

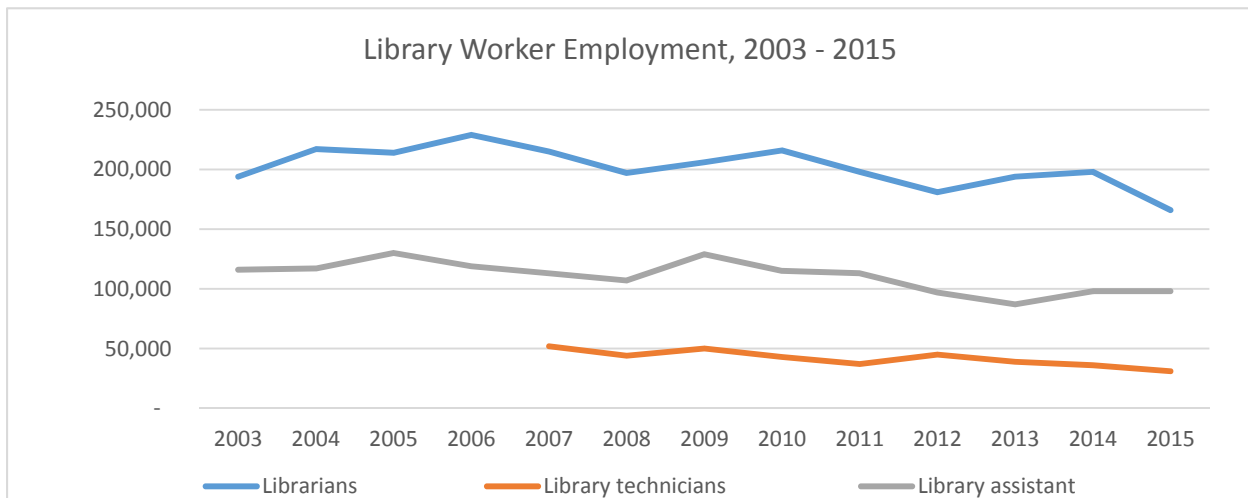
LIBRARY WORKERS: FACTS & FIGURES

Libraries and library staff provide essential services for schools, universities, and communities. Americans use libraries for free, reliable, and organized access to books, the Internet, and other sources of information and entertainment; assistance finding work; research and reference assistance; and programs for children, immigrants, and other groups with specific needs, just to name a few.

This fact sheet explores: library staff in the workforce, diversity within the professions, education attainment of library workers, the role of women in the professions, issues of pay and pay equity, and the union difference for library staff.

An Overview of Library Professionals and Libraries

- In 2015, there were 166,000 librarians, 31,000 library technicians, and 98,000 library assistants employed.¹ Generally, a “librarian” is a person who holds at least a master’s degree in library science or meets state teaching license standards for being a school librarian.² “Library technicians” assist librarians in the acquisition, preparation, and organization of materials “and assist users in locating the appropriate resources.”³ “Library assistants” are similar to library technicians, but may have fewer responsibilities.
- From 2007 through 2015, cumulative employment among librarians, library technicians, and library assistants shrank from 380,000 to 295,000.
- The mean annual earnings of librarians in 2015 were \$58,930.⁴
- The mean hourly wage of library technicians was \$16.44 in 2015.⁵



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, BLS, Current Population Survey, Household Data Annual Averages, Table 11, 2003 – 2015.

