

# Fact Sheet 2012



## LIBRARY WORKERS: FACTS & FIGURES

Libraries and library staff provide essential services for schools, universities, and communities. Among those services are: free, reliable, and organized access to books, the Internet, and other sources of information and entertainment; assistance finding work; research and reference assistance; and scores of others, including programs for children, immigrants, and other groups with specific needs.

This fact sheet explores: library staff in the workforce, where library staff work, their diversity, the role of women in the profession, issues of pay and pay equity, the union difference for library staff, and how the recession has impacted libraries and library staff.

### The Numbers

- In 2011, there were 198,000 librarians, 37,000 library technicians, and 140,000 other education, training, and library workers.<sup>1</sup> “Librarian” is generally defined as a person who holds a master’s degree in library science or meets state teaching license standards for being a school librarian.<sup>2</sup> “Library technicians” assist librarians in the acquisition, preparation, and organization of materials “and assist users in locating the appropriate resources.”<sup>3</sup> “Library assistants” are similar to library technicians, but may have fewer responsibilities.
- “Nationwide, visits to public libraries totaled 1.5 billion, or 5.1 library visits per capita. There were 2.28 billion circulations of library materials (7.7 per capita) and 1.21 uses of Internet PCs per capita during fiscal year 2008.”<sup>4</sup> Libraries cost each person about \$35 per year.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2010, “[d]uring a typical week, academic libraries had more than 31 million searches in electronic databases, answered more than 469,000 reference questions, and made more than 12,000 group presentations attended by more than 219,000 students and faculty. Library websites received more than 722 million virtual visits from outside the physical library building, and visits to online library catalogs totaled more than 479 million.”<sup>6</sup>
- Between 2010 and 2020, the number of librarians is expected to increase by seven percent, while library technician positions are expected to increase by nine percent. Total employment in the U.S. is expected to increase by 14 percent over this period.<sup>7</sup>
- The mean hourly earnings of librarians in 2011 were \$27.41.<sup>8</sup>
- The mean hourly wage of library technicians was \$14.01 in 2011.<sup>9</sup>
- Library assistants had mean hourly earnings of \$12.46.<sup>10</sup>

## **Employment**

- Most librarians, nearly two-thirds, work in school and academic libraries.<sup>11</sup> Nearly one-third of librarians work in public libraries.<sup>12</sup> The remainder work in special libraries, including businesses, law firms, nonprofits, and scientific organizations.<sup>13</sup>
- In 2011, 26 percent of librarians worked part-time.<sup>14</sup> Public and college librarians often work weekends and evenings, as well as some holidays.<sup>15</sup> School librarians usually have the same workday and vacation schedules as classroom teachers.<sup>16</sup> Special librarians usually work normal business hours, but in fast-paced industries such as advertising or legal services, often work longer hours when needed.<sup>17</sup> This also applies to library technicians.<sup>18</sup>
- More than half of all library assistants are employed by local government in public libraries; most of the remaining employees work in school libraries.<sup>19</sup> About 63 percent of all library assistants worked part-time in 2010.<sup>20</sup>

## **Diversity among Library Workers**

- Librarians, technicians, and assistants are predominantly white.<sup>21</sup> According to an ALA report, there is a persistent lag in racial diversity and people with disabilities.<sup>22</sup>
- In 2011, 15 percent of all librarians were minorities: 10.1 percent were Black or African American, 3.9 percent were Hispanic or Latino, and 2.6 percent were Asian.<sup>23</sup>
- Minorities accounted for approximately 20 percent of all other education, training, and library workers in 2011: 7.7 percent were Black or African American, 3.4 percent were Asian, and 9.2 percent were Hispanic or Latino.<sup>24</sup>
- Among members of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), 16.2 percent of the professional staff is composed of minorities.<sup>25</sup> Asian and Pacific Islanders account for 6.8 percent of the professional staff, Black or African Americans for 4.4 percent, Latinos or Hispanics for 2.6 percent, and American Indian or Alaskan natives for 0.3 percent.<sup>26</sup>
- The percentage of minorities varies significantly between geographical regions. Minorities make up 18.2 percent of professional employees in ARL libraries in the South Atlantic Region, while composing 3.4 percent of professionals in the East South Central ARL libraries.<sup>27</sup>
- In 2005, just 21 percent of librarians were under age 39. Forty-one percent of librarians are between 50 and 59 years old.<sup>28</sup>

