



# Introduction

Montana State Library Commission adopted the Fair Library Access Resolution (see Appendix A), committing to the development and implementation of a statewide strategy toward the goal of providing all Montanans with equitable, sufficient access to library resources. In recognizing the critical role staff recruitment plays in the delivery of library services, the Network Advisory Council (NAC) recommended that the Montana State Library (MSL) conduct a study of wages for public library positions with the following desired outcomes:

- MSL and the NAC have more information that will help them make decisions about how to best support libraries.
- Library directors have access to information about comparable wages around the state that they can use to make competitive job offers and to advocate for appropriate salary adjustments for existing staff to encourage retention.
- Counties and cities have access to information to support library staff wages and to remain competitive workplaces.
- Montanans receive better library service because their communities can hire and retain highly qualified staff.

This research included the examination of existing resources and the administration of a salary survey distributed to all public and tribal college libraries in the state.

## Background Research

In its literature review, MSL identified sources of public library salary information. The most comprehensive source of public library data, the national Public Libraries Survey from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (2023) includes data useful for national comparisons. For example, the survey includes data on staffing levels such as total librarians, all other paid staff, and total paid employees. The data catalog also includes operating expenses that can be attributed to salaries and benefits, but the information is aggregated across all paid staff and cannot be analyzed by position.

Another national survey, the ALA-APA Salary Survey (2019) collects salary data from 727 libraries and 12,032 positions. However, the most recent data is restricted to those positions that require a Master of Library Science (MLS) degree. Non-MLS position data was last published in 2007. This limitation is particularly important in Montana as most public libraries (67%) do not have staff with a Master of Library Science degree, especially in the smallest communities. Moreover, the ALA-APA Salary Survey groups data using geographic regions. Montana is included in the West & Southwest region which includes 15 states. Summaries based on more populous states like California and Washington do not necessarily apply to Montana hiring practices, despite the states being in the same geographic region.

At the local level, the Montana League of Cities & Towns (2022) administers a salary survey “including starting and maximum salaries and minimum education/experience requirements” for common municipal positions. The inclusion of non-library positions means that wages can be

viewed in comparison to other similar roles. However, because the League's salary survey is limited to city government, the data does not include staff from county, district, or tribal libraries.

The Montana Department of Labor & Industry and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics also publish informational wage rates by occupation. The Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) survey uses the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) to group occupations. This information can be segmented by industry, including local government.

Building on the context of the existing research, MSL decided to administer a study of staffing and wages specific to Montana public libraries. Other State Library Administrative Agencies pursued a similar course. Vermont's *Working Group on the Status of Libraries in Vermont: Public Library Compensation and Salary Survey Analysis (2023)* was a particular source of inspiration. Montana also reviewed surveys from Rhode Island and Washington and received tips from other states via the State Data Coordinator discussion forum.

## Survey Methods

To ensure representation among public libraries of all sizes, types, and regions, the survey was distributed to 89 Montana libraries, including the 82 state-recognized public libraries and the seven tribal college libraries eligible to apply for status as public libraries.

Library directors accessed the survey via an online portal using the software Counting Opinions LibPAS. Responses were collected as a Staffing & Salaries section within the annual Public Libraries Survey (PLS). Montana included the questions as part of the PLS rather than as a separate survey because of a preference voiced by the Network Advisory Council to receive a longer survey rather than multiple short surveys (see Appendix B). This also encouraged a higher response rate because libraries have an established routine for entering statistical data each fall. Participants had 60 days to complete the survey, with 16 libraries requesting up to a one-month extension.

Notifications about the survey were distributed via GovDelivery, on the library's website, and at the State Librarian's webinar series, "Webside Chat." Following these initial notices, the State Library Data Coordinator presented and recorded a training webinar and offered in-person training at the 2023 Fall Workshop in Great Falls. After the survey launched, librarians attended open office hours on five different dates in October and November. In addition to hosting office hours, the State Library Data Coordinator responded to 126 email questions, 30 phone calls, and three Zoom appointments about the PLS, including the Staffing & Salaries section.

As job titles vary between organizations, respondents were instructed to use standard definitions in determining whether they employed staff in an equivalent role. In creating the definitions, Montana examined examples from other states, State of Montana occupational standards, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and O\*NET OnLine. Definitions were then reviewed and refined by the Public Library Statistics Task Force.

For each position, libraries responded whether they employed staff in that role. Next, they indicated the highest paid hourly wage among all staff in the role and minimum education requirements. Some libraries employ more than one person in a position, which is not reflected

in this report. While some libraries reported starting wages listed in the job description, this data was unavailable or outdated at many locations and has therefore been excluded.

For the library director position, libraries reported additional data including years of experience and whether the library director has a Master of Library Science degree.

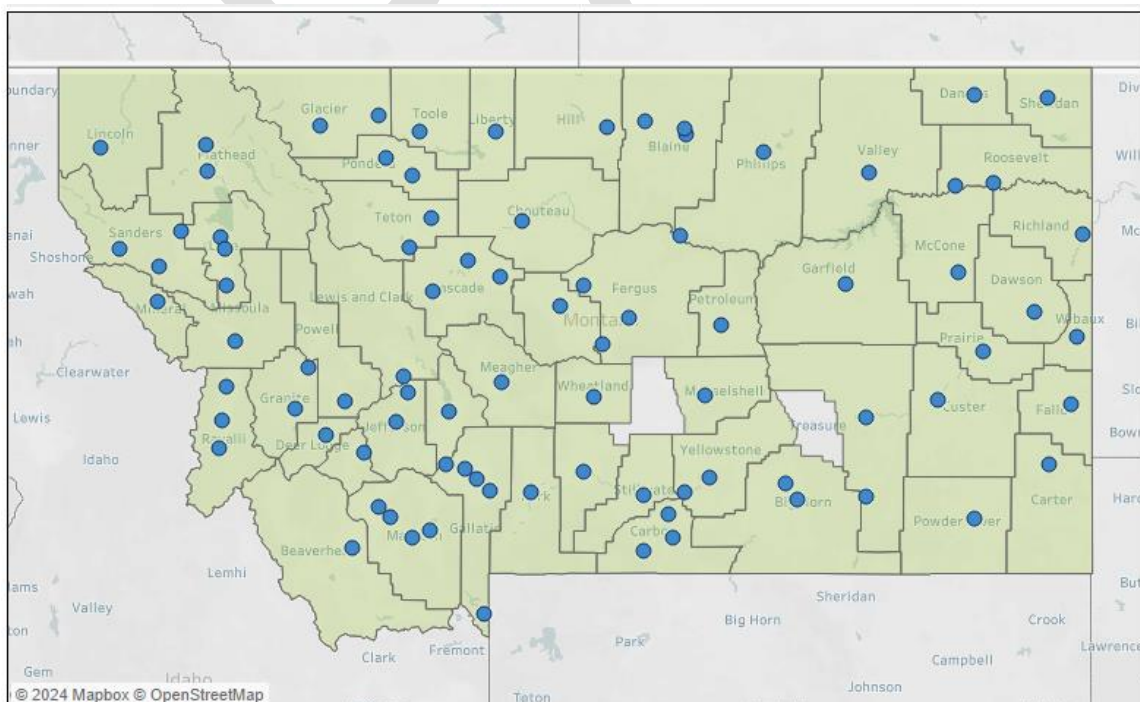
After collection, MSL aggregated the data by four service area populations bands:

- Fewer than 3,500
- 3,501-9,999
- 10,000-24,999
- More than 25,000

The above bands match those used in the Public Library Standards, [ARM 10.102.1159](#) for determining the minimum number of hours a library should be open to the public. Because the service area population for tribal college libraries has not been defined in the administrative rules as of publication of this report, MLS used tribal enrollment counts.

## Survey Results and Analysis

Eighty-six libraries responded to the survey with salary data for one or more positions, a 97% response rate. In terms of geography, responses represent all but Treasure and Golden Valley counties, neither of which have a state-recognized public library. With this high level of participation, the results can be used to understand the state of library salaries and staffing in Montana. The following map displays libraries that contributed data about staffing and salaries.



# Staffing Levels

Library staffing levels ranged from one part-time position to a staff of more than 50. Among libraries serving a population smaller than 3,500, 83% operate with less than two full-time equivalent (FTE) staff.

TOTAL PAID LIBRARY STAFF FTE			
Service Area Population	Count of Libraries	Total FTE	Average FTE per Library
Fewer than 3,500	30	37	1.2
3,501-9,999	36	93	2.6
10,000-24,999	12	65	5.4
More than 25,000	8	208	26
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>4.7</b>

With fewer staff to operate the facility, smaller libraries are on average open less hours. This means that the public tends to have a shorter window in which they can make use of library resources in communities. The Public Library Standards list both a minimum and desirable number of hours as displayed below.

CENTRAL LIBRARY HOURS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC PER WEEK					
Service Area Population	Lowest (Actual)*	Highest (Actual)*	Average (Actual)*	Minimum (Standards)	Desirable (Standards)
Fewer than 3,500	15 hours	51 hours	32 hours	15 hours	25-40 hours
3,501-9,999	16 hours	63 hours	40 hours	30 hours	40-50 hours
10,000-24,999	31 hours	55 hours	46 hours	40 hours	50-60 hours
More than 25,000	47 hours	71 hours	58 hours	50 hours	60+ hours
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>15 hours</b>	<b>71 hours</b>	<b>40 hours</b>	<b>15 hours</b>	<b>60+ hours</b>

\*The survey defined “open hours” as the hours the library is open to the public each week. In cases where the library has multiple branches, MSL used the hours open at the central library. Some libraries may use non-overlapping hours at branch facilities to meet the standard.

Most central libraries (62%) offer desirable public service hours. However, the range varies significantly even within population bands. The smallest libraries are open 32 hours on average with some open the minimum required, 15 hours. The largest libraries, in comparison, offer an average of 58 public hours each week. In larger libraries, service is sometimes delivered across multiple branches, adding both hours and convenience to the public. When accounting for the added hours delivered by branches, 70% of libraries fall into the desirable range.

# Library Occupations

This section includes a synthesis of staff wages and qualifications in Montana libraries for ten library positions including library director, assistant director, branch manager, department manager, supervising librarian, librarian II, librarian I, IT staff, library assistant, and library aide. For a table containing compensation profiles for all positions, see Appendix C.

## Library Director

A library director oversees the operations and management of a public library. This position involves a combination of administrative, leadership, and managerial responsibilities. The director advises the library board on matters pertaining to policy, budget, and planning. In the smallest communities, the library director may be the sole employee of the public library and thus duties can vary depending on the service area.

