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## Salaries &amp; Pay Equity

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## High Library Administration Salaries Reported in NYT

On November 19, 2006, *New York Times* readers learned that several New York Public Library administrators earn mid- and high-six-figure salaries. Serge F. Kovalski's article "[New York Library Officials' Pay? Shhh](#)" points out that the compensation for chief executive might raise eyebrows, especially since the library system has had financial constraints for the past few years. According to recent tax filings, the salary of the library's president, Paul LeClerc, increased more than \$579,000 from \$221,000 to over \$800,000. Susan Kent, who as director and chief executive of the branch libraries manages a budget that exceeds \$115 million, had a compensation package of \$302,484.

Below is data taken from 2005 annual reports and Public Library Data Service Statistical Report about the 20 largest public libraries by population served. It lists Population, Library, Library Web site, Director's Name, Director's Salary and Operating Expenditures.

### 2005 Directors' Salary and Library Expenditures for Largest Public Libraries by Population Served

Population of legal service area	Library Name (State)	Director's Name	Salary	Operating Expenditures
3,912,200	<a href="#">Los Angeles Public Library (CA)</a>	Fontayne Holmes	\$200,508	\$111,755,970
3,595,300	<a href="#">Los Angeles Public Library, County of (CA)</a>	Margaret Donnellan Todd	\$138,881	\$88,027,505
3,313,573	<a href="#">New York Public Library, The Branch Librs. (NY)</a>	Susan Kent	N/A	\$115,650,467
2,896,016	<a href="#">Chicago Public Library (IL)</a>	Marsha Grove	\$134,424	\$89,298,048
2,465,326	<a href="#">Brooklyn Public Library (NY)</a>	Ginnie Cooper (now at DCPL)	\$203,600	\$80,342,387
2,229,379	<a href="#">Queens Borough Public Library (NY)</a>	Thomas W. Galante	N/A	\$75,305,469
2,055,300	<a href="#">Houston Public Library (TX)</a>	Toni Lambert	\$110,568	\$33,602,700
1,970,525	<a href="#">Miami-Dade Public Library System (FL)</a>	Raymond Santiago	\$171,900	\$49,203,535
1,760,000	<a href="#">Broward County Libraries Division (FL)</a>	Robert Cannon	\$138,464	\$55,387,733
1,553,300	<a href="#">San Antonio Public Library (TX)</a>	Ramiro Salazar	\$125,000	\$20,697,866
1,517,550	<a href="#">Philadelphia, The Free Library of (PA)</a>	Elliot L. Shelkrot	\$117,700	\$63,268,244
1,417,052	<a href="#">Phoenix Public Library (AZ)</a>	Toni Garvey	\$135,512	\$28,998,036
1,336,449	<a href="#">Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (PA)</a>	Herb Elish	N/A	\$21,004,089
1,320,521	<a href="#">Harris County Public Library (TX)</a>	Catherine S. Park	\$103,043	\$20,770,147
1,294,000	<a href="#">San Diego Public Library (CA)</a>	Anna Tatar	\$128,995	\$37,322,837
1,269,800	<a href="#">Sacramento Public Library (CA)</a>	Anne Marie Gold	\$125,964	\$25,323,162
1,257,608	<a href="#">Hawaii State Public Library System (HI)</a>	Jo Ann Schindler	\$110,000	\$26,920,333
1,210,311	<a href="#">Las Vegas-Clark County Library District (NV)</a>	Daniel L. Walters	\$155,646	\$40,077,939
1,175,200	<a href="#">San Bernadino County Library (CA)</a>	Ed Kieczkowski	\$173,000	\$11,330,000
1,147,740	<a href="#">King County Library System (WA)</a>	William H. Ptacek	\$141,148	\$71,414,453
1,079,587	<a href="#">Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library (FL)</a>	Joe Stines	\$121,659	\$26,917,163
1,048,319	<a href="#">Providence Public Library (RI)</a>	Dale Thompson	\$133,000	\$9,842,685
1,043,600	<a href="#">Fairfax County Public Library (VA)</a>	Edwin S. Clay	\$133,341	\$26,739,568
1,023,850	<a href="#">San Diego County Library (CA)</a>	Jose Aponte	\$125,000	\$21,558,215

Corrections, updates and comments are **welcome!**

## A Few Easy Steps to Unionizing Libraries

By A.C. Hawley

Libraries are an important component of the American intellectual landscape. Without librarians and libraries, professors could not write, students could not learn, and Americans could not keep themselves informed. As essential as libraries are to the spread of information and the creation of an informed populace, librarians and the support staff that help to maintain them are paid very poorly.

