

**Библиотекари, информационные и архивные работники
и оплата их труда: проблемы и решения, или
Работа в библиотеке: по любви или ради денег**

**Library, Information Center, and Archives Professionals
and Their Compensation: Problems and Solutions; or
working@your library: for Love or Money**

**Бібліотекарі, інформаційні та архівні працівники
та оплата їх праці: проблеми та вирішення, або
Робота в бібліотеці: з любові чи заради грошей**

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В докладе исследуется проблема привлечения и удержания в штате работников библиотек, информационных центров и архивов, возникающая вследствие того, что предлагаемая им оплата труда неадекватна.

Как библиотекарь-профессионал, который давал консультации, выступал с докладами или участвовал в конференциях в более чем 25 странах на пяти континентах, я обнаружил, что везде, где мне доводилось бывать, библиотекарям платили несправедливо мало по сравнению с представителями других профессий, имеющими аналогичное образование, опыт, умения и уровень ответственности.

Универсальность такого положения ужасает.

В докладе исследуются факторы и проблемы, приведшие к такому положению вещей, и предлагаются практические способы его исправления.

This paper examines the problem of attracting and keeping library, information center, and archives professionals because the compensation offered is inadequate.

As a career librarian who has consulted, given papers, or participated in conferences in more than 25 countries on five continents, I found that everywhere I went library professionals were unfairly compensated relative to people in other professions that had similar education, experience, skills, and responsibilities.

The universality of this condition is dismaying.

This paper will explore factors and issues that have contributed to this state of affairs and will offer practical ways to remedy the problem.

У доповіді досліджено проблему залучення та утримання в штаті працівників бібліотек, інформаційних центрів і архівів, що виникає через неадекватну оплату праці. Як бібліотекар-професіонал, який надавав консультації, виступав із доповідями чи брав участь у конференціях у понад 25 країнах на п'яти континентах, я з'ясував, що всюди, де мені доводилося бувати, бібліотекарям платили несправедливо мало у порівнянні з представниками інших професій, що мали аналогічну освіту, досвід, вміння та рівень відповідальності.

Універсальність такого положення жахає.

У доповіді досліджено фактори та проблеми, що призвели до такого становища, та запропоновано практичні способи його виправлення.

A few years ago a columnist for *USA Today* applauded a New Hampshire librarian for loving her work so much that she retired, but then came in everyday to do her old job as a volunteer. She did it to save enough money for her small town library to buy new books.

One isn't entirely surprised given the dedication of librarians and their devotion to service. But it certainly is dismaying.

What should trouble everyone in our profession is that too often libraries are forced to choose between paying their most valuable resource – the staff – the salaries they deserve; or, adding to their collections, hours and online capacity.

At a time when public library services are more in demand than ever, many libraries are experiencing budget cuts, especially in the area of staffing, particularly through the deprofessionalization of positions. Reference librarian positions are being redefined as information assistants (or similar titles) – and they do not need to possess the professional education of a librarian. The equation is simple: pay less money to someone who will do the same work.

The circulation of materials in public libraries in the United States has grown dramatically in the 21st century, especially when compared with circulation figures from the 1990s. Serving the people who are making these increased demands of the library, one would think, should require skilled professionals, and not people with more limited training and education.

Academic libraries in the U.S. – because of the offerings of the Internet and the availability of online serial databases – have seen their circulation and the overall usage of the physical library diminish. Academic libraries are busy reconstituting and redefining critical services to their various user communities.

One of the key areas in which academic librarians have responded is in research instruction, a highly developed service offered by academic library staff to faculty, staff, and students. Again, identifying key sources in all media and teaching ways to approach specific research areas requires a level of sophistication, knowledge, training, and experience one associates with library and information professionals – not support staff, paraprofessionals, or others similarly non-credentialed.

The issues underlying this contradiction, namely the need for even more skilled library and information professionals and the trend toward lowering the standards and requirements for information service positions will be examined.

As the President of the American Library Association, 2002-2003, I chose to focus on a better understanding of why librarians were undercompensated and advocating ways and means by which librarian compensation could be improved. It was during the years of 2001-2003, which includes my term as President-Elect that I traveled in 33 cities in the U.S. and to 12 countries. Although I spoke on such matters as intellectual freedom, improving library funding, I primarily advocated for better salaries and pay equity for everyone who worked in libraries, information centers, and archives.

Historically, all too many librarians have been reluctant to speak out on these issues – they were afraid to appear «self-serving.»

