

Connecticut Library Association Support Staff (CLASS) Salary Survey Report, 2003

Report written by Sandy Brooks, MLS

Statistics compiled by Tzou Min Hsiung, Library Technician

Background

In the fall of 1998, the Connecticut Library Association Support Staff section (CLASS), in conjunction with the Connecticut State Library, surveyed libraries throughout the state in regards to library worker salaries and benefits. (The results of the 1998 survey are available online at <http://www.cslib.org/lasurvey.htm>.) The purpose of the survey was to get information on salaries for library workers who were not working in a position that requires the MLS (Masters of Library Science) or equivalent degree. Many libraries are interested in this information for setting competitive salaries in their region, and workers wonder if they are being paid equivalently to others in their field. CLASS also hopes to someday use the survey information to initiate a minimum wage schedule for library workers, as CLA has done for entry-level MLS positions.

In December of 2002, CLASS decided it was time to re-survey library workers. A two-page survey was developed based on the 1998 survey. Instead of mailing to library directors to fill out for their staff as was done previously, individual surveys were mailed to as many library workers as we had contact information for, which was 450 staff people. In addition, we mailed the survey to 43 academic library directors and 190 public library directors in the state, and asked them to distribute the survey to their staff people. Response due date was 1/31/03.

Returns

We received 456 usable survey responses. It is difficult to ascertain the return rate, since the 233 surveys sent to public and academic library directors were intended to be distributed to all staff, and we did not know the size of these staffs. Also, some of the staff members may have already received a survey mailed to them personally. However, in gross numbers, we sent out 683 surveys and received 456 back, a return rate of 67%. Also in gross numbers, we received almost twice as many responses in 2003 than we did in 1998 (249 responses).

Returns came from all types of libraries. Based on the library types identified on the survey, most responses came from public libraries, whether small, medium or large (a total of 379, or 83%). The remainder of the responses came from academic libraries (46), school libraries (22), and "other" (9).

Library Type		
Small public	148	32%
Medium public	162	36%
Large public	69	15%
Academic	46	10%

School	22	5%
Other	9	2%
Total	456	100%

Respondents were also asked to indicate what county their library is in, to give an idea of regional practices. The largest number of responses came from Hartford County, at 21%, with the fewest responses in Middlesex County, at 8%.

County		
Hartford	93	21%
New Haven	68	15%
New London	68	15%
Fairfield	60	13%
Tolland	47	10%
Windham	41	9%
Litchfield	41	9%
Middlesex	37	8%
Total	455	100%

Who Are We?

There is a long-term, ongoing discussion in the library profession as to what to call library workers who are not in positions that require an MLS. While what we are called is not as important as the work done, we did ask survey participants to list their job title. Almost half responded that they are called “Library Assistants”. The other two most commonly used titles were “Clerk” and “Library Technician”.

Job Title		
Library Assistant	210	46%
Clerk	68	15%
Library Technician	50	11%
Library Tech. Asst.	39	9%
Manager	37	8%
Librarian	31	7%
Director	11	2%
No answer	10	2%
Total	456	100%

More than half of the respondents have been in their jobs for 0-5 years.

Number of Years in Position		
Under 1 year	46	10%
1-2 years	99	22%
3-5 years	116	26%
6-10 years	71	16%
11-15 years	52	11%

15+ years	55	12%
No answer	17	3%
Total	456	100%

More than half of the respondents (58%) also indicated they are in part-time positions. Of these, 6% work 1-10 hours per week, 24% work 11-19 hours per week, and 28% work 20-34 hours per week. The other 42% work 35 or more hours per week, considered full-time.

