

# Fact Sheet 2014



## LIBRARY WORKERS: FACTS & FIGURES

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

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

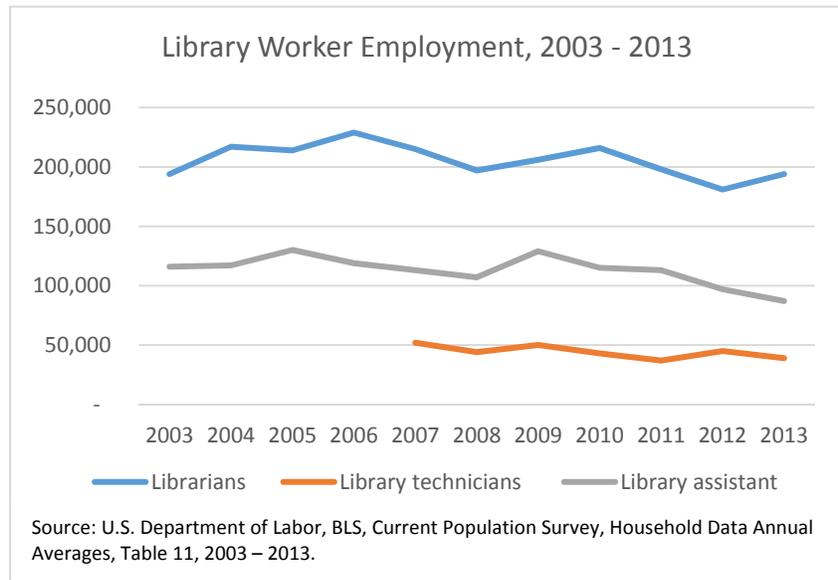
### An Overview of Library Professionals and Libraries

- In 2013, there were 194,000 librarians, 39,000 library technicians, and 87,000 library assistants.<sup>1</sup> Generally, the definition of “librarian” is a person who holds at least a master’s degree in library science or meets state teaching license standards for being a school librarian.<sup>2</sup> “Library technicians” assist librarians in the acquisition, preparation, and organization of materials “and assist users in locating the appropriate resources.”<sup>3</sup> “Library assistants” are similar to library technicians, but may have fewer responsibilities.
- From 2007 through 2013, library employment among librarians and library technicians and assistants shrank from 380,000 to 320,000.
- The median annual earnings of librarians in 2013 were \$55,690.<sup>4</sup>
- The median hourly earnings of library technicians were \$15.04 in 2013.<sup>5</sup>
- Library assistants had median hourly earnings of \$11.37.<sup>6</sup>
- In fiscal year 2011, public libraries circulated 2.44 billion materials and offered 3.8 million programs at nearly 9,000 public libraries. Children’s programs accounted for 60.5 percent of all programs offered.<sup>7</sup> In a 2013 Pew Research survey, “90 percent of the respondents said that libraries are important to the community, and 76 percent said that libraries are important to them and their families.”<sup>8</sup>
- Public libraries provided access to 261,413 computers with internet access in 2011. Library patrons used these computers over 341 million times during that fiscal year.<sup>9</sup> In 2012, 62 percent of libraries reported that they provided the only free public internet access in their community.<sup>10</sup>

### Employment of Library Professionals

- Most librarians, 57 percent, worked in school and academic libraries in 2013. Nearly 30 percent of librarians worked in public libraries. The remainder worked in special libraries, including businesses, law firms, nonprofits, and scientific organizations.<sup>11</sup>