- Library assistants earned a mean hourly wage of \$12.78 in 2015.⁶
- In 2013, public libraries circulated 2.37 billion materials and offered 4.3 million programs, attended by 97 million members of the public. Children’s programs accounted for 59 percent of all programs offered.⁷ In a 2013 Pew Research survey, “90 percent of the respondents said that libraries are important to the community, and 76 percent said that libraries are important to them and their families.”⁸
- Public libraries provided access to 281,000 computers with internet access in 2013. Library patrons used these computers over 334 million times during that year.⁹ In 2012, 62 percent of libraries reported that they provided the only free public internet access in their community.¹⁰

Employment of Library Professionals

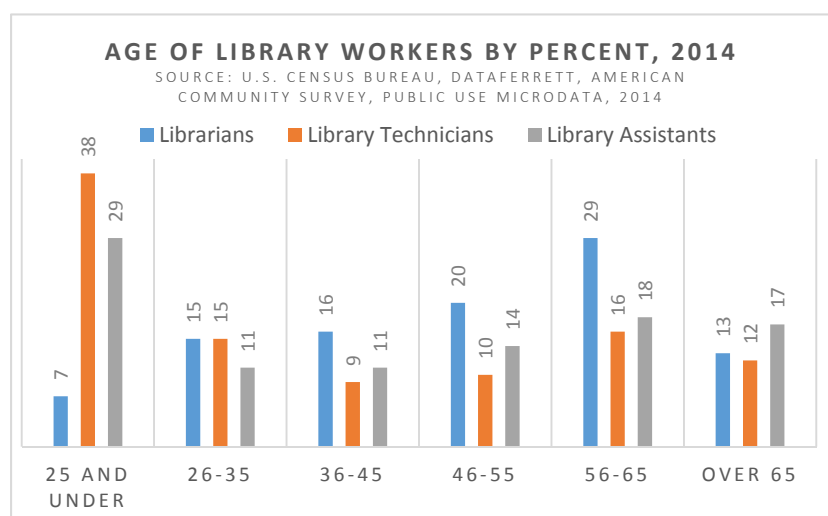
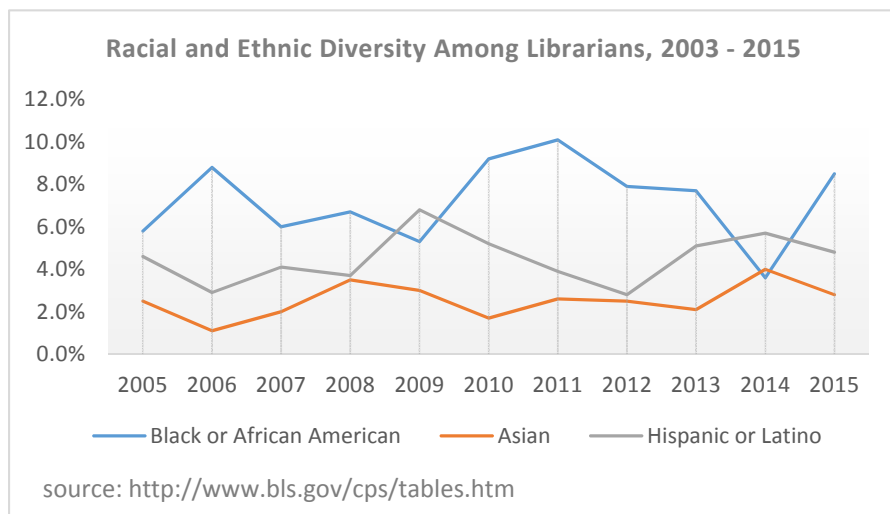
- Most librarians, 57 percent, worked in school and academic libraries in 2015. Nearly 30 percent of librarians worked in public libraries. The remainder worked in special libraries, including businesses, law firms, nonprofits, and scientific organizations.¹¹
- In 2015, 22 percent of librarians worked part-time.¹² Public and college librarians often work weekends and evenings, as well as some holidays.¹³ School librarians usually have the same workday and vacation schedules as classroom teachers.¹⁴ Special librarians usually work normal business hours, but in fast-paced industries such as advertising or legal services, often work longer hours when needed.¹⁵
- More than half of all library technicians and 60 percent library assistants were employed by local governments; many other library technicians and assistants work in school libraries.¹⁶ Among library technicians, 47 percent worked part-time and 60 percent of library assistants worked part-time in 2015.¹⁷
- Employment of elementary and secondary school librarians and library workers declined 25 percent between 2004 and 2014. In 2014, elementary and secondary schools employed just under 66,000 librarians (full and part time). This is down from just over 80,000 employed in 2004.¹⁸ Employment of library technicians declined 50 percent and library assistant employment declined 30 percent from 2004 to 2014.¹⁹

Diversity among Library Workers

The librarian profession suffers from a persistent lag of racial diversity that has little indication of abating.

