

Library Worklife:

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Library Employee Benefits 2003 and 2008: A Report From the 2008 Librarian Salary Survey

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Given the current economic downturn, one might assume that libraries are offering fewer benefits than they were five years ago. The results of the 2008 ALA-APA Salary Survey: Librarian—Public and Academic (*Librarian Salary Survey*) confirm this assumption, but also offer several surprises. The supplemental question in the 2008 ALA-APA Salary Survey: Librarian was a five-year follow-up to the 2003 ALA Survey of Librarian Salaries on benefits provided to library staff (Lynch 2003). Twenty-one common benefits were listed in the questionnaire, which also allowed for an “other” option. Human resources staff completed this question for full- and part-time professional and support staff: “Please indicate below what benefits your library provides and which staff are eligible. Use your own definitions of full-time and part-time. Do not report benefits that are for the director only as determined by contract negotiations.”

Comparison of benefits offered by public and academic libraries from 2003 and 2008 revealed:

- In the insurance group of benefits, academic libraries stood out as offering more options to part-time staff.
- Leave benefits typically declined more for academic libraries.
- Both library types are offering fewer financial benefits (retirement savings, professional memberships, pension plans) than in 2003.
- There were signs of hope, however, in many slight rather than major declines and in the vast array of additional benefits and creative options that libraries are offering their employees.

Staff responding to the survey were generous: 99.7 percent of public libraries and 98.3 percent of academic libraries listed their benefits. One thousand and ten public and academic libraries completed the salary portion of the survey (609 public and 401 academic) and 993 of those completed the supplemental question on benefits as well. The 1,010 responding libraries were 29 percent of the total 3,484 libraries with at least two ALA-accredited MLS librarians. Please see the end of this article for information on accessing data from the 2008 *Librarian Salary Survey*.

Figures 1 and 2 respectively list the benefits and staff categories. Respondents were asked to apply their own definitions to professional and support staff.

Figure 1. List of Benefits

- Bereavement leave
- Child care
- Credit union
- Dental insurance
- Disability insurance
- Elder care
- Flexible spending plans*
- Health insurance
- Life insurance
- Long-term care
- Pension
- Personal days
- Prescription benefits
- Professional memberships
- Retirement savings
- Sick leave
- Training & education
- Transportation subsidies
- Tuition reimbursement
- Vacation
- Vision insurance
- Other

*Not included in 2003 survey

Figure 2. Staff categories

- Full-time Professional Staff
- Part-time Professional Staff
- Full-time Support Staff
- Part-time Support Staff

All twenty-one benefits were offered by at least some libraries. For the purposes of comparison, benefits were aggregated into four groups—insurance, leave, financial and other—in detail below for public and academic libraries separately. Overall, for full-time professional and support staff in public and academic libraries combined, more than 90 percent were offered health insurance, vacation and sick leave (Table 1). The least commonly offered benefits were elder and child care.

There were only slight differences in benefits offered to professional and support staff. The largest differences were seen in the additional benefits group of benefits: professional memberships (42.7 vs. 21.2 percent); training and education (87.8 vs. 82.6 percent); and transportation subsidies (36.6 vs. 32.6).

Table 1. Benefits Provided To Eligible Full-Time Professional and Support Staff In Public and Academic Libraries

Professional Staff	% of Libraries	# of Libraries		Support Staff	% of Libraries	# of Libraries
Health insurance	99.1%	984		Health insurance	97.6%	930
Vacation	97.3%	966		Vacation	96.1%	916
Sick leave	97.0%	963		Sick leave	96.0%	915
Bereavement leave	88.1%	875		Bereavement leave	87.8%	837
Training & education	87.8%	872		Life insurance	86.1%	821
Life insurance	87.7%	871		Dental insurance	85.3%	813
Dental insurance	85.1%	845		Prescription benefits	83.4%	795
Prescription benefits	84.8%	842		Training & education	82.6%	787
Pension	76.8%	763		Pension	75.8%	722
Retirement savings	75.6%	751		Retirement savings	73.3%	699
Disability insurance	72.1%	716		Disability insurance	71.6%	682

Personal days	66.5%	660		Personal days	68.2%	650
Vision insurance	64.6%	641		Flexible spending plans	64.4%	614
Flexible spending plans	63.7%	633		Vision insurance	62.6%	597
Tuition reimbursement	61.8%	614		Tuition reimbursement	59.2%	564
Credit union	43.6%	433		Credit union	44.6%	425
Professional memberships	42.7%	424		Transportation subsidies	32.6%	311
Transportation subsidies	36.6%	363		Long-term care	25.6%	244
Long-term care	24.4%	242		Professional memberships	21.2%	202
Other	11.4%	113		Other	10.5%	100
Child care	4.3%	43		Child care	4.7%	45

Because the 2003 survey responses were reported in aggregate as benefits offered to full-time only (professional and support), all staff (full- and part-time, professional and support) and other by type of library, direct comparisons are not possible for professional and support staff. The tables below show the 2008 data for each benefit by library type and staff category. For some sense of perspective, the last two columns show the percentage in 2003 of libraries that provided the benefit for only full-time and for all staff categories. The numbers of responding libraries for tables in the 2003 Employee Benefits Survey were not included.

