

# CHALLENGED MATERIALS IN COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARIES, 2003

ED3/110.10/No. 214

214 February 11, 2005

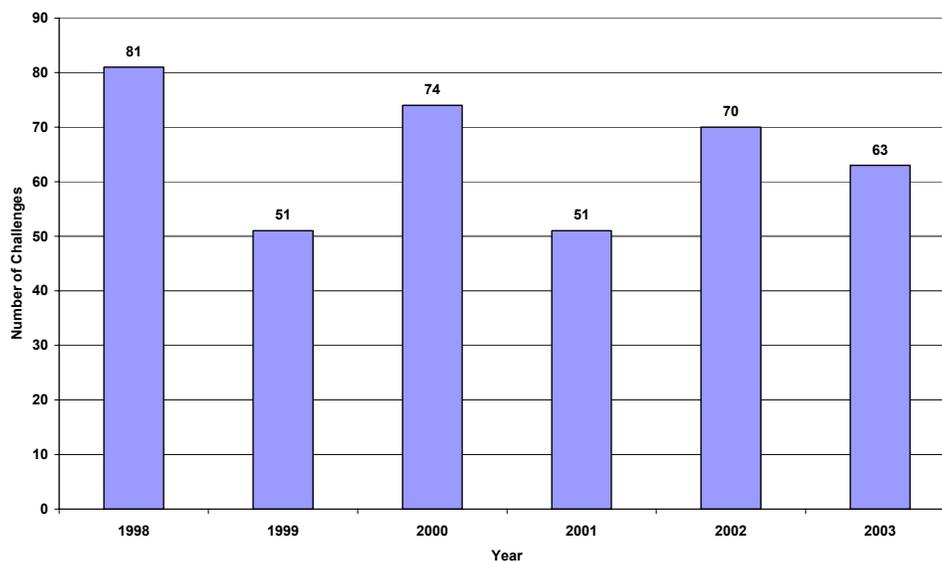
The American Library Association defines a challenge as: “an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group...Challenges do not simply involve a person expressing a point of view, rather they are an attempt to remove material from the curriculum or library, thereby restricting the access of others.”

Each year, the **Library Research Service** collects data on formally challenged materials as a part of the Colorado Public Library Annual Survey. In 2003, 20 Colorado libraries reported 63 challenges to books, materials, events, and exhibits. The number of challenges represents a reduction from the 70 reported in 2002, although the number of libraries reporting these challenges increased from 16 to 20. The number of materials, events, and exhibits challenges reported in 2003 was slightly below the average of 65 occurrences for the preceding five-year period (see Chart 1).

## Highlights

- *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture* by Michael A. Bellesiles was the most challenged title in Colorado’s public libraries during 2003.
- Three reasons for challenges accounted for nearly half (45%) of reported objections: offensive language, unsuited to age group, and sexually explicit.
- Young adult materials represented a larger proportion of challenges in 2003 than in previous years.

Chart 1: Number of Challenges Reported by Colorado Public Libraries 1998-2003



Challenges to Internet content or access policies were also noted as a part of the 2003 survey. Six Colorado public libraries reported a total of 12 challenges to these services, a reduction of 59% from the 2002 total of 29 Internet-related challenges.

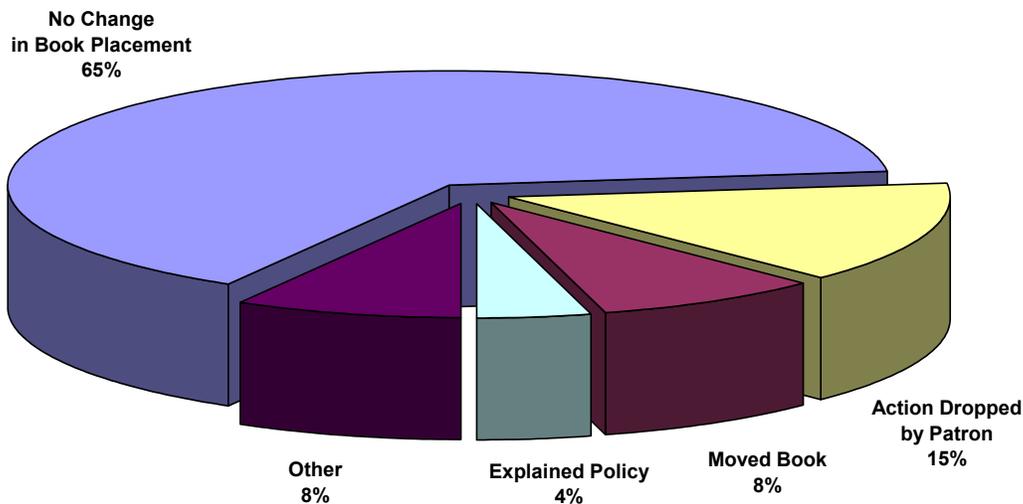


A follow-up survey was distributed to libraries that had reported challenges. The survey requested more detailed information about the nature of each challenge, including format, title, author, date of publication/incidence, and reasons reported for each challenge, as well as any actions that may have been taken by the library in response. Of the 21 libraries that had reported challenges of any kind, 15 responded to the follow-up survey, providing detailed information on 53 of the 75 total challenges related to materials, events, exhibits, and Internet access.

## Actions

Actions taken by Colorado public libraries in response to formal challenges are summarized in Chart 2. Of the 48 non-Internet challenges reported in the follow-up survey, 31 (65%) resulted in no change being made by staff regarding the location, availability, description, or classification of an item. In seven cases (14% of the total), the action was dropped by the individual who filed the challenge before the library took official action on the matter in question. Four challenges (8% of the total) resulted in an item being moved to an alternate location in the library. One challenge resulted in the re-classification of an item, while one other challenge prompted a change in the description of the item in the library's online catalog. In an additional challenge case, a title was added to a library's collection in order to provide an opposing viewpoint. There were two reported incidents (4%) in which library staff members resolved challenge situations by explaining institutional policies to patrons.

**Chart 2: Actions Taken by Colorado Public Libraries  
in Response to Formal Challenges  
2003**



Of the five Internet related challenges listed in the follow-up survey, three resulted in filtering software being installed on at least one library computer.

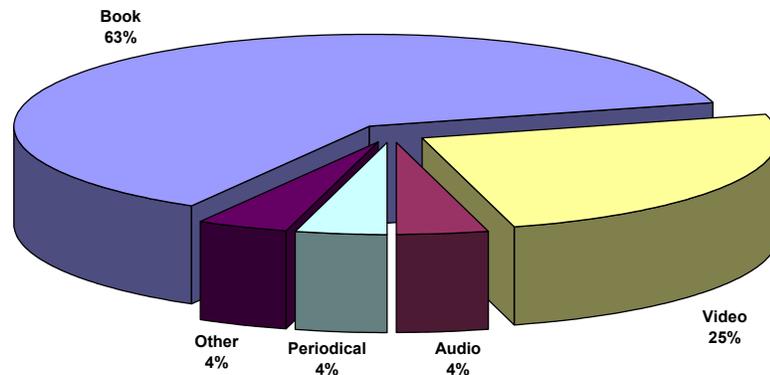


Overall, formal challenges prompted changes to availability, location, classification, description, or access policy in 9 of the 53 cases (17%) detailed in the follow-up survey, while 44 of 53 challenges (83%) resulted in no action taken by library staff that specifically impacted the item or service in question.

### Formats

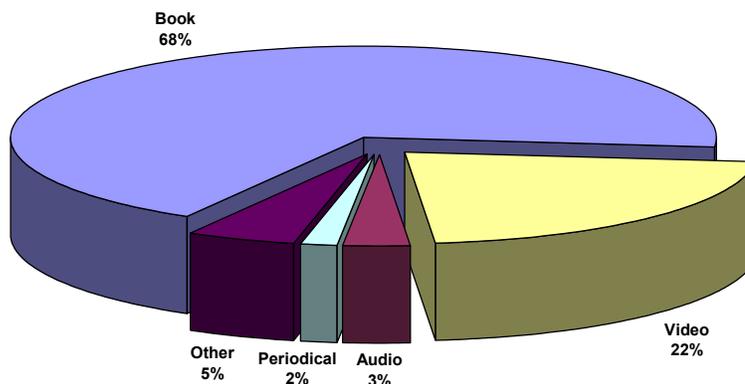
Books continued to be the most challenged format in Colorado public libraries in 2003. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of formal non-Internet related challenges were directed at books, while a quarter of challenges (25%) concerned video titles. Challenges involving periodicals, audio titles, and other/miscellaneous (e.g. unspecified) formats accounted for the remaining eighth (12.5%) of occurrences (see Chart 3).

Chart 3: Format of Non-Internet Materials Challenges in Colorado Public Libraries 2003



The percentages of formal challenges by format for 2003 did not reflect radical changes in the historical distribution of challenge episodes over the preceding five years. There were,

Chart 4: Format of Non-Internet Materials Challenged in Colorado Public Libraries 1998-2002



however, some interesting statistical shifts. While books continued to be the most frequently challenged format, the percentage of challenges directed at books in 2003 (63%) was lower than the preceding five-year average of 68 percent. The majority of this 5 percent decrease from the historical average can be attributed to an increase in the proportion of challenges that were

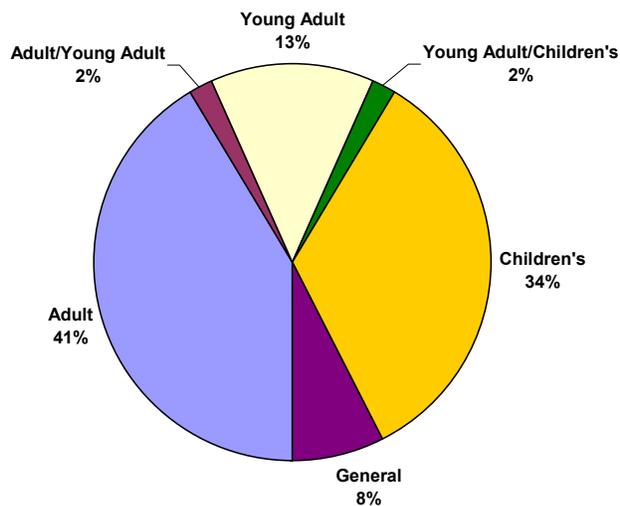


related to video titles, which jumped from an historical average of 22 percent (1998-2002) to 25 percent in 2003. Slight increases in percentages of challenges concerning audio and magazine titles account for the rest of the difference (see Chart 4).

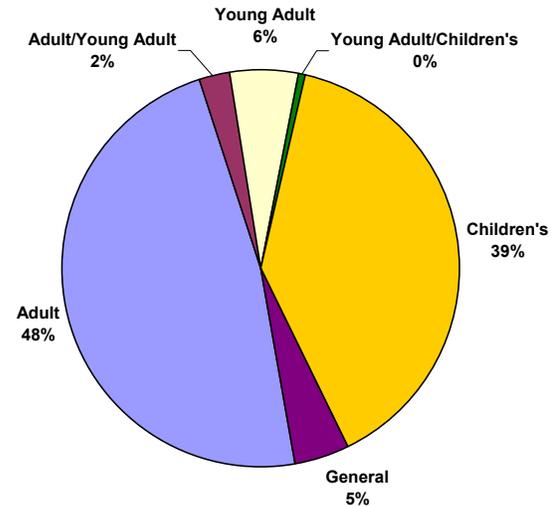
### Audience/Age Group

Forty-nine percent of challenges in Colorado public libraries concerned adult or general audience materials. Children's materials accounted the next highest proportion at 34 percent, while young adult titles made up 13 percent of the total (see Chart 5). These proportions are comparable with figures from the preceding five-year period, although young adult titles contributed a larger share of reported challenges in 2003 (13%) than during the previous five years (an average of 6%) (see Chart 6).

**Chart 5: Challenges to Materials in Colorado Public Libraries by Audience/Age Group 2003**



**Chart 6: Challenges to Materials in Colorado Public Libraries by Audience/Age Group 1998-2002**



### Reasons for Challenges

When reporting details related to challenges in 2003, libraries often cited multiple reasons for a single challenge. Three reasons for challenges accounted for nearly half (45%) of the reported objections: offensive language, unsuited to age group, and sexually explicit. Reported frequencies of reasons for challenges are listed in Table 1.

It should be noted that the "other" category included all responses that were not listed on the follow-up survey, including issues relating to writing quality and accuracy of materials. The category also includes instances in which no specific reason was given for a challenge.



**Table 1:  
Frequencies of Reasons for  
Challenges Reported by Colorado  
Public Libraries, 2003**

Reason	Frequency
Offensive Language	13
Unsuited to Age Group	12
Sexually Explicit	11
Other	9
Nudity	8
Violence	8
Homosexuality	5
Insensitivity	3
Occult/Satanism	2
Political Viewpoint	2
Sex Education	2
Anti-Family	1
Drugs	1
Racism	1
Religious Viewpoint	1
Sexism	1

## Challenged Titles

The most challenged title of the year was *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture* by Michael A. Bellesiles, which was formally challenged five times during 2003. Bellesiles' book, first published in 2000, was also challenged once during 2002, making it the most challenged book in Colorado public libraries during the last five years (1999 through 2003) with six total challenges. The most frequently cited reason for challenges to this title was "political viewpoint" (three occurrences).

Over the past five years, only two other titles have been challenged more than three times in Colorado public libraries. Richard Cohen's book *Alfie's Home* has been challenged four times, with the most common complaint being "unsuitable to age group" (three occurrences). *It's Perfectly Normal: A Book About Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health* by Robie H. Harris was also challenged four times during this time span, with the objection "sexually explicit" being cited in each formal challenge.

Only one additional title was challenged on multiple occasions during 2003. The video for James Foley's 1992 film version of *Glengarry Glen Ross* (based on the play by David Mamet) was challenged twice. On each occasion, "offensive language" was cited as the reason for the challenge.

## Other Intellectual Challenge Resources

For more information on challenge policies and challenged titles, see the following resources:

Colorado Association of Libraries: Intellectual Freedom Handbook  
<http://www.cal-webs.org/ifhandbook.html>

American Library Association: Intellectual Freedom/Censorship  
<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=if>

The 100 Most Frequently Challenged Books of 1990-200 (ALA):  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/bbwlinks/100mostfrequently.htm>

Support for Dealing with or Reporting Challenges to Library Materials (ALA):  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/challengesupport/challengesupport.htm>

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**COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARY PARAPROFESSIONALS EXPERIENCED, WELL-EDUCATED  
GOOD CANDIDATES FOR FUTURE LEADERSHIP, BUT THEY NEED INCENTIVES**

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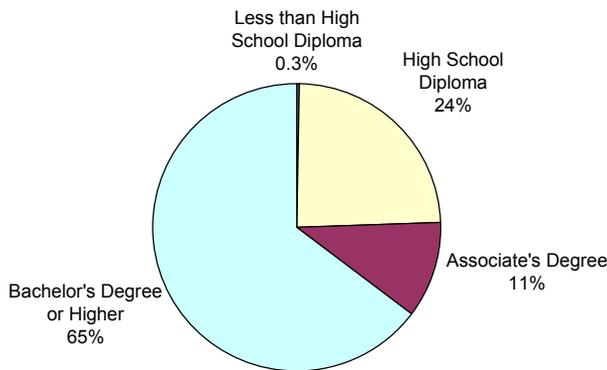
February 11, 2005

Colorado's public libraries boast a wealth of experienced, educated paraprofessionals, according to responses to *Retirement, Retention, and Recruitment: The Future of Librarianship in Colorado*, a study recently released by the Library Research Service. Many of them could be in line for credentialed librarian leadership positions in the near future.