Educational level is quite varied in library worker positions, with the largest number of replies indicating completion of a 4-year degree (36%). Next came completion of a high school diploma (25%), followed by a 2-year degree (21%). In addition to their other educational training, thirty respondents indicated they hold an LTA Certificate (probably from one of the two LTA Certificate Programs in the state, at Three Rivers Community College in Norwich or Capital Community College in Hartford.) Another 10 indicated they were in the process of getting their certificate – thus a total of 11% of survey-takers have LTA Certificate program training of some sort. (It is interesting to note that, at 12.5%, there are more library workers with graduate degrees other than the MLS than there are workers with LTA Certificate training.)

Educational Level Completed		
High School	116	25%
2-year Degree	96	21%
4-year Degree	165	36%
MLS	16	3.5%
Other Graduate Degree	57	12.5%
No answer	6	1%
Total	456	100%

Salaries

Now to the meat of the survey: the average wage for a library worker in CT, working in a position that does not require an MLS, is **\$14.00/hour**. For those who supervise other workers, this raises to \$15.50/hour on average (those who don't supervise average only \$11.71/hour). For those who indicate they belong to a union, this raises to \$15.73/hour on average (those not in a union average only \$11.94/hour.) Those in academic libraries average much higher pay (\$19.09/hour) than those in public libraries (\$13.34/hour).

Average Wage by Library Type	
Small Public Library	\$11.94
Medium Public Library	\$13.06
School Library	\$13.55
Large Public Library	\$16.59
Other	\$16.91
Academic Library	\$19.09
Overall Average	\$14.00

(Note: The salary survey asked respondents whether they worked in a small public, medium public, large public, academic, special, school K-12, corporate, or other library. The survey did not define “small”, “medium”, or “large” for public libraries in order to save space and keep the survey simple. The committee felt most workers knew if their library was considered small, medium, or large within the context of the state of Connecticut. When data was compiled, however, adjustments were needed to group libraries appropriately. Libraries with a staff of less than 15 were considered “small”, staff of 15-31 people were considered “medium”, and large encompassed libraries with staffs of more than 31 workers.)

Certain job titles tend to indicate higher pay, with Library Technicians faring the best (\$17.38/hour), even better than those called Librarian without an MLS degree (\$14.67/hour). Note that the CLA recommended minimum entry-level salary for a Librarian *with* an MLS is \$21.51/hour as of July 1, 2003.

Average Wage by Job Title	
Library Assistant	\$12.64
Clerk	\$12.65
Director	\$13.61
Librarian	\$14.67
Library Technical Assistant	\$15.20
Manager	\$17.18
Library Technician	\$17.38
Overall Average	\$14.00

Higher educational level completed does not necessarily equate to higher pay, unless you are in a full-time position. Overall those with high school diplomas turned out, in this survey, to make more than those with the MLS. Those with 2-year degrees are making more than those with 4-year degrees. This may indicate that there are a lot of educationally over-qualified people working part-time in libraries, who are being compensated for the type of work they do, not the education they have completed (probably not required for their current position).

Average Wage by Education Level		
	Full-time only	Overall
High School	\$15.55	\$13.55
2-year Degree	\$17.87	\$14.27
4-year Degree	\$17.49	\$14.20
MLS	\$18.21	\$13.01
Other Graduate Degree	\$17.66	\$13.95
LTA Certificate		\$13.37
LTA Certificate in progress		\$10.97
Overall Average	\$17.04	\$14.00

The more hours you work, the higher your pay. Full-time workers (35+ hours/week) earn \$17.04/hour. Those who work 20-34 hours/week earn \$12.96/hour; for 11-19 hours/week it goes down to \$10.77/hour; and finally, at 1-10 hours/week, the pay is at a low of \$9.46/hour.

Similarly, the longer you've been at your job, the higher your pay. Those who have been at their jobs for 15+ years make \$16.61/hour. For those working 6-15 years, pay is \$15.33/hour. At 1-5 years the wage is \$12.99/hour, and those just starting out (under 1 year) earn \$11.49/hour.