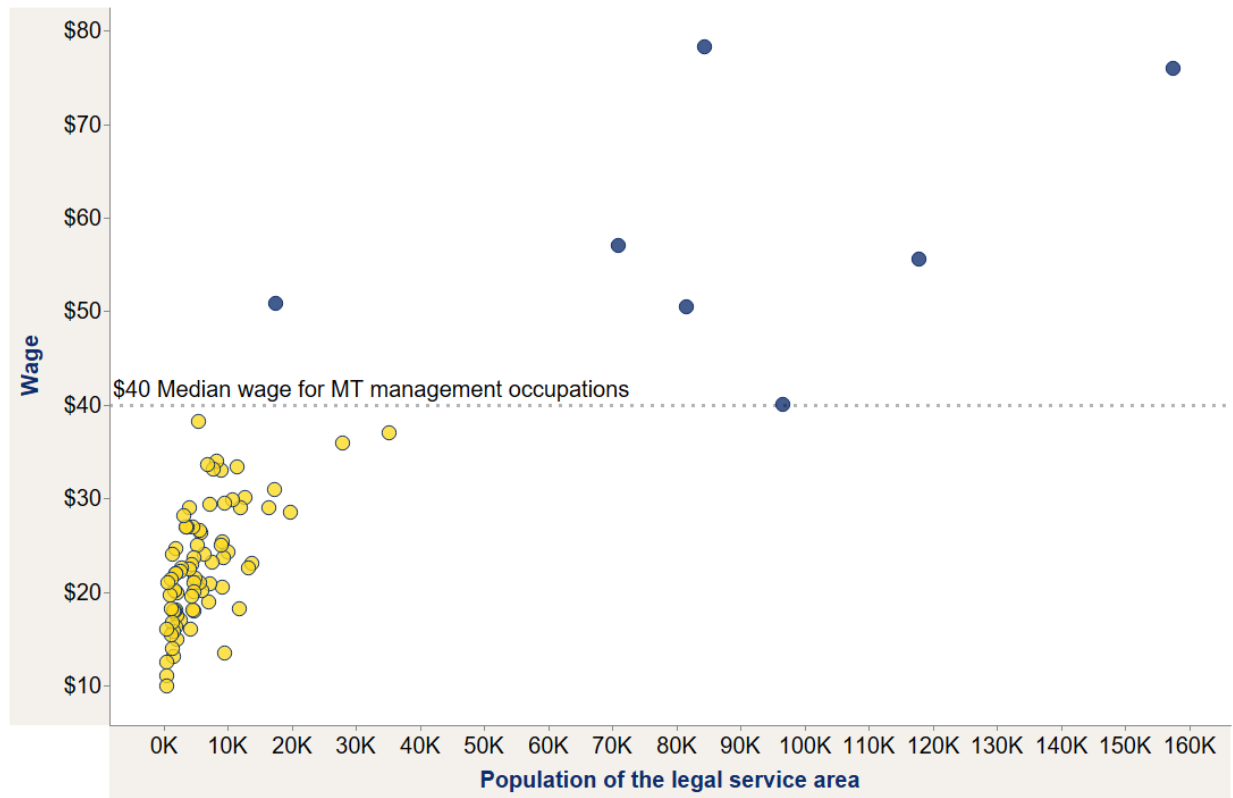
LIBRARY DIRECTOR WAGES					
Service Area Population	Count of Libraries	Average hourly rate	Median hourly rate	Lowest hourly rate	Highest hourly rate
Fewer than 3,500	30	\$18.35	\$18.08	\$9.95	\$28.11
3,501-9,999	36	\$24.65	\$23.87	\$13.54	\$38.20
10,000-24,999*	11	\$29.61	\$29.00	\$18.23	\$50.89
More than 25,000	8	\$53.78	\$53.02	\$35.93	\$78.28
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>\$25.82</b>	<b>\$22.61</b>	<b>\$9.95</b>	<b>\$78.28</b>

\*Wage data was not available for one library director in this service area band.

All libraries indicated that they employ a library director. The director position makes up more than 1 in 5 public library jobs in Montana. While the position includes management and administrative responsibilities, the median hourly rate is not commensurate with other management positions in the state. According to the May 2022 OEWS Research Estimates, management occupations in Montana earn a median hourly wage of \$40.

As the chart below demonstrates, only seven (8%) of Montana library directors receive an hourly wage at or above the median rate for management occupations despite planning, directing, and coordinating operations and working with a board of trustees to formulate policy. Library directors that serve communities of more than 25,000 people are more likely to receive a wage comparable to other management positions in the state. These positions oversee an organization with multiple departments and a larger staff, but directors of smaller libraries may address equally complex responsibilities, especially in cases where the director manages a system with branch locations.

## DIRECTOR HOURLY WAGES BY SERVICE AREA POPULATION



Does the wage fall at or above the median for Montana management occupations?  
 ■ No      ■ Yes

### Minimum Qualifications

ARM 10.102.1160 sets the expectation that public library directors become certified through the Montana State Library, but local library boards can require additional qualifications.

MINIMUM DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS					
Service Area Population	None	High School	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree in any field	Master of Library Science
Fewer than 3,500	0	19	9	1	1
3,501-9,999	2	12	17	2	3
10,000-24,999	1	3	4	2	2
More than 25,000	1	0	0	0	7
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>

The qualifications in the table above reflect position requirements rather than the credential earned by the director. In some cases, the director's qualifications exceed these requirements. For example, one respondent indicated that she earned a Master of Library Science degree despite the position only preferring a bachelor's or master's degree with no requirement. In another example, a director earned a Ph.D. beyond the master's requirement.

One library remarked that the library board might revise the required qualifications following the 2023 change in Public Library Standards which no longer require a Master of Library Science (MLS) degree for organizations serving more than 25,000 people. Though the library in this example serves 10,000-24,999 people, it historically required the MLS to align with the practice and example set by larger libraries.

MASTER OF LIBRARY SCIENCE		
Service Area Population	Count of directors with MLS	Percent of directors with MLS
Fewer than 3,500	0	0%
3,501-9,999*	9	25%
10,000-24,999	4	33%
More than 25,000	7	88%
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23%</b>

\*Another director in this population band earned her MLS in the weeks after the survey closed.

### *Professional Experience*

In addition to their credentials, library directors in the state bring a high level of experience in public service, with the average director reporting more than a decade in the role. While 30% of directors reported less than five years' experience, each population band has more than one director that has served over 30 years at the helm of a public library. The longest serving director in the state has an impressive 39 years' experience leading libraries in rural Montana.

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AT THE DIRECTOR LEVEL					
Service Area Population	Less than 5 years	More than 5 years	Average years	Lowest years	Highest years
Fewer than 3,500	40%	60%	10	1	39
3,501-9,999	31%	69%	12	0	37
10,000-24,999	17%	83%	10	1	38
More than 25,000	13%	88%	17	0	37
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39</b>



## Assistant Director

The assistant director performs administrative work involving organizing and coordinating the delivery of public service system wide. In Montana, 20% of libraries benefit from the leadership offered by an assistant director, distributed as indicated in the table below. The median hourly rate is \$20.76, and most positions require a high school diploma or bachelor's degree. A Master of Library Science is more common in larger libraries.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR WAGES					
Service Area Population	Count of Libraries	Average hourly rate	Median hourly rate	Lowest hourly rate	Highest hourly rate
Fewer than 3,500	4	\$15.19	\$13.50	\$13.00	\$20.76
3,501-9,999	7	\$19.03	\$18.50	\$12.00	\$26.44
10,000-24,999	2	\$24.65	\$24.65	\$23.91	\$25.39
More than 25,000	4	\$47.09	\$43.56	\$32.23	\$69.00
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>\$25.39</b>	<b>\$20.76</b>	<b>\$12.00</b>	<b>\$69.00</b>

### Minimum Qualifications

MINIMUM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS					
Service Area Population	None	High School	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree in any field	Master of Library Science
Fewer than 3,500	1	2	1	0	0
3,501-9,999	0	6	1	0	0
10,000-24,999	0	0	1	0	1
More than 25,000	0	0	1	0	3
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

An assistant library director plays a crucial role in supporting the overall operation and management of a library. Often the assistant director provides administrative support that streamlines operations and ensures that the library runs efficiently. This support to the director can include staff coordination, budget management, and day-to-day operations support.