For the purpose of consistency in the study, public library paraprofessionals were defined as individuals without an MLIS or library media endorsement who are working in a library.

Surprisingly high levels of education and experience were reported by those who are neither planning on retiring in the next five years nor currently enrolled in an MLIS program.

**Chart 1: Educational Level of Paraprofessionals**

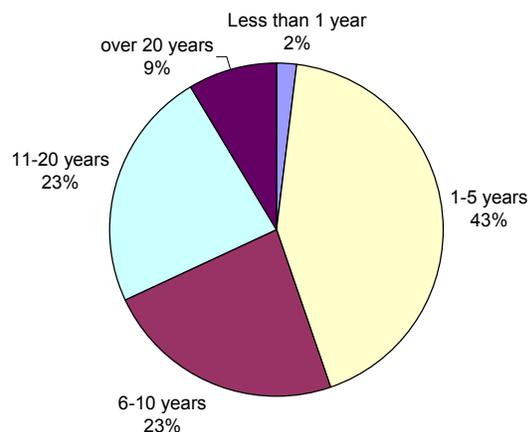


In public libraries throughout the state, paraprofessionals prove to be very well-educated. Nearly all of those who responded to the survey (99.7%) have at least a high school education.

Additionally, nearly two-thirds of them (65%) have at least a bachelor's degree, and three-quarters (76%) have an associate's degree or higher (see chart 1).

Equally important as this high educational level is the amount of practical library experience these paraprofessionals bring to the public they serve. More than half of survey respondents (55%) have five or more years of library experience and nearly a third (32%) have over ten years of experience (see chart 2).

**Chart 2: Years of Experience for Library Paraprofessionals**



As our public libraries prepare for a potential dearth of credentialed librarians due to retirements, these experienced, educated paraprofessionals are a likely

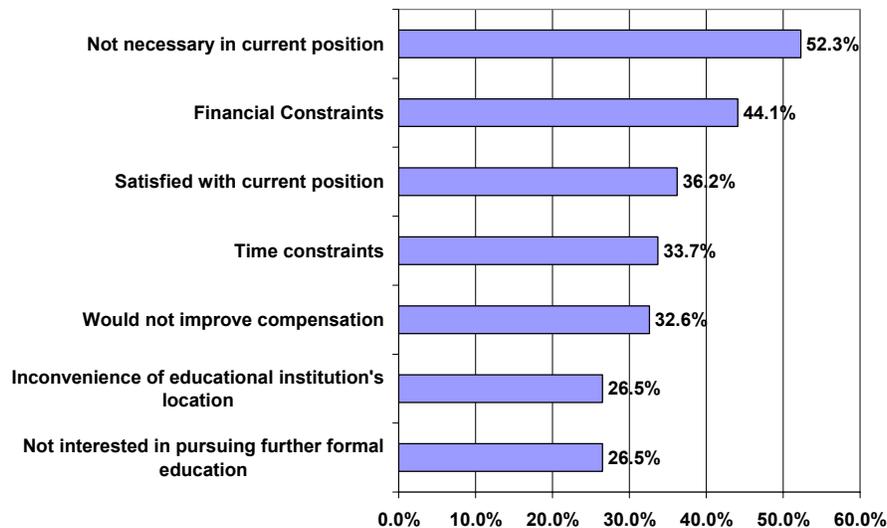


direction in which to look for replacements. However, only about a quarter (26%) of those responding to the survey said that they were even considering an MLIS.

The dominant factors cited for not pursuing an MLIS suggested the perception that a further degree was not worth the effort. More than half of those choosing not to pursue further education (52.3%) stated that it was not necessary in their current position and 32.6 percent did not believe the degree would improve their financial compensation. In addition, financial and time constraints also serve to deter paraprofessionals from getting a degree (see Chart 3).

Paraprofessionals play an important role in Colorado's public libraries, and we are lucky to have such a capable group to perform in this capacity. In addition, they seem an obvious pool from which to draw tomorrow's leaders. However, if we are going to lure this experienced, well-educated group into leadership positions, we need to make it worth their while.

**Chart 3: Reasons for not pursuing an MLS**



Source

*Retirement, Retention, and Recruitment: The Future of Librarianship in Colorado.* Available online at: <http://www.lrs.org>.

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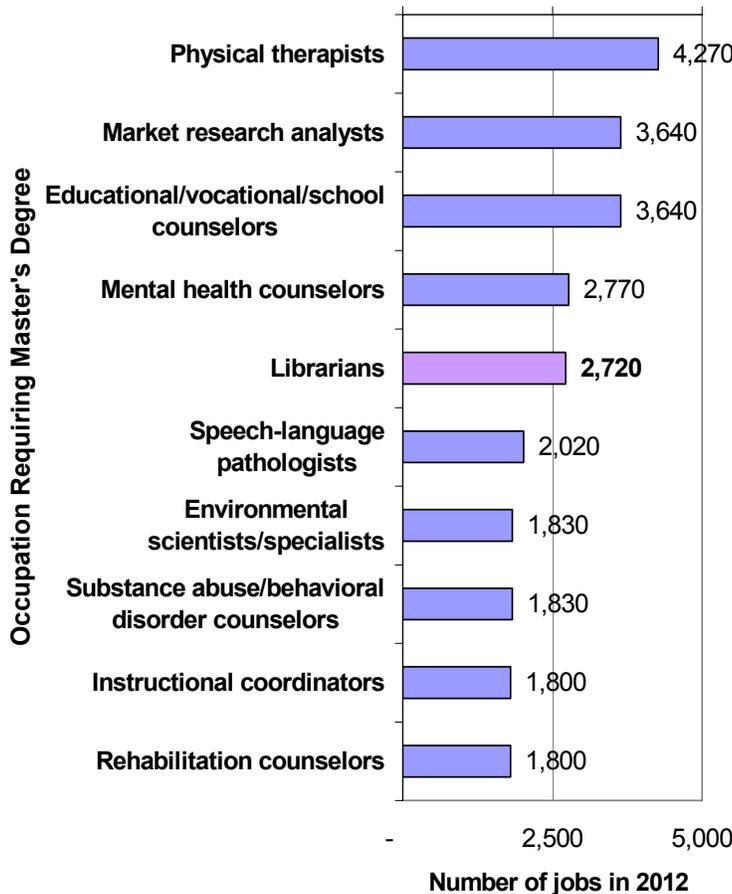


# LIBRARIAN AMONG TOP COLORADO JOBS REQUIRING MASTER'S DEGREE THROUGH 2012

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March 11, 2005

**Chart 1. Projected Employment by Occupation Requiring a Master's Degree: Colorado, 2012**



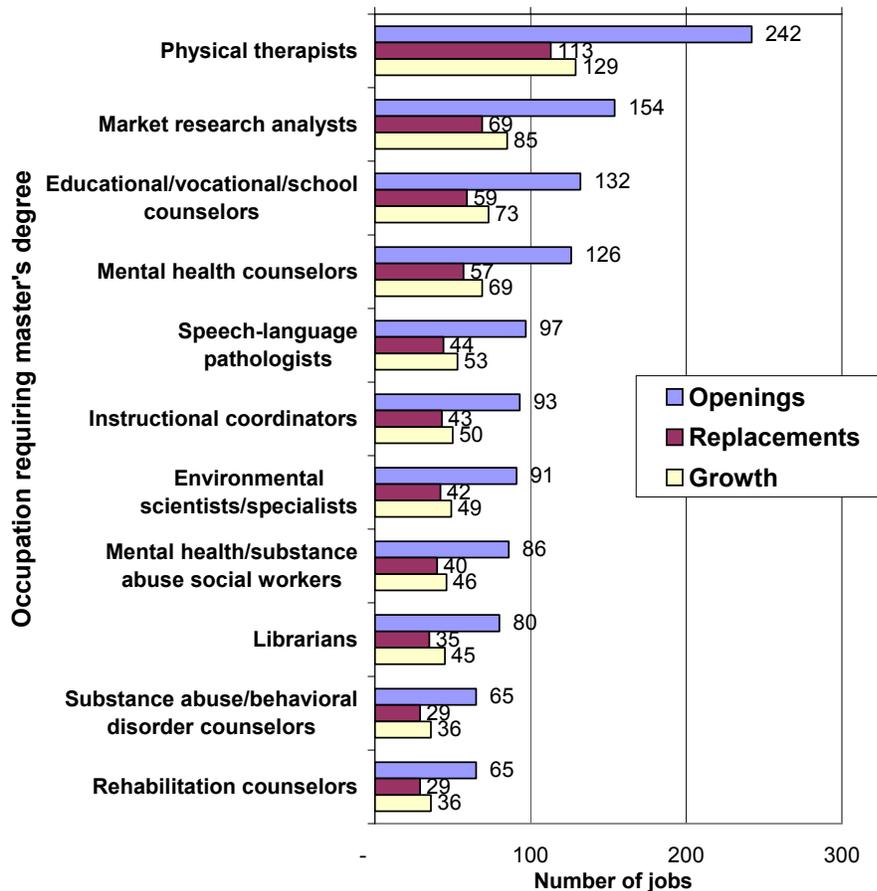
According to the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE), librarian is among the state's top jobs requiring a master's degree through 2012.

Employing a projected 2,720 Coloradans in 2012, librarian ranks fifth on projected employment behind physical therapist, market research analyst, educational counselor, and mental health counselor.\* Rounding out the top 10 master's-degreed jobs will be speech pathologist, environmental

scientist, substance abuse counselor, instructional coordinator, and rehabilitation counselor. (See Chart 1.)



**Chart 2. Average Annual Openings, Replacements and Growth for Occupations Requiring Master's Degree: Colorado, 2002-12**



CDLE also projects the average annual number of openings for each master's-degree occupation, including replacements for vacated existing positions and growth due to the creation of new positions. Librarian ranks ninth for average annual openings through 2012. It is anticipated that the annual average of 80 openings will include 35 replacements and 45 new positions. (See Chart 2.)

As for projected employment, the top jobs based on average annual openings will be physical therapist, market research analyst, educational counselor, and mental health counselor.



These projections indicate that librarianship as a profession is not only here to stay, but that the demand for librarians is likely to continue to grow. This is encouraging news for the field generally and for current and future job-seekers in particular. It is also an upbeat challenge to the pessimism about future job opportunities expressed by some respondents to the survey reported in Retirement, Retention, and Recruitment (the 3 Rs): the Future of Librarianship in Colorado. (Available at:

[http://www.irs.org/documents/fastfacts/216\\_Top\\_Colorado\\_Jobs.pdf](http://www.irs.org/documents/fastfacts/216_Top_Colorado_Jobs.pdf)



\* Technical Note: CDLE's figures cannot be parsed by library sector. Thus, it is not possible to anticipate the extent to which the trends reflected in these projections apply to academic, public, school, and special libraries separately. The fact that it is assumed these positions require a master's degree might call into question whether these projections include school librarians; however, the majority of the state's school librarians have master's degrees. In addition, CDLE's estimate of 2002 librarian employment—2,270—seems reasonable, knowing that academic, public, and school libraries employ approximately 1,400 librarians known to have master's degrees and about 1,850 librarians, including public and school librarians known not to have master's degrees. CDLE's classification of librarian as a position requiring a master's degree is based on the federal Department of Labor's Standard Occupational Classification, which notes that librarian positions usually require a master's degree. This being the case, the 1,850 figure is probably the more appropriate one to use, leaving about 420 jobs to be accounted for by the state's special libraries.

Source: Colorado Labor Market Information, **Occupational Employment Outlook 2002-2012** (Colorado Department of Labor and Employment). Available at:  
<http://www.coworkforce.com/lmi/oeo/Masters%20Degree.htm>.

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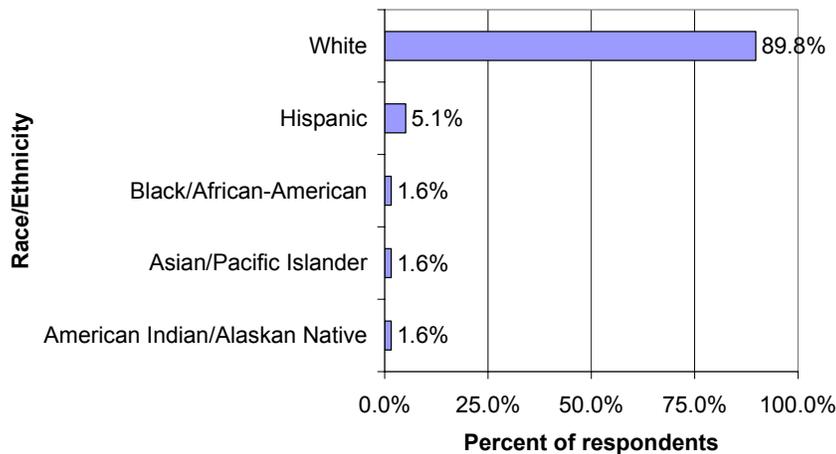


# DIVERSITY OF COLORADO LIBRARY WORKERS: PROFESSIONAL SELF-PERCEPTIONS AND PORTENTS FOR THE FUTURE

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March 11, 2005

**Chart 1. Respondents to the 3Rs Survey by Race/Ethnicity, Fall 2003**

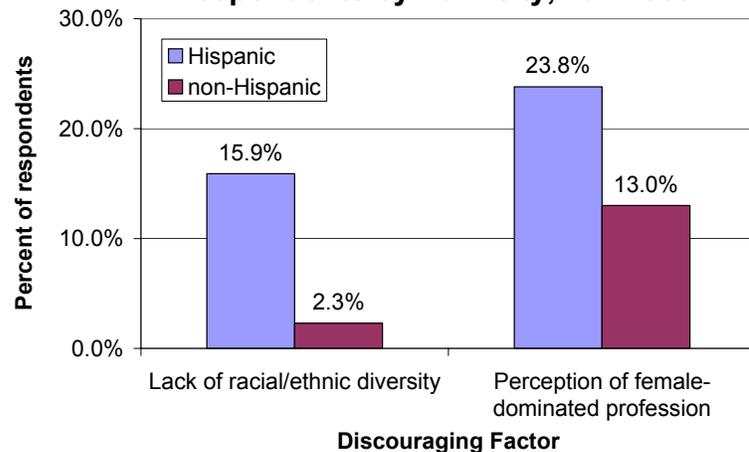


Retirement, Retention, and Recruitment: The Future of Librarianship in Colorado—a recent LRS study—was based on a survey of over 1,200 library workers statewide in Fall 2003. While the sample for this study could not be obtained randomly, their answers to questions about

how library workers themselves perceive librarianship as a profession are intriguing. The ethnicity and gender demographics of these respondents also offer some hope that, in the near future, Colorado librarians will become more diverse, like the patrons they will serve.