To calculate the 2008 Does not offer percentages for tables, the percentage is equivalent to one minus the highest percentage of full-time professional staff covered for any type of insurance in the group. For example, since 98.7 percent of full-time professional staff in public libraries have health insurance coverage, one point three (1.3) percent of responding libraries did not offer health insurance coverage.

It is important to note that some of the libraries in the survey did not employ part-time staff. It is also important to note that the question asked if benefits were provided, a wording which does not reveal underlying questions such as what amount or percentage of the benefit is paid by the library and by staff, the number or percentage of staff who take advantage of the benefit and why or why they do not. Some insight to the latter question can be garnered from a 2008 Workplace Wellness study conducted by the ALA-APA (Bragg 2008).

INSURANCE

Insurance benefits are health, dental, life, vision, disability and prescription. In public libraries, part-time professional and support staff are offered less insurance coverage than in academic libraries. For example, health insurance was provided for 55.4 percent of academic part-time professional staff but only 34.2 percent of public part-time professional staff, a gap of more than 21 percent. For part-time support staff, the health insurance offering gap is more than 25 percent.

In public libraries, due to the economy and other factors, the percentage of libraries *not* offering each insurance benefit has increased slightly, at most 2.7 percent for disability insurance. Interestingly, in academic libraries, the percentage of benefits offered has *increased* in all areas, by as much as

18.2 percent for vision and as little as .7 percent for health coverage.

Table 2. Insurance, Public Libraries 2008 and Comparison of Coverage of All Staff in 2003

Public						
Insurance Type	FT Professional % n=599	PT Professional % n=476	FT Support % n=566	PT Support % n=490	2003 FT Only %	2003 All %
Health	98.7	34.2	96.6	32.2	57.9	33
Dental	81.5	30.0	82.0	30.0	49.1	28
Life	83.5	34.2	82.5	31.8	51.9	29
Vision	60.8	23.7	59.0	24.5	33.5	22
Disability	63.4	30.9	64.0	27.8	34.4	26
Prescription	83.3	29.0	80.9	26.9	51.5	26

Table 3. Insurance, Public Libraries, Comparison of 2003 and 2008 Benefits Not Offered

Public	2003 Does not offer %	2008 Does not offer %
Health	0.2	1.3
Dental	16.0	18.5
Life	13.1	16.5
Vision	39.5	39.2
Disability	33.9	36.6
Prescription	16.8	16.7

Table 4. Insurance, Academic Libraries 2008 and Comparison of Coverage of All Staff in 2003

Academic						
Insurance Type	FT Professional % n=394	PT Professional % n=260	FT Support % n=387	PT Support % n=251	2003 FT Only %	2003 All %
Health	99.7	55.4	99.0	57.8	63.8	19.7
Dental	90.6	51.5	90.2	51.8	53.8	15.4
Life	94.2	48.1	91.5	49.4	58.5	14.4

Vision	70.3	37.3	68.0	38.2	32.3	9.2
Disability	85.3	45.0	82.7	48.6	49.7	15.6
Prescription	87.1	46.9	87.1	51.4	51.0	13.8

Table 5. Insurance, Academic Libraries, Comparison of 2003 and 2008 Benefits Not Offered

Academic	2003 Does not offer %	2008 Does not offer %*
Health	1.0	0.3
Dental	17.9	9.4
Life	10.5	5.8
Vision	47.9	29.7
Disability	19.7	14.7
Prescription	23.1	12.9

LEAVE

Leave benefits are vacation, sick, personal days and bereavement. For almost all types of leave, more public library employees enjoy these benefits. The exception was slightly higher vacation and sick leave reported for academic library full-time support staff.

Both public and academic libraries are offering fewer types of leave benefits. Yet the percentage of decline by academic libraries is far more, as 9.3 percent fewer academic libraries are offering personal days and 4 percent fewer offer vacation leave to staff. For public libraries, no leave benefit declined more than 2.4 percent (bereavement). Interestingly, this was the same amount by which academic libraries increased their bereavement benefits over five years, the only leave increase in either library type.