Part of my message was that we must abandon such self-defeating attitudes. We must better understand and value what we do, especially how our work contributes to the success of the library mission.

And the issue is not simply salaries, but overall compensation.

Paid health insurance? Paid vacation and sick leave? Maternity leave for both the mother and the father? Financial support for continuing education, including attendance at conferences? None of these are givens in the United States. And the diminution of such benefits has been an unfortunate 21st century trend. In altogether too many institutions – where librarians already are underpaid – they are asked to pay for part or all of what had been wholly subsidized health benefits.

As part of my efforts, I appointed and funded an ALA presidential Task Force on Better Salaries and Pay Equity. Its goal was to empower library staff to better promote their worth, individually and collectively, by providing tools, training, and encouragement. Information about the Task Force and the wealth of materials it originally created can be found at: <http://www.mjfreedman.org/freedmantf/tfhome.html>. Included is an excellent publication, *Advocating for Better Salaries and Pay Equity Toolkit*, now in its fourth edition, <http://ala-apa.org/toolkit.pdf>, which has a wealth of information including FAQs (frequently asked questions), sample op-ed pieces, letters to the editor, statistics, and other resources that will help everyone better understand the value of library workers and the contribution they make to the communities they serve.

Current information on all related salary issues is now located and maintained at <http://www.ala-apa.org>, the web site for the ALA Allied Professional Association that was created as an allied organization to specifically address compensation and certification issues for librarians.

The simple message is that libraries, information centers, and archives don't just happen. They are run by highly educated professionals – unsung heroines and heroes who far too frequently are underpaid and under-recognized.

As part of my efforts, I spoke about improving the compensation of librarians on U.S. National Public Radio, in newspaper interviews, and in speeches in 33 U.S. cities and 12 countries. Overall awareness of the inequity of librarian pay was dramatized and disseminated in a variety of venues that had never had the issue arise.

It is true of course that the salary issue of librarian pay is part of a much larger problem in the U.S.

In the U.S. librarians know that they are not paid fairly because they work in a profession that is predominantly female. This is a primary reason why librarians are inequitably compensated not just in the U.S. but in countries around the world where women predominantly populate the library profession. By meeting with librarians on every continent except Australia and New Zealand I found this to be true, and from written communications found that it also was true 'down under.'

Following is some statistical data that supports that claim.

According to the National Committee on Pay Equity, the wage gap remains at a standstill with women earning 77¢ for every dollar a man earns.

The 2003 U.S. Census reports that the average salary of men with master's degrees was \$75,950 (median \$61,634), while women earned only \$46,961 (median \$41,185) – a difference of almost \$29,000 (62 percent). The average salary of a librarian in 2006 was \$56,259 and the median was \$50,976. It is good to see that the efforts initiated with my ALA initiative show that librarian pay exceeds by \$10,000 the average pay of women with master's degrees, but librarians are still making almost \$20,000 less per year in the U.S. than men with master's degrees.

Progress is being made but not nearly enough.

Further men with bachelor's degrees earned an average of \$62,471 (median \$49,449); while women earned an average of \$35,935 (median \$30,412) – a difference of \$26,536 (73 percent). Thus a male with a bachelor's degree annually does over \$10,000 better – on the average – than librarian's with master's degrees.

Not surprisingly, pay inequity also exists within librarianship. The Association of Research Libraries, in its Annual Salary Survey 2005-6, reported that the average salary for male academic librarians in member libraries was \$63,984, while the average for female academic librarians was \$61,083.5

Library Journal reported that new library school graduates finally crossed the \$40,000 mark as an average salary, but the gender split had women below that point with \$39,587 and men at \$42,143.

There also has been a developing shortage of librarians. It has been projected that by 2010, nearly one in four U.S. librarians will be of retirement age. Being a librarian is a great first or even second career. But based on today's compensation issues why will someone wish to take their place? With access to professions formerly holding back women – law, medicine, finance, business, etc. – and paying much better, why would prospective librarians choose to go somewhere they know they will be paid unfairly or substantially less than offered in non-female predominant professions.

Of course the other question concerning the aging of U.S. librarians –based on the salary inequities they experienced throughout their careers – is, how will they afford to retire?

The good news is that U.S. librarians and library associations have been doing much more than they have in the past to better librarian compensation.