Predictably, nine out of ten respondents to the library worker survey were White (89.8%) and female (90.3%). Each of the other three major racial groups—American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Black/African-American—represented less than two percent of the respondents. Hispanic respondents (who could be of any race) constituted over five percent (5.1%) of the total survey response. (See Chart 1.) Suffice it to say, that there is little diversity in gender or ethnicity among Colorado library workers.

**Chart 2. Factors Perceived to Discourage Pursuing Librarianship as a Profession by 3Rs Respondents by Ethnicity, Fall 2003**

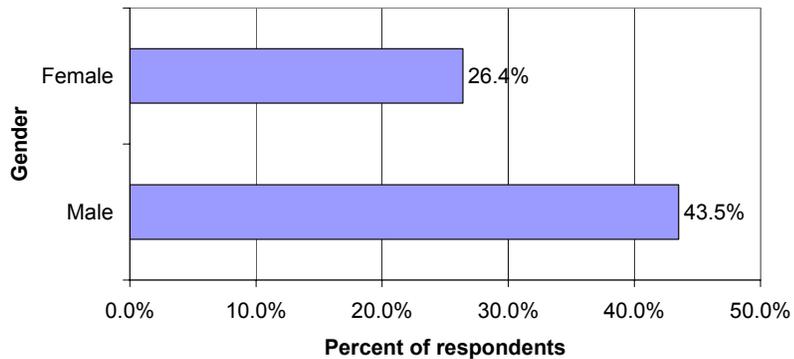


Why is this? One of the questions asked in the survey helps to answer this question. Respondents were asked to identify factors that they perceive to be discouraging of the pursuit



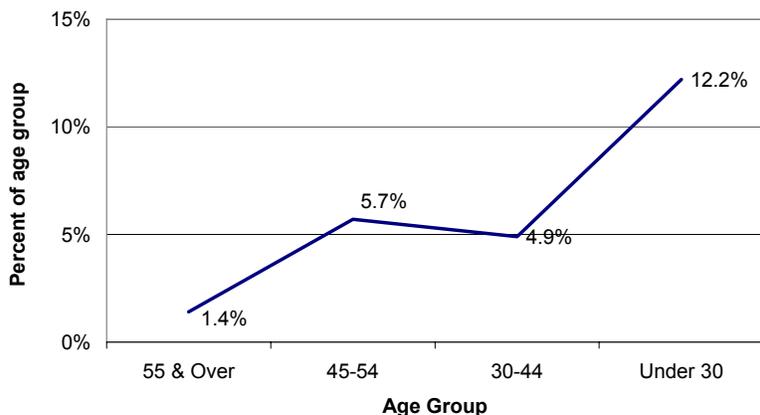
of librarianship as a profession. Three of those factors elicited different responses based on ethnicity and gender. Hispanics were almost seven times as likely as non-Hispanics to identify the lack of racial and ethnic diversity among library workers as a discouraging factor. In addition, Hispanics were almost twice as likely to perceive that librarianship being a female-dominated profession discourages choosing it as a career. (See Chart 2.)

**Chart 3. Perception that Low Prestige Discourages Pursuit of Librarianship as a Profession by 3Rs Respondents by Gender, Fall 2003**



Interestingly, only one factor discouraging librarianship as a career choice was more likely to be identified by one gender than the other. Men were more than half again as likely to identify the low prestige of librarians as a problem. (See Chart 3.)

**Chart 4. Hispanic 3Rs Respondents by Age Group, Fall 2003**

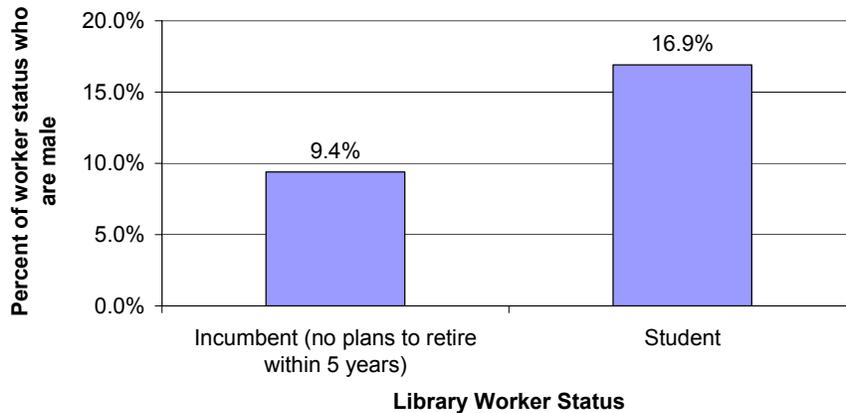


What progress may be being made in raising the prestige of librarians is debatable, but further evidence from this study indicates that librarianship in Colorado is becoming more diverse in terms of ethnicity and gender. The percentage of respondents who identified themselves as Hispanics increased dramatically by age group. Only 1.4% of respondents age 55 and over were Hispanic, compared with 12.2% of those under 30. (See Chart 4.) These

findings suggest that there is at least the potential for a dramatic increase in the percentage of Hispanics in library jobs in the state. From other data, however, we know that one of the major obstacles to Hispanics becoming librarians is obtaining a master's degree. For this potential to be realized, obstacles to Hispanics pursuing graduate studies will have to be removed.



**Chart 5. Incumbent Library Workers & LIS Students Who Responded to 3Rs Survey & Who Are Male, Fall 2003**



Likewise, when the gender distribution of incumbent library workers (i.e., those without plans to retire within the next five years) is compared to that for library and information science graduate students, there are signs that Colorado librarianship may be on its way to becoming a less “pink-collar” profession. The percentage of LIS

students who are male (almost 17%) is nearly twice the percentage for incumbent library workers (about 9%). (See Chart 5.)

There is no denying that, at present, there is little diversity among Colorado library workers. But, if the respondents to the 3Rs survey represent library workers generally, there are hopeful signs that, particularly as new library workers replace those who are retiring, greater diversity is a likely consequence.



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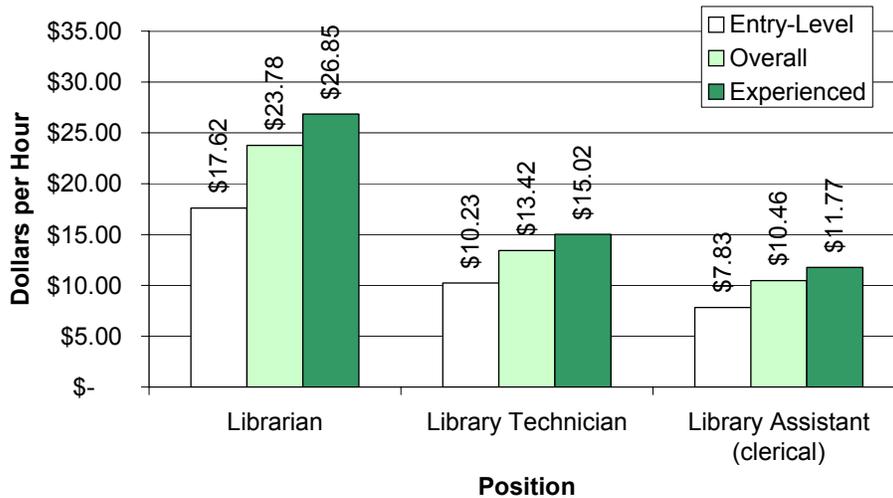


# HOURLY WAGES OF COLORADO LIBRARY WORKERS

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**Chart 1. Average Hourly Wages for Colorado Library Workers, 2003**



During the Spring and early Summer of 2004, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) conducted a Job Vacancy Survey in the Denver metropolitan area. The report of that survey's results includes hourly wage statistics for all jobs, including three types of library workers:

librarians, library technicians, and library assistants.

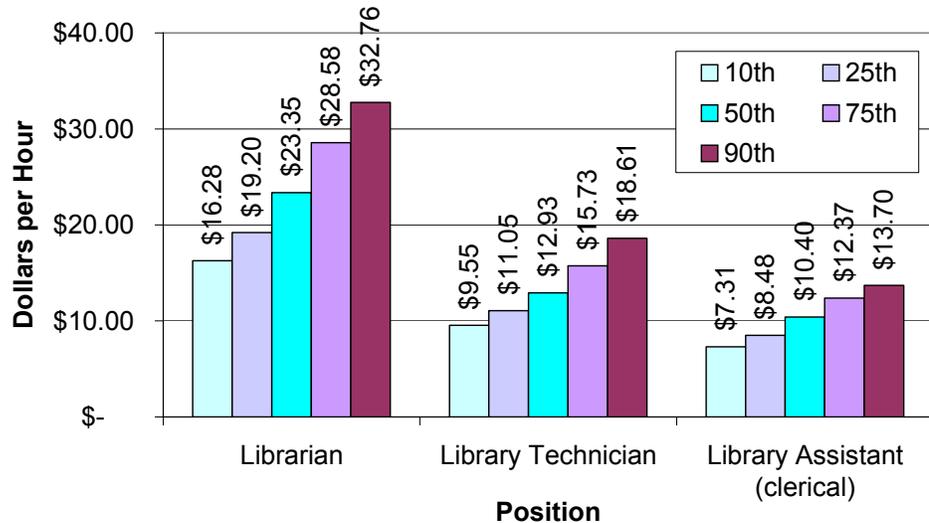
According to those statistics, hourly wages average \$23.78 for librarians, \$13.42 for library technicians, and \$10.46 for library assistants. These wage rates translate into full-time salaries (based on a 40 hour week and a 52 week year) of approximately \$49,500, \$27,900, and \$21,800, respectively. (See Chart 1.)

Average wages are also reported for both entry-level and experienced workers. For all three types of library workers, the increases in pay from entry-level to experienced workers are approximately 50 percent. In other words, an experienced worker generally earns half again as much as an entry-level worker.



In addition to average wage statistics, the report provides five wage percentiles for each position. The 90<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> percentiles provide some idea of the earnings of the top and bottom ten percent. The 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentiles indicate the range of the middle half of wages. And, the median wage separates the better and worse paid halves of library workers in each position.

**Chart 2. Hourly Wage Percentiles for Colorado Library Workers, 2003**



Median hourly wages for Colorado library workers are \$23.25 for librarians, \$12.93 for library technicians, and \$10.40 for library assistants.

The Library Research Service collects and reports data on public library salaries annually.\* Likewise, the Colorado Department of Education collects and reports data on school library salaries annually.\*\* The CDLE data are, however, the only available data that provide an overview of library worker salaries across library types, particularly including academic and special libraries.

Source:

**Denver Metro Region Job Vacancy Survey, Spring 2004** (Denver: Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Summer 2004). Available at: <http://www.coworkforce.com/lmi/WRA/DMJVS9.PDF>.

Related Sources:

\* Colorado public library salaries: **Colorado Public Library Statistics** (Denver: Library Research Service, Colorado State Library, Colorado Department of Education). Available at: [http://www.lrs.org/pub\\_stats.asp](http://www.lrs.org/pub_stats.asp).

\*\* Colorado school library salaries: **School/District Staff Statistics** (Denver: Colorado Department of Education). Available at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/index\\_stats.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_stats.htm)

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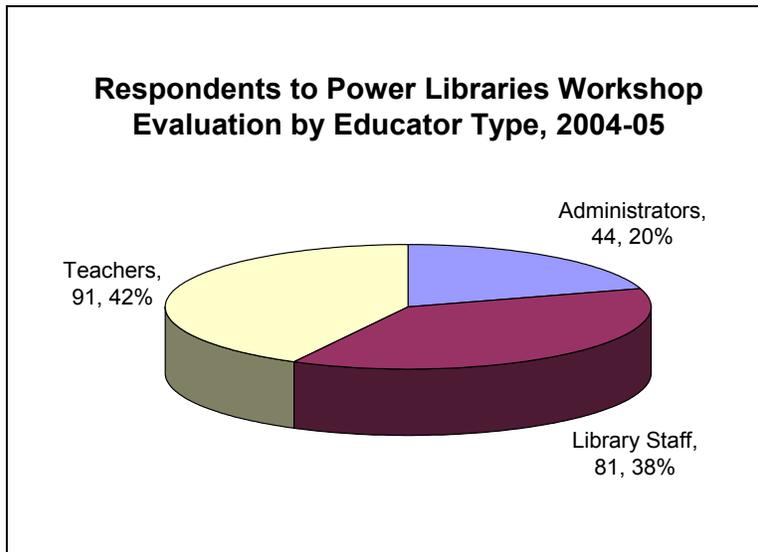
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# POWER LIBRARIES WORKSHOPS PREPARE—AND MOTIVATE— LIBRARIANS AND OTHER EDUCATORS TO COLLABORATE

ED3/110.10/No. 219

March 11, 2005



### POWER LIBRARIES PROJECT

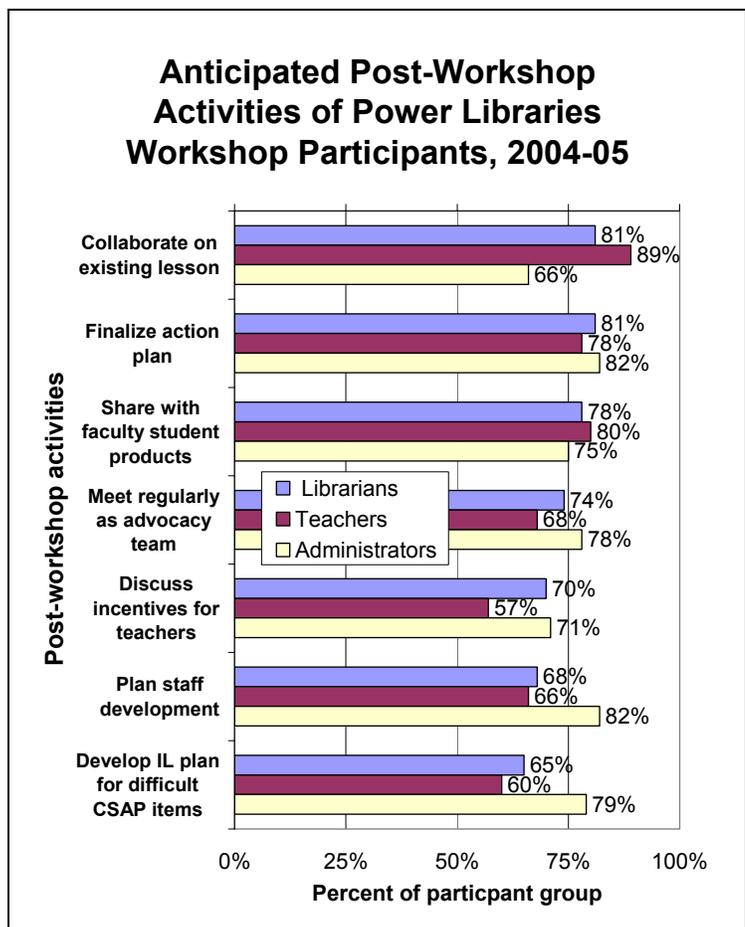
During Fall 2004 and early Winter 2005, the Colorado Power Libraries project offered a series of workshops throughout the state to encourage more schools to join the project. Power Libraries promotes collaboration between administrators, classroom teachers, and library staff through peer-to-peer mentoring.