Table 6. Leave, Public Libraries 2008 and Comparison of Coverage of All Staff in 2003

Public						
Leave Type	FT Professional % n=599	PT Professional % n=476	FT Support % n=566	PT Support % n=490	2003 FT Only %	2003 All %
Vacation	99.3	75.6	96.3	73.5	32.1	57.1
Sick	97.7	67.2	94.9	63.7	36.4	52.4
Personal days	70.3	43.7	68.7	41.4	31.3	32.1
Bereavement	91.3	63.2	90.6	60.2	34.6	49.9

Table 7. Leave, Public Libraries, Comparison of 2003 and 2008 Benefits Not Offered

Public	2003 Does not offer %	2008 Does not offer %*
Vacation	0.2	0.7

Sick	1.2	2.3
Personal days	28.8	29.7
Bereavement	6.3	8.7

Table 8. Leave, Academic Libraries 2008 and Comparison of Coverage of All Staff in 2003

Academic						
Leave Type	FT Professional % n=394	PT Professional % n=260	FT Support % n=387	PT Support % n=251	2003 FT Only %	2003 All %
Vacation	94.2	66.5	95.9	73.7	51.3	27.4
Sick	95.9	68.5	97.7	71.7	52.3	28.2
Personal days	60.7	36.5	67.4	41.4	34.6	15.6
Bereavement	83.2	54.6	83.7	55.8	43.3	22.3

Table 9. Leave, Academic Libraries, Comparison of 2003 and 2008 Benefits Not Offered

Academic		
Leave Type	2003 Does not offer %	2008 Does not offer %*
Vacation	1.8	5.8
Sick	1.8	4.1
Personal days	30.0	39.3
Bereavement	19.2	16.8

FINANCIAL

Financial benefits include pension, retirement savings, tuition reimbursement, credit union, professional memberships and transportation subsidies. Public libraries are more likely to offer pensions while retirement savings are a bit more common in academic libraries. Understandably, tuition reimbursement is in better alignment with resources available to academic libraries. The largest differences in financial benefits are in professional memberships and transportation subsidies, both more likely in public libraries; the numbers dip into single digits for academic support staff.

In public libraries, retirement savings benefits declined by 11.8 percent; while, they increased by 3 percent for academic library staff. Credit union relationships in public arenas are down 28 percent; the number of federally insured credit unions decreased by 16 percent from 2003 to 2007, their assets are up and the number of members increased by more than 5 percent (National Credit Union Association 2007). Credit unions and transportation subsidies are less often seen in academic libraries.

Table 10. Financial, Public Libraries 2008 and Comparison of Coverage of All Staff in 2003

Public						
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Financial Type	FT Professional % n=599	PT Professional % n=476	FT Support % n=566	PT Support % n=490	2003 FT Only %	2003 All %
Pension	81.1	51.7	80.0	50.2	36.6	46.2
Retirement savings	70.8	46.2	69.3	43.5	29.7	43.8
Tuition reimbursement	52.3	34.9	49.3	31.6	22.5	25.8
Credit union	41.1	39.3	42.8	36.7	9.4	54.8
Professional membership	56.9	26.3	29.7	15.7	11.2	10.0
Transportation subsidies	43.6	31.3	39.6	31.2	8.8	32.7

Table 11. Financial, Public Libraries, Comparison of 2003 and 2008 Benefits Not Offered

Public		
Financial Type	2003 Does not offer %	2008 Does not offer %*
Pension	11.9	18.9
Retirement savings	17.4	29.2
Tuition reimbursement	43.6	47.7
Credit union	30.9	58.9
Professional membership	46.8	43.1
Transportation subsidies	51.5	56.4

Table 12. Financial, Academic Libraries 2008 and Comparison of Coverage of All Staff in 2003

Financial Type	FT Professional % n=394	PT Professional % n=260	FT Support % n=387	PT Support % n=251	2003 FT Only %	2003 All %
Academic						

Pension	70.3	41.9	69.5	43.8	46.2	19.7
Retirement savings	83.0	53.1	79.3	51.0	47.9	18.5
Tuition reimbursement	76.4	48.1	73.6	46.6	47.2	16.9
Credit union	47.5	45.8	47.3	48.6	23.3	21.0
Professional membership	21.1	10.0	8.8	6.4	6.2	1.8
Transportation subsidies	25.9	18.5	22.5	18.3	17.4	10.8

Table 13. Financial, Academic Libraries, Comparison of 2003 and 2008 Benefits Not Offered

Academic		
Financial Type	2003 Does not offer %	2008 Does not offer %*
Pension	23.3	29.7
Retirement savings	20.0	17.0
Tuition reimbursement	22.6	23.6
Credit union	49.5	52.5
Professional membership	69.0	78.9
Transportation subsidies	62.6	74.1

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Four other benefits were considered both in 2003 and 2008: child care, elder care, long-term care, and training & education. Respondents in 2003 indicated a very high “not offered” response therefore no tables were presented in the 2003 Employee Benefits survey report, while they were included in the narrative. Flexible spending plans were not addressed in the 2003 survey. Public libraries were more likely to offer such benefits as flexible spending plans, child care, long-term care and elder-care to full-time staff more than to support staff. Most markedly, flexible spending plans were offered almost 30 percent more often by responding academic libraries. Part-time employees receive greater additional benefits at academic libraries as well. Training and education, surprisingly, was the only benefit that appears to be supported more frequently in public libraries for full-time employees.