The New Jersey Library Association continues to compile a salary survey that should serve as a model for state associations around the country. As a result, NJLA has established minimum salary standards for the various titles associated with employment in New Jersey libraries – librarians, support staff, etc. NJLA successfully addressed the issue of compensation issues for libraries of different size. NJLA established separate minimums for categories of positions in libraries of widely different sizes. <http://www.njla.org/resources/salaryguide.pdf>.

The impact of the NJLA minimums is that there have been libraries in New Jersey that have raised their minimum salaries in order to be consistent with the NJLA standards.

An important conclusion that should be drawn is that a professional association can have an impact on compensation and play a significant role in advocating for equitable salaries for library workers.

Several state associations expressed an intention to establish committees or initiatives to advocate for better compensation for library workers. Additionally, salary equity initiatives were underway in Canada, Australia, Great Britain, and other nations.

It is only by such efforts that the library profession will begin to achieve the salary status it deserves.

Individually and as a profession, librarians must assert that «A library's lack of money is *not* a valid reason to unfairly compensate its staff.» Librarians *must* stop donating work to their employers by accepting truncated paychecks.

The noted author, Barbara Ehrenreich, calls this *involuntary philanthropy*.

We must also dispel the prevalent myth that we chose librarianship INSTEAD of choosing to be fairly compensated. We chose librarianship AND we want equitable compensation. The stereotype of the poor but proud librarian, one who works for a pittance of pay, is one that needs to be dismantled and sent to the Smithsonian Institution along with the other relics collected there.

One example of the salary issue is the case of Nancy Moore, the director of a small town public library in West Virginia. The library has two Internet-access terminals as well as a reasonable collection of library materials for its size. In managing that library she faced the same issues the directors of the largest public libraries have, e.g., improving funding for the library, getting the most she can from limited resources, dealing with problem patrons, etc.

Her dilemma was that her son was going to graduate from high school and she was trying to figure out how to pay for her son's college tuition. She had two choices. *One*: continue as the director of the public library. Or, *two*: take an entry-level job at Wal-Mart, a U.S. company noted for inadequately compensating its non-management staff.

The obvious question is why would the director of a public library take a bottom-of-the-line job at Wal-Mart? The answer was because the store offered better pay and better benefits. Because of the national spotlight that was focused on her story¹ her library board – after four consecutive years of no raises – increased her salary from \$5.41 per hour to \$5.93 per hour in 2002. For comparison, the current U.S. minimum wage is \$5.85 per hour.

Nancy Moore's case is not unique. There are librarians throughout the U.S. being paid below the poverty level, and not just in rural areas.

U.S. librarians – and librarians everywhere – deserve compensation, not just commensurate with a librarian's education, skills and experience, but with people in other fields whose education, skills, and experience in other fields – the accountants, engineers, and systems analysts – is comparable to theirs. This is the whole issue of comparable worth compensation – people doing similar work or people with similar education, skills, and experience requirements should receive comparable pay.

Many who are unsympathetic to the funding of libraries ask the question, why should librarians be paid better? Hasn't the Internet made libraries and librarians obsolete? If we do not answer these questions well, librarians will be consigned permanently to inadequate compensation.

The approach offered here is based on three steps.

First, we must understand and articulate the value of the library to the community it serves.

Unless we can convince the communities we serve that the library is critical to their success, there is no way to interest anyone in why librarians should be better paid. If the institution is not valued, why should the people who work in it be valued?

It is immaterial what kind of library it is – research, academic, corporate, public, government, hospital, school, etc. Every library has a defined community it is chartered to serve. It is incumbent on the librarian to articulate to the members of the community it serves how important the library is and how the library contributes to their success. Corporate librarians must show the company how they can contribute to the profits of the company through the information services that they provide. Government librarians must show how government libraries and information centers will help better meet the information needs of government officials who consequently will be better able to serve the citizens.

There is one other way that we must recognize the value of the library, that is, as a *public good*. A public good is an institution whose use by only some people *benefits* all people. Certainly public and government libraries, information centers, and archives benefit not just the users of their institutions but everyone in their service jurisdictions. For example staff using the information center of their particular

¹ Yvonne Farley, « _____ » *American Libraries*, January 2002.

government agency will be able to do their jobs better and thereby provide everyone who is served by that agency with a better service.

Non-public information centers are *public* goods in a more restricted sense. The general public may or may not benefit, but certainly a corporation, its stockholders, managers, and staff all will benefit if the information center succeeds in providing the information sought only by the people who use that information center.