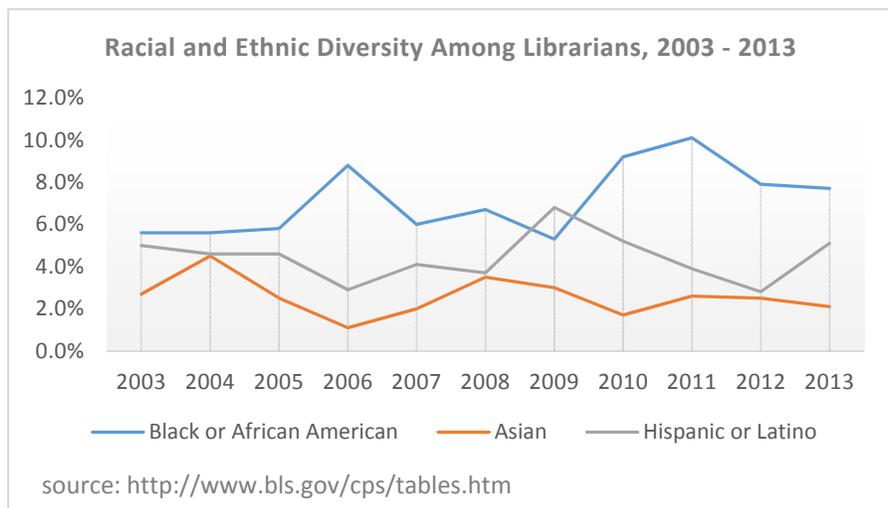
- In 2013, 20 percent of librarians worked part-time.<sup>12</sup> Public and college librarians often work weekends and evenings, as well as some holidays.<sup>13</sup> School librarians usually have the same workday and vacation schedules as classroom teachers.<sup>14</sup> Special librarians usually work normal business hours, but in fast-paced industries such as advertising or legal services, often work longer hours when needed.<sup>15</sup>



- More than half of all library technicians and nearly 60 percent library assistants are employed by local governments in public libraries; many other library technicians and assistants work in school libraries.<sup>16</sup> Among library technicians, 60 percent worked part-time and 46 percent of library assistants worked part-time in 2013.<sup>17</sup>
- Employment of school librarians has continued to drop. In the fall of 2011, public elementary and secondary schools employed nearly 48,500 full-time or equivalent librarians. This is down from peak employment of public school librarians in the fall of 2001 when nearly 54,500 were employed.<sup>18</sup> The ratio of pupils per librarian has gone from 877:1 in the fall of 2001 to 1,023:1 in the fall of 2011.<sup>19</sup>
- Employment of full-time or equivalent librarians and professional staff by degree granting institutions has increased from 32,000 employed in the 2001-02 school year to 34,000 employed in 2009-10. Employment of other paid staff in degree-granting libraries during that time decreased by about 5,000 employees.<sup>20</sup>

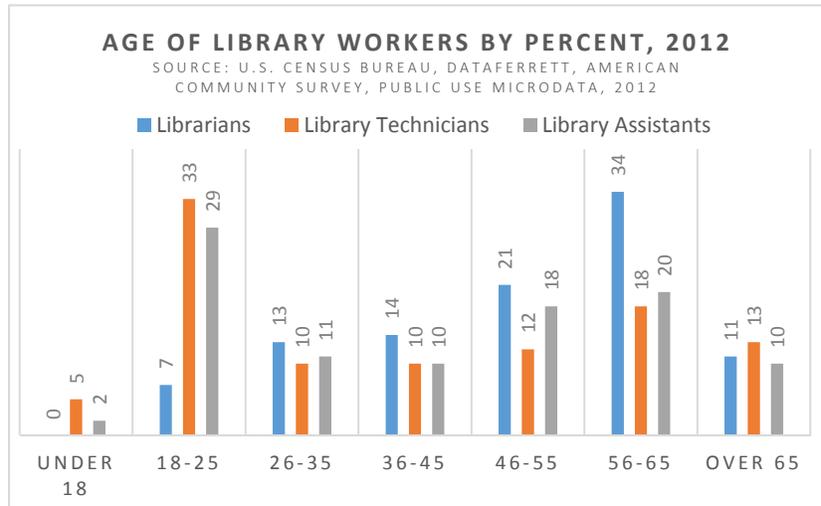
### Diversity among Library Workers

- Librarians were predominately White, about 85 percent in 2013. Lower-paid technicians and assistants have increased diversity. Among library assistants in 2013, about 72 percent were White.<sup>21</sup> According to a 2007 American Library Association report,



there is a persistent lag in racial diversity and people with disabilities among librarians.<sup>22</sup>

- In 2013, 7.7 percent of librarians were Black or African American, 5.1 percent were Hispanic or Latino, and 2.1 percent were Asian.<sup>23</sup>
- Among all workers in education, training, and library occupations, Black and African American



professionals made up 9.4 percent of the workforce, while Hispanic and Asians represented 9.6 percent and 4.5 percent of the education workforce, respectively.<sup>24</sup>