- Librarians were predominately non-Hispanic Whites, about 84 percent in 2015. Library technicians and assistants have increased diversity. Among library assistants in 2015, nearly 74 percent were non-Hispanic Whites.²⁰

- In 2015, just 8.5 percent of librarians were Black or African American, 4.8 percent were Hispanic or Latino, and 2.8 percent were Asian.²¹
- Among all workers in education, training, and library occupations, Black and African American professionals made up 10.4 percent of the workforce, while Hispanic and Asians represented 9.9 percent and 4.5 percent of the education workforce, respectively.²²
- In 2014, 42 percent of librarians, 28 percent of library technicians, and 35 percent of library assistants were over the age of 55.²³



Education Attainment

Many library workers, including lower paid library technicians and library assistants have high education attainment. In 2014, six percent of library technicians reported having earned an associate's degree; 16 percent had a bachelor's degree; and eight percent had a master's degree or higher. Among library assistants in 2014, 10 percent reported having earned an associate's degree; 23 percent had earned a bachelor's degree; and six percent had earned a master's degree or higher.

Among librarians in 2014, 55 percent had earned a master's degree or higher and 26 percent reported their highest degree completed was a bachelor's degree.²⁴

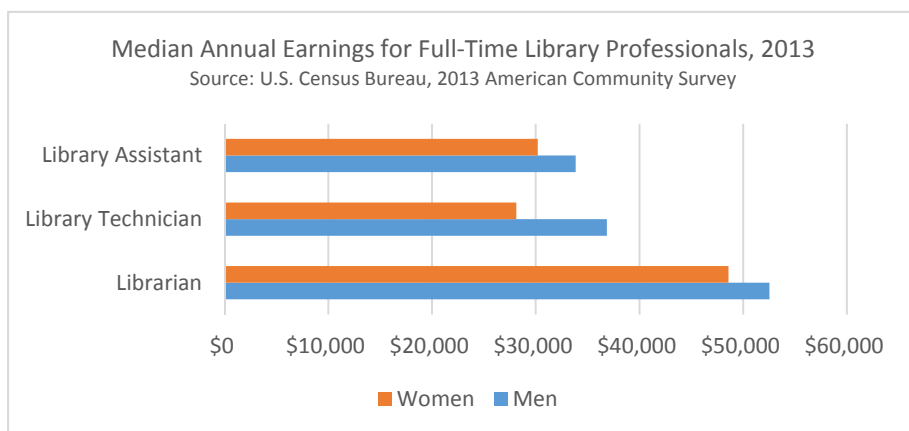
Women and Library Work

- In 2015, women accounted for 83 percent of all librarians, well above the average of 73 percent for all education and library professionals.²⁵ Women have traditionally made up a majority of the library profession. In 1995, women were 83.9 percent of librarians; in 2003, women were 84.4 percent of the librarian workforce.

- Women represented 82 percent of graduates in Master of Library Science (MLS) programs in 2013-2014. Black women were 3.7 percent of all MLS graduates, while Hispanic and Asian women accounted for five and 3.4 percent of the 2014 class, respectively.²⁶

The Wage Gap and Library Worker Earnings

Pay inequity remains a persistent and pervasive problem in our society. In 2015, median weekly earnings for women were 81 percent of men's earnings.²⁷ For most women of color, the earnings gap is even larger: African American women



earned just 69 cents for every dollar earned by men in 2015.²⁸ Hispanic and Latina women earned just 63 cents for every dollar men earned.²⁹ Asian women reported the highest earnings, 98 cents on the dollar compared to all men.³⁰ However, they earned only 78 percent of that reported by Asian men.³¹