Getting everyone to understand the nature of the library, information center, or archive as a public good is extraordinarily important. Simply, use by some, benefits all!

The noted U.S. economist, Paul Samuelson, gave the example of the lighthouse as a public good. Only the ships navigating the waters adjacent to the lighthouse actually needed the lighthouse. But everyone benefited from the lighthouse because the ships carried to all of the people the goods they had on board.

Second, once we have established the value of libraries to the communities served by them, we must then demonstrate that it is the library staff that gives the library its value.

Librarians have been called the ultimate search engines and knowledge navigators. We save users time and money (not to mention aggravation) by helping them find the best, most accurate and complete information, whether it's in print, electronic, video or any other format.

Sadly, there are still many people out who do not understand what librarians do and why it is important. Based on some earlier events, U.S. librarians are partly responsible for this situation.

About 15 years ago, ALA sponsored a National Library Week theme called «Ask a professional. Ask a librarian.» The campaign failed. Based on the feedback ALA received, the fundamental problem was that librarians were reluctant to put themselves in the spotlight and leave out the support staff.

We pay a price for such modesty. In the last few years, librarians have transformed public, school, academic and special libraries. By and large we have done a better job of implementing new technology than telling people what it can do for them, and what a valuable role we play in helping them use that technology to get the information they need.

Our challenge now is to transform how we communicate about libraries and ourselves. Surveys have found that while people value the speed and convenience of the Internet and the comfort of bookstores, *people turn to libraries for information they can trust and help finding it.*

If bookstores and the Internet are libraries' main competition, the expertise of librarians is the library's unique selling point. We must promote that.

And, of course, the constituents served by most libraries – unlike bookstore customers – receive their services at no charge.

People who understand e-services use them heavily. At the Westchester Library System (my former employer), the number of holds/reserves placed skyrocketed once patrons could place them online via the Internet. From 4,000 paper reserves that were filled per month prior to November 1999; to 40,000 fills per month after the first full year online; 60,000 in 2001, and 80,000 to 90,000 filled per month the last three years. This story is replicated everywhere U.S. public libraries offer patron-placed reserves.

By and large, librarians have not done a good job of «translating» electronic services in a way that people understand or make them want to understand. And that includes, most importantly, the expertise that librarians offer. Telling «the librarian» story must be a key strategy in seeking salaries that reflect higher esteem for what we do. Which leads to the third point:

Third, once the value of libraries and the work of librarians that create that value is understood, then librarians can campaign for better salaries.

Without an understanding of the importance of the library to each community of users, and the role the librarians play in the delivery of the services that create that value, the consumers will have no interest in any discussion of the compensation of librarians.

But ultimately, comparable worth compensation, pay equity, fair pay, or any other formulation for fixing the comparatively low salaries of librarians must be pursued at the institution or community level. There is no *one* proven strategy. But there is valuable support information at the American Library

Association-Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA) web site: <http://ala-apa.org/>. As noted earlier, the toolkit, <http://ala-apa.org/toolkit.pdf>, is an extraordinary resource. Also, there is a short documentary DVD, *working @ your library: for LOVE or MONEY* (<http://ala-apa.org/salaries/4loveormoney.html>) that is especially valuable as a tool to demonstrate to non-librarians the various and valuable services librarians offer – in different kinds of libraries. There also is a new *Video Guide* (<http://ala-apa.org/salaries/videoguide.pdf>) that can be used in conjunction with the DVD that will be especially helpful promoting the librarian message.

I am quoted in that publication (p.3):

...Freedman, whose tireless pay-equity efforts helped in the formation of the ALA-APA and this video production, presents the challenge clearly:

«We must promote a better understanding of what the librarian does. No one will want to pay us more money if they have no idea what education, experience, judgment, and special skills it takes for us to do our jobs. We must contribute substantively to the fight for pay equity – it is our fight, too. Women have been discriminated against in a variety of ways, a primary one being compensation.» – *Advocating for Better Salaries and Pay Equity Toolkit*, p. 3

Become an outspoken advocate for libraries and librarians. Collect data that will demonstrate the worth of the librarians' contributions. And, always, work in the message at every possible opportunity how valuable libraries and librarians are.

Achieving Comparable Worth Compensation and Pay Equity

Having outlined the foundation for getting librarians the status they deserve and fair pay, I will offer a concrete three-step program that will offer librarians a guide to achieve comparable worth compensation. The goal is for all librarians to be compensated similarly to people working in other professions with similar education, experience, skills, responsibilities, and any other facets that define a library position. These are the three steps that are suggested.