Educators who attended these events were asked how they intended to act differently after the workshop – within the next week, month, semester, or year.

Of the 259 registrants, there were 216 survey respondents who identified themselves by educator type – just over 40% were teachers, almost another 40% were library staff, and 20% were administrators.

All three educator groups placed a similarly high priority on two post-workshop activities:

- Finalizing action plans for increased collaboration and
- Displaying or otherwise sharing with faculty students' products from collaborative lessons.



While all three groups gave high priority to collaborating to help revise existing lesson plans, library staff and teachers ranked this activity more highly than administrators. That may simply reflect the fact that administrators are less directly involved in that activity.

The three educator groups also gave high priority to two additional activities:

- Meeting to plan a school-wide staff development program about collaboration between teachers and library staff and
- Developing plans for emphasizing information literacy skills that provide practice for the most difficult CSAP items.

Interestingly, however, administrators identified these activities as high priorities (82% and 79%, respectively) much more often than did teachers and library staff (60-68%). As these activities involve taking a leadership role in encouraging teacher-librarian collaboration school-wide, perhaps it is no surprise that administrators would perceive these activities as ones that should be high priorities for them.

Meeting regularly as a team to advocate for collaboration and discussing the best ways to provide incentives for teachers to collaborate were also high priorities for the three educator groups. However, administrators and library staff (70-82%) were more likely to assign high priority to these activities than teachers (57-66%). Teachers may have been being professionally modest about requiring incentives to collaborate with library staff, but their lesser enthusiasm for maintaining ongoing efforts to encourage collaboration can be interpreted in at least two rather different ways. Either they believe collaboration between teachers and library staff can be maintained without ongoing advocacy for it, or they are somewhat less enthusiastic about sustained collaborative efforts. In either event, two out of three teachers who attended the workshops and responded to the survey gave high priority to sustained advocacy for collaboration.

The Colorado Power Libraries Project has demonstrated again and again that peer-to-peer mentoring involving administrators, teachers, and library staff is a truly powerful way to encourage the kinds of collaboration between school librarians and other educators that pay off in terms of higher CSAP scores.

## Resources

- For research about the relationship between teacher-librarian collaboration and CSAP scores, see **How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards: the Second Colorado Study** at: <http://www.lrs.org/impact.asp#colo>.
- For more information about the Power Libraries Project, visit: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/powerlib/index.htm>.

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# LIBRARIANSHIP IN COLORADO SCHOOL LIBRARIES

ED3/110.10/No. 220

MARCH 25, 2005

In the recent study, *Retirement, Retention, and Recruitment: The Future of Librarianship in Colorado*, library workers from all types of libraries from around the state were asked about their careers, their workplaces, and their attitudes about librarianship. Included in the study were school librarians, who were defined as librarians with a library media endorsement, Master of Library Science degree, or equivalent and working in a Colorado school library. This issue of Fast Facts reports the responses of the 110 school librarians who participated in the study.

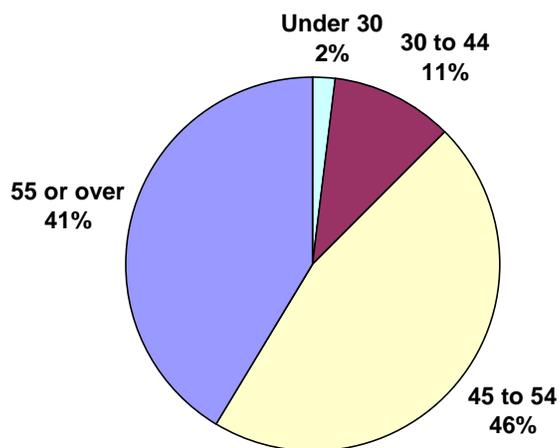
Not surprisingly, three out of four school librarians in the study lived in a metropolitan area (76%) and/or along the Front Range (74%). One in five respondents in this group lived on the Western Slope or in the mountain regions of the state. Only 6 percent of respondents resided along the Eastern Plains.

Nearly 9 out of 10 school librarian respondents were 45 or older. Of those 2 in 5 were 55 or older, a significantly larger proportion than librarian respondents from other library types. Only 2 percent of school librarians responding to the survey were under 30. (See Chart 1.)

## Highlights from School Librarian Respondents

- Nearly 9 out of 10 indicated they were 45 or older.
- Almost half indicated they plan to retire in the next five years (45%).
- 1 in 3 have more than 20 years library work experience.
- 9 out of 10 said they had some experience working or volunteering in a school or library before pursuing a library credential.
- More than 3 out of 5 identified a love of books or reading as a factor making librarianship an attractive profession.
- More than 2 out of 3 said misconceptions about librarianship discouraged a career in the profession.

Chart 1  
Colorado School Librarian Respondents -  
Distribution by Age



Forty-six percent of these respondents said they plan to retire in the next five years indicating that at least some of them will retire before the traditional retirement age of 65.

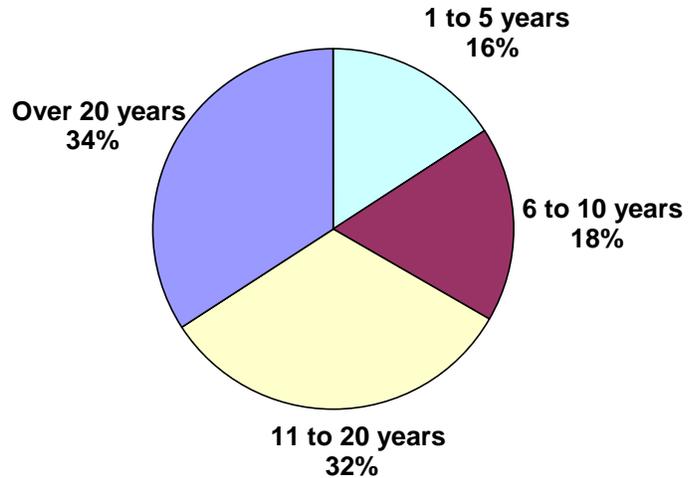
The “graying” of the library profession is evident in the answers given by the school librarian respondents and seems to foretell a shortage of certified librarians in Colorado schools, especially if large numbers of librarians retire before age 65.



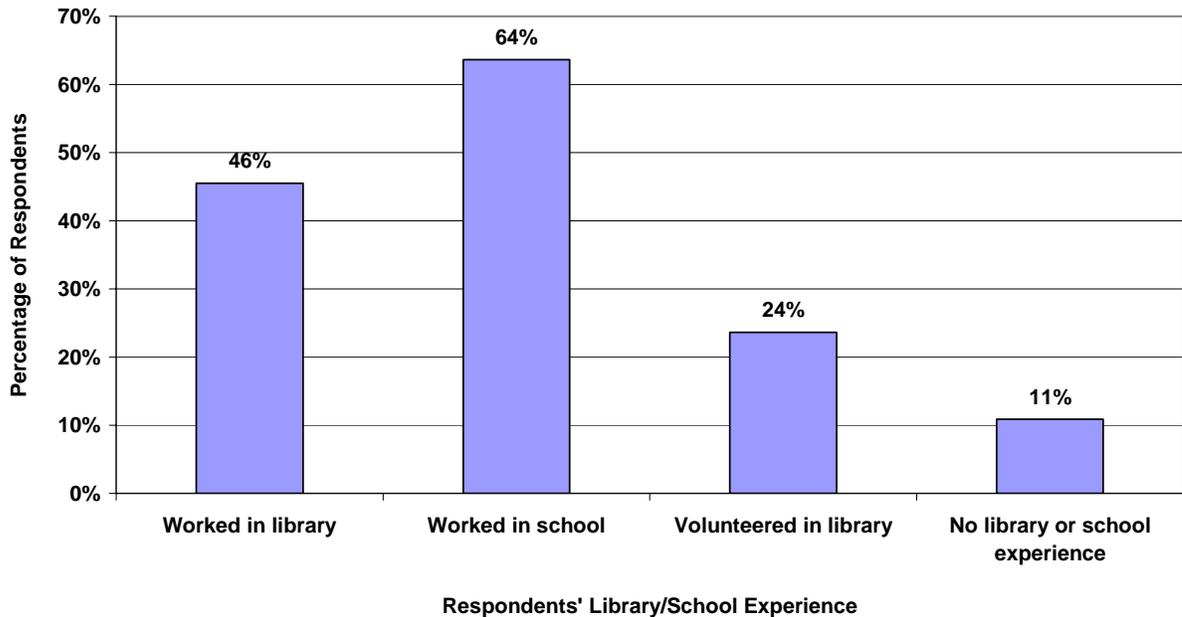
Given the age of this group of respondents it is not surprising that they have an abundance of library work experience. Over one-third had more than 20 years experience and another third had 11 to 20 years experience. The remaining third were almost evenly divided between 6 to 10 years and 1 to 5 years experience. (See Chart 2.)

Before becoming school librarians, the majority of these respondents either worked in a school (64%) and/or a library (46%). In fact, 9 out of 10 said they had some experience working or volunteering in a school or library (i.e., 11% said they had no library or school experience). This indicates that schools and libraries are fertile ground for cultivating future school librarians. (See Chart 3.)

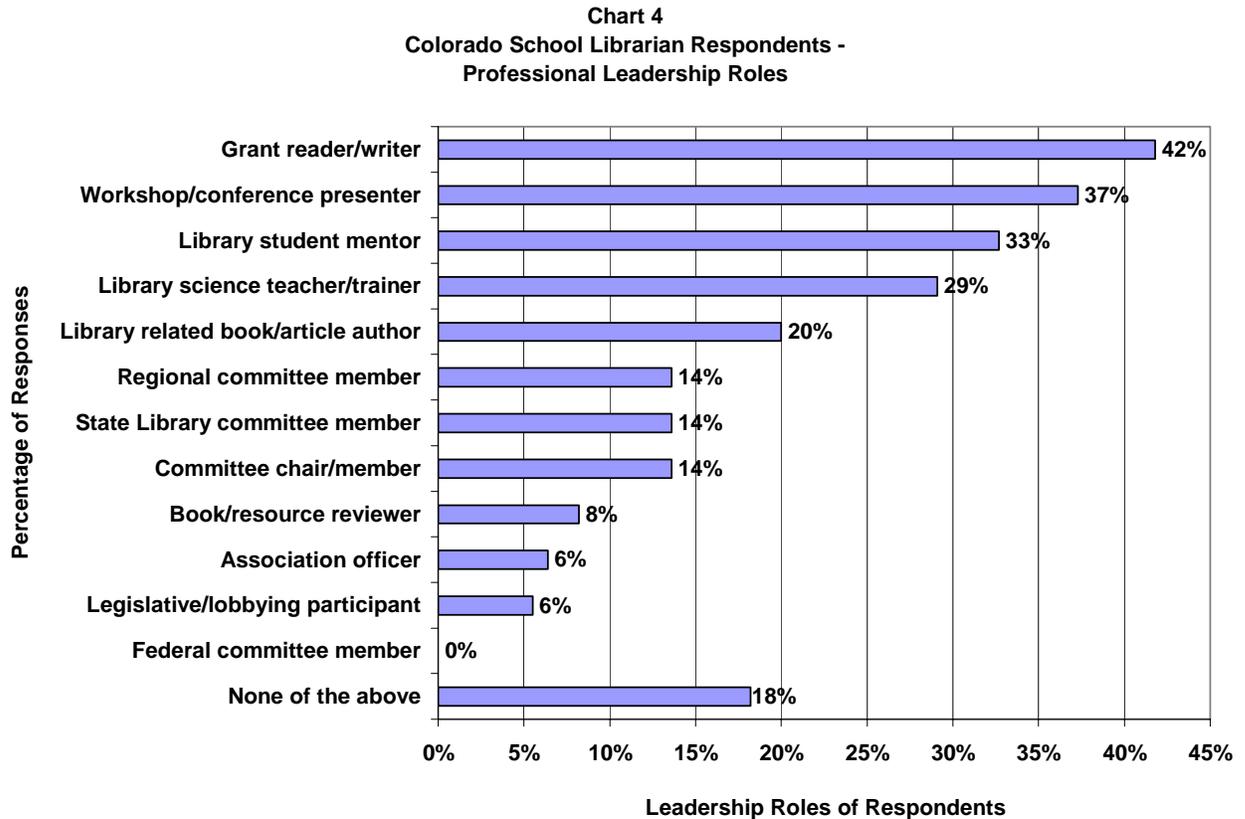
**Chart 2**  
**Colorado School Librarian Respondents - Distribution by Years of Library Employment**



**Chart 3**  
**Colorado School Librarian Respondents - Work Experience Prior to Pursuing a Graduate Degree in Library Science or a School Library Media Endorsement**



Four out of five school librarian respondents indicated they served in professional leadership roles in the last five years (i.e., 18% indicated none of the above). Two out of five school librarians responded that they had been grant readers or writers (42%) and over a third had been presenters at workshops or conferences (37%). Library student mentor (33%) and library science teacher or trainer (29%) were also indicated by approximately 1 in 3 respondents. (See Chart 4.)



This group of respondents indicated love of books or reading (62%) most frequently as a factor that makes librarianship an attractive profession. Perhaps as a reflection of their somewhat different job duties, school library respondents chose this considerably more frequently than those from other types of libraries.