## **Women's Work**

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

- Most of the Master's of Library Science (MLS) degrees conferred in the 2009-10 school year went to women. Women comprise 81 percent of MLS graduates.<sup>29</sup> Black women comprise 4.1 percent of MLS graduates, Hispanic women comprise 4.9 percent of MLS graduates, and Asian and Pacific Islander women comprise 3.7 percent of graduates.<sup>30</sup>
- In 2010, women accounted for 86.2 percent of all librarians and 71.2 percent of all other education, training, and library workers.<sup>31</sup>
- An ARL survey found that 62 percent of university library professionals are female. Among research library directors, women are in the majority (58 percent).<sup>32</sup>
- While men accounted for only 38 percent of university library professionals in 2011, they accounted for approximately 42 percent of university library directors.<sup>33</sup>

## **The Wage Gap**

Pay inequity remains a persistent and pervasive problem in our society. In 2010, median weekly earnings for women were 81 percent those of men.<sup>34</sup> For most women of color, the earnings gap is even larger: African American women earned just 72 cents for every dollar earned by men in 2010.<sup>35</sup> Hispanic and Latina women earned just 62 cents for every dollar men earned.<sup>36</sup> Only Asian American women's earnings were closer to parity with men's: in 2010, they earned 94 percent that of all men.<sup>37</sup> However, they earned 83 percent as much as Asian American men.<sup>38</sup>

- In 2011, female librarians had median weekly earnings of \$813, compared to \$1052 for men.<sup>39</sup> Thus, male librarians earned 29.4 percent more than female librarians in 2011.
- The overall salary for women research university library professionals was 96 percent that of men in 2011-12, compared to 94.4 percent in 2003-04.<sup>40</sup>
- In a 2011-12 survey of academic librarians, even when years of experience in a particular job were equal, men still outpaced women in salary by 3.8 percent: \$73,348 for women and \$76,225 for men.<sup>41</sup> On average, women have more years of experience than men, but men's salaries are still higher in nine out of 10 experience cohorts.<sup>42</sup>

## **Regional Variance in Salaries**

- Nationally, the mean annual wage for librarians was \$57,020 in 2011.<sup>43</sup> However, wages varied from state to state. The highest salaries were in the District of Columbia, Maryland, California, Connecticut, and New Jersey where the average annual wage among the five states was \$67,736.<sup>44</sup> The five lowest paying states were South Dakota, Idaho, Vermont, Mississippi, and Oklahoma where the average annual wage among the five states was \$41,308.<sup>45</sup>
- The West and North Atlantic, which have high union membership rates, also consistently have the highest mean salaries for librarians and library workers.<sup>46</sup>

## **Institutional Variance in Salaries**

Library staff salaries depend on the type of library.

- In 2007, directors of very small university libraries (with fewer than 50 staff) had average salaries of \$183,989. In contrast, directors of very large university libraries (over 110 staff members) made \$258,544.<sup>47</sup>
- Differences exist among librarians as well. Librarians employed by local governments earned an average mean salary of \$51,140 in 2011. Elementary and secondary school librarians earned an average mean salary of \$59,190 in 2011.<sup>48</sup>
- In 2010, directors of public libraries were paid a mean salary of \$100,106, while librarians made \$52,851.<sup>49</sup> Directors of academic libraries earned \$97,767, while librarians earned \$55,732.<sup>50</sup>