- In 2012, 45 percent of librarians, 31 percent of library technicians, and 30 percent of library assistants were over the age of 55.<sup>25</sup>

### Education Attainment

Many library workers, even lower paid library technicians and library assistants have high education attainment. In 2012, 34 percent of library technicians reported having earned at least an associate's degree; 19 percent had a bachelor's degree. Among library assistants in 2012, 41 percent reported having earned at least an associate's degree; 23 percent had earned a bachelor's degree.

Among librarians in 2012, 55 percent had earned a master's degree and four percent a professional degree or Ph.D; 23 percent reported their highest degree completed was a bachelor's degree.<sup>26</sup>

### Women and Library Work

- In 2013, women accounted for 84.1 percent of all librarians, well above the average of 73.8 percent for all education and library professionals.<sup>27</sup> Women have traditionally made up the majority of the library profession. In 1995, women were 83.9 percent of librarians; in 2003, women were 84.4 percent of the librarian workforce.
- Women represented nearly 81 percent of graduates in Masters of Library Science (MLS) programs in 2011-2012. Black women were 87 percent of Black MLS graduates and 3.8 percent of all MLS graduates, while Hispanic and Asian women accounted for 5.3 and 2.9 percent of the 2012 class, respectively.<sup>28</sup>

### The Wage Gap and Library Worker Earnings

Pay inequity remains a persistent and pervasive problem in our society. In 2012, median weekly earnings for women were 81 percent those of men.<sup>29</sup> For most women of color, the earnings gap is even larger: African American women earned just 70 cents for every dollar earned by men in 2012.<sup>30</sup> Hispanic and Latina women earned just 61 cents for every dollar men

earned.<sup>31</sup> Asian women reported the highest median salary, earning 90 cents on the dollar compared to all men.<sup>32</sup> However, they earned only 73 percent of that reported by Asian men.<sup>33</sup>

While earnings based on gender are reported every year, for librarians and library technicians, 2011 is the most current data, because there are too few men in the data sample. Despite the fact

that the library profession is predominantly female, the wage gap is actually larger than that reported in the labor force writ large:

- In 2011, women working as librarians reported a median weekly salary of \$813, compared to \$1,052 for men.<sup>34</sup>
- The disparity was even more staggering among library technicians where women earned 59 cents on the dollar compared to men. Men working as library technicians reported higher median salaries (\$1,126) than women working as librarians (\$813).<sup>35</sup>
- The overall salary for women working as librarians at a research university was 96 percent that of men in 2011-12, compared to 94.4 percent in 2003-04.<sup>36</sup>
- In a 2011-12 survey of academic librarians, even when years of experience in a particular job were equal, men still outpaced women in salary by 3.8 percent: \$73,348 for women and \$76,225 for men.<sup>37</sup> On average, women have more years of experience than men, but men's salaries are still higher in nine out of 10 experience cohorts. The wage gap for minority workers persisted as well. The average salaries of both minority men and women were below the average for all men and women in 2011.<sup>38</sup>

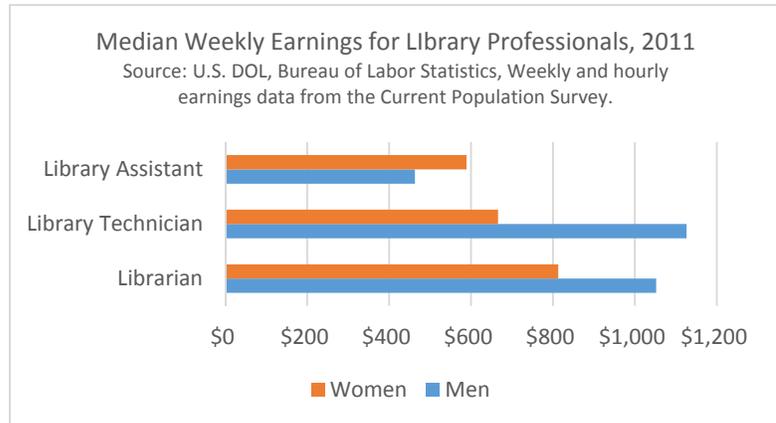
The American Library Association-Allied Professional Association published the *Advocating for Better Salaries Toolkit* in April 2014. One section of the toolkit addresses how librarians can address pay equity issues in their library.<sup>39</sup>

