

Special Library Salaries in Mountain Region Lag Behind Nation

ED3/110.10/No. 243

August 1, 2006

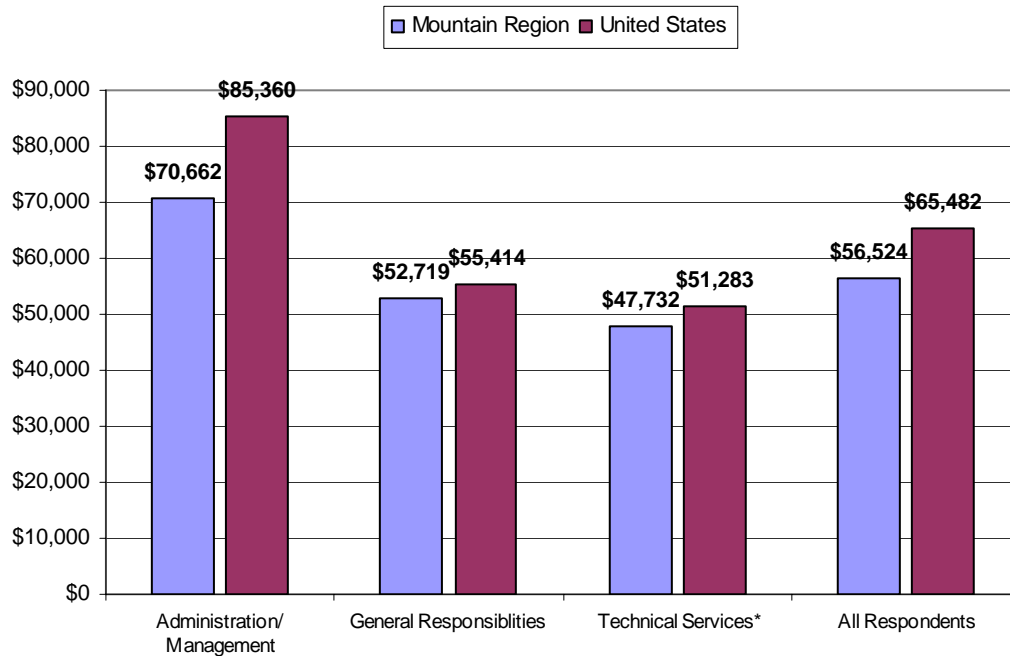
By Holly Cole

Money is always a hot topic in any profession and librarianship is no exception. Salary information is always interesting to note because of the wide ranges in pay—from different types of libraries to different types of positions. Since 1967, the Special Libraries Association (SLA) has conducted a salary and workplace survey that focuses on that sector of librarianship in both the United States and Canada. In 2005, there were a little over 3,000 completed surveys (a 35% response rate). Over half of the respondents were located in the southern states and, of the respondents from the United States, about 3% were from the Mountain area.



In 2005, the overall average salary for the “Mountain” region—which includes Colorado, Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming—was \$56,524. The gap between the Mountain region and the United States as a whole was largest, by far, for administration/management positions. Average Mountain region salaries consistently lag behind the national average for all position types (See chart below).

Average Salary by Job Description/Responsibilities



* “Technical Services” not only refers to acquisitions and cataloging staff, but to circulation and inter library loan staff as well.

On a more positive note, according to the SLA survey, since 1985, librarians' salaries have continuously stayed above the cost-of-living increases in the United States and Canada.

Salaries in the special library sector are higher than those in public libraries. The average salary for special librarians in Colorado's major metropolitan areas—including Denver, Boulder, and Colorado Springs—was \$59,796, which is \$2,500 to \$3,000 more than the average salary of public librarians in Colorado. Despite their higher salaries, special librarians, like other types of librarians, are still not on par with other occupations that require equal or less education (See table below).

AVERAGE SALARIES FOR SELECTED COLORADO OCCUPATIONS	
Occupation Title	Average Annual Salary
Business and Financial Operations	\$60,005
Computer and Information Scientists Research	\$91,844
Computer and Information Systems Managers	\$104,234
Computer Programmers	\$73,184
Database Administrators	\$68,031
Public Relations Managers	\$85,366
Training and Development Managers	\$77,414
Special Librarians	\$59,796

Along with position type, gender is a predictor of salary. In the SLA survey, men average about \$4,000 more than their female counterparts. Perhaps because most special librarians have a master's degree, the impact of educational attainment on salaries is minimal. However, for those with doctorates, the average salary jumps almost \$20,000 from those with a master's degree.

Special library salaries are relatively high within the library world, and if trends continue, they will increase. Many factors influence a librarian's salary including region, gender and position type. Also, special librarians are not paid as much as others in similar positions.

Colorado Department of Labor & Employment (2006). Colorado Occupational Wages: May 2005 Survey. Available at: <http://www.coworkforce.com/lmi/wages/AHWbyOccGrp4b.asp>.

SLA Annual Salary Survey & Workplace Study 2005 (2005). Special Library Association.

ALA Survey of Librarian Salaries 2005 (2005). American Library Association.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Author: Holly Cole, University of Denver Research Fellow
 Library Research Service • 201 East Colfax Avenue, Suite 309 • Denver, Colorado 80203-1799
 Phone 303.866.6900 • E-mail: lrs@lrs.org • Web site: www.LRS.org
 Layout and production by Debra Gettings • Phone: 303.866.6906 • E-mail: gettings_d@cde.state.co.us