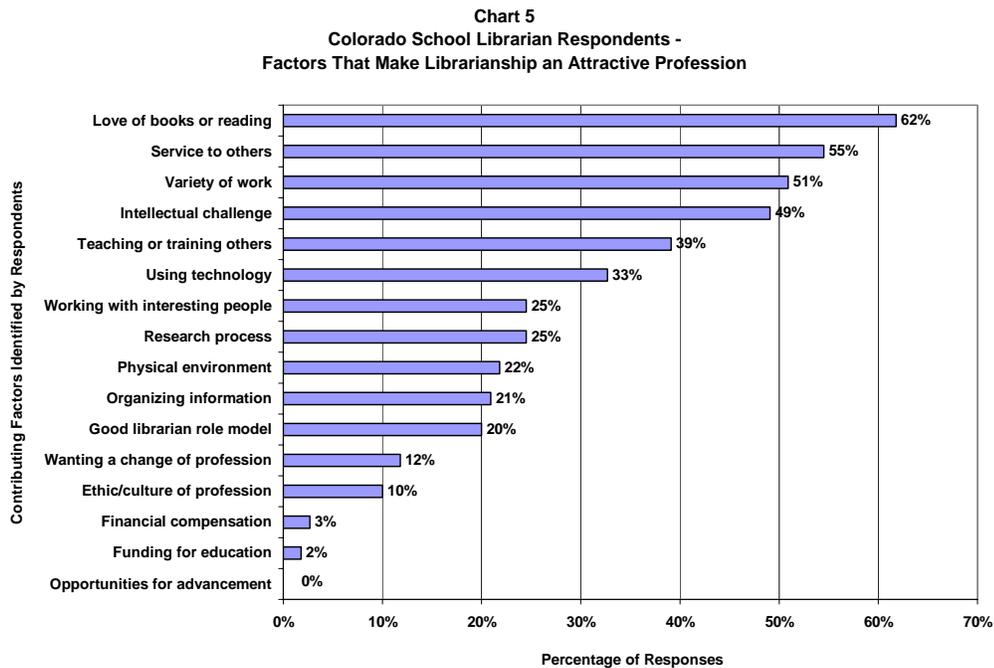
*"I am thrilled to be a Library Media Specialist and I love every day that I work. I encourage other people [to] become a librarian hoping that they too will love it as much as I."*  
 – School Librarian

*Colorado is an exciting place to be a librarian; the library system and the librarians in the state are forward looking and on the cutting edge of librarianship in many areas. Though I, and librarians in general, often do not receive the professional recognition we deserve, everyday I grow mentally and spiritually... How could my professional life be better?*  
 – School Librarian



Approximately half of responding school librarians chose service to others (55%), variety of work (51%), and/or intellectual challenge (49%) as making librarianship a desirable career choice. (See Chart 5.)

No respondents from this group identified opportunities for advancement and very few indicated funding for education (2%) or financial compensation (3%) as factors that make librarianship an attractive career choice.



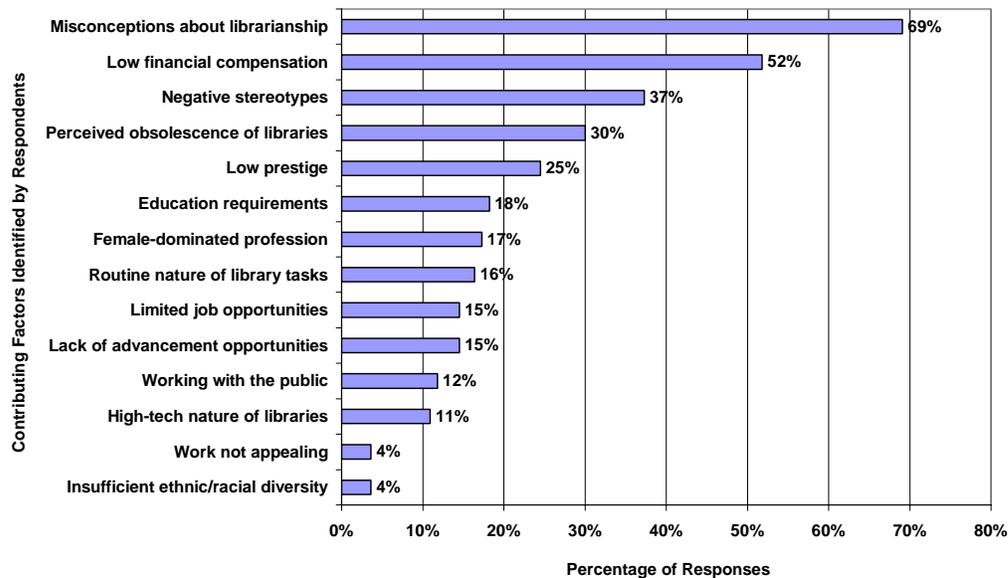
Interestingly, librarians from other types of libraries most frequently indicated low financial compensation as the factor that discourages a career in librarianship. However, school librarians responding to the survey chose misconceptions about librarianship most frequently (69%) and low financial compensation was second (52%). At a distant third, negative stereotypes (37%) was indicated by over a third of this group, followed by perceived obsolescence of libraries (30%). This pattern may reflect the perceptions of school librarians that other educators do not always understand or appreciate their value to schools. (See Chart 6.)

*“I am concerned with schools not replacing retiring media specialist with another specialist. They should be looking for the same qualifications and knowledge/training instead of accepting less. I fear that students and teachers are being short changed.”*  
– School Librarian

*“Not all school districts require endorsed librarians or even certified teachers in their libraries, especially at the elementary level. With budget cuts, these jobs are not at all secure. But the educational requirements are huge. How can we ask people to pursue the education and not guarantee them positions?”*  
– School Librarian



**Chart 6**  
**Colorado School Librarian Respondents -**  
**Factors that Discourage a Career in Librarianship**



When asked how the downturn in the economy had affected their career plans, over half of school librarian respondents had no change of plans (53%) and a third said they decided to stay in their current library job (32%). Retire later (13%) was indicated by 1 in 8 respondents, but only 1 in 13 said retire earlier (8%). Like many of their colleagues from other types of libraries who participated in the study, school librarians' career plans seem relatively unaffected by the economic situation. (See Table 1.)

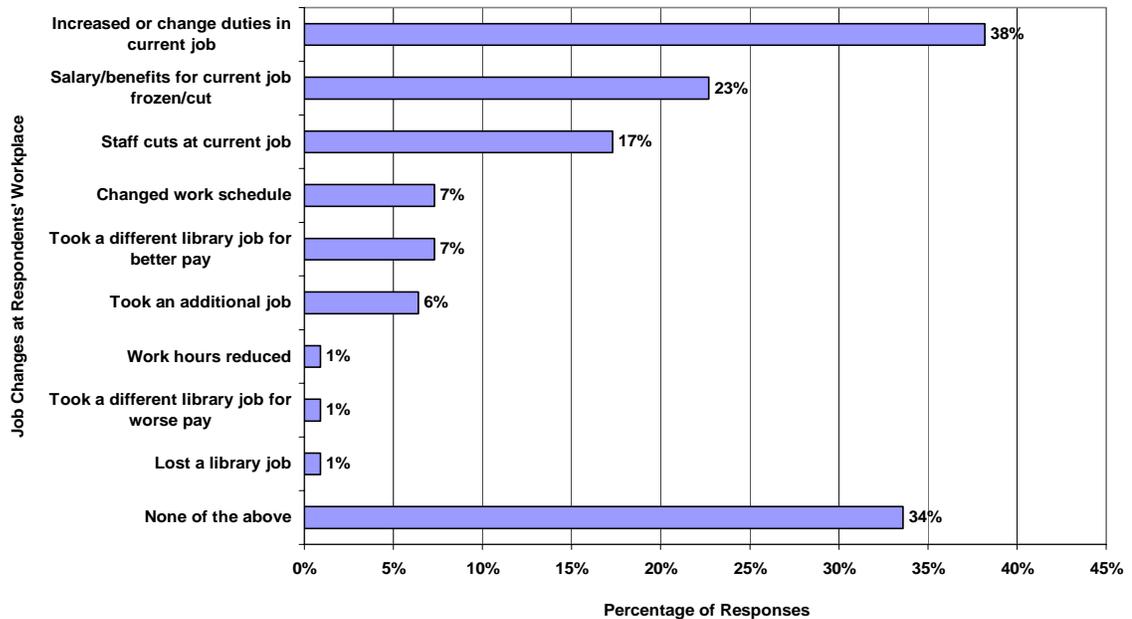
**Table 1**  
**Colorado School Libraries**  
**Affects of the Economic Downturn on Respondents' Career Plans**

No change of plans	53%
Stay in current library job	32%
Retire later	13%
Retire earlier	8%
Seek another library job	5%
Return to school for non-library degree	3%
Return for MLS or media endorsement	2%
Retrain in different library specialty	1%
Leave the library field	0%

One-third of school librarians responding to the survey said there was no change at their current workplaces in the last year (34%). Nearly 2 in 5 said there was an increase or change in duties at their current job (38%). Almost 1 in 4 had salary or benefits frozen or cut (23%) and about 1 in 6 experienced staff cuts at their workplace. (17%). Presumably most of these cuts can be attributed to the economic downturn in the state and the subsequent reduction in school funding. (See Chart 7.)



Chart 7  
Colorado School Librarian Respondents -  
Changes at Their Workplaces in the Last Year



The school librarians who participated in this study were on average over 45 years of age with more than 10 years library experience. They were also quite likely to be considering retiring in the next 5 years. Most had worked in a school or library before becoming a certified librarian and were active in their profession. Many feel a love of books and reading is a key factor in making librarianship an attractive career. However, misconceptions about librarianship were cited most frequently as discouraging to potential librarians.

Given the age and retirement rate of participants in this study, it seems likely that schools in Colorado will experience a severe shortage of certified school librarians. When they leave the profession, these retiring librarians will take with them years of library and classroom experience.

So where will their replacements come from? Quite possibly they can be found in the schools and libraries themselves. Given that most current school librarian respondents had worked in a school or library before becoming librarians, it seems logical to recruit new school librarians from within the ranks of teachers, paraprofessionals, and volunteers. There should be some urgency in this matter, as the profession needs to have new librarians in place before too many more retirements occur, so that the knowledge of one generation of librarians can be passed to the next.

The complete report, *Retirement, Retention, and Recruitment: The Future of Librarianship in Colorado*, can be found at [LRS.org](http://LRS.org).

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# LIBRARIANSHIP IN COLORADO ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

ED3/110.10/No. 221

MARCH 25, 2005

*Retirement, Retention, and Recruitment: The Future of Librarianship in Colorado*, a recent study conducted by the LRS, asked 1,241 respondents from around the state about their jobs, their libraries, and their career plans. This issue of Fast Facts examines the data provided by the 91 academic librarian respondents – defined as those having a Master of Library Science degree (MLS) or equivalent and working in a Colorado college or university library.

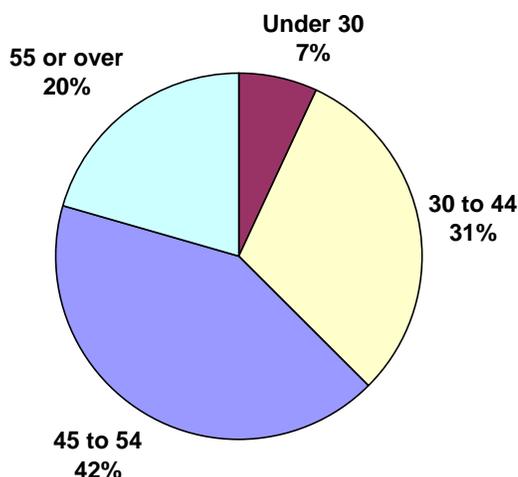
Given the distribution of colleges and universities around the state, it is not surprising that the majority of academic librarian respondents resided in the metropolitan areas along the Front Range. Nine out of ten indicated they lived in a metropolitan area (90%) and more than 4 out of 5 lived along the Front Range (87%). The mountains and Western Slope account for 10 percent of respondents and the Eastern Plains for 3 percent.

Proportionally, academic respondents were slightly younger than librarian respondents from other types of libraries with 7 percent

## Highlights from Academic Librarian Respondents

- More than 1 in 3 were under 45.
- 1 in 3 have more than 20 years experience working in a library.
- 2 in 3 worked or volunteered in a library or school prior to pursuing a library degree.
- Over 4 in 5 indicated they had served in a professional leadership role(s) in the last five years.
- More than half said service to others and/or intellectual challenge made librarianship an attractive profession.
- 9 in 10 cited “low financial compensation” as a factor discouraging potential librarians.
- Almost 1 in 2 indicated that salaries or benefits had been frozen or cut at their workplace in the last year.

**Chart 1**  
**Colorado Academic Librarian Respondents - Distribution by Age**



under 30 years of age and 31 percent ages 30 to 44. That means well over one-third of academic librarian respondents were under 45. However, it also means approximately two-thirds were age 45 or older. The largest group was 45 to 54 years old with 2 in 5 reporting being in this age range. (See Chart 1.)

Academic librarians responding to the survey are retiring in smaller numbers than librarian respondents from other types of libraries. Only 1 in 10 said they were planning to retire in the next five years. This is consistent with this being a comparatively younger group of respondents.



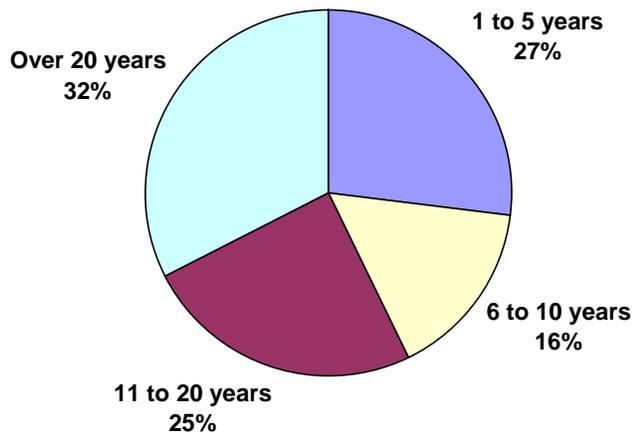
Respondents in this group were more likely than other librarians responding to the survey to be male. One in five respondents in this group were male, whereas about 1 in 15 school and public librarian respondents were male. Approximately 1 in 8 respondents from special libraries were male. (See Table 1.)