Public and academic librarians are paid on average \$56,259.<sup>1</sup> For state-employed librarians, the pay rate is even less at \$41,592.<sup>2</sup> Library support staff salaries are even lower.<sup>3</sup> In all cases, the rate of pay is not keeping pace with the rate of inflation. Additionally, librarians are underpaid in comparison to other professionals such as electrical engineers due to librarianship being an overwhelmingly female profession.<sup>4</sup> Due to the low pay of the profession, librarians are unable to comfortably settle in larger American cities such as Boston, New York City, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. where housing costs are very high.

Along with issues with pay, librarians also suffer from the continual deterioration of their working conditions and their benefits. Because they may have no representation with the state or an a campus, librarians and library staff can lose many of their workplace rights and many benefits such as losses of sick days and a loss of year cost of living adjustments, or COLAs. Additionally, librarians, like many workers, have had their health benefits eroded, being forced to pay more money for fewer benefits.<sup>5</sup>

As can be sensed, librarians suffer from poor pay conditions, eroding working conditions, and loss of benefits. This is not appropriate treatment for any type of worker, especially not for the highly trained workers that are library staff. A possible way to curb such erosions is through the formation of unions within the library.

Unions can give workers the ability to earn higher and more equitable salaries and receive COLAs from year to year. In addition, organizing a library's staff into a union may help to improve the working conditions in the library. As well, unionizing can give librarians and library paraprofessionals benefits such as health and dental insurance, things that may not be offered normally to the paraprofessionals of the library, particularly if they are part-time employees. In addition to the tangible benefits, the library staff will gain a voice to make grievances against what they see as unfair treatment and allow them to become a more important player in the decision-making process. While a union can provide such benefits to its members, it is important to know the steps required to begin a union. This article primarily focuses on public libraries but many of the steps may be appropriate for academic libraries.

The first and simplest detail is to know your state law on collective bargaining. While unions are recognized in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, there are only 25 states and the District of Columbia that have given their state and local employees the right to engage in collective bargaining, which gives the union the right to negotiate with the government to set its wage level, benefits package, and workplace conditions.<sup>6</sup> If a public library union exists in a state without a collective bargaining law for public employees, the ramifications are that the union's calls for pay raises, COLAs, workplace improvements, and worker benefits do not have to be heard by the government, allowing the government to make changes to the library worker's wages, benefits, and working conditions with little to no concern for what the library workers want. In such a situation, while it can offer health benefits and help to give the library a stronger, unified voice, the union would be lacking a large amount of its strength. It is important to note that this does not apply in private collegiate situations.<sup>7</sup> In these institutions, the union would be bargaining directly with the institution with no governmental component.

If the library is committed to forming a union after considering the first step, the second step is to determine who is eligible to join the union. Typically the only people in the library who are not eligible to join are the managers/supervisors of the library including the director and assistant director. All paraprofessionals and librarians are usually eligible for the union. Along with the aforementioned benefits of union creation of better working conditions and benefits, the union can become an effective way to bridge the gap that exists between the paraprofessionals and the librarians within libraries, though there are situations where librarians and paraprofessionals are members of two different unions. Additionally, the formation of a library staff union can give back power to the staff from the supervisors, as it can show the ability of the staff to work with one another and control themselves and be efficient without the intervention of supervisors.<sup>8</sup>

After finding workers who are interested in joining a union, the third issue is determining how the union will function within the library. Will membership in the union be a condition of working in the library or will it be optional? Even if the state has given public employee unions the right to bargain collectively, 22 states have "right-to-work" laws in place. Right-to-work laws make it illegal for employers to force workers to join unions or, if not interested in joining, paying the equivalent of union dues as a condition of their job. So, if the library would like to unionize and make joining the union or paying union dues a condition of employment in the library in a right-to-work state, the union will be in violation of the law. To see which states have right-to-work laws, visit the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation's website ([www.nrtw.org/rtws.htm](http://www.nrtw.org/rtws.htm)).<sup>9</sup> There is a color-coded map with forced unions and right-to-work states separated. The website also has links to the statutes in the right-to-work state where the law is in place.

