

Is \$40,000 the Magic Number?

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With such a wide range of salaries being offered to new Master's in Library Science (MLS) graduates, it may be difficult to know just how much one should expect to be paid. It now appears that \$40,000 may be the magic number.

According to a February 2007 press release by the American Library Association (ALA), \$40,000 is the wage most agreed upon as the minimum starting salary that should be offered to professional librarians.¹ In their annual salary survey, ALA defines a professional librarian as an individual with a master's degree from an ALA accredited program.²

The declaration passed by ALA at the 2007 Midwinter meeting, "endorses a nonbinding minimum salary of \$40,000 for professional librarians." It also states: "over three-quarters of respondent library workers support the establishment of salary minimums for librarians, with the commonest salary figure cited being \$40,000."³ The full resolution can be found on the ALA-APA website at: <http://www.ala-apa.org/about/20062007APACD15.pdf>

How realistic is this number? The most recent data available from the 2005 *Colorado Public Library Report*, which reports salaries as of January 2006, illustrates how Colorado stands⁴.

Based on this report, out of the 115 public libraries in Colorado, 65 reported employing ALA-MLS accredited librarians. The remaining 50 libraries reported no librarians with ALA-MLS credentials. (See Chart 1.) Of these 65 libraries with ALA-MLS librarians, only 33 reported salaries for full-time beginning and non-supervisory librarian positions (see definitions in sidebar). The following information is based on the salaries reported by these 33 libraries.

More than half (17) of the 33 libraries, report paying a *minimum* salary of less than \$40,000 to full-time beginning and non-supervisory librarians. Many of these salaries are significantly less than \$40,000.

Colorado Public Library Annual Report Job Definitions

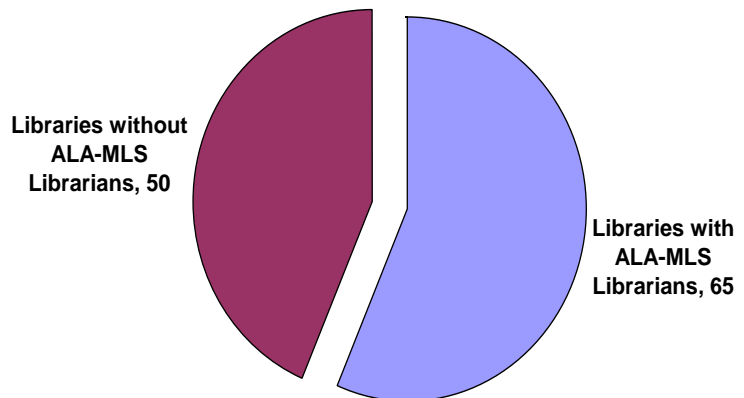
Beginning Librarians:

Staff with LIS master's degrees but no professional experience after receiving the degree.

Non-supervisory Librarians:

Staff with LIS master's degrees who were not reported earlier [i.e., managers, supervisors, associate directors, and directors] and who do not supervise.