**Table 1**  
**Colorado Academic Librarian Respondents –**  
**Gender of Librarian Respondents by Type of Library**

Type of Library	Female	Male
Academic	79%	21%
Public	93%	7%
School	94%	6%
Special	88%	12%

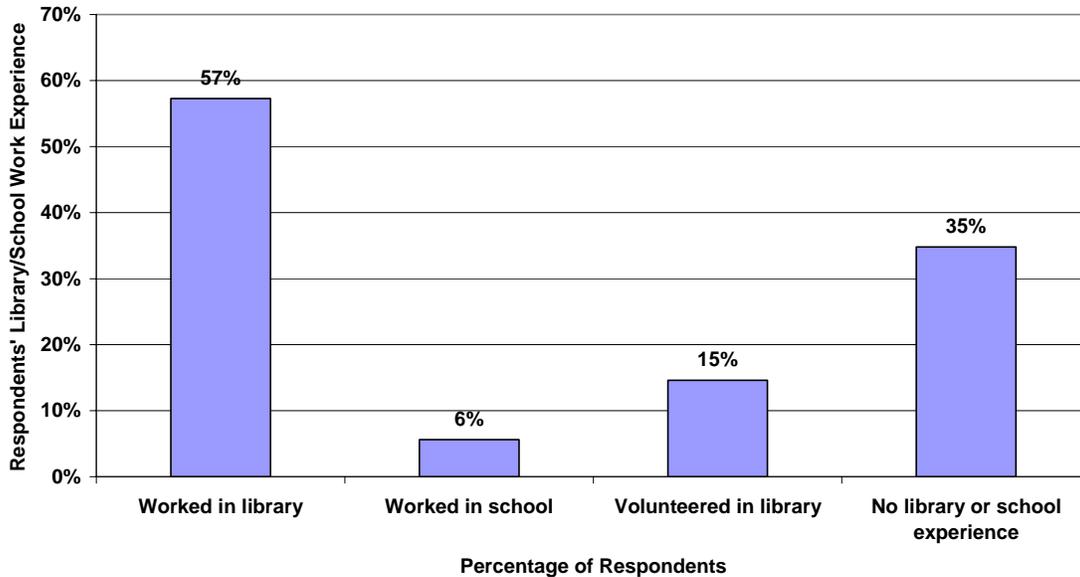
Almost 1 in 3 academic librarians (32%) responding to the survey had more than 20 years experience working in a library. Another 1 in 4 had 11 to 20 years library work experience (25%). Perhaps reflecting the relative youth of these respondents, the second largest group had 1 to 5 years experience (27%). (See Chart 2.)

**Chart 2**  
**Colorado Academic Librarian Respondents -**  
**Distribution by Years of Library Employment**



Two-thirds of respondents indicated that they had worked or volunteered in a library or school prior to pursuing an MLS or equivalent library credential (i.e., 35% had no library or school experience). Predictably, well over half had worked in a library before pursuing a library credential (57%), whereas only 1 in 17 had worked in a school (6%). (See Chart 3.)

**Chart 3**  
**Colorado Public Librarian Respondents - Work Experience Prior to Pursuing a Graduate Degree in Library Science or a School Library Media Endorsement**



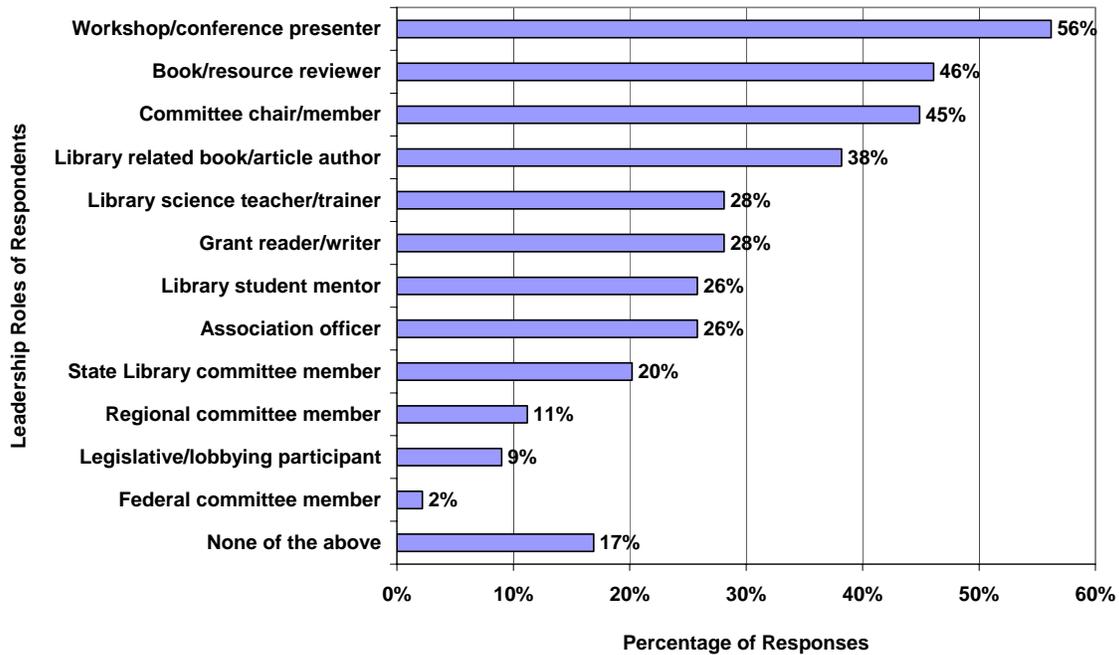
Academic librarian respondents are particularly active in their profession. More than 4 out of 5 indicated they had served in a professional leadership role in the last five years (i.e., 17% marked none of the above). Well over half had been a workshop or conference presenter (56%). In addition, close to half had been a book/resource reviewer (46%) and/or a committee chair/member (45%). Undoubtedly driven somewhat by the publish or perish requirement of tenured faculty, more than a third of these survey respondents said they had authored a library-related book or article (38%). (See Chart 4.)

*Librarianship has a future in Colorado, but some positions will be threatened by employers who are willing to accept lower levels of performance for lower pay to address budget problems. Librarians have been relatively successful demonstrating that their libraries make a difference, but haven't always done a good job of demonstrating that they themselves make a difference. That needs to change.*

– Academic Librarian



**Chart 4**  
**Colorado Academic Librarian Respondents -**  
**Professional Leadership Roles**



More than half of academics found service to others (54%) and intellectual challenge (53%) factors that make librarianship an attractive profession – well ahead of other factors. Over a third indicated variety of work (36%). Interestingly, only 23 percent indicated love of books or reading, close to half the percentage for all responding librarians combined (42%). (See Chart 5.)

*“I think being a librarian in the state of Colorado is an exciting position to be in. From an academic standpoint the future is all about technology and online education.”*

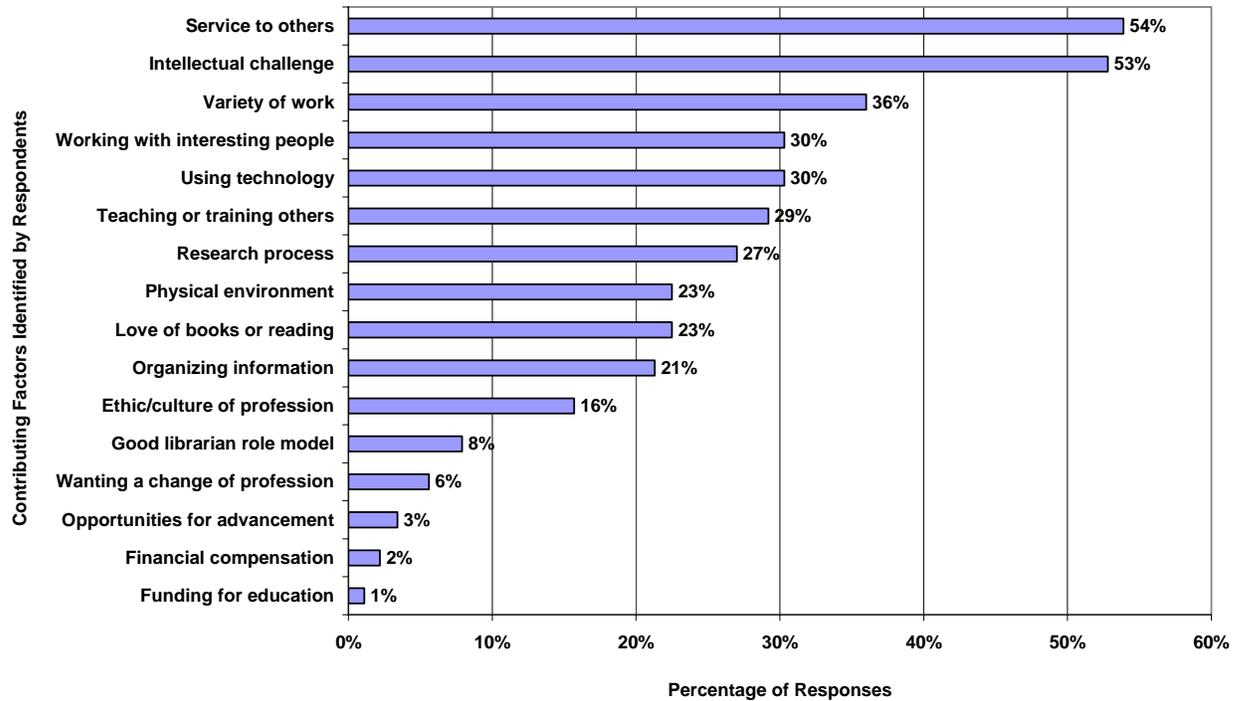
– Academic Librarian

*“We need to get the message across to younger people that librarianship is an exciting and challenging field.”*

– Academic Librarian



**Chart 5**  
**Colorado Academic Librarian Respondents -**  
**Factors That Make Librarianship an Attractive Profession**



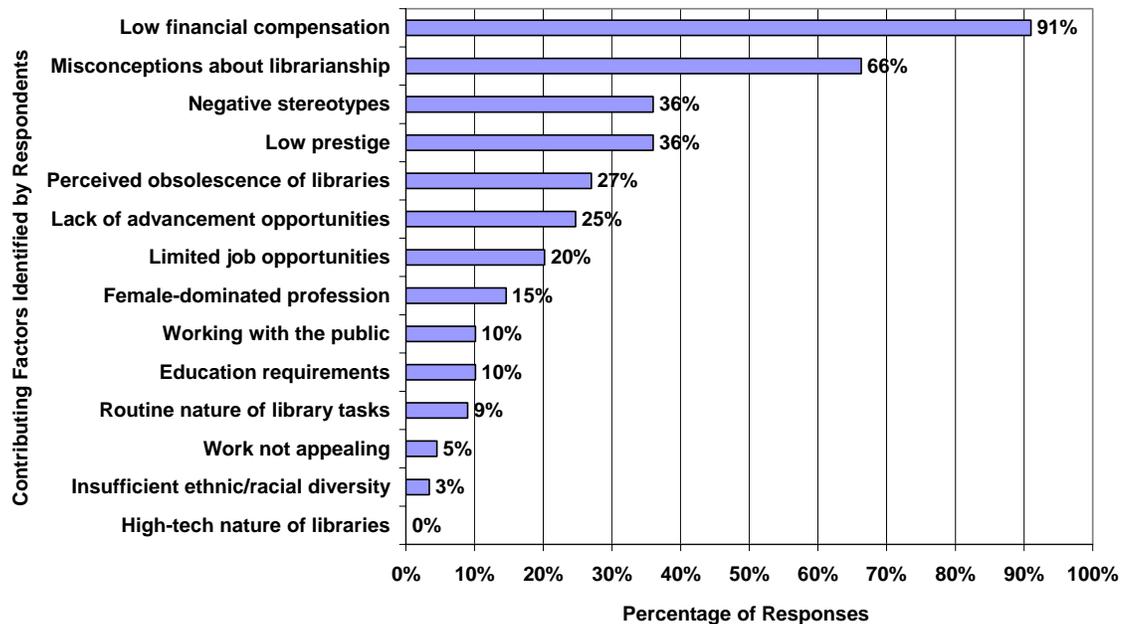
Overwhelmingly, academic librarian respondents indicated low financial compensation as a factor discouraging potential librarians. In fact, 9 out of 10 academics cited this factor, whereas 3 out of 4 librarian respondents from all library types chose it. Two-thirds of academic respondents said misconceptions about librarianship (66%) and one-third cited low prestige (36%) and/or negative stereotypes (36%) as discouraging factors. None of the factors related to the work itself or the lack of diversity among staff were cited in significant numbers. (See Chart 6.)

*We need strong marketing of the critical importance of libraries and librarians in our technological society. If the perception of our value and our expertise increases, then it will help us gain more appropriate compensation... We have numerous obstacles to overcome. One obstacle is that only a small percentage of the public avail themselves of our services. Another is that people take libraries for granted, like they do water and electrical service.*

– Academic Librarian



**Chart 6**  
**Colorado Academic Librarian Respondents -**  
**Factors that Discourage a Career in Librarianship**



The majority of academic librarians answering the survey said they had no change of plans (55%) when asked how the economic downturn had affected their careers. Similarly, staying in their current library job was chosen by 1 in 3 respondents (32%). Plans to retire later was indicated by 1 in 7 respondents (14%). (See Table 2.)

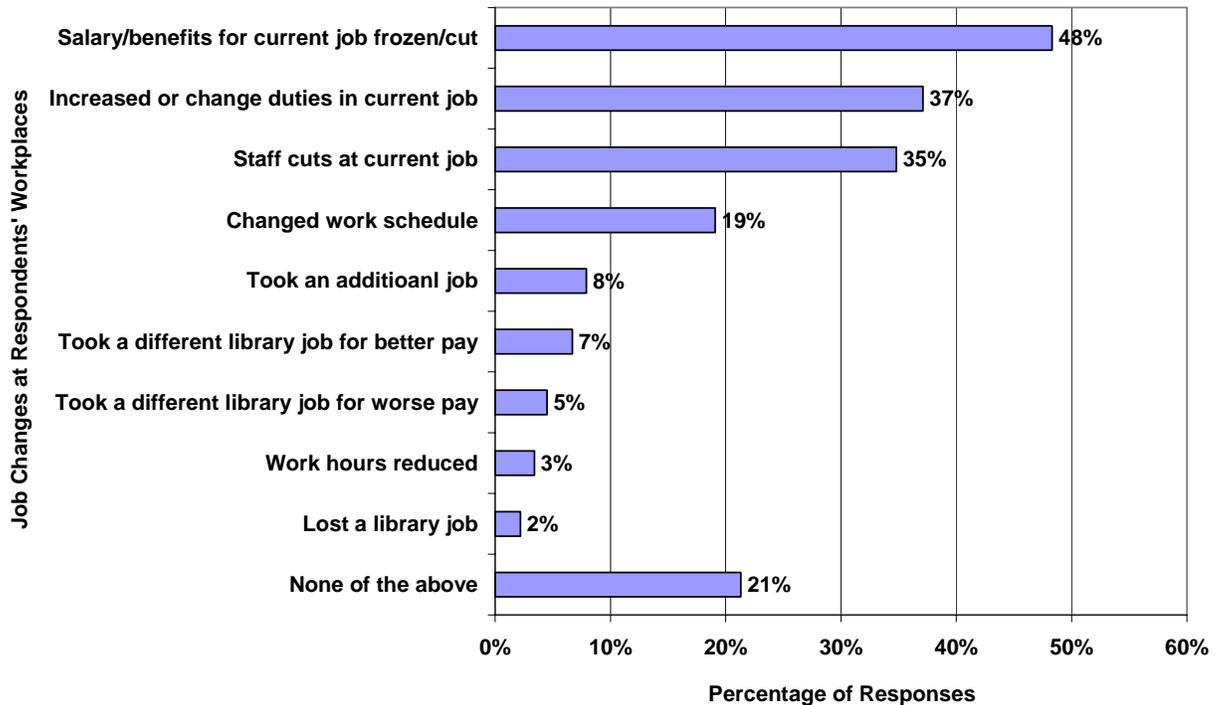
**Table 2**  
**Colorado Academic Librarian Respondents –**  
**Affects of the Economic Downturn on Respondents’ Career Plans**

No change of plans	55%
Stay in current library job	32%
Retire later	14%
Seek another library job	5%
Retire earlier	2%
Leave the library field	1%
Return to school for non-library degree	1%
Retrain in different library specialty	0%
Return for MLS or media endorsement	0%

When asked about the changes in their workplaces in the last year, almost half of respondents indicated that salaries or benefits had been frozen or cut (48%). Over one-third had experienced an increase or change in job duties (37%) and/or staff cuts (35%). It can be surmised that at least some of these changes can be attributed to the funding cuts experienced at colleges and universities in Colorado. One in five of these respondents indicated none of the changes listed (21%). (See Chart 7.)