First, get the library's governing body to adopt the principle of comparable worth compensation. We must convince the board, academic committee on the library, or whatever institution is the governance structure for the library, information center, or archive – whomever decides library policy and compensation – that it should ***adopt a policy of equal pay for equal work***, yet another formulation of the basic principle of comparable worth compensation. Certainly many if not most governance bodies should have little problem endorsing such a simple policy of fairness. Surely any sense of fairness would preclude arguing the opposite.

Second, once the governing body adopts this principle, ***a comparable worth compensation study should be performed***. The education, skills, experience, and responsibilities of the incumbents in various positions in the library organization should have their compensation compared with the compensation of incumbents with similar positions in other fields. Based on comparable worth studies and anecdotal evidence most such studies almost always will demonstrate that library staff do not receive compensation comparable to people in positions with similar education, experience, training, skills, and responsibilities. It also is common to find that those from other professions who are better compensated usually are in fields that are predominantly male.

In the event that the governance body may not be willing to pay for a comparable worth study or is hostile to it – that would suggest that the Board did not adopt the *equal pay for equal work* principle – one or more members of the staff can do the study. The board may be opposed to such work being done on library time. Those committed to comparable worth compensation should be prepared to pursue this objective on their own time.

There is no point trying to convince anyone that librarians in a given library are paid unfairly unless there also is data that supports that contention.

Third, with the information in hand, ***the governing body should adopt a plan to eradicate the inequities in compensation demonstrated by the study***. How the third step actually is carried out presents several possibilities: (a) if the body followed steps 1 and 2, and finds the study persuasive, then it is

simply a matter of the staff working with the Board to develop a plan; (b) if the body is hostile to the whole idea, i.e. it rejects 1 and 2, then the staff, individually or collectively must find ways to influence and change the views of the governing body. In the latter case, there are staff associations, unions, and depending on the type of library, information center, or archive other possible ways to impact the thinking of the governance unit.

However there is another possibility, (c) the body indicates that there are insufficient funds to achieve comparable worth compensation for the staff. Many responses are offered. The salaries of librarians would not be in their current state if librarians got the compensation due them during times of adequate or good library funding – let us recall that inequitable pay has accompanied librarianship all the way back to the 19th century in every predominantly female setting.

If there is a genuine shortage of funds – or if the gap between what fair pay and actual pay is so very large – a multi-year plan should be developed that will achieve the goal of comparable worth compensation. Getting the library to commit annually to even a small amount of money for fairer pay will be critical. It means that the funding body acknowledges the reality of the problem – virtually irrespective of the library's finances.

It also commits the library to increasing the commitment in future years. Given time to plan allocation or reallocation of resources will promote the eradication of inequitable pay for librarians.

My view is that if the library staff can successfully get to this third step, there will be increases in compensation that eventually will result in the library staff being paid comparably with people in other professions with similar backgrounds that traditionally have been compensated much better.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to identify, discuss, and explain the problem that librarians do not receive compensation comparable to professionals in many other fields with similar credentials.

Another purpose was to offer practical steps that would ensure that the people we serve in our respective libraries, information centers, and archives understand how critical the library is to the success of the users of these institutions – be it regarding information that they seek and need for their vocations or avocations; or, the value that is given because the library has disseminated that information to its constituents whose use of that information ultimately benefits everyone – in other words the library, information center, or archive is a «public» good.

Finally concrete steps were offered on how to achieve comparable worth compensation in one's own institution.

Simply, we as librarians have toiled long and hard. We have gone into this profession because we were attracted to, and, I trust love or at least enjoy the work that we do. I hope by this point, we all understand that we should be paid more fairly than librarians have traditionally been paid.

Our work is critical to the success of the people who use the institutions that employ us. Once they understand just how important that work is, our compensation will be comparable to that of people with similar backgrounds in better compensated professions.

Simply, good libraries are essential in an information society.

You can't have good education without good libraries.

And you can't have good libraries without librarians who are fairly compensated.

Righting past wrongs can't be done in one stroke. In most cases, there will need to be a commitment made to a long-range plan with specific goals for addressing salary inequities for librarians

Librarians should and must be paid 21st century salaries if users are to benefit fully from 21st century library and information services.

Until and unless our boards, administrators and elected officials understand the value of what we do, their ears will be deaf to our salary demands.

I trust that this paper has provided the information that you will need to become an advocate for libraries and librarians.