#### *Regional Variance in Salaries*

- Nationally, the median annual wage for librarians was \$55,690 in 2013.<sup>40</sup> Wages vary significantly from state to state. The mean annual wage in Washington, D.C. topped the list at \$74,740, followed by California, Maryland, Connecticut, and Colorado. The five lowest paying states were South Dakota, Idaho, Oklahoma, Mississippi, and Nebraska where the average annual wage among the five states was \$42,562.<sup>41</sup> These salaries are not, however, adjusted for differences in cost of living across states.
- The West and North Atlantic, which have high union membership rates, also consistently have the highest mean salaries for librarians and library workers.

#### *Institutional Variance in Salaries*

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



- Librarians employed by local governments earned a mean salary of \$51,940 in 2013. Elementary and secondary school librarians earned a mean salary of \$59,560 in 2013. Librarians in colleges, universities, and professional schools earned an average of \$62,010 in 2013.<sup>42</sup>
- Among library technicians in 2013, those employed by local governments earned an average of \$15.36 per hour, those employed in elementary and secondary schools earned an average of \$14.61 per hour, and colleges and universities paid an average of \$18.11.<sup>43</sup>
- Library assistants were the lowest paid library workers in 2013. Local governments paid an average of \$11.95 per hour, elementary and secondary schools paid \$12.76 per hour, and colleges and universities paid an average of \$14.56 to library assistants in 2013.<sup>44</sup>

### **Health Benefits**

- In 2012, 84 percent of librarians had health insurance through a current or former employer or union. Librarians employed by state governments had the highest rate of employer or union coverage, 87 percent. Librarians employed by private-for-profit companies had the lowest rate of coverage, 81.5 percent.<sup>45</sup>
- Among library technicians in 2012, just 64 percent received health insurance through a current or former employer or union. Most library technicians were employed by local governments in 2012. Just 67 percent of library technicians employed by local governments received employer or union health insurance. Library technicians employed by private, for-profit companies had the lowest rate of employer provided health insurance, 51 percent.<sup>46</sup>
- Library assistants had coverage similar to that of library technicians. Nearly 68 percent had employer-provided health insurance and 72 percent of state governments, 68 percent of local governments, and 60 percent of for-profit companies provided library assistants with health insurance.<sup>47</sup>

### **The Union Difference**

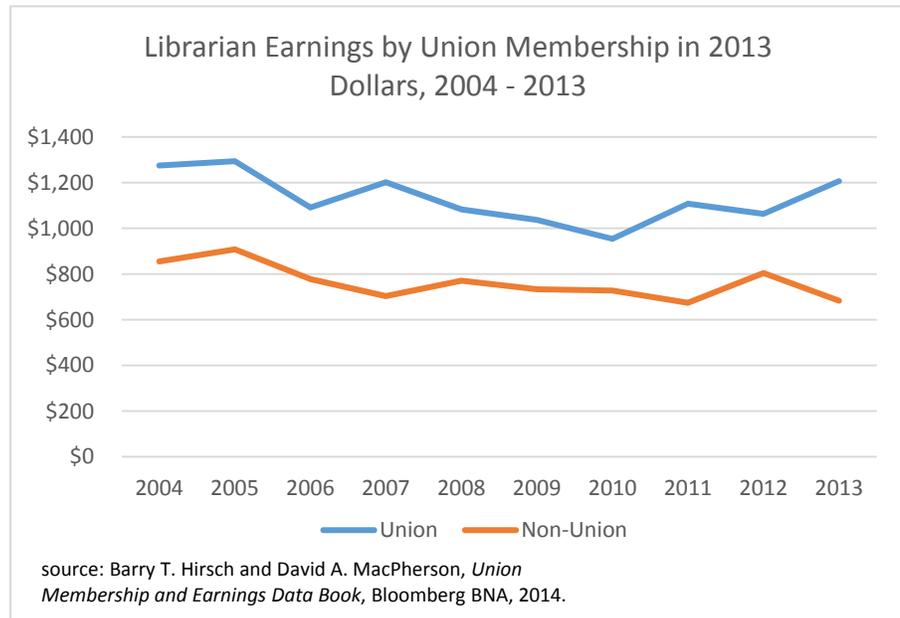
Unions are an important way for library workers to negotiate collectively for better wages, hours, and working conditions. Unions also work to elevate the library profession and secure working conditions that make it possible to provide professional service.

