

**Support Staff Salaries in CT, 1998-2008**  
**(based on 3 CLASS Salary Surveys)**  
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(This report is based on a similar report by the same author and Tzou Min Hsiung, "Connecticut Library Association Support Staff (CLASS) Salary Survey Report, 2003", published in *Library Mosaics*, (Jan / Feb 2004), vol.15, no.1, pp.10-13, which was in turn based on an initial report by the same author and Leon Shatkin of the CT State Library, "A Study of Library Assistant Positions in Connecticut Libraries", published in *Library Mosaics* (May / June 1999), vol.10, no.3, p.13.)

Background

In the fall of 1998, the Connecticut Library Association Support Staff section (CLASS), in conjunction with the Connecticut State Library, initiated a survey of libraries throughout the state in regards to library worker salaries and benefits; a second survey was completed in 2003. The purpose of the surveys was to get information on salaries for library workers who were not working in positions that required 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 the fall of 2007, CLASS decided it was time to re-survey library workers. A survey was developed based on the 2003 survey. Instead of mailing to library directors to fill out for their staff as was done in 1998, the 2008 survey followed the model of requesting information directly from support staff workers. This allows for questions to be asked about education level, number of years of service to the library and the profession, and other comments that we wanted to have on file. Previously, individual surveys were mailed to as many library workers as we had contact information for. In addition, we mailed the survey to all academic and public library directors in the state, and asked them to distribute the survey to their staff people. This time, with assistance from the CT State Library, the survey was mounted online and participants were solicited through various email lists and direct email messages. Letters were still sent to public and academic library directors to encourage responses from their staff, and hard copies of the survey were included in the packets for the CLASS annual conference in November 2007. The response due date was 1/1/08.

Returns

We received 456 usable survey responses out of 587 electronic and paper responses (coincidentally, exactly the same number of usable responses as in 2003!) It is impossible to ascertain the return rate, since the survey was announced as far and wide as possible. Many responses were not usable

because they did not include the most important piece of information – the salary! The online survey tool did not stop respondents from filling in as much or as little information as they chose.

Returns came from all types of libraries. Library types were defined differently in 2008 than in 2003. In 2003 public libraries were designated “small”, “medium”, or “large” based on number of staff. In 2008 we moved to a system that mirrors the Connecticut State Library’s definitions as used in their annual Public Library Statistics, based on population size. Most responses came from public libraries, whether small, medium or large (a total of 347, or 76%). The remainder of the responses came from academic libraries (68), school libraries (23), and special or “other” libraries (18).

Library Type		
Small public (pop. <10k)	110	24%
Medium public (pop. 10-50k)	169	37%
Large public (pop. >50k)	68	15%
Academic	68	15%
School	23	5%
Other / Special	18	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>100%</b>

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 23%, with Fairfield County close behind. The fewest responses came from Tolland and Windham Counties at 7%.

County	2008 # of responses	2008	2003
Hartford	106	23%	21%
Fairfield	102	22%	13%
New London	53	12%	15%
Middlesex	47	10%	8%
New Haven	45	10%	15%
Litchfield	42	9%	9%
Tolland	31	7%	10%
Windham	30	7%	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 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 job titles are not as important as the work done, we did ask survey participants to list their job title. Then, for ease of manipulating data, positions were grouped into the following seven categories: Clerk, Library Assistant (LA), Library Technical

Assistant (LTA), Library Technician (LT), Manager, Librarian, and Director. This is an imperfect system. For example, the title “LT” in one library may mean something different than “LT” in another library, thus receiving widely different pay and affecting the average salary in that category. In addition, “LT” has a very specific connotation in certain state agencies. Also, some job titles had no clear correlation to one of these seven categories, and so were placed in a category somewhat arbitrarily. One suggestion for future surveys would be to list some basic tasks associated with each category, and let survey participants place their job into the category that best describes their duties. Almost half of the respondents in this survey fell into the generic category of “Library Assistant”.