With all of the basic components now in place, the last and most important step is actually finding a labor union to join. There are many unions that are recognized for serving librarians and library paraprofessional needs specifically.

Three such unions are the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), which represents public workers; Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which also represents public library workers; and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), which represents teachers and librarians/Media Specialists throughout the American educational system. There are many different choices for unions and

the workers who choose to organize will have to make a decision about what union they would like to join, considering what they hope to gain from organizing. As well, the workers will have to choose a union that is convenient for them and will serve their area well. These are a couple of things to consider when selecting a union to represent the library.

The ALA-Allied Professional Association asked libraries about union membership in the *ALA-APA Salary Survey—Non-MLS: Public and Academic*, which revealed the following: of the 258 libraries that responded to this question about whether librarians, support staff and others were members of unions, 88 were identifiable as AFL-CIO (through AFSCME or affiliates), 22 cited SEIU and 10 the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

This is, by no means, a fully comprehensive look at how to organize and start a library union. To get a better sense of what is required to get a union past these steps and off of the ground, visit the website started by the organizers at the Indianapolis- Marion County Public Library where they began the process of unionizing in early 2006 at [www.indylibraryunion.org](http://www.indylibraryunion.org). Librarian Kathleen de la Peña McCook has started a blog called *The Union Librarian* (<http://unionlibrarian.blogspot.com>) that posts news on library unionization and resources for library staff that has decided that it wants to start a union. I hope that this piece has given a solid idea of what will be required to get a union started. Happy organizing!

## Acknowledgements

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## References

1. Grady, Jenifer and Denise Davis. *ALA-APA Salary Survey: Librarian— Public and Academic*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2006.
2. 2006 AFT Public Employees Compensation Survey. [www.aft.org/salary/2006/download/PECompSurvey06.pdf](http://www.aft.org/salary/2006/download/PECompSurvey06.pdf) (accessed September 21, 2006). It is important to note that the ALA survey does not include school librarians while the AFT survey does, explaining the discrepancy.
3. Grady, Jenifer and Denise Davis. *ALA-APA Salary Survey: Non-MLS—Public and Academic*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2006.
4. Professionals in electrical engineering, a primarily male profession, earn \$70,200 per year, considerably more than professionals in librarianship. Source: Fact Sheet 2006: *Library Workers: Facts and Figures*, Department of Professional Employees, AFL-CIO
5. These were, in fact, benefits lost by the Indianapolis- Marion County Public Library. More was lost than what has been mentioned. You can learn more by visiting <http://www.indylibraryunion.org>.
6. Preciphs, Joi. "Three Republican Governors Hit Unions," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 11, 2005. [http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB112372150421610433-R7EqE5zDSjj7c6baEltXFIw\\_u88\\_20060810.html?mod=public\\_home\\_us](http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB112372150421610433-R7EqE5zDSjj7c6baEltXFIw_u88_20060810.html?mod=public_home_us) (accessed July 28, 2006).
7. Public universities and colleges must know their state's collective bargaining law as they are responsible to the state.
8. Johnson, Cameron A. "Library Unions: Politics, Power, and the Care of the Library Worker," Cameron A. Johnson, *Alki: The Washington Library Association Journal* 17 (December 2001), 16–19.
9. In fairness to both sides of this issue, it must be disclosed that the Notional Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation is a component of a lobbying organization for the abolition of unions. The information presented on the website referenced is objective therefore I have no qualms about sourcing it as it is a utility to organizing librarians. If you read further into the site, it is strongly encouraged that you read the opposite side of the argument about what the Foundation is doing. Such information can be found at [www.americanrightsatwork.org/antiunionnetwork/index.cfm](http://www.americanrightsatwork.org/antiunionnetwork/index.cfm).

**Have you been part of a union formation? What have you learned? Tell us your story.**

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