- In 2013, workers in education, training, and library occupations had the highest unionization rates for any professional occupation group, 35.3 percent.<sup>48</sup>
- In 2013, 25.3 percent of librarians were union members.<sup>49</sup>
- In 2013, among library technicians, 17.3 percent were union members.<sup>50</sup>
- Among library assistants, 26.7 percent were union members in 2013.<sup>51</sup>
- Nearly 21 percent of other education, training, and library workers were union members in 2013.<sup>52</sup>

#### *Wages and Benefits*

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

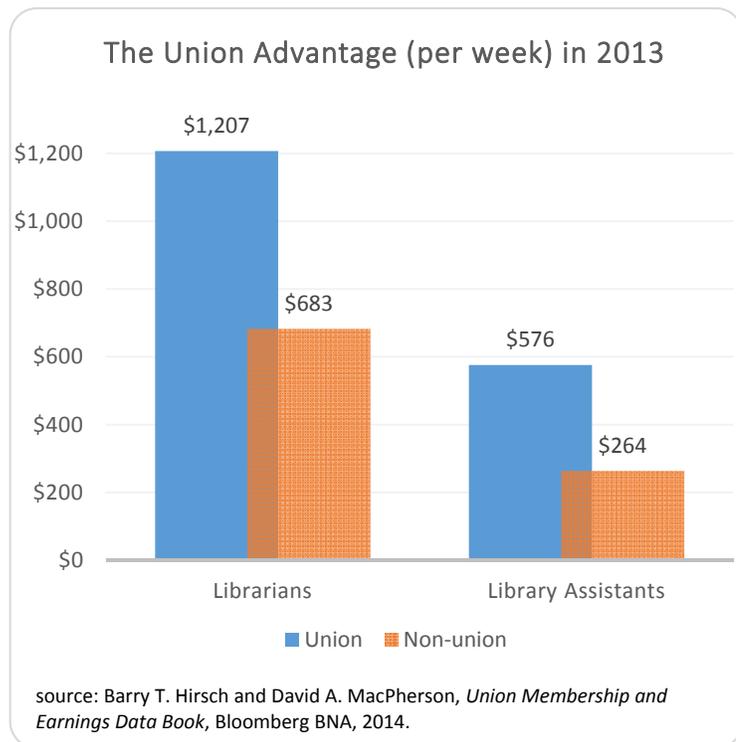
- In 2013, librarians who were union members earned 77 percent more than their non-union counterparts.<sup>53</sup> While there has been a lot of volatility in wages reported by librarians, likely due to economic factors that affect library funding, it has paid to be a union librarian.



- In 2013, union library assistants earned 118 percent more than their non-union counterparts.<sup>54</sup>
- In 2013, other union members in education, training, and library occupations earned an average of 20 percent more than their non-union counterparts.<sup>55</sup>

- Union salary data was not available for library technicians in 2013. In 2009, the last year comparative data was available, union library technicians earned 49 percent more than their non-union counterparts.<sup>56</sup>

- Union workers are more likely than their non-union counterparts to be covered by a retirement plan, health insurance, and paid sick leave. In 2013, 95 percent of union members in the civilian workforce had access to a retirement plan, compared with only 63 percent of non-union workers. Similarly, 95 percent of union members had access to health insurance, compared to 68 percent of non-union workers in 2013. In 2013, 84 percent of union members in the civilian workforce had access to paid sick leave compared to 62 percent of non-union workers.<sup>57</sup>



### *Recent Union Success Stories*

Librarians represented by the American Federation of Teachers in the University of California system negotiated fair pay increases and a dedicated professional development fund for the represented librarians. The professional development fund sets an annual minimum of nearly \$280,000 for the 345 represented librarians. The contract is effective from 2013 to 2018.<sup>58</sup>