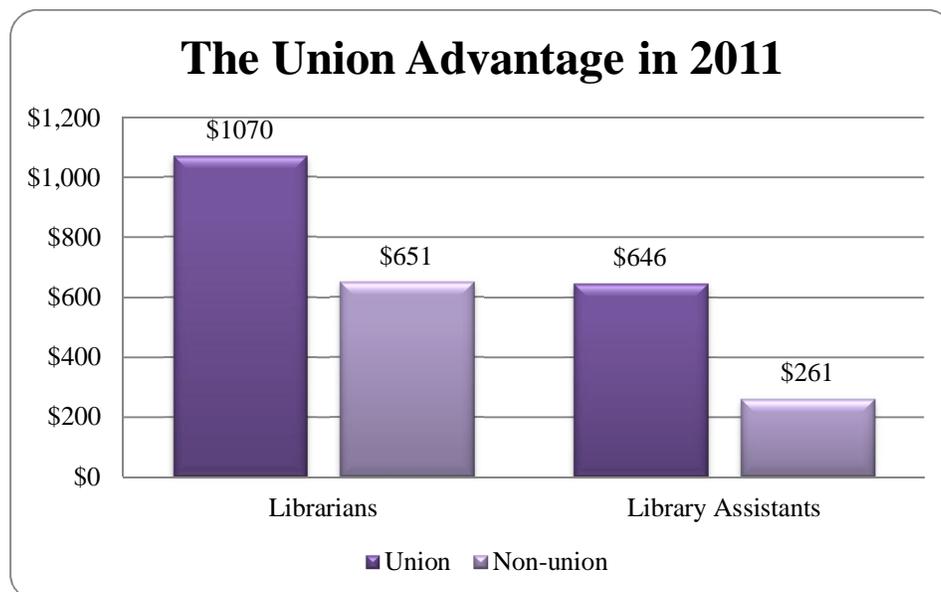
## **Benefits**

- Nearly 12 percent of public libraries do not offer a pension, and 17.4 percent do not offer retirement savings. Among academic libraries, 23.3 percent do not offer a pension, and 20 percent do not offer retirement savings.<sup>51</sup>
- Almost 40 percent of public libraries do not offer vision insurance, and 16 percent do not offer dental insurance. Among academic libraries, 42.9 percent do not offer vision insurance, and 17.9 percent do not offer dental insurance.<sup>52</sup>

- Almost 34 percent of public libraries do not offer disability insurance, and almost 17 percent do not offer prescription coverage; in academic libraries, 19.7 percent do not offer disability insurance, and 23.1 percent do not offer prescription coverage.<sup>53</sup>

### **The Union Difference**

- In 2011, workers in education, training, and library occupations had the highest unionization rates for any occupation group.<sup>54</sup>
- In 2011, 23.7 percent of librarians were union members.<sup>55</sup>
- In 2011, among library technicians, 18.4 percent were union members.<sup>56</sup>
- Among library assistants, 17.2 percent were union members, in 2011.<sup>57</sup>
- Twenty-two percent of other education, training, and library workers were union members in 2011.
- Union librarians earned an average of 64 percent more than non-union librarians in 2011.<sup>58</sup> Union library technicians earned an average of 32.3 percent more than non-union librarian technicians in 2010 (the last year available). Union library assistants earned nearly 148 percent more than non-union library assistants in 2011.<sup>59</sup>
- In 2011, union workers in other education, training, and library fields earned an average of 24.2 percent more than their non-union counterparts.<sup>60</sup>
- Union workers are more likely than their nonunion counterparts to be covered by health insurance and paid sick leave. In March 2011, 93 percent of union workers had access to medical care benefits, compared with only 69 percent of nonunion workers. In 2011, 84 percent of workers in unions had paid sick leave compared with 64 percent of nonunion workers.<sup>61</sup> On average, public-sector unionized workers are paying 25 percent less for family coverage than public-sector nonunionized workers.<sup>62</sup>



Source: Barry T. Hirsch and David A. MacPherson, *Union Membership and Earnings Data Book*, The Bureau of National Affairs, 2012.

