offer vision insurance and 17.9% do not offer dental insurance.³⁵
- Almost 34% of public libraries do not offer disability insurance and almost 17% do not offer prescription coverage; in academic libraries, 19.7% do not offer disability insurance and 23.1% do not offer prescription coverage.³⁶

The Union Difference

- In 2007, 26.8% of librarians were union members; 29.9% were represented by unions.
- Among library technicians, 14.4% were union members in 2007, and almost 15.8% were represented by unions.³⁷
- 20.4% of library assistants were union members in 2007, and 23.5% were represented by unions.
- The union earnings advantage for librarians was 52% in 2007.³⁸
- The union earnings advantage for library assistants was 34% in 2007.³⁹
- Through the NY Public Library Guild, Local 1930, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) library workers won an eight percent pay increase, in addition to the two four percent raises negotiated for citywide employees, after a three year campaign and negotiating with city officials.⁴⁰
- Orange County, Florida Library System organized and affiliated with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Management spent \$100,000 to defeat the union. Workers got the first pay raise in nine years as a result of bargaining, as well as an extra floating holiday and a grievance procedure that mandates binding arbitration.⁴¹
- Across all regions, librarians benefited from unionization. For example, the smallest gain was in the North Atlantic and Great Lakes and Plains regions where union librarians earned nearly 19% more than their fellow non-union librarians. The greatest gains were in the West and Southwest where there was a nearly 27% gain from unionization.⁴²
- Across all types of work in the library profession a union advantage existed, from associate librarians who earned more than 27% more than their non-union counterparts, to library techs who earned more than 25% more than their non-union colleagues.⁴³
- Almost no matter what type of institution a librarian works at there is a union advantage, be it a gain of over 62% in very small public libraries to over 4% for librarians at four-year colleges, the one employment situation that did not show a marked union advantage.⁴⁴

The Union Advantage



In 2007, the union earnings advantage for librarians was 52%; the union earnings advantage for library assistants was 34%.

¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey*. Annual Averages, Table 11.

² Hecker, Daniel, "Occupational Employment Projections to 2014", U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review*, November 2005.

³ Hecker, Daniel, "Occupational Employment Projections to 2012", U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review*, February 2004.

⁴ ALA-APA, *Advocating for Better Salaries and Pay Equity Toolkit*, <http://ala-apa.org/salaries/toolkit.pdf>

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, 2008–2009 Edition.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ American Library Association, Office of Research and Statistics, *Diversity Counts*, January 2007.

⁹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Annual Salary Survey (2006–07) and (2007–2008), Association of Research Libraries,

<http://www.arl.org/stats/pubpdf/ss04.pdf>

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ American Library Association, Office of Research and Statistics, *Diversity Counts*, January 2007.

¹⁴ ALISE Statistical Report, 2004.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, Annual Averages, Table 11, "Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity", 2006,

<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf>

¹⁶ Annual Salary Survey (2007–08) Association of Research Libraries.

¹⁷ ALA-APA, *Advocating for Better Salaries and Pay Equity Toolkit*, op. cit.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey*, Table 37. Accessed June 2008.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, "Educational Attainment in the United States: 2006 Detailed Tables", Table 9, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/education/cps2006.html>

- ²⁰ ALA-APA Survey of Librarian Salaries, 2006.
- ²¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Employment Survey*, Table 39, 2005.
- ²² U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2007 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates.
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ ARL Salary Survey, op. cit.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey 2007*, Table 39.
- ²⁹ Maatta, Stephanie, “Starting Pay Breaks \$40K – Placements and Salaries 2005,” *Library Journal*.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ *Ibid.*
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ ALA provided statistics, 2008.
- ³⁴ Lynch, Mary Jo. “ALA Employee Benefits”, 2003, <http://www.ala.org/ala/ors/reports/employeebenefits.htm>
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷ Bureau of National Affairs, *Union Membership and Earnings Data Book, 2008 Edition*, Washington, DC.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ *Toolkit*, op. cit.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² American Library Association-Allied Professional Association and Office of Research and Statistics, *ALA-APA Salary Survey 2007: Librarian — Public and Academic, ALA-APA Salary Survey 2007: Non-MLS — Public and Academic*.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

For further information on professional workers, check out DPE’s Web site: www.dpeaflcio.org

The Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE) comprises 24 AFL-CIO unions representing over four million people working in professional, technical and administrative support occupations. DPE-affiliated unions represent: teachers, college professors and school administrators; library workers; nurses, doctors and other health care professionals; engineers, scientists and IT workers; journalists and writers, broadcast technicians and communications specialists; performing and visual artists; professional athletes; professional firefighters; psychologists, social workers and many others. DPE was chartered by the AFL-CIO in 1977 in recognition of the rapidly-growing professional and technical occupations.

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