Despite the fact that the library profession is predominantly female, a wage gap still exists:

- In 2014, women working as full-time librarians reported a median annual salary of \$48,589, compared to \$52,528 for men.³² A pay gap of 93 percent.
- The disparity was even more staggering among full-time library technicians where women earned \$28,121 per year, compared to men who earned \$36,862 per year (a 76 percent gap). However, the margin of error for men's salaries was high, since there were few men in the sample.
- Among librarians with a master's degree working 32 hours a week or more in colleges, universities, and professional schools, including junior colleges, women earned 90 percent of what men earned in 2014.³³ Women, on average, were nearly six months older than their male counterparts.³⁴
- The pay gap affects Black librarians working in higher education as well. In 2014, Black librarians working full-time earned just 90 percent of what their White counterparts earned.³⁵

The American Library Association-Allied Professional Association published the *Advocating for Better Salaries Toolkit* in April 2014. One section of the toolkit addresses how librarians can address pay equity issues in their library.³⁶

Regional Variance in Salaries

- Nationally, the mean annual wage for librarians was \$58,930 in 2015.³⁷ Wages vary significantly from state to state. The mean annual wage in Washington, D.C. topped the list at \$82,780 in 2015 followed by California, Delaware, Massachusetts, and Maryland. The average annual mean wage of these five states was \$71,766 in 2015. The five lowest paying

states were Idaho, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Mississippi, and West Virginia where the average annual wage among the five states was \$43,302.³⁸ These salaries were not adjusted for differences in cost of living across states.

Institutional Variance in Compensation

Library staff compensation also vary based on the type of library employer: government, postsecondary, or elementary and secondary school.

- Librarians employed by local governments earned a mean salary of \$53,440 in 2015. Elementary and secondary school librarians earned a mean salary of \$60,670 in 2015. Librarians in colleges, universities, and professional schools earned an average of \$63,980 in 2015.³⁹
- Among library technicians in 2015, those employed by local governments earned a mean hourly wage of \$15.73, those employed in elementary and secondary schools earned \$15.54 per hour, and colleges and universities paid an average of \$19.10 per hour.⁴⁰
- Library assistants were the lowest paid library workers in 2015. Local governments paid an hourly mean wage of \$12.42, elementary and secondary schools paid \$13.14, and colleges and universities paid a mean hourly wage of \$14.49 to library assistants in 2015.⁴¹

Health Benefits

- In 2014, 80 percent of librarians had health insurance through a current or former employer or union. Librarians employed by the government had the highest rate of employer or union health insurance coverage, 82 percent. Librarians employed by private-for-profit companies had the lowest rate of coverage, 70 percent. Four percent of librarians were uninsured⁴²
- Among library technicians in 2014, just 63 percent received health insurance through a current or former employer or union. Most library technicians were employed by local governments in 2014, but just 64 percent of library technicians employed by local governments received employer or union health insurance. Library technicians employed by the federal government had the lowest rate of employer provided health insurance, 57 percent. Among library technicians in 2014, 25 percent received Medicaid, medical assistance or some other kind of public health coverage. Eight percent were uninsured⁴³
- Library assistants had coverage similar to that of library technicians. Just over 66 percent had employer-provided health insurance in 2014. Private for-profit employers only provided health insurance to 61 percent of employees. Twenty-seven percent received government assistance for health insurance and nine percent were uninsured.⁴⁴

The Union Difference

Unions are an important way for library professionals to negotiate collectively for better wages, hours, and working conditions. Unions work to elevate library professions and secure working conditions that make it possible to provide professional service.