**Chart 7**  
**Colorado Academic Librarian Respondents -**  
**Changes at Their Workplaces in the Last Year**



The academic librarian respondents were a slightly younger group and were planning to retire in smaller numbers than those from other library types. They were more apt to be male than their counterparts from other types of libraries and they were very active in their profession. Many found librarianship appealing because of the service to others and the intellectual challenge of the work. Conversely, they overwhelmingly felt low financial compensation was a factor that discourages potential librarians.

Although not retiring in the high proportions of respondents from other types of libraries, academic librarians will undoubtedly face the same recruitment issues as their colleagues. It seems clear that the work librarians do is appealing to this group; however, the pay and benefits are not. In addition to feeling poorly compensated, these respondents felt that librarians and their work were not accurately perceived by potential new recruits into the profession.

The complete report, *Retirement, Retention, and Recruitment: The Future of Librarianship in Colorado*, can be found at [LRS.org](http://LRS.org).

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# LIBRARIANSHIP IN COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

ED3/110.10/No. 222

MARCH 25, 2005

In a recent LRS study, *Retirement, Retention, and Recruitment: The Future of Librarianship in Colorado (3Rs)*, 1,241 respondents from all types of libraries were asked about their careers, their workplaces, and their attitudes about librarianship. This issue of Fast Facts explores the responses from the 245 public librarian respondents – defined as librarians with a Master of Library Science degree (MLS) or equivalent library credential and working in a Colorado public library.

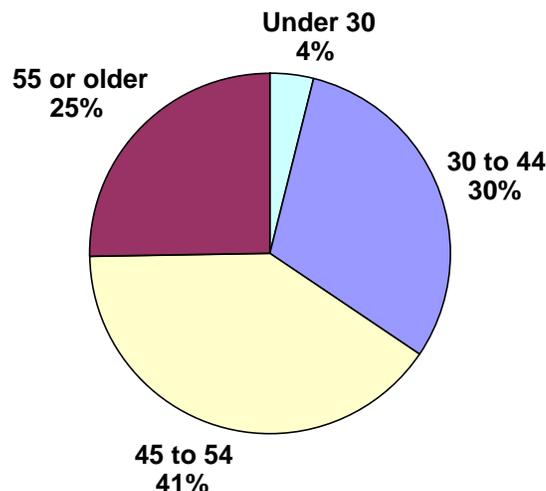
Predictably, the respondents' geographic distribution followed the general population distribution in the state. Public library respondents were predominately from metropolitan areas and the Front Range. More than 4 out of 5 public librarians (84%) indicated they resided in a metropolitan area. Moreover, 81 percent live along the Front Range and 18 percent live in the Mountains or on the Western Slope, leaving only 1 percent residing on the Eastern Plains.

## Highlights from Public Librarian Respondents

- 1 in 7 said they plan to retire in the next five years.
- 1 in 4 was 55 or older, within 10 years of the traditional retirement age of 65.
- Nearly 2 in 3 indicated "service to others" as a leading factor in making librarianship an attractive profession.
- 4 out of 5 said "low financial compensation" was the leading factor discouraging potential librarians from pursuing a career in librarianship.
- Approximately 1 in 3 had their salary and/or benefits frozen or cut in the last year.
- More than 1 in 5 experienced staff cuts at their workplace.

The proverbial "graying of the profession" can be seen in the distribution by age of public library respondents. One in four respondents was 55 or older (25%), within 10 years of the traditional retirement age of 65. The largest percentage of respondents were 45 to 54 years of age (41%), with the 30 to 44 year olds making up the second largest group (30%). Barely registering is the youngest group with a mere 1 in 25 indicating they are under 30 (4%). (See Chart 1.)

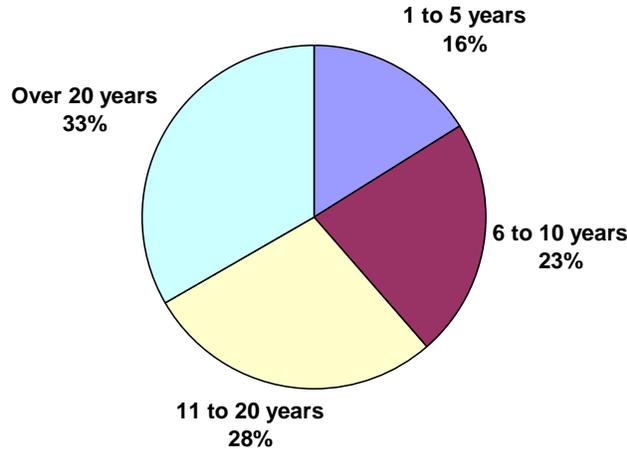
**Chart 1**  
**Colorado Public Librarian Respondents -**  
**Distribution by Age**



Of those public librarians responding to the survey, 1 in 7 said they plan to retire in the next five years (14%). Given the age distribution of respondents (two-thirds are 45 or older) and the fact that many workers retire before reaching 65, this could be just the tip of the iceberg in terms of retirements in the next 10 to 15 years.



**Chart 2**  
**Colorado Public Librarian Respondents -**  
**Distribution by Years of Library Employment**

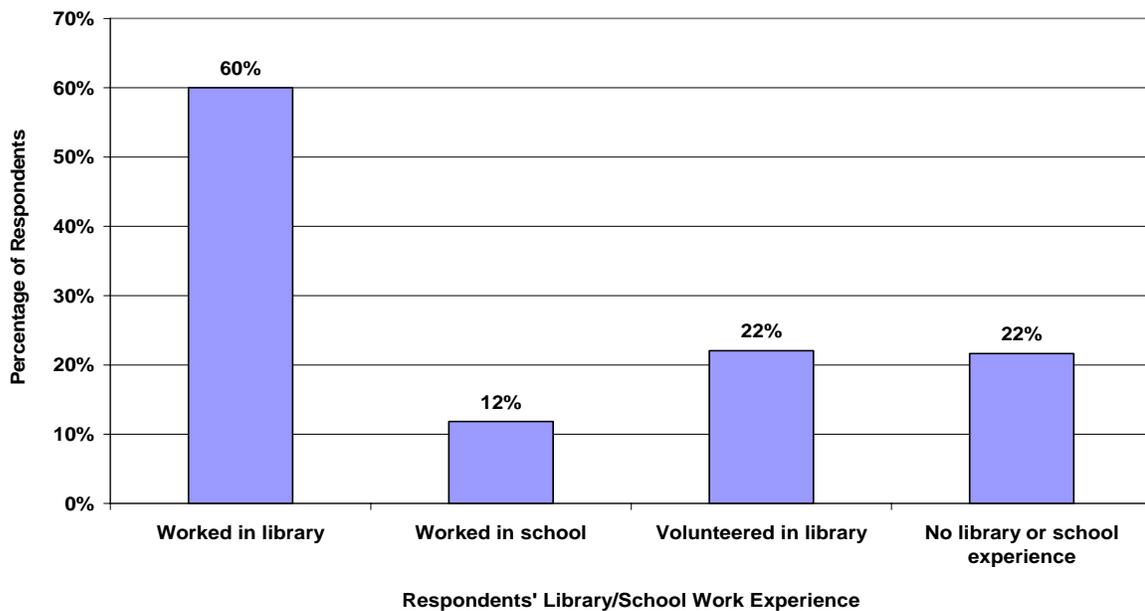


Colorado public librarians are an experienced lot – at least those responding to this study had considerable years of library employment. Three in five had more than 10 years of library experience. Almost a quarter had 6 to 10 years experience working in a library. The smallest group was the least experienced with about 1 in 6 having 5 years experience or less. (See Chart 2.)

More than three-quarters of respondents (78%) indicated they had worked or volunteered in a library and/or school prior to pursuing a library credential (i.e., 22% indicated no library or school

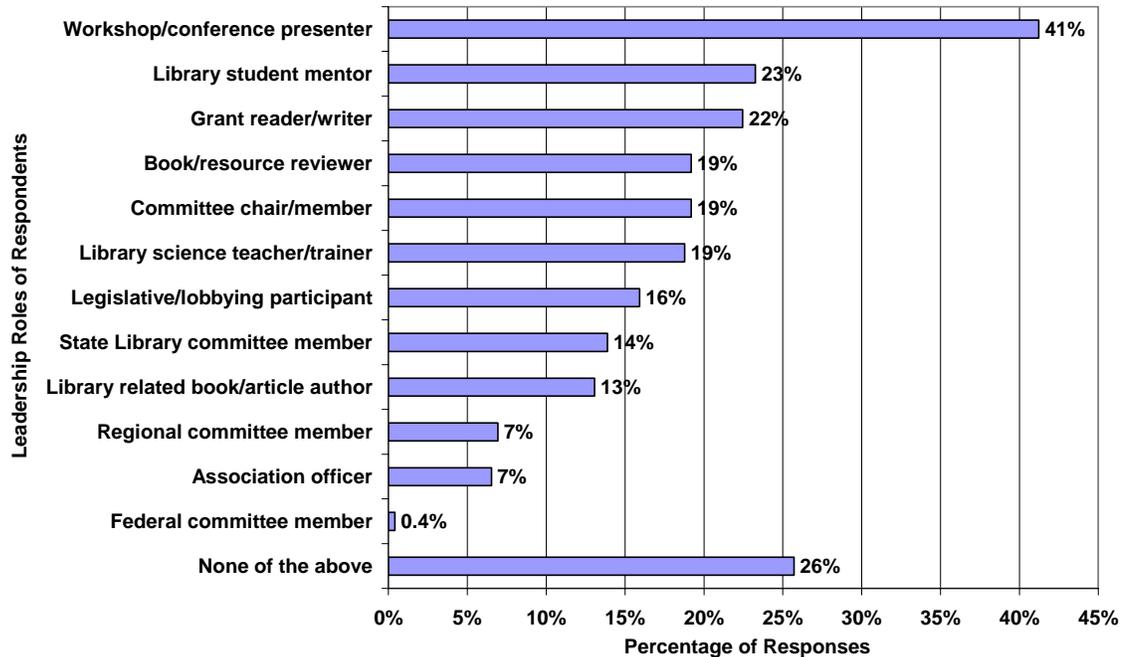
experience). Almost two-thirds of public librarians worked in a library before pursuing an MLS or equivalent credential (60%). Not surprisingly fewer public librarians had worked in schools (12%) than in libraries. This data supports the strategy of recruiting future public librarians from within the ranks of current library staff. (See Chart 3.)

**Chart 3**  
**Colorado Public Librarian Respondents - Work Experience Prior to Pursuing a**  
**Graduate Degree in Library Science or a School Library Media Endorsement**



Public librarian respondents are very active in the professional community with 3 out of 4 indicating one or more leadership roles in the last five years (i.e., 26% indicated none of the above). More than 2 out of 5 were workshop and/or conference presenters (41%) and close to 1 in 4 were mentors (23%) and/or grant readers/writers (22%). (See Chart 4.)

**Chart 4**  
**Colorado Public Librarian Respondents -**  
**Professional Leadership Roles**



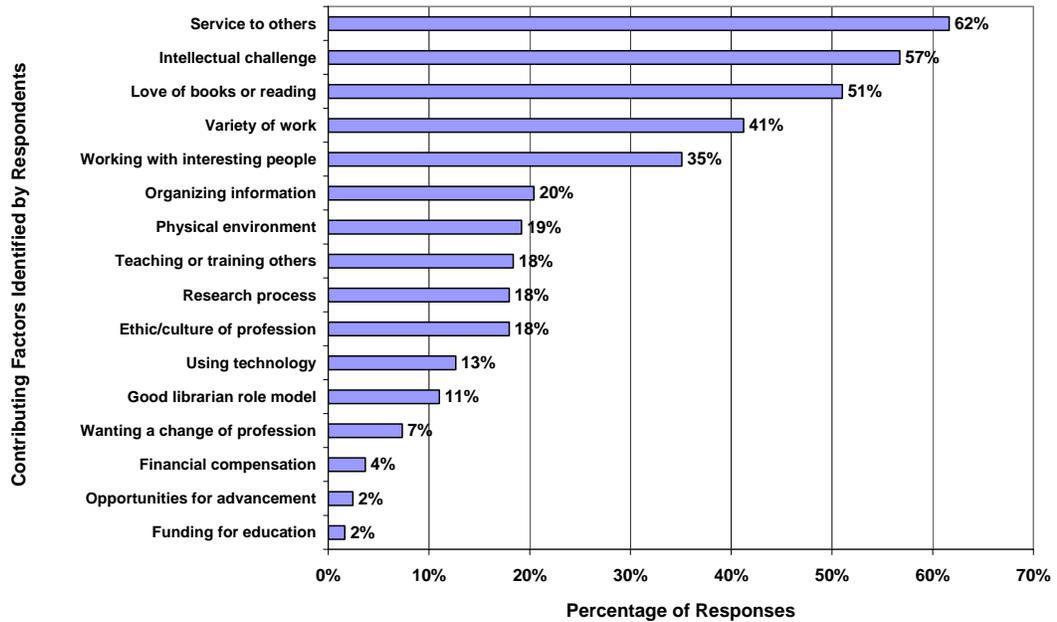
Public librarian respondents, like many of their colleagues in other types of libraries, indicated service to others as a leading factor in making librarianship an attractive profession (62%). Additionally, more than half of respondents chose intellectual challenge (57%) and love of books or reading (51%). Other leading factors include variety of work (41%) and working with interesting people (35%). At the bottom of the list is funding for education (2%), opportunities for advancement (2%), and financial compensation (4%). (See Chart 5.)