Table 14. Additional Benefits, Public Libraries 2008

Public				
Additional Benefits	FT Professional % n=599	PT Professional % n=476	FT Support % n=566	PT Support % n=490

Flexible spending plans	52.9	28.6	54.1	27.1
Child care	1.5	0.8	1.6	1.6
Elder care	2.0	1.3	1.9	0.8
Long-term care	15.5	8.8	16.1	8.0
Training & education	90.3	26.3	86.4	71.8

Table 15. Additional Benefits, Academic Libraries 2008

Academic				
Additional Benefits	FT Professional % n=394	PT Professional % n=260	FT Support % n=387	PT Support % n=251
Flexible spending plans	80.2	46.2	79.6	45.8
Child care	8.6	7.7	9.3	8.8
Elder care	3.8	3.5	3.6	3.6
Long-term care	37.8	21.9	39.5	24.7
Training & education	84.0	59.6	77.0	58.6

OTHER

There were a myriad of benefits in the Other category. Some were paid in full or part, or group discounts were arranged for deferred compensation, long-term care insurance and fitness center memberships. Family Medical Leave Act benefits are legal mandates that some human resources staff included in their benefits package (United States Department of Labor). States also have laws that govern what some consider benefits, like time off to vote (Findlaw). Other human resources staff included benefits that some employees might take for granted, such as free parking. Whether part-time professional and support staff receive these benefits, like those reported above, depend on tenure, the percentage of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) or hours worked (e.g., must work 53 percent of the workweek, 750 hours a year). Some libraries prorate their benefits based on these calculations. Part-time staff may also receive a lump sum towards benefits such as \$200 annually towards vision care.

Insurance-related

- Accidental death and dismemberment insurance
- Dependent care reimbursement account with health care savings plan/flexible spending plan that allows pre-tax contributions
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Group legal/prepaid legal services
- Short-term disability
- Supplemental insurance
- Wellness programs

Leave

- Administrative leave
- Educational leave
- Floating holidays
- Jury Duty leave—paid and/or time off; also called civic or public service leave
- Military leave

- Paid holidays ranged from 11 in public to 16 in academic
- Premium compensation for working on Sundays
- Sabbaticals (academic)
- Sick leave bank

Financial

- 401(k), 402(b) or 457 plan (tax-deferred defined contribution retirement plans)
- Bilingual pay
- Bonuses
- Dependent tuition wavers (academic)
- Direct deposit
- Free, waived or reimbursed tuition
- Interest-free computer loans and cell phone discounts (academic)
- Longevity pay
- Savings bonds through direct deductions
- Scholarships for general or diverse staff enrolled in graduate programs of Library Science

Other

- Discounted books and media
- Fine-free borrowing (public)
- Fitness center discounts
- Flexible scheduling
- Free parking
- Meal supplement—free lunch or discounts in campus meal facilities
- Professional travel
- Union membership. At one academic library, full-time and part-time support staff have union membership as a benefit. There may be other libraries, public and academic, where a union is present, but was not listed a benefit. Please see the ALA-APA Salaries website for information about unions in libraries—<http://www.ala-apa.org/salaries/salaries.html>.

SALARY DATA

For the fourth year, the American Library Association-Allied Professional Association: the Organization for Advancement of Library Employees (ALA-APA) conducted the national survey of librarian salaries. The American Library Association (ALA) conducted a periodic survey of salaries for full-time professionals in academic and public libraries from 1982 to 2004.

The 2008 *ALA-APA Salary Survey: Librarian—Public and Academic* may be purchased at the ALA Store—http://www.alastore.ala.org/SiteSolution.taf?_sn=catalog2&_pn=product_detail&_op=2641.

The *ALA-APA Library Salary Database* – <http://www.ala.org/cfapps/salarysurvey/salarysurveyform/form.cfm>—gives subscribers access to salary data for more than 60 librarian and non-MLS positions from 2006 through 2008.

If you have specific questions about this data, please contact ALA-APA at 800-545-2433, x2424 or jgrady@ala.org.

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