Chart 1
Colorado Public Libraries by ALA-MLS
Librarians Staffing Status, 2006

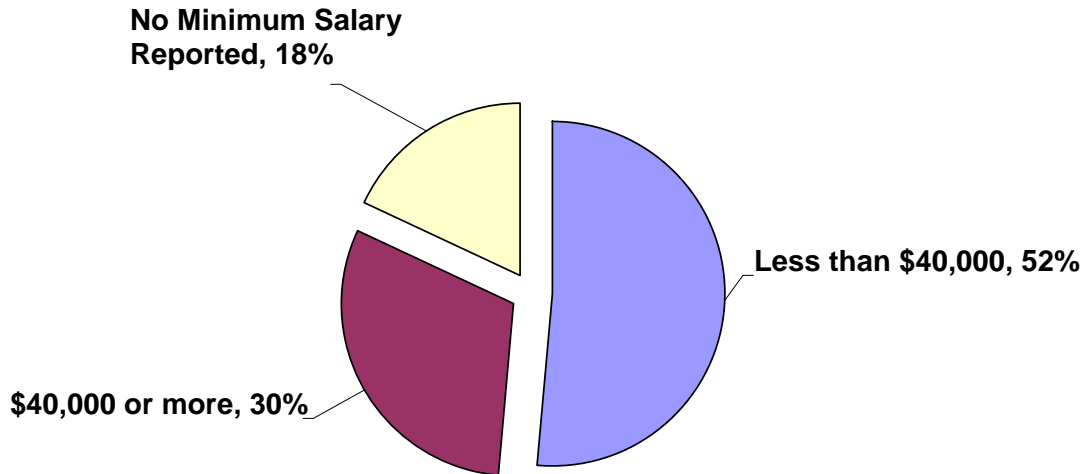


As reported in the Colorado Public Library Annual Report 2005 to the Library Research Service, Colorado State Library, January-March 2006.



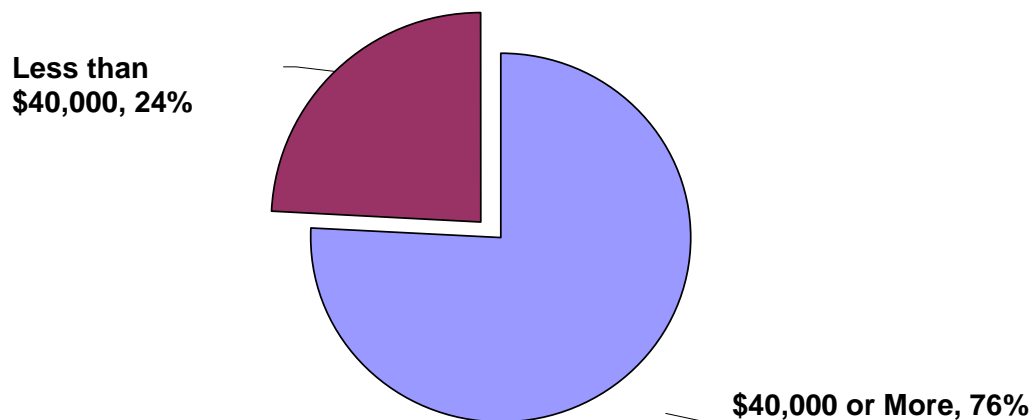
Less than one-third (10) of these libraries, report paying a *minimum* salary of \$40,000 or more to full-time beginning and non-supervisory librarians. Six libraries did not report minimum salaries. (See Chart 2.)

Chart 2
Minimum Salaries Paid by Colorado Public Libraries to Beginning or Non-Supervisory Librarians



More than three-fourths (25) of the 33 libraries, report paying a *maximum* salary of \$40,000 or more to beginning and non-supervisory librarians. While about one-fourth (8) of these libraries, report paying a *maximum* salary of less than \$40,000. (See Chart 3)

Chart 3
Maximum Salaries Paid by Colorado Public Libraries in 2006 to Beginning or Non-Supervisory Librarians



Perhaps the ALA resolution will be an incentive for libraries to increase the minimum salaries of librarians. At this time, however, more than half of the public libraries in Colorado do not pay the proposed minimum salary of \$40,000 to full-time beginning or non-supervisory librarians.



For detailed information regarding individual libraries reported salaries of librarians in Colorado go to:

<http://www.lrs.org/interactive/index.asp>

Sources:

- ¹American Library Association – Allied Professional Association. *ALA-APA Council Passes Resolution to Endorse a Nonbinding Minimum Salary for Professional Librarians*. (February 13, 2007). Retrieved on March 7, 2007 from <http://www.ala-apa.org/news/news.html#councilmw07>.
- ²Grady, J. & Davis, D. (2006). *ALA Survey of Librarian Salaries*. American Library Association – Allied Professional Association.
- ³McGrorty, Michael. (2007). American Library Association Allied Professional Association. *Endorsement of a Nonbinding Minimum Salary for Professional Librarians*. Retrieved on March 7, 2007 from <http://www.ala-apa.org/about/20062007APACD15.pdf>
- ⁴*Colorado Public Library Annual Report, 2005*. (2005). Compiled by Library Research Service. Retrieved on March 7, 2007 from <http://www.LRS.org>.

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