In some communities, the library board establishes the assistant director position as part of a library director's succession plan. In the absence of the library director, the assistant can step into the role temporarily or be trained for future leadership. Hiring an assistant director before a library director's retirement can ensure continuity in service during the recruitment process. Once potential successors are identified, libraries can invest in their development by providing training opportunities such as mentorship and exposure to different aspects of the organization.

## Branch Manager

The branch manager is responsible for the coordinating, planning, and delivery of public services to the branch library. A branch library is a smaller library that operates as part of a larger library system or network. It is typically located in a specific neighborhood, community, or region, serving the local population. Branch libraries are extensions of the main library and provide access to a collection of books and other resources. Of the 18 libraries in Montana with branch facilities, ten employ a branch manager. The median hourly rate for a branch manager is \$21, and a high school diploma is the most common minimum qualification.

BRANCH MANAGER WAGES					
Service Area Population	Count of Libraries	Average hourly rate	Median hourly rate	Lowest hourly rate	Highest hourly rate
Fewer than 3,500	0	-	-	-	-
3,501-9,999	4	\$17.49	\$16.04	\$13.81	\$24.05
10,000-24,999	2	\$19.16	\$19.16	\$18.32	\$19.99
More than 25,000	4	\$23.85	\$22.71	\$22.00	\$28.00
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>\$20.37</b>	<b>\$21.00</b>	<b>\$13.81</b>	<b>\$28.00</b>

### Minimum Qualifications

MINIMUM BRANCH MANAGER QUALIFICATIONS					
Service Area Population	None	High School	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree in any field	Master of Library Science
Fewer than 3,500	-	-	-	-	-
3,501-9,999	0	3	1	0	0
10,000-24,999	0	2	0	0	0
More than 25,000	1	1	2	0	0
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Branch managers provide localized management, overseeing the day-to-day operations of a specific branch. This allows for a more focused approach to the unique needs and characteristics of each community. Because branch managers work directly with the local community, they understand the needs and preferences of the people they serve and can share that perspective with the larger library system. This localized approach builds a stronger connection between the library and its patrons.

## Department Manager

The department manager manages the operation of a department within the library such as the children's department, circulation, or reference services. This position supervises staff and oversees a department which differentiates it from the librarian supervisor position. At the median rate, department managers make \$27.54 per hour. Most libraries require a high school diploma, but some require a Master of Library Science degree.

DEPARTMENT MANAGER WAGES					
Service Area Population	Count of Libraries	Average hourly rate	Median hourly rate	Lowest hourly rate	Highest hourly rate
Fewer than 3,500	2	\$13.10	\$13.10	\$12.50	\$13.70
3,501-9,999	1	\$18.11	\$18.11	\$18.11	\$18.11
10,000-24,999	0	-	-	-	-
More than 25,000	5	\$36.79	\$30.86	\$25.07	\$49.00
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>\$28.53</b>	<b>\$27.54</b>	<b>\$12.50</b>	<b>\$49.00</b>

### *Minimum Qualifications*

MINIMUM DEPARTMENT MANAGER QUALIFICATIONS					
Service Area Population	None	High School	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree in any field	Master of Library Science
Fewer than 3,500	1	1	0	0	0
3,501-9,999	0	1	0	0	0
10,000-24,999	-	-	-	-	-
More than 25,000	0	2	0	1	2
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

Although only 9% of libraries in the state have department managers, a significant 63% of libraries in the largest service area population category have personnel in such roles. The largest libraries are more inclined to hire department managers due to the additional coordination and communication required to effectively manage a large and specialized staff. Managers can act as a bridge between the library administration and the workers in their departments. This involves conveying organizational goals, policies, and expectations to the team, as well as providing feedback and insights from the department to the higher management. In addition to coordinating staff around a common mission, department managers are usually experts in their respective fields, positioning them to lead their teams in adapting to users' needs and new trends.

## Librarian Supervisor

The librarian supervisor serves the public in reference, acquisitions, cataloging, collection development, programs, and/or branch operations, all of which require extensive subject, technical knowledge, and expertise. This position supervises staff which differentiates it from librarian II or librarian I but does not oversee an entire department. Librarian supervisors are less common in Montana than other positions, with only five libraries reporting this role in the two largest population bands. Librarian supervisors earn a median hourly wage of \$27.53, close to the rate offered to department managers.

LIBRARIAN SUPERVISOR WAGES					
Service Area Population	Count of Libraries	Average hourly rate	Median hourly rate	Lowest hourly rate	Highest hourly rate
Fewer than 3,500	0	-	-	-	-
3,501-9,999	0	-	-	-	-
10,000-24,999	2	\$21.46	\$21.46	\$17.92	\$25.00
More than 25,000	3	\$35.51	\$39.00	\$27.53	\$40.00
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>\$29.89</b>	<b>\$27.53</b>	<b>\$17.92</b>	<b>\$40.00</b>

### Minimum Qualifications

MINIMUM LIBRARIAN SUPERVISOR QUALIFICATIONS					
Service Area Population	None	High School	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree in any field	Master of Library Science
Fewer than 3,500	-	-	-	-	-
3,501-9,999	-	-	-	-	-
10,000-24,999	0	1	0	0	1
More than 25,000	1	0	0	0	2
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

In larger libraries, the librarian supervisor plays a role in overseeing and developing front-line staff, a duty typically shouldered by the director or assistant director in smaller library settings. This contribution is particularly significant in organizations characterized by a larger workforce and a more intricate hierarchical structure. Supervisors have a narrower scope of authority than department managers but provide comparable levels of experience and expertise. Supervisors typically are expected to have a broad understanding of library operations and public service while serving as a leader among their staff which might include a combination of librarians and paraprofessionals.