- In 2015, workers in education, training, and library occupations had the highest unionization rate for any professional occupation group, 35.5 percent.⁴⁵
- In 2015, 20.5 percent of librarians were union members.⁴⁶
- In 2015, among library technicians, 11.2 percent were union members.⁴⁷

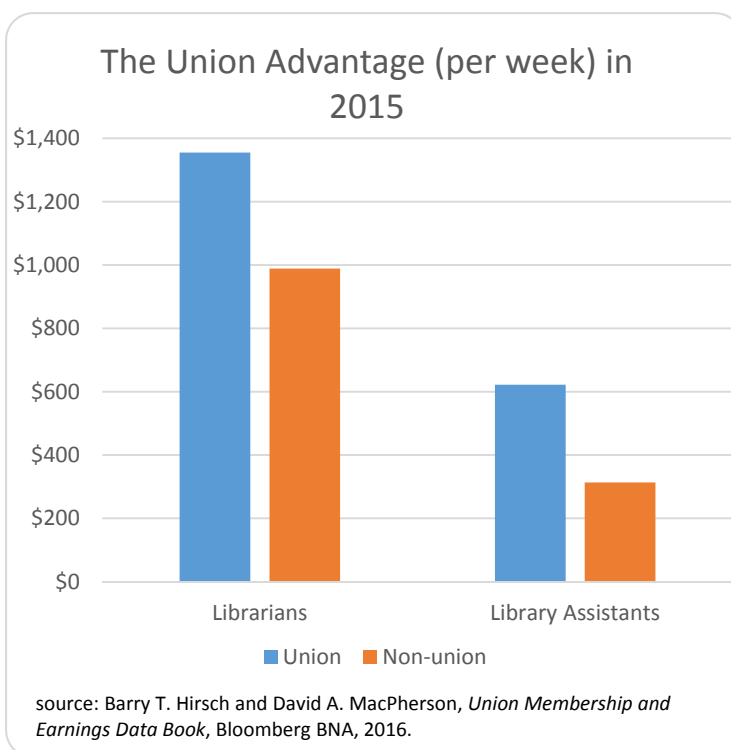
- Among library assistants, 16.3 percent were union members in 2015.⁴⁸
- Just over 19 percent of other education, training, and library workers were union members in 2015.⁴⁹

Wages and Benefits

Librarians and library worker union members have leveraged their collective voices to earn fair wages and stronger benefits. Wages and benefits earned by union librarians and library workers are more commensurate with the skilled and professional nature of library work.

In 2015, librarians who were union members earned 37 percent (\$336) more per week than their non-union counterparts.⁵⁰ While there has been a lot of volatility in wages reported by librarians, likely due to economic factors that affect library funding, it has paid to be a union librarian.

- In 2015, union library assistants earned 99 percent more than their non-union counterparts.⁵¹
- Union salary data was not available for library technicians in 2015. In 2009, the last year comparative data was available, union library technicians earned 49 percent more than their non-union counterparts.⁵²
- Union workers are more likely than their non-union counterparts to be covered by a retirement plan, health insurance, and paid sick leave. In 2015, 94 percent of union members in the civilian workforce had access to a retirement plan, compared with only 65 percent of non-union workers. Similarly, 95 percent of union members had access to employer provided health insurance, compared to 69 percent of non-union workers in 2015. In 2015, 85 percent of union members in the civilian workforce had access to paid sick leave compared to 62 percent of non-union workers.⁵³



Recent Union Success Stories

Librarians represented by the American Federation of Teachers in the University of California system negotiated fair pay increases and a dedicated professional development fund for the represented librarians. The professional development fund sets an annual minimum of nearly \$280,000 for the 345 represented librarians. The contract is effective from 2013 to 2018.⁵⁴

In 2013, the Prince George's County, Maryland executive's proposal to cut \$820,000 from the Prince George's County library system turned into a \$2.5 million add back thanks to members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1994. Union members advocated for their library and their patrons at county council meetings as well as during one-on-one meetings

with council members. Local 1994 members educated council members about the devastating impact budget cuts have on libraries and communities. The budget increase was used to increase library hours on Sundays, increase staff wages, and hire new staff.⁵⁵

For more information on professional and technical workers, check the DPE website:
www.dpeaflcio.org.

The Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE) comprises 22 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.

Source: DPE Research Department
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