In 2013, the Prince George's County, Maryland executive's proposal to cut \$820,000 from the Prince George's County library system turned into a \$2.5 million add back thanks to members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1994. Union members advocated for their library and their patrons at county council meetings as well as during one-on-one meetings with council members. Local 1994 members educated council members about the devastating impact budget cuts have on libraries and communities. The budget increase was used to increase library hours on Sundays, increase staff wages, and hire new staff.<sup>59</sup>

For more information on professional and technical workers, check the DPE website:

[www.dpeaflcio.org](http://www.dpeaflcio.org).

*The Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE) comprises 21 AFL-CIO unions representing over four million people working in professional and technical occupations. DPE-affiliated unions represent: teachers, college professors, and school administrators; library workers; nurses, doctors, and other health care professionals; engineers, scientists, and IT workers; journalists and writers, broadcast technicians and communications specialists; performing and visual artists; professional athletes; professional firefighters; psychologists, social workers, and many others. DPE was chartered by the AFL-CIO in 1977 in recognition of the rapidly growing professional and technical occupations.*

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity*, Table 11. 2014.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, "Librarians." 2012-13 Edition. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos068.htm>

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- <sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Occupational Outlook Handbook, Library Technicians and Library Assistants.” 2012-13 Edition. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos316.htm>
- <sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, “Librarians,” Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2013.
- <sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, “Library Technicians,” Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2013.
- <sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, “Library Assistants,” Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2013.
- <sup>7</sup> Institute for Museum and Library Science, Public Library Services and Resources, Tables 8 – 17A from Public Libraries in the United States Survey: Fiscal Year 2011.
- <sup>8</sup> The American Library Association, “The State of America’s Libraries: A Report by the American Library Association.” 2014. *American Libraries*
- <sup>9</sup> Institute for Museum and Library Science, Public Library Services and Resources, Tables 8 – 17A from Public Libraries in the United States Survey: Fiscal Year 2011.
- <sup>10</sup> The American Library Association, “The State of America’s Libraries: A Report by the American Library Association.” 2013. *American Libraries*. <http://www.ala.org/news/sites/ala.org.news/files/content/2013-State-of-Americas-Libraries-Report.pdf>
- <sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2013, “Librarians.”
- <sup>12</sup> Hirsch, Barry T. and David A. MacPherson, *Union Membership and Earnings Data Book*, Bloomberg BNA, 2014.
- <sup>13</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, 2014-15 Edition, “Librarians.”
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>17</sup> Hirsch, Barry T., op. cit.
- <sup>18</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, 2013 Tables and Figures, Table 213.10.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, 2012 Tables and Figures, Table 481.
- <sup>21</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Household Data Annual Averages, Table 11, 2013.
- <sup>22</sup> American Library Association, Office of Research and Statistics, *Diversity Counts*, January 2007.
- <sup>23</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, 2013, Table 11, “Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.” Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf>.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, DataFerrett, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample 2012.
- <sup>26</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, DataFerrett, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample 2012.
- <sup>27</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Annual Averages, Table 11, “Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity”, 2011. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf>.
- <sup>28</sup> Master's degrees conferred to females by degree-granting institutions, by race/ethnicity and field of study: 2010-11 and 2011-12 *National Center for Education Statistics*. Tables 323.50 and 323.30 available at [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/2013menu\\_tables.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/2013menu_tables.asp)
- <sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Table 37, “Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics.” 2012. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat37.pdf>.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>36</sup> Association of Research Libraries “Annual Salary Survey (2011-12),” Table 17
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>42</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wages, “Librarians,” May 2013.
- <sup>43</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wages, “Library Technicians,” May 2013.
- <sup>44</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wages, “Library Assistants,” May 2013.
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- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>49</sup> Hirsch, Barry T., op. cit.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>59</sup> Metropolitan Workers Council, AFL-CIO. “Union Members Applaud Move By PG County Council to Boost Budget by \$2.5 Million for Libraries”, *Union City*, June 2, 2013. Available at: <http://www.dclabor.org/ht/display/ArticleDetails/i/108518>