## Librarian II

The librarian II serves the public in reference, acquisitions, cataloging, collection development, programs, and/or branch operations, all of which require extensive subject, technical knowledge, and expertise. This position requires two years of experience or more but does not supervise staff. The median hourly rate for a librarian II is \$18.25, and in most communities the minimum qualification is a high school diploma, but some require a bachelor's degree or MLS.

LIBRARIAN II WAGES					
Service Area Population	Count of Libraries	Average hourly rate	Median hourly rate	Lowest hourly rate	Highest hourly rate
Fewer than 3,500	0	-	-	-	-
3,501-9,999	8	\$18.19	\$17.54	\$13.49	\$26.61
10,000-24,999	1	\$21.95	\$21.95	\$21.95	\$21.95
More than 25,000	1	\$24.50	\$24.50	\$24.50	\$24.50
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>\$19.20</b>	<b>\$18.25</b>	<b>\$13.49</b>	<b>\$26.61</b>

### *Minimum Qualifications*

MINIMUM LIBRARIAN II QUALIFICATIONS					
Service Area Population	None	High School	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree in any field	Master of Library Science
Fewer than 3,500	-	-	-	-	-
3,501-9,999	1	5	1	0	1
10,000-24,999	0	0	1	0	0
More than 25,000	1	0	0	0	0
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

Librarian I and librarian II undertake similar responsibilities within the library, including tasks related to collection management, assisting patrons, coordinating programs, and providing information services. However, the distinction between the two positions lies in the level of experience and expertise. Librarian II is typically expected to bring a higher level of experience to the role. This may involve a more extensive background in library services, a deeper understanding of information resources, and a heightened proficiency in managing diverse tasks. Librarian II is often entrusted with more complex projects, specialized assignments, or additional responsibilities that leverage their seasoned expertise.

## Librarian I

The librarian I serves the public in reference, acquisitions, cataloging, collection development, programs, and/or branch operations, all of which require extensive subject, technical knowledge, and expertise. This position is considered entry level. Fifteen libraries reported staff at the librarian I level with a median hourly wage of \$17.86.

LIBRARIAN I WAGES					
Service Area Population	Count of Libraries	Average hourly rate	Median hourly rate	Lowest hourly rate	Highest hourly rate
Fewer than 3,500	2	\$16.30	\$16.30	\$15.10	\$17.49
3,501-9,999	7	\$18.82	\$17.05	\$14.75	\$26.44
10,000-24,999	3	\$20.97	\$22.11	\$16.81	\$23.98
More than 25,000	3	\$35.91	\$37.42	\$32.82	\$37.48
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>\$22.33</b>	<b>\$17.86</b>	<b>\$14.75</b>	<b>\$37.48</b>

### Minimum Qualifications

MINIMUM LIBRARIAN I QUALIFICATIONS					
Service Area Population	None	High School	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree in any field	Master of Library Science
Fewer than 3,500	1	1	0	0	0
3,501-9,999	1	4	2	0	0
10,000-24,999	0	2	1	0	0
More than 25,000	0	0	0	1	2
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

Librarians in larger communities tend to focus on specific subjects like youth services or interlibrary loans, while their counterparts in smaller communities often take on a variety of roles as generalists. Regardless of specialization, those in librarian I roles are considered entry-level. Individuals hired for librarian I positions are likely in the process of developing the foundational skills essential for a range of tasks within librarianship. As librarians develop their skills, they may advance to positions such as supervisor or department manager, bypassing librarian II. Montana reported more librarian I positions than librarian II, especially in larger libraries which are more likely to have supervisory and management positions as an option for staff hoping to advance. Notably, the median hourly wage for a librarian I is higher than a librarian II in the larger population bands. In these libraries, the role requires a Master of Library Science or another master's degree, and no library II position exists.

## IT Staff

The IT staff performs skilled technical work involving operation of the computer network and related peripheral devices. Eight libraries employ IT staff with a median hourly wage of \$27.32.

IT STAFF WAGES					
Service Area Population	Count of Libraries	Average hourly rate	Median hourly rate	Lowest hourly rate	Highest hourly rate
Fewer than 3,500	0	-	-	-	-
3,501-9,999	2	\$18.13	\$18.13	\$16.50	\$19.75
10,000-24,999	0	-	-	-	-
More than 25,000	6	\$28.95	\$31.04	\$23.00	\$33.20
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>\$26.24</b>	<b>\$27.32</b>	<b>\$16.50</b>	<b>\$33.20</b>

### *Minimum Qualifications*

MINIMUM IT STAFF QUALIFICATIONS					
Service Area Population	None	High School	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree in any field	Master of Library Science
Fewer than 3,500	-	-	-	-	-
3,501-9,999	0	1	1	0	0
10,000-24,999	-	-	-	-	-
More than 25,000	2	0	4	0	0
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The IT Staff position is not popular among small libraries as technology work is often carried out on a contract basis. Alternatively, the network and devices may be maintained by a technology administrator employed by the city or county rather than directly by the library. Conversely, 75% of the largest libraries hire technology staff. Libraries with a higher service area population are more likely to have larger buildings, more computers, and technology classes thus necessitating staff with technology specialization. In some cases, libraries offer maker and technology labs for public use, again justifying IT staff.

## Library Assistant

The library assistant performs moderately complex library operations in dealing with the public, assists with patron use of computer equipment, the charge and discharge of materials, and the basic level of service delivery. Found in 42 libraries, the library assistant role ranks second in popularity, following the library director. The median hourly wage for this role is \$16.35 and most commonly requires a high school diploma.