*"I believe librarianship is alive and well, despite the economy... We've survived other bad times; we'll survive these..."*  
 – Public Librarian

*"I'm optimistic! I see a continued role for libraries in some form or other. The profession is keeping me because it's ever-changing and challenging. People still love their library! Even though most folks get into the profession because of love of books or other misguided preconceptions (we do NOT 'get to read books all day'), we all end up staying because it's just good work to get to do."*  
 – Public Librarian



Chart 5  
Colorado Public Librarian Respondents -  
Factors That Make Librarianship an Attractive Profession



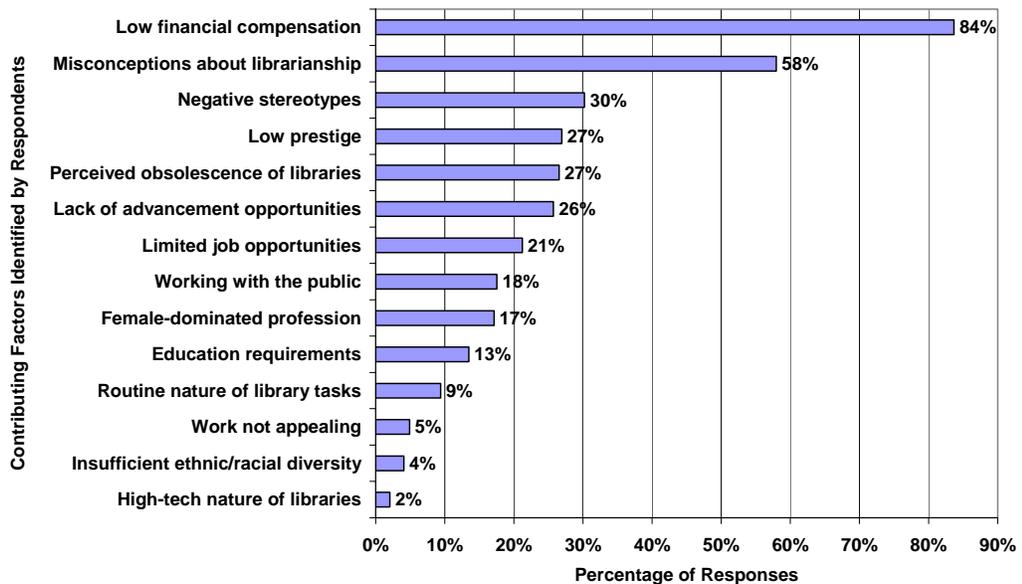
Overwhelmingly, public librarian respondents indicated low financial compensation as the leading factor discouraging a career in librarianship (84%). A distant second was misconceptions about librarianship (58%). Negative stereotypes (30%), low prestige (27%), and perceived obsolescence of libraries (27%) round out the top five factors. It is interesting to note that all but the top reason—low financial compensation—relates to the perception of librarians and libraries. (See Chart 6.)

*“Decreasing pay and increasing workloads will continue to make this profession undesirable to students looking for a promising career.”*  
– Public Librarian

*“Many administrators/management-level staff will be retiring in the next ten to 15 years and it will be a challenge to replace them. When we have school visits, students are reluctant to pursue library degrees due to the length of the educational process compared to the salary they might hope to receive in their first job. Our jobs are not as attractive as those in other field of study which pay more for an advanced degree.”*  
– Public Librarian



**Chart 6**  
**Colorado Public Librarian Respondents -**  
**Factors that Discourage a Career in Librarianship**



Half of public librarians indicated the downturn in the economy had no effect on their career plans (50%). In addition, over a third said they decided to stay in their current library job (39%). Significantly fewer respondents said they would retire later (14%) and even fewer chose to seek another library job (7%). So although the current economic climate has had a negative effect on many libraries in Colorado, it has not significantly impacted the career plans of the majority of public librarian respondents. (See Table 1.)

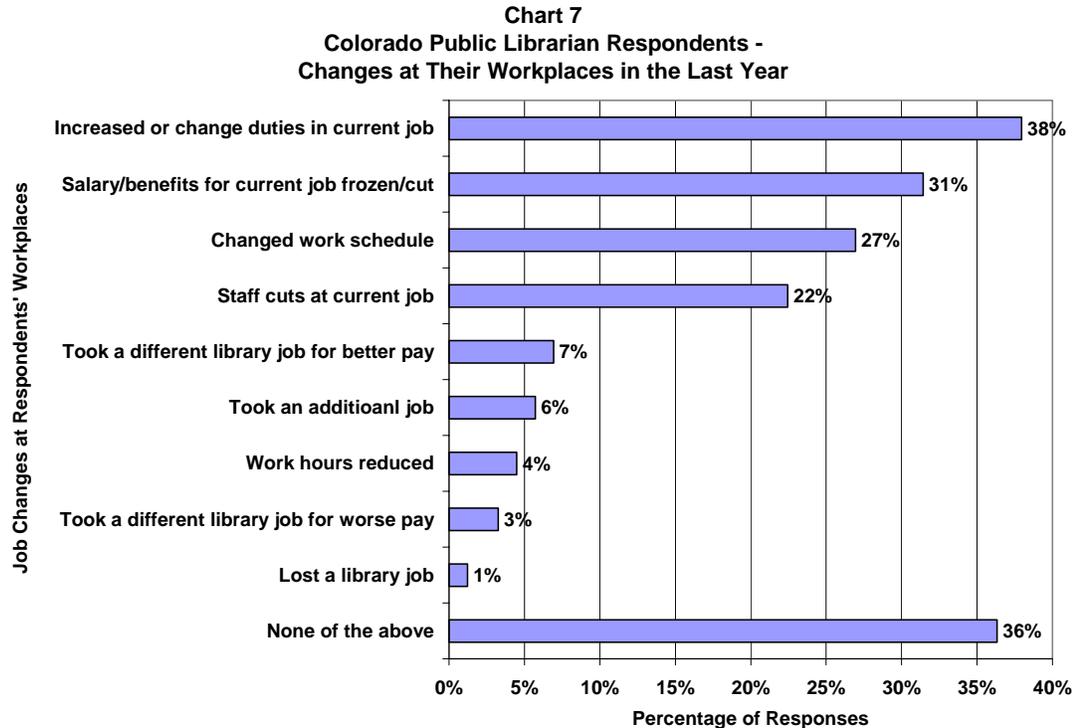
**Table 1**  
**Colorado Public Libraries**  
**Affects of the Economic Downturn on Respondents' Career Plans**

No change of plans	50%
Stay in current library job	39%
Retire later	14%
Seek another library job	7%
Retire earlier	4%
Leave the library field	3%
Retrain in different library specialty	2%
Return to school for non-library degree	2%
Return for MLS or media endorsement	2%

When asked about the changes in their workplaces in the last year, more than one-third of public librarians responding to the survey did not experience any of the changes listed. However, more than a third experienced an increase or change in duties at their current job (38%). Slightly fewer had their salary and/or benefits frozen or cut (31%). Around 1 in 4 had a change in their work



schedule (27%) and more than 1 in 5 experienced staff cuts at their job (22%). Presumably many of these changes can be attributed to economic pressures, however, some may be due to management decisions other than those related to financial considerations. (See Chart 7.)



By all accounts, librarianship is a graying profession and Colorado will undoubtedly feel the effects in the next 5 to 10 years. The average public librarian who responded to the 3Rs survey was over 45, had more than 10 years library work experience, and was active in her profession. She indicated she values the service to others aspect of librarianship and felt that potential librarians are discouraged by low pay and misconceptions about librarianship and librarians.

With 1 in 7 librarians planning to retire in the next five years and many more reaching retirement age in the next 10 -15 years, who will replace them? It seems clear that many future librarians may be found already working or volunteering in libraries and schools. It is also evident that better pay would motivate more potential librarians to pursue an MLS or equivalent degree. In addition, correcting the misconceptions about librarianship and librarian stereotypes would aid in the recruiting new librarians.

The complete report, *Retirement, Retention, and Recruitment: The Future of Librarianship in Colorado*, can be found at [LRS.org](http://LRS.org).

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# ASKCOLORADO'S FIRST YEAR ONLINE

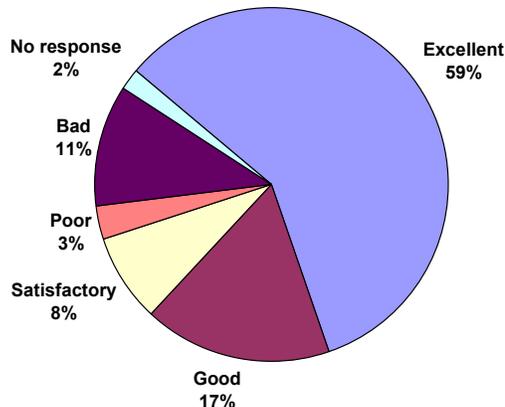
ED3/110.10/No. 223

March 28, 2005

## Coloradans Embrace Virtual Reference Service

AskColorado, a statewide virtual reference service, was launched on September 2, 2003. The service, available for both English and Spanish-speaking patrons, is staffed by over 200 library personnel from all types of libraries throughout the state. AskColorado is funded through a combination of local contributions from Colorado libraries, federal funds provided by the Colorado State Library under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), and state general funds allocated to the State Library. Available online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at <http://www.askcolorado.org>, the librarians at AskColorado answered, on average, over 2,000 questions a month during the service's first year of operation. The service's usage figures have continued to increase. During the first two months of 2005 an average of over 5,000 questions were answered per month, over half of them from K-12 students.

Chart 1  
Overall, how would you rate the AskColorado virtual reference service?



Of all respondents:

- Three out of four rated the service overall as excellent or good. (See Chart 1.)
- Two out of three were very satisfied or satisfied with the answer to their question. (See Chart 2.)
- Almost three out of four found the service very helpful or helpful. (See Chart 3.)

### AskColorado Highlights

- Over 2,000 reference questions were answered per month (on average) during AskColorado's first year online.
- In early 2005, over 6,000 questions were answered during a single month.
- Nearly three-quarters of respondents found the service to be "helpful" or "very helpful."
- Well over half of respondents under age 18 (59%) and aged 18-24 (71%) used AskColorado to do research for homework or another school project.

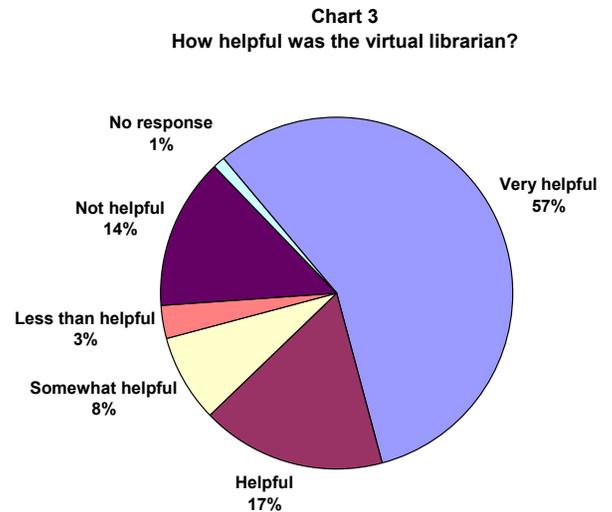
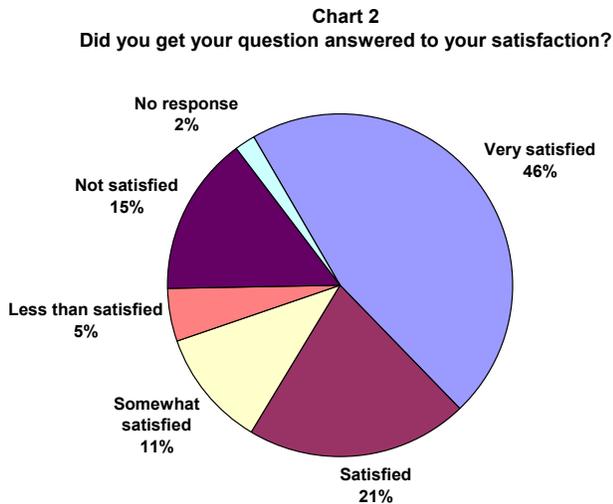
## Customer Satisfaction Survey

A pop-up survey, in English or Spanish (as appropriate), was presented to all users of the AskColorado virtual reference service between September 2003 and June 2004. Of the 5,382 responses, 5,322 in were English and 60 were in Spanish. Approximately 23,100 virtual reference questions were answered during the same time period, producing a survey response rate of 23%.

"The reference question was answered quickly and since this was my first experience with the system, the librarian was concerned that my question was answered completely. Wonderful service."

- AskColorado User





## Outcome Survey

A supplemental outcome survey was also administered to respondents who provided their e-mail addresses for follow-up contact. The English and Spanish versions of this survey produced a total 335 responses. Respondents provided information about their gender, age, and general location, as well as how AskColorado helped them. While the relatively small percentage of AskColorado users represented (1.5%) makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions, the survey provided a useful initial portrait of the service's patron base, and establishes a baseline for future evaluations. Highlights of the survey's findings included:

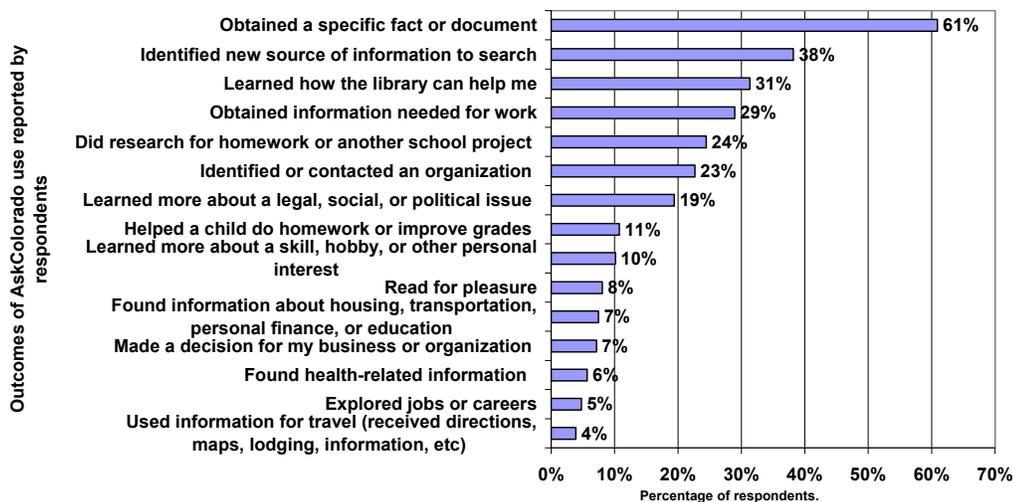
- Over half of AskColorado outcome survey respondents (51%) reported having a bachelor's or higher college degree.
- People ages 40-59 represented the biggest group of AskColorado outcome survey respondents at 42%. The next biggest group was 25-39 year olds at 26%.
- Over half (61%) of the outcome survey respondents said they used the service to obