

Earnings of Library Staff in Mountain West Low Compared to Workers in Similar Jobs

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According to the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System librarians maintain library collections, provide patron assistance for locating materials and reference information, and organize collections. Library clerks on the other hand, compile records, shelve materials, and issue/receive materials. Librarians and library clerks perform work similar to that of professional and clerical staff in other fields such as education, public administration, computer assistance, and accounting. However, library personnel receive lower hourly wages compared to many of these occupations.

This report examines the hourly wages of librarians and library clerks in the Mountain West division which includes Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana.

Occupations in the first comparison were chosen because of the similarity of their work to that of librarians (see Table 1). The SOC groups together librarians at all levels of responsibility and experience as well as those in all types of libraries. This report uses information which is based on the average salary of all librarian types.

Table 1. Average Hourly Earnings for Librarians and Selected Other Professional and Technical Occupations, Mountain West, 2004.

Occupation	Hourly Earnings	Margin of Error	90% Confidence Interval	
			Low	High
Personnel/Labor Relations Manager	\$44.02	6.6%	\$39.24	\$48.80
College or University Teacher	\$41.50	3.3%	\$39.25	\$43.75
Education Administrator	\$41.30	2.4%	\$39.67	\$42.93
Public Relations Specialist	\$38.36	25.4%	\$22.33	\$54.39
Public Administrator	\$30.54	5.4%	\$27.83	\$33.25
Secondary School Teacher	\$30.51	4.8%	\$28.10	\$32.92
Computer Systems Analyst	\$29.47	10.0%	\$24.62	\$34.32
Elementary School Teacher	\$29.37	5.9%	\$26.52	\$32.22
Computer Programmer	\$29.36	26.0%	\$16.80	\$41.92
Librarian	\$27.65	29.2%	\$14.37	\$40.93
Vocational/Educational Counselor	\$27.19	6.3%	\$24.37	\$30.01
Sales, Business Services	\$23.73	40.5%	\$7.92	\$39.54
Pre/Kindergarten Teacher	\$20.24	22.3%	\$12.82	\$27.66

Note: The low and high boundaries of this 90% confidence interval were calculated using the relative standard error for each occupation. See sidebar for more information.

The 2004 National Compensation Survey for the Occupational Wages of the Mountain Census Division indicates that librarians made an average hourly wage of \$27.65. Compared to the selected other professional and technical occupations, librarians earned the fourth lowest average hourly wage of the group. But if the confidence interval (see grey box for more information) is taken into account, librarians would rank third from the bottom in the low salary range.





Library clerks are more similar to positions in administrative support occupations than librarians. The positions chosen for comparison perform work similar to library clerks in other fields.

Table 2. Average Hourly Earnings for Library Clerks and Selected Other Administrative Support Occupations, Mountain West, 2004.

Occupation	Hourly Earnings	Margin of Error	90% Confidence Interval	
			Low	High
Computer Operator	\$18.57	6%	\$16.65	\$20.49
Meter Reader	\$15.51	9%	\$13.24	\$17.78
Dispatcher	\$15.31	16%	\$11.18	\$19.44
Eligibility Clerk, Social Welfare	\$14.24	11%	\$11.76	\$16.72
Mail Clerk	\$14.08	11%	\$11.58	\$16.58
Bookkeeper	\$14.00	4%	\$13.08	\$14.92
Order Clerk	\$13.82	20%	\$9.21	\$18.43
Traffic, Shipping & Receiving Clerk	\$13.73	4%	\$12.83	\$14.63
Payroll and Timekeeping Clerk	\$13.23	8%	\$11.51	\$14.95
Library Clerk	\$13.12	9%	\$11.20	\$15.04
Stock or Inventory Clerk	\$12.37	8%	\$10.82	\$13.92
Records Clerk	\$12.31	5%	\$11.40	\$13.22
Bill or Account Collector	\$11.92	5%	\$10.94	\$12.90
Interviewer	\$11.56	10%	\$9.68	\$13.44
Material Recording, Scheduling & Distribution Clerk	\$10.94	21%	\$7.11	\$14.77

Note: The low and high boundaries of this 90% confidence interval were calculated using the relative standard error for each occupation. See sidebar for more information.

The 2004 average hourly earnings for library clerks was \$13.12, the sixth lowest of the group (see Table 2). When the confidence interval is considered, library clerks would rank seventh from the bottom of the fifteen positions in the low salary range. In the high salary range library clerks would rank seventh from the top.

Overall, these data indicate that salaries of library workers in the Mountain West are not keeping pace with those of comparable workers in the region.

Sources:

U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2004). National Compensation Survey: Occupational Wages in Mountain West. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ocs/sp/ncbl0736.pdf>.

U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2001). Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/soc/home.htm>.

Data Reliability

The data in these tables are estimates from a scientifically selected probability sample...The sample used for this survey is one of a number of possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the sample design. Estimates derived from the different samples would differ from each other.

A measure of the variation among these differing estimates is called the standard error or sampling error. It indicates the precision with which an estimate from a particular sample approximates the average of estimates from all possible samples. The relative standard error (RSE) is the standard error divided by the estimate. Tables in this bulletin provide RSE data for indicated series. The relative standard error can be used to calculate a *confidence interval* around a sample estimate...If all possible samples were selected to estimate the population value, the interval from each sample would include the true population value approximately 90 percent of the time.

From *Technical Note*, National Compensation Survey: Occupational Wages in the Mountain West Census Division, June 2004, <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ocs/sp/ncbl0736.pdf>

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