LIBRARY ASSISTANT WAGES					
Service Area Population	Count of Libraries	Average hourly rate	Median hourly rate	Lowest hourly rate	Highest hourly rate
Fewer than 3,500	13	\$14.69	\$15.00	\$10.95	\$18.38
3,501-9,999	17	\$15.71	\$15.13	\$12.00	\$20.62
10,000-24,999	5	\$18.48	\$16.81	\$16.05	\$24.20
More than 25,000	7	\$23.05	\$22.62	\$18.00	\$27.82
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>\$16.98</b>	<b>\$16.35</b>	<b>\$10.95</b>	<b>\$27.82</b>

### *Minimum Qualifications*

MINIMUM LIBRARY ASSISTANT QUALIFICATIONS					
Service Area Population	None	High School	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree in any field	Master of Library Science
Fewer than 3,500	2	11	0	0	0
3,501-9,999	2	14	1	0	0
10,000-24,999	0	4	1	0	0
More than 25,000	1	3	3	0	0
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Library assistants staff libraries of all sizes to offer public facing services and operational support. Library assistants must be skilled at customer service as they provide core services that support access to the library collection such as locating books, registering borrowers for library cards, and scanning barcodes to circulate library materials. The prevalence of library assistant positions in Montana libraries (49%) is driven by the need for operational efficiency and cost-effective library services. The library assistant role is often considered an entry-level opportunity and typically requires fewer academic credentials than librarian or management positions.



## Library Aide

The library aide performs manual library and messenger work. The person in this role sorts, moves, shelves, locates, and retrieves library materials. The median hourly wage for a library aide is \$16.00 and most commonly requires a high school diploma.

LIBRARY AIDE WAGES					
Service Area Population	Count of Libraries	Average hourly rate	Median hourly rate	Lowest hourly rate	Highest hourly rate
Fewer than 3,500	7	\$16.35	\$16.34	\$12.30	\$20.00
3,501-9,999	10	\$14.04	\$13.45	\$10.64	\$18.70
10,000-24,999	2	\$15.82	\$15.82	\$11.63	\$20.00
More than 25,000	4	\$19.45	\$19.19	\$16.00	\$23.41
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>\$15.84</b>	<b>\$16.00</b>	<b>\$10.64</b>	<b>\$23.41</b>

### *Minimum Qualifications*

MINIMUM LIBRARY AIDE QUALIFICATIONS					
Service Area Population	None	High School	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree in any field	Master of Library Science
Fewer than 3,500	1	6	0	0	0
3,501-9,999	1	9	0	0	0
10,000-24,999	1	1	0	0	0
More than 25,000	2	2	0	0	0
<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Library aides provide some of the same work as library assistants in the smallest libraries, but in larger libraries reshelving materials and organizing book carts occupies most of the aide's time. This position is sometimes filled by staff without any library-related qualifications, but success in this position requires attention to detail to ensure materials are returned to the correct place. Maintaining a well-organized collection ensures that patrons and staff can find the books they need. Library aides often perform task-oriented work with established procedures and routines such as pulling books to fill hold requests every morning, scanning the shelves for inventory, and emptying the book drop throughout the day.

# Conclusion

The information presented in this report serves as an initial reference point for understanding the compensation and minimum qualifications of library personnel in Montana. While the libraries that participated in the study furnished total staff counts, the specific distribution of staff across roles was not delineated beyond indicating the presence or absence of a particular occupation within a library. Similarly, starting wages were excluded from this study as most libraries indicated that they set the wage upon posting. Unless a position was recently filled, the library couldn't accurately identify a starting wage. This means that the data presented skews higher than it would if wages for all staff in a role were reported, especially those at the lower end of the pay band. The exception to this flaw is the library director as organizations typically hire only one person in this role. Subsequent surveys could seek data at the position level to create a more comprehensive salary range. Additionally, future research could draw comparisons between library jobs and other roles within municipalities, counties, and tribes.

While looking to library peers for comparable wages is helpful, pay parity should also be evaluated by looking at similar jobs outside the library. For example, library boards might examine how other city department heads are compensated when setting a salary for a library director. The Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) survey is another powerful dataset for evaluating how library director salaries compare to wages earned by other managerial positions in the state. Merely 8% of Montana library directors earn an hourly wage that is equal to or surpasses the state's median rate for management occupations. Library directors, like other managers, often have complex responsibilities that include strategic planning, leadership, budget management, and policy formulation. If the scope of their duties aligns with those of other managers, comparable compensation may be justified.

Compensation for librarians, like most professions, depends on the region and prevailing economic conditions. However, paying a higher wage is a strategic investment that can positively impact the recruitment and retention of library staff. It helps attract qualified candidates, fosters a positive work environment, and contributes to the overall success of the library in serving its community. Competitive salaries not only attract new talent but also help in retaining experienced library personnel. When library staff feel adequately compensated, they are more likely to stay with the organization, reducing turnover and retaining valuable institutional knowledge. Most importantly, a skilled staff is better equipped to deliver collections and library services that build fair educational opportunities for all Montanans.

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# Appendix A: Fair Library Access Resolution

**Fair Library Access for All Montanans:  
A Resolution from the Montana State Library Commission, Regarding Fair Standard  
Access to Library Content and Services for All Montanans**

Montana State Library Commission, Aaron LaFromboise, Chair

Adopted by the State Library Commission June 12, 2019

## **Montanans' Dignity**

Whereas all Montanans are born with inherent, inviolable dignity;

Whereas all Montanans are at liberty to pursue life's basic necessities, health, and happiness;

## **Right to Lifelong Learning**

Whereas in pursuit of life's basic necessities, health, and happiness, all Montanans have the right to seek information and pursue ideas, through any media, regardless of location, and without discrimination;

Whereas it is Montana's constitutional goal to establish a system of education which will develop the full potential of each person, with equitable education opportunities being guaranteed to each person of the state;

Whereas, the Montana State Library (MSL) is aligned with and affirms the American Library Association's placing high value in a learning society, and in affirming libraries' vital and cooperative role in supporting all Montanans' lifelong pursuit of inquiry and learning for all;

## **Montana State Library's Role**

Whereas libraries exist to help Montanans to enrich and inform themselves;

Whereas Montana State Library's purpose is to assist all organizations, communities, and Montanans to thrive through excellent library resources and services;

Whereas it is MSL's duty to directly provide or distribute access to library content and services, sufficient to each user's needs, to all Montanans;

