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Workplace Wellness Survey Reveals Correlation Between Work-Life Initiative Availability, Participation

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The second installment of *Library Worklife's* discussion of the 2007 Library Workplace Wellness online survey will identify trends by type of library (academic, public, special and "other," an option provided by the survey to employees who do not work in the other three). The first section, Employer Options, will study the activities or initiatives offered by employers. Using data from the survey we will compare the average number of initiatives offered by each type of library. The second section, Employee Participation, will examine workers' choices to participate in different initiatives.

Of the 2,524 respondents, 976 work in academic libraries (referred to in the tables as A), 1,316 work in public (P), 79 work in special libraries (S) and 148 work in other (O). Because the respondents were allowed to choose more than one initiative, the total number of initiatives selected often exceeds the number of respondents. For example, in response to the question, "Which of these workplace wellness activities does your library offer? Check as many as apply," 2,524 respondents selected 7,636 initiatives. When asked, "Do you take advantage of any of these activities?" the 2,524 respondents selected 3,244 initiatives.

Employer Options

In the survey's first question about available programs, respondents were asked to select from a list of work-life initiatives any offered by their employers. Listed below (Table 1) are the survey's initiatives; the table illustrates the number of initiatives offered at each of the four types of libraries. Among academic libraries, the four most commonly offered options are flu shot given at work, work release for continuing education, Employee Assistance Plans and on-site exercise facilities. Public libraries most commonly offer Employee Assistance Plans, flu shots, work release for continuing education and health screenings. Among special libraries, workers will most likely be offered flu shots, Employee Assistance Plans, an alternative work schedule and a work release for continuing education; "other" libraries, however, most often provide flu shots, Employee Assistance Plans, work release for continuing education and leave allowed for children's school functions.

Table 1: Employer Options

Initiative	A	P	S	O	Total Respondents Offered Initiative

Alternative work schedule	382	235	28	29	674
Childcare on-site or subsidies	115	52	7	16	190
Compressed work week	138	74	10	10	232
Discounts or subsidies for gym membership	237	265	17	18	537
Employee Assistance Plans (EAP)	480	440	42	60	1022
Flu shot given at work	228	273	15	30	546
Health screenings (encouraged to get screenings for diabetes, breast cancer, prostate cancer, high blood pressure, etc.)	424	329	26	43	822
Job sharing	116	7	7	7	137
Leave allowed for children's school functions	42	57	3	10	112
On-site exercise classes	407	577	41	44	1069
On-site exercise facilities	275	28	18	7	328
Telecommuting	392	22	14	11	439
Wellness classes (stress relief, time	376	270	14	22	682

management, diet/nutrition, smoking cessation, CPR, etc.)					
Work release for continuing education	286	274	20	26	606
None	46	174	3	17	240
Total Initiatives (other than “none”) Selected per Library Type	3898	2903	262	333	7636
Total Respondents per Library Type	976	1316	79	148	2524

From Table 1 and other available data we can determine the average number of initiatives offered by each type of library. On average, employees of academic libraries report four available initiatives ($3,898/976=3.99$), the largest number of options offered by any of the library types. Public libraries, on average, offer the fewest work-life options to employees (2.21). Within this range fall special libraries (3.32) and “other” (2.25).

We may also calculate the percentage of each type of library that offers no work-life activities. Leading the four categories is public libraries; 13.22% of public library respondents report no available workplace initiatives of this kind ($174/1316=13.22\%$). The response by workers in “other” libraries follows close behind that of public libraries, with 11.49% of “other” libraries represented by the survey offering no work-life initiatives. Special and academic libraries, however, are far more likely to offer some form of work-life program; only 4.71% of academic libraries offer no such plans, and all but 3.8% of special libraries offer at least one initiative.

Employee Participation

In the second question about available initiatives, respondents were asked to what extent, if any, they take advantage of the work-life initiatives listed above. Table 2 (below) illustrates the participation of employees in work-life activities, organized by initiative and type of library. Among academic library employees, the four most commonly utilized options are flu shots, alternative work schedule, work release for continuing education and wellness classes. Employees of public libraries most commonly participate in flu shots, work release for continuing education, Employee Assistance Plans and health screenings. Among special libraries, workers will most likely take advantage of flu shots, alternative work schedules, work release for continuing education and Employee Assistance Plans; employees of “other” libraries, however, most often choose to participate in flu shots, work release for continuing education, alternative work schedules and health screenings.

Table 2: Employee Participation

Initiative	A	P	S	O	Total Respondents Participating

					in Initiative
Alternative work schedule	240	151	16	20	427
Childcare on-site or subsidies	8	4	1	1	14
Compressed work week	28	36	5	3	72
Discounts or subsidies for gym membership	73	71	4	9	157
Employee Assistance Plans (EAP)	114	177	15	9	315
Flu shot given at work	254	229	22	36	542
Health screenings (encouraged to get screenings for diabetes, breast cancer, prostate cancer, high blood pressure, etc.)	154	171	15	17	357
Job sharing	13	10		3	26
Leave allowed for children's school functions	77	102	5	12	196
On-site exercise classes	87	21	3	3	114
On-site exercise facilities	123	14	5	2	144
Telecommuting	50	39	3	11	103

Wellness classes (stress relief, time management, diet/nutrition, smoking cessation, CPR, etc.)	174	160	12	9	355
Work release for continuing education	203	177	16	25	422
Total Initiatives Selected per Library Type	1598	1362	122	160	3244
Total Respondents per Library Type	976	1316	79	148	2524

Table 2 reveals the average number of initiatives offered by each type of library. On average, employees of academic libraries are most likely to participate in employer-sponsored initiatives, averaging two per respondent ($1,598/976=1.64$). After academic libraries follow special (1.54 initiatives per respondent), "other" (1.08) and public (1.03).

Conclusion

It is not surprising that when libraries offer a greater average number of work-life initiatives, library employees are more likely to participate in at least one initiative. On average, academic libraries offer four such programs, and employees participate in two; special libraries, three, and their employees, two. This trend is also evident in "other" and public libraries; both, on average, offer two programs, and their employees participate in one.

We are excited to explore the results of this important survey, and future issues of *Library Worklife* will continue the discussion. In upcoming issues, *LW* will address the following questions: which initiatives are most commonly offered in each type of library, and what does this data reveal about priorities and funding capabilities in these respective institutions? Which programs are most popular among employees in each type, and what can these trends tell us about employee needs in each type of library?

Finally, the survey asked several open-ended questions. These questions include: "Do staff in your library collaborate on activities, like walking clubs and healthy potlucks? Please describe," "If your library does not offer any of these activities, why do you think this is the case?" and "Do you think these activities are important? Why or why not?" Future articles in *LW* will discuss how employee responses to the survey's open-ended questions complicate and reinforce the quantitative data. All articles in this series will be available on the ALA-APA website on the [Salaries](#) page.

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We would love to have your [feedback](#) on this article!

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