## **Libraries and Library Staff in the Recession**

- In an op-ed piece in the *Huffington Post*, former American Library Association President Jim Rettig noted that “as the nation continues to experience a sharp and jarring economic downturn, local libraries are providing valuable free tools and resources to help Americans of all ages through this time of uncertainty.... [N]ow more than ever, libraries are proving that they are valued and trusted community partners.”<sup>63</sup>
- Libraries and library staff are under increasing pressure to meet the needs of their communities in this serious economic downturn. *The Wall Street Journal* reports that, in 2008, libraries across the country have seen jumps in attendance of as much as 65 percent.<sup>64</sup>
- Nationwide, more people applied for library cards in 2008 than at any time since records have been kept.<sup>65</sup> Demand for new library cards, for example, has increased 27 percent in San Francisco, California and 61 percent in Boise, Idaho.<sup>66</sup>
- Families patronizing libraries during this recession are often looking for less expensive ways to find entertainment and access the Internet, while many adults utilize the facilities to find new jobs. In Modesto, California, libraries report a 15 percent increase in the checkout of books, CDs, and DVDs. Circulation of job-hunting materials is up 14 percent in Boulder, Colorado, and computer usage in Brantley County, Georgia was up 26 percent in the last quarter of 2008.<sup>67</sup>
- At a time when libraries and librarians are facing increasing demands, many states and municipalities are threatening to cut library budgets and close branches as a result of budget shortfalls.<sup>68</sup> Libraries and librarians are faced with meeting the challenges of increased usage without increased budgetary support.
- Libraries continue to receive strong support from their communities. Between December 1, 2009 and November 30, 2010, ballot measures asking voters to support increases in operating revenue passed 87 percent of the time. Ballot measures seeking funds to build libraries passed 55 percent of the time.<sup>69</sup>
- As a result of the recession, libraries and librarians have had to confront challenges like homelessness, increased crime, and violent incidents in their work environment. Although the ALA does not keep statistics on such incidents, there is significant anecdotal evidence nationwide that libraries are struggling with increased usage and the incidents which have come along with it.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity*, Table 11. 2012.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Occupational Outlook Handbook, Librarians.” 2012-13 Edition. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos068.htm>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Occupational Outlook Handbook, Library Technicians and Library Assistants.” 2012-13 Edition. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos316.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Henderson, Everett, et. al., “Public Libraries in the United States: Fiscal Year 2008,” *Institute of Museum and Library Service*. June 2010. Available at: [http://harvester.census.gov/imls/pubs/pls/pub\\_detail.asp?id=130](http://harvester.census.gov/imls/pubs/pls/pub_detail.asp?id=130).

<sup>5</sup> Di Carlo, Matthew, “The High Cost of Closing Public Libraries,” *Shanker Blog*. April 18, 2011. Available at: <http://shankerblog.org/?p=2346>.

<sup>6</sup> The American Library Association, “The State of America’s Libraries: A Report by the American Library Association.” 2011. *American Libraries*.

