

Library Worklife:

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Many Academic and Public Librarian Positions Face Wage Decline; Inflation Erodes Salary Gains for Many Others

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By Jamie Bragg

Results of the 2008 ALA-APA Salary Survey: Librarian – Public and Academic (*Librarian Salary Survey*) indicate that real salary gains of recent years might be endangered by rising inflation. According to the surveys, the mean salary of librarians did not outpace inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

According to the 2008 *Librarian Salary Survey*, the mean librarian salary rose to \$58,960, an increase of \$1,151 from 2007. Significantly, this increase of 2.0 percent was half that of the Consumer Price Index for the same time period: 4.0 percent (February 2008).

In collecting data on six positions requiring a Master's Degree in Library Science (MLS), the *Librarian Salary Survey* included 16,258 individual salaries ranging from \$22,000 to \$331,200 with a mean of \$58,960 (\$57,809 in 2007).

The average salary increase of public librarians (2.7 percent) was outpaced by inflation (4.0 percent). According to Table 1, only one of the six surveyed positions saw a salary increase that exceeded the rise of inflation: Director/Dean/Chief Officer (11.9 percent). Four other positions saw modest gains which were fully eroded by inflation: Beginning Librarian (3.1 percent), Manager/Supervisor of Support Staff (1.7 percent), Department Head/Branch Manager/Coordinator/Senior Manager and Librarian Who Does Not Supervise (both 0.8 percent). The salary of one position, Deputy/Associate/Assistant Director, actually decreased by 2.1 percent.

Academic librarians, however, fared worse. Table 2 indicates that salaries of academic librarians were largely stagnant. The mean salaries of three of the six positions actually decreased: most dramatic was that of the Beginning Academic Librarian, whose salary diminished by 7.1 percent. Following the Beginning Academic Librarian are Department Head/Branch Manager/Coordinator/Senior Manager, with a salary decline of 5.9 percent, and Librarian Who Does Not Supervise, which saw a small loss of one half of a percent. However, two positions enjoyed salary increases that exceeded inflation: Director/Dean/Chief Officer (6.4 percent) and Manager/Supervisor of Support Staff (5.2 percent).

RESULTS:

As stated previously, for all six categories and both academic and public libraries combined, the average salary was \$58,960, up 2.0 percent from 2007, and the median was \$53,521, a one percent increase from the 2007 median.

Table 1. Rank Order of Position Types by Mean of Salaries Paid, Public Libraries, Comparison 2007 and 2008

	PUBLIC Regional Salary Data, 2007	PUBLIC Regional Salary Data, 2008	Difference in Mean Salaries, \$	Difference in Mean Salaries, %	N (2008)
Director/Dean/Chief Officer	77,200	86,354	9,154	11.86	584
Beginning Librarian	41,334	42,601	1,267	3.07	826
Manager/Supervisor of Support Staff	50,722	51,594	872	1.72	1,596
Department Head/Branch Manager/Coordinator/Senior Manager	60,327	60,835	508	0.84	3,508
Librarian Who Does Not Supervise	47,772	48,167	395	0.83	4,570

Deputy/Associate/Assistant Director	74,942	73,385	-1,557	-2.08	624
Total					11,707

Table 2. Rank Order of Position Types by Mean of Salaries Paid, Academic Libraries, Comparison 2007 and 2008

	ACADEMIC Regional Salary Data, 2007	ACADEMIC Regional Salary Data, 2008	Difference in Mean Salaries, \$	Difference in Mean Salaries, %	N (2008)
Director/Dean/Chief Officer	88,902	94,567	5,665	6.37	389
Deputy/Associate/Assistant Director	77,372	80,062	2,690	5.25	528
Department Head/Branch Manager/Coordinator/Senior Manager	65,270	61,412	-3,858	-5.91	451
Librarian Who Does Not Supervise	54,959	54,684	-275	-0.50	2,289
Manager/Supervisor of Support Staff	51,666	54,376	2,710	5.25	615
Beginning Librarian	48,365	44,917	-3,448	-7.13	279
Total					4,551

METHODOLOGY AND RESPONSE RATE

The 2008 survey elicited 21 percent greater response than did the 2007 survey. Table 3 notes that the 2008 survey was sent to the same number of libraries as was the 2007 survey (3,484). However, of those 3,484 recipients, 1,010 completed the 2008 survey (29 percent), as opposed to 834 respondents in 2007 (24 percent), when it was combined with a survey of Non-MLS position salaries. We will continue to assess how to increase the response rate to previous levels, although the rate is satisfactory for a national survey and regional data is typically statistically significant.

Table 3. Response Rates, 2000-2008

Year and Survey	Sample	Responses	Response Rate %
2008 – Librarian	3,484	1,010	29
2007 – Librarian and Non-MLS combined	3,484	834	24
2006 – Librarian	3,418	1,053	31
2006 – Non-MLS	3,418	836	24
2005 – Librarian	4,343*	2,058	47
2004 – Librarian	1,275	881	69
2003 – Librarian	1,268	901	72
2002 – Librarian	1,320	924	70
2001 – Librarian	1,297	866	67

2000 – <i>Librarian</i>	1,294	931	72
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*Survey sample expanded to include state-level data.

Table 4 shows that Very Large public libraries had the highest response rate at 71 percent, an improvement of 10 percent over 2007. Medium public library response improved 12 points to 33 percent. The largest increase was in Large public libraries, which had a 28 percent response rate in 2007, compared with 49 percent this year. Very Small public libraries response rate dipped six points to 16 percent this year.

University response rates rose six points to 32 percent this year and ARL member libraries had a 51 percent response rate, 13 percent higher than in 2007. Response remains low for Two-Year college libraries (17 percent).

Table 4. Response Rates by Library Type, 2008

Library Type	Responding Libraries	Libraries Invited to Participate	Response Rate
Very Small Public	88	541	16%
Small Public	132	523	25%
Medium Public	165	505	33%
Large Public	166	337	49%
Very Large Public	58	82	71%
2-Year College	93	539	17%
4-Year College	109	373	29%
University	163	513	32%
ARL	36	71	51%
Total	1010	3484	29%

Despite the increased response rate, much of the state-level data reported is statistically insignificant. However, the project directors decided to include all data, including those without statistically significant response rates.

HOW TO ACCESS THE DATA

Data from the 2008 *Librarian Salary Survey* is available through the *ALA-APA Library Salary Database* (<http://cs.ala.org/websurvey/salariesurvey/salariesurveyform/form.cfm>), a subscription-based tool that costs \$50 for 30-day access and \$150 for annual access (\$250 for non-ALA members). Subscribers can run reports for 2006 to 2008 data by more than 60 MLS and non-MLS positions, library type, region and state. The database is useful for job seekers, employees preparing for performance reviews, library administrators and human resources staff.

The print editions of the survey offer more extensive data analyses and salary resources. There are separate sections for public and academic librarians in six position categories. State-level data are presented in each section by position, following the regional salary table. The full *Library Salary Survey* is \$90 (\$81 for ALA members). The printed versions can be ordered by mail from the ALA Store, P.O. Box 932501, Atlanta, GA 31193-2501; by phone (1-866-746-7252); by fax (1-770-442-9742); or online (<http://www.alastore.ala.org/>). Please note that survey respondents receive a 25 percent discount.

For more information, visit www.ala-apa.org or call ALA-APA Director Jenifer Grady at 800-545-2433, x2424.

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