Pay ranges from \$11.50/hour to \$15.84/hour across the different state counties. The lowest is in New London County; the highest is in Hartford County, with Fairfield County close behind (\$15.46/hour). Some of this discrepancy is due to the fact that academic and large public libraries indicated the highest wages, and certain counties have more large cities (thus large public libraries) or more academic institutions within their borders than do other counties.

Average Wage by County	
Tolland County (Region 3)	\$11.50
Middlesex County (Region 5)	\$13.00
Litchfield County (Region 1)	\$13.24
New London County (Region 6)	\$13.27
Windham County (Region 3)	\$13.46
New Haven County (Region 5)	\$13.66
Fairfield County (Region 4)	\$15.46
Hartford County (Region 2)	\$15.84
Overall Average	\$14.00

Public libraries are often looking for salary information from neighboring towns when setting pay rates. Because 83% of the respondents were from public libraries, yet the salaries are highest in academic libraries, the following chart indicates wages by county for just public libraries, to get a better overall comparison of wages for this library type. Note that the average public library wage is lower, at \$13.34/hour, than the overall \$14.00/hour average wage when the other library types are removed from the calculations. Windham and Middlesex Counties swap places in the ranks, likely due to the two large universities in Windham County employing library workers at higher salaries than the public libraries. Hartford and Fairfield Counties also switch places, probably for similar reasons, although the pay difference is not as large between these two counties.

Average Wage by County for Public Libraries Only	
Tolland County (Region 3)	\$11.03
Windham County (Region 3)	\$11.09
Litchfield County (Region 1)	\$12.07
New London County (Region 6)	\$12.93

Middlesex County (Region 5)	\$12.97
New Haven County (Region 5)	\$13.31
Hartford County (Region 2)	\$14.87
Fairfield County (Region 4)	\$15.71
Overall Average	\$13.34

Benefits and Other Considerations

Surprisingly, two-thirds of all respondents indicated that they get some sort of benefits, regardless of whether they are full-time or part-time. (The question was worded “Do you receive medical, vacation, and/or other benefits as part of your compensations?”) Only about one-third of respondents are unionized (32%), and 39% report supervisory responsibilities, up from 30% in the 1998 survey.

In the areas of pay raises and career ladders, there is good news and bad news. Only 22% of survey-takers claim they have “an opportunity for advancement that does not require additional education”. However, 89% report that they receive periodic pay raises. While 59% are regularly evaluated in some formal way, only 23% said their pay raises were tied to their evaluations.

Conclusions

Salaries have risen since this survey was last performed 5 years ago in 1998. At that time the overall average wage for library workers without an MLS was roughly \$12.00/hour. That wage is now up to \$14.00/hour. Academic positions have increased on average from \$11.79/hour to \$19.09/hour. School wages are up from \$10.79/hour to \$13.55/hour. Public libraries are a little harder to compare as wages were reported slightly differently in 1998, but they also appear to be up about \$4.00/hour. “Other” encompasses all other positions in this survey, at a wage of \$16.91/hour. Last time corporate wages were reported as \$14.50/hour, and special libraries at \$12.78/hour. The overall wage increase is only slightly below the increases in the CLA minimum recommended salary for entry-level MLS positions, which was \$18.78/hour in 1998, and is currently at \$21.51/hour, a difference of \$2.73, slightly higher than the \$2.00/hour increase in library worker salaries over the same time period.

Academic libraries and special/corporate/other libraries still pay better on the whole than public or school library positions. As was true in 1998, those who supervise others and those in unions receive better wages. The northeast (Region 3) still pays the lowest, while Hartford County (Region 2), still pays the highest wages. More library support staffers are reporting supervisory roles – now 40% rather than the 30% reported in 1998. The response rate in both gross numbers of surveys returned, as well as the percentage returned for all surveys mailed out (67%), is significantly higher than the last survey. Therefore, we expect this information is fairly representative of the wages actually being paid in Connecticut at this time, except perhaps for the small returns in the areas of “other” and school library settings, which may be skewed due to low returns.