<b>Job Title Listed or Assigned</b>		
Library Assistant	218	48%
Manager	49	11%
Clerk	48	11%
Library Technician	47	10%
Library Tech. Asst.	46	10%
Librarian	35	8%
Director	8	2%
No answer	5	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>101% *</b>

- *Total is more than 100% due to rounding functions.*

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

<b>Number of Years in Position</b>		
Under 1 year	47	10%
1-2 years	99	22%
3-5 years	92	20%
6-10 years	124	27%
11-15 years	32	7%
15+ years	51	11%
No answer	11	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>99%*</b>

- *Total is less than 100% due to rounding functions.*

More than half of the respondents (52%) indicated they are in full-time positions (35+ hours/week). In 2003 only 42% of participants said they worked full-time, and in 1998 that figure was similar, at 41%. Of the part-time workers, 7% work 1-10 hours per week, 19% work 11-19 hours per week, and 22% work 20-34 hours per week.

Educational level is quite varied in library worker positions, with the largest number of replies indicating completion of a 4-year degree (41%). Next came completion of a high school diploma (27%), followed by a 2-year degree (13%). Thirty-eight respondents indicated they hold an LTA Certificate, which may be in

addition to other educational achievements beyond high school (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.) This is 8% of the total respondents, and 27% more than were reported in 2003. Also, there was a 50% increase in the number of respondents who hold an MLS degree from 2003 to 2008.

<b>Highest Educational Level Completed</b>		
High School	122	27%
2-year Degree	62	14%
4-year Degree	190	42%
MLS	32	7%
Other Graduate Degree	48	11%
No answer	2	<1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>101%</b>
<i>LTA Certificate (may be in addition to other degree(s))</i>	38	8%

- Total is more than 100% due to rounding functions.

### Salaries

Now for the numbers we've all been waiting for: the average wage for a library worker in CT, working in a position that does not require an MLS, is **\$17.47/hour**. (This was \$14.00 in 2003, and \$12.42 in 1998.) The average wage increased 15% from 1998 to 2003, and 25% from 2003 to 2008. The lowest reported wage was \$7.65 (minimum wage at survey time was \$7.40.) The highest reported wage was \$45.85. The median wage was \$16.38.

For those who supervise other workers, the average wage was higher at \$19.65 (those who don't supervise average only \$15.83/hour). For those who indicate they belong to a union, the wage raises to \$20.73/hour on average (those not in a union average only \$14.86/hour.) Schools saw the largest increase in annual salary at 29%.

<b>Average Wage by Library Type</b>	
Small Public Library (pop. <10k)	\$14.38
Medium Public Library (pop. 10-50k)	\$16.27
School Library	\$17.42
Other/Special	\$19.34
Large Public Library (pop. >50k)	\$20.32
Academic Library	\$22.13

Certain job titles tend to indicate higher pay, with Library Technicians faring the best (\$22.06/hour), even better than those called Librarian without an MLS degree (\$19.19/hour) or Directors (\$21.44). Note that the CLA recommended

minimum entry-level salary for a Librarian *with* an MLS was \$24.55/hour at the time of this survey (January 2008).

<b>Average Wage by Job Title</b>	
Clerk	\$15.71
Library Assistant	\$15.82
Library Technical Assistant	\$18.32
Manager	\$18.80
Librarian	\$19.19
Director	\$21.44
Library Technician	\$22.06

Higher educational level completed generally equates to higher pay, except for those with “other graduate degrees” (not an MLS). In the 2003 survey educational level did not necessarily equate to higher pay unless you were in a full-time position. The majority of respondents in this survey do hold full-time positions, also a change from 2003.

<b>Average Wage by Educational Level</b>	
High School	\$15.17
2-year Degree	\$17.41
4-year Degree	\$17.84
MLS	\$20.27
Other Graduate Degree	\$17.75
LTA Certificate (may hold other degrees)	\$18.28

The more hours you work, the higher your pay. Full-time workers (35+ hours/week) earn \$20.54/hour on average. Those who work 20-34 hours/week earn \$15.62/hour; for 11-19 hours/week it goes down to \$13.18/hour; and finally, at 1-10 hours/week, the pay is at a low of \$12.10/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 \$20.48/hour on average. For those working 6-15 years, pay is \$18.51/hour. At 1-5 years the wage is \$16.59/hour, and those just starting out (under 1 year) earn \$14.92/hour.

Pay ranges from \$14.32/hour to \$19.98/hour across the different state counties. The lowest is in Tolland County; the highest is in Hartford County. 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. For example, Litchfield, New London and Windham counties had no large public libraries reporting. Windham County had almost twice the survey average of academic workers reporting; Tolland & New London counties had much less than the average number of academic workers.

<b>Average Wage by County</b>	
Tolland County	\$14.32
New London County	\$14.77
Litchfield County	\$15.56
Middlesex County	\$16.67
Windham County	\$16.80
New Haven County	\$17.02
Fairfield County	\$18.77
Hartford County	\$19.98

Public libraries are often looking for salary information from neighboring towns when setting pay rates. Because 76% 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 than the overall \$17.47/hour average wage – just \$16.46/hour for public library workers when the other library types are removed from the calculations.

<b>Average Wage by County for Public Libraries Only</b>	
Windham County	\$13.04
Tolland County	\$14.12
New London County	\$14.69
Litchfield County	\$14.91
New Haven County	\$15.49
Middlesex County	\$17.24
Fairfield County	\$18.26
Hartford County	\$18.92
<b>Overall Average for Public Libraries</b>	<b>\$16.46</b>

#### *Benefits and Other Considerations*

Surprisingly, more than two-thirds of all respondents (68%) 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 compensation?”) Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents are unionized, up significantly from 32% in 2003. More workers report supervisory responsibilities than in the past, at 43% for 2008 – up from 39% in 2003 and only 30% in 1998.

In the areas of pay raises and career ladders, there is good news and bad news. Only 28% of survey-takers claim they have “an opportunity for advancement that does not require additional education” (up from 22% in 2003). However, 92% report that they receive periodic pay raises. While 65% are regularly evaluated in some formal way, only 24% said their pay raises were tied to their evaluations – at 23% in 2003, this is an area that does not show much growth.

### Other Salary Data

*Library Mosaics* magazine, which ceased publication in 2005, used to do a national support staff salary survey (the last one reported was in 2003) and response rate had traditionally been very low. ALA started a national “non-MLS salary survey” in 2006. This lists salary ranges by 62 library job titles, broken out by state, but the response rates have been extremely low, and no hourly rate is reported to compare to this current survey.

In other statewide data, the CT State Library asks a question about “Library Technical Asst. salary or range” in their Public Library Statistics. In the most recent data (2007-2008), only 46 towns (25%) reported salary as an hourly wage – the average was \$14.17 (closest to this survey’s “Small Public Library” average hourly wage of \$14.38).

### Conclusions

Salaries have risen since this survey was last performed 5 years ago in 2003. At that time the overall average wage for library workers without an MLS was roughly \$14.00/hour (and was only \$12.42 in 1998). Now the average wage is \$17.47/hour, up 41% from 1998. When adjusting for “real dollars”, it seems that support staff salaries have actually increased.

	<b>1998 survey (data gathered 10/1998)</b>	<b>2003 survey (data gathered 12/2002)</b>	<b>2008 survey (data gathered 12/2007)</b>
Overall average wage	\$12.42	\$14.00	\$17.47
<i>2007 equivalent wage*</i>	<i>\$15.80</i>	<i>\$16.14</i>	<i>\$17.47</i>
Public library average wage	N/A	\$13.34	\$16.46
CT minimum wage **	\$5.18	\$6.70	\$7.40
CLA recommended minimum MLS salary	\$18.78	\$20.68	\$24.55

\*From CPI inflation calculator at <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl> accessed 1/20/09.

\*\* From Dept. of Labor information at <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wgwkstnd/wage-hour/history.htm>, accessed 1/20/09.

Academic & large public libraries pay better than school or smaller public libraries. Tolland and New London counties have some of the lowest salaries; Hartford and Fairfield counties still have the highest.

There are other positives in the survey results:

- More workers (a majority) now report full-time rather than part-time work – full-time work pays better.
- More workers have benefits and are unionized than in 1998 or 2003 – unionized workers get paid better.

- More workers report supervisory responsibilities – supervisors get paid better.
- More workers (a majority) report having a Bachelors degree or higher. More workers have an MLS degree, and more workers have an LTA certificate – and more education equates to better pay.

The intent of this survey is not to draw too many conclusions, but to make available the data collected by CLASS in the course of these surveys. Much work can still be done to make the surveys more accurate, more valuable, and more statistically significant. However, data culled over the past decade can still be useful, and there is a dearth of such information either on a national level or from other states.

Recommendations resulting from this survey would be to survey again in 5 years, and to improve the survey instrument, especially the classification of job titles. CLASS continues to recommend that CLA propose and support a minimum salary guideline for support staff as it does for MLS positions.

### Resources

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