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- <sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Occupational Outlook Handbook, Librarians.” 2012-13 Edition.
- <sup>8</sup> Hirsch, Barry T. and David A. MacPherson, *Union Membership and Earnings Data Book*, The Bureau of National Affairs, 2012.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Occupational Outlook Handbook, Librarians.” 2010-11 Edition. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos068.htm>
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>14</sup> Hirsch, Barry T., op. cit.
- <sup>15</sup> “Occupational Outlook Handbook, Librarians.” op. cit.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Library Technicians and Library Assistants. 2012-13 Edition. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos316.htm>.
- <sup>20</sup> Hirsch, Barry T., op. cit.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>22</sup> American Library Association, Office of Research and Statistics, *Diversity Counts*, January 2007.
- <sup>23</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, 2011, Table 11, “Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.” Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf>.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> Association of Research Libraries, “Annual Salary Survey (2011-12).” Available at: <http://www.arl.org/stats/annualsurveys/salary/sal1112.shtml>.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> Davis, Denise M., Planning for 2015: The Recent History and Future Supply of Librarians. The American Library Association, Office for Research and Statistics, June 2009.
- <sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2009-10 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Table 304, 2011. [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d11/tables/dt11\\_304.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d11/tables/dt11_304.asp)
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Annual Averages, Table 11, “Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity”, 2011. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf>.
- <sup>32</sup> Association of Research Libraries, *Annual Salary Survey (2009-10)*, op. cit.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Table 37, “Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics.” 2011. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat37.pdf>.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Weekly and hourly earnings data from the current population.” 2011. <http://data.bls.gov/pdq/querytool.jsp?survey=le>
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 17.
- <sup>41</sup> “Annual Salary Survey (2011-12),” op. cit., Table 17.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>43</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Employment and Wages*, “Librarians”, May 2011. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes254021.htm>
- <sup>44</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, *Occupational Employment and Wages*, Librarians. May 2011. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes254021.htm>

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- <sup>45</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics Query System, May 2011. Available at: [http://data.bls.gov/oes/search.jsp?data\\_tool=OES](http://data.bls.gov/oes/search.jsp?data_tool=OES).
- <sup>46</sup> Maatta, Stephanie, op. cit.
- <sup>47</sup> Annual Salary Survey (2011-12)
- <sup>48</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wages, Librarians, May 2011.
- <sup>49</sup> Grady, Jenifer, "Salary Survey: 2010 Librarian Pay Up 3 Percent Despite Economic Woes," *Library Worklife: HR E-News for Today's Leaders*. November 2010. Available at: <http://ala-apa.org/newsletter/2010/11/01/salary-survey-librarian-pay-increased-3-percent-despite-2010-economic-woes/>.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>51</sup> Lynch, Mary Jo. "ALA Employee Benefits," 2003.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>54</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Table 3. Union affiliation of employed wage and salary workers by occupation and industry." January 2011. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.t03.htm>.
- <sup>55</sup> Hirsch, Barry T., op. cit.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>61</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Employee Benefits Survey, Table 2 and Table 6; March 2011.
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>63</sup> Rettig, Jim and Greg Worrell. "Libraries Stand to Help in Tough Economic Times," *The Huffington Post*, December 11, 2008. Available at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jim-rettig/libraries-stand-ready-to\\_b\\_150268.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jim-rettig/libraries-stand-ready-to_b_150268.html)
- <sup>64</sup> Carlton, Jim. "Folks are Flocking to the Library, a Cozy Place to Look for a Job," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 15, 2009, pg. 1.
- <sup>65</sup> Hughes, Sandra. "In Recession, Libraries Are Booming," *CBS Evening News*, February 2, 2009.
- <sup>66</sup> Jackson, Derrick. "The Library – A Recession Sanctuary," *The Boston Globe*, January 3, 2009.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>69</sup> American Library Association, *State of Americas Libraries: A Report from the American Library Association*, 2011, pg. 11.
- <sup>70</sup> Saulny, Susan and Karen Ann Cullotta. "Downturn Puts New Stresses on Libraries," *New York Times*, April 1, 2009. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/02/us/02library.html?pagewanted=2&r=1>

For more information on professional workers, check the DPE website: [www.dpeaflcio.org](http://www.dpeaflcio.org)

*The Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE) comprises 21 AFL-CIO unions representing over four million people working in professional and technical 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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Source: DPE Research Department  
815 16th Street, N.W., 7th Floor  
Washington, DC 20006

Contact: Jennifer Dorning  
(202) 683-0320 extension 114  
[jdorning@dpeaflcio.org](mailto:jdorning@dpeaflcio.org)

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