Whereas MSL's many dynamic relationships with users and partners include, either directly or indirectly, local, State and Federal agencies, all Montanans, and all of Montana's libraries' communities including all those they serve;

Whereas because MSL provides content or services to users through its relationships with governmental agencies, libraries, or other institutional partners, it follows that MSL measures its success by evaluating the degree to which, through its efforts, individual users have access to sufficient library content and services to meet their needs;

### **Fair (equitable) Access**

Whereas to thrive, all Montanans deserve convenient access to sufficient (if not necessarily the same) library content and services, so that they may seek information and pursue ideas;

Whereas Montana's communities vary, in regards to the availability of local resources, in differences between each communities' ability to provide their users with sufficient resources, and in their ability to participate as a partner with other sources of Montana information resources, including the Montana State Library;

Whereas all Montana communities experience gaps in library services, and vary in their ability to help their users and their communities thrive; therefore, let it be

### **Resolution**

Resolved, that the Montana State Library acknowledges that that there is an uneven distribution of library services throughout Montana, and that there are disparities in the sufficiency of library services;

Montanans have unique critical needs for convenient access to sustainably funded, sufficient unto each Montanan's needs, high-quality library content and services;

With its partners and all Montana Libraries, Montana State Library commits to developing and implementing a statewide strategy, toward the goal of providing all Montanans with equitable, sufficient access to library resources;

That all Montana's libraries, all Montana State Library's partners, and all state agencies will be encouraged to join in this statewide strategy; so that

All Montanans will have access to library content and services, sufficient unto their needs.

# Appendix B: Survey Instrument

The Staffing & Salaries Survey was presented as a separate section within the larger, annual Public Libraries Survey, beginning at question 66.

## Staffing & Salaries

### *Staffing & Salaries*

66. Total library staff with MLS FTE

Librarians with master's degrees from programs of library and information studies accredited by the American Library Association.

67. Total librarians FTE

Persons with the title of librarian who do paid work that usually requires professional training and skill in the theoretical or scientific aspects of library work, or both, as distinct from its mechanical or clerical aspect. This data element also includes ALA-MLS (data element #250).

68. Total other staff FTE

This includes all other FTE employees paid from the reporting unit budget, including plant operations, security, and maintenance staff.

69. Total paid staff FTE

This is the sum of Total Librarians and All Other Paid Staff (data elements #251 and #252).

70. Total hours worked by non-paid staff (volunteers, interns) per year

This should be the total hours for the entire year across all volunteers and other non-paid staff.

71. Does the library director have an MLS? [Yes, No]

Indicate Yes if the director has a master's degree from a program of library and information studies accredited by the American Library Association. Otherwise, enter No.

72. What is the director's current hourly wage?

The actual hourly wage for the current library director. Note: If this is a salaried position, please calculate the hourly wage using the following formula. For full-time directors: annual salary divided by 52 divided by 40. For part time directors: annual salary divided by 52 divided by hours worked per week.

73. What is the starting hourly wage for the director position?

The starting wage for this position. This figure might be included in the job description. Note: If this is a salaried position, please calculate the hourly wage using the following formula. For full-time directors: annual salary divided by 52 divided by 40. For part time directors: annual salary divided by 52 divided by hours worked per week.

74. How many hours does the director work a week?

The number of hours the director works each week on average.

75. How many years of experience does the director have?

The director's years of experience in the director role.

76. What education level does the directory position require? [MLS, Masters, Bachelors, High School Diploma, None]

Select MLS, Masters, Bachelors, High School Diploma, or None.

### *Library Staff*

77. Does the library employ an assistant director?

Job titles vary between organizations. Use the following definition to determine if you employ staff in an equivalent role.  
**Assistant Director:** Performs administrative work involving organizing and coordinating the delivery of public service system wide.

81. Does the library employ a branch manager?

Job titles vary between organizations. Use the following definition to determine if you employ staff in an equivalent role.  
**Branch Manager:** Manages branch operations wherein the employee is responsible for the coordinating, planning, and delivery of public service to the branch library.

85. Does the library employ a department manager?

Job titles vary between organizations. Use the following definition to determine if you employ staff in an equivalent role.  
**Department Manager:** Manages the operation of a department within the library such as the children's department, circulation, or reference services. Supervises staff.

89. Does the library employ a librarian supervisor?

Job titles vary between organizations. Use the following definition to determine if you employ staff in an equivalent role.  
**Librarian supervisor:** Serves the public in reference, acquisitions, cataloging, collection development, programs, and/or branch operations, all of which require extensive subject, technical knowledge and expertise. Supervises staff.

93. Does the library employ a librarian II?

Job titles vary between organizations. Use the following definition to determine if you employ staff in an equivalent role.  
**Librarian II:** Serves the public in reference, acquisitions, cataloging, collection development, programs, and/or branch operations, all of which require extensive subject, technical knowledge and expertise. Two years of experience or more.

97. Does the library employ a librarian I?

Job titles vary between organizations. Use the following definition to determine if you employ staff in an equivalent role.  
**Librarian I:** Serves the public in reference, acquisitions, cataloging, collection development, programs, and/or branch operations, all of which require extensive subject, technical knowledge and expertise. Entry level.

101. Does the library employ IT staff?

Job titles vary between organizations. Use the following definition to determine if you employ staff in an equivalent role.  
**IT Staff:** Performs skilled technical work involving operation of the computer network and related peripheral devices.

105. Does the library employ a library assistant?

Job titles vary between organizations. Use the following definition to determine if you employ staff in an equivalent role.  
**Library Assistant:** Performs moderately complex library operations in dealing with the public, assists with patron use of computer equipment, the charge and discharge of materials, the basic level of service delivery.

109. Does the library employ a library aide?

Job titles vary between organizations. Use the following definition to determine if you employ staff in an equivalent role.  
**Library Aide: Performs manual library and messenger work. Sorts, moves, shelves, locates, and retrieves library materials.**

A “yes” response for each of the above questions triggered the display of the following additional questions.

- Based on all staff currently in the position, what is the highest hourly wage received?

The library may employ multiple staff in this role. Enter the highest hourly wage received.

- What is the starting hourly wage for the position?

The starting wage for this position. This figure might be included in the job description.

- What education level does the position require? [MLS, Masters, Bachelors, High School Diploma, None]

Select MLS, Masters, Bachelors, High School Diploma, or None.



# Appendix C: Compensation Profiles

Position	Service Area Population	Count of Libraries	Average hourly rate	Median hourly rate	Lowest hourly rate	Highest hourly rate
Library Director	Fewer than 3,500	30	\$18.35	\$18.08	\$9.95	\$28.11
Library Director	3,501-9,999	36	\$24.65	\$23.87	\$13.54	\$38.20
Library Director	10,000-24,999*	11	\$29.61	\$29.00	\$18.23	\$50.89
Library Director	More than 25,000	8	\$53.78	\$53.02	\$35.93	\$78.28
<b>Library Director</b>	<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>\$25.82</b>	<b>\$22.61</b>	<b>\$9.95</b>	<b>\$78.28</b>
Assistant Director	Fewer than 3,500	4	\$15.19	\$13.50	\$13.00	\$20.76
Assistant Director	3,501-9,999	7	\$19.03	\$18.50	\$12.00	\$26.44
Assistant Director	10,000-24,999	2	\$24.65	\$24.65	\$23.91	\$25.39
Assistant Director	More than 25,000	4	\$47.09	\$43.56	\$32.23	\$69.00
<b>Assistant Director</b>	<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>\$25.39</b>	<b>\$20.76</b>	<b>\$12.00</b>	<b>\$69.00</b>
Branch Manager	Fewer than 3,500	0	-	-	-	-
Branch Manager	3,501-9,999	4	\$17.49	\$16.04	\$13.81	\$24.05
Branch Manager	10,000-24,999	2	\$19.16	\$19.16	\$18.32	\$19.99
Branch Manager	More than 25,000	4	\$23.85	\$22.71	\$22.00	\$28.00
<b>Branch Manager</b>	<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>\$20.37</b>	<b>\$21.00</b>	<b>\$13.81</b>	<b>\$28.00</b>
Department Manager	Fewer than 3,500	2	\$13.10	\$13.10	\$12.50	\$13.70
Department Manager	3,501-9,999	1	\$18.11	\$18.11	\$18.11	\$18.11
Department Manager	10,000-24,999	0	-	-	-	-
Department Manager	More than 25,000	5	\$36.79	\$30.86	\$25.07	\$49.00
<b>Department Manager</b>	<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>\$28.53</b>	<b>\$27.54</b>	<b>\$12.50</b>	<b>\$49.00</b>
Librarian Supervisor	Fewer than 3,500	0	-	-	-	-

Position	Service Area Population	Count of Libraries	Average hourly rate	Median hourly rate	Lowest hourly rate	Highest hourly rate
Librarian Supervisor	3,501-9,999	0	-	-	-	-
Librarian Supervisor	10,000-24,999	2	\$21.46	\$21.46	\$17.92	\$25.00
Librarian Supervisor	More than 25,000	3	\$35.51	\$39.00	\$27.53	\$40.00
<b>Librarian Supervisor</b>	<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>\$29.89</b>	<b>\$27.53</b>	<b>\$17.92</b>	<b>\$40.00</b>
Librarian II	Fewer than 3,500	0	-	-	-	-
Librarian II	3,501-9,999	8	\$18.19	\$17.54	\$13.49	\$26.61
Librarian II	10,000-24,999	1	\$21.95	\$21.95	\$21.95	\$21.95
Librarian II	More than 25,000	1	\$24.50	\$24.50	\$24.50	\$24.50
<b>Librarian II</b>	<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>\$19.20</b>	<b>\$18.25</b>	<b>\$13.49</b>	<b>\$26.61</b>
Librarian I	Fewer than 3,500	2	\$16.30	\$16.30	\$15.10	\$17.49
Librarian I	3,501-9,999	7	\$18.82	\$17.05	\$14.75	\$26.44
Librarian I	10,000-24,999	3	\$20.97	\$22.11	\$16.81	\$23.98
Librarian I	More than 25,000	3	\$35.91	\$37.42	\$32.82	\$37.48
<b>Librarian I</b>	<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>\$22.33</b>	<b>\$17.86</b>	<b>\$14.75</b>	<b>\$37.48</b>
IT Staff	Fewer than 3,500	0	-	-	-	-
IT Staff	3,501-9,999	2	\$18.13	\$18.13	\$16.50	\$19.75
IT Staff	10,000-24,999	0	-	-	-	-
IT Staff	More than 25,000	6	\$28.95	\$31.04	\$23.00	\$33.20
<b>IT Staff</b>	<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>\$26.24</b>	<b>\$27.32</b>	<b>\$16.50</b>	<b>\$33.20</b>
Library Assistant	Fewer than 3,500	13	\$14.69	\$15.00	\$10.95	\$18.38
Library Assistant	3,501-9,999	17	\$15.71	\$15.13	\$12.00	\$20.62
Library Assistant	10,000-24,999	5	\$18.48	\$16.81	\$16.05	\$24.20
Library Assistant	More than 25,000	7	\$23.05	\$22.62	\$18.00	\$27.82

<b>Position</b>	<b>Service Area Population</b>	<b>Count of Libraries</b>	<b>Average hourly rate</b>	<b>Median hourly rate</b>	<b>Lowest hourly rate</b>	<b>Highest hourly rate</b>
<b>Library Assistant</b>	<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>\$16.98</b>	<b>\$16.35</b>	<b>\$10.95</b>	<b>\$27.82</b>
Library Aide	Fewer than 3,500	7	\$16.35	\$16.34	\$12.30	\$20.00
Library Aide	3,501-9,999	10	\$14.04	\$13.45	\$10.64	\$18.70
Library Aide	10,000-24,999	2	\$15.82	\$15.82	\$11.63	\$20.00
Library Aide	More than 25,000	4	\$19.45	\$19.19	\$16.00	\$23.41
<b>Library Aide</b>	<b>All Reporting Libraries</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>\$15.84</b>	<b>\$16.00</b>	<b>\$10.64</b>	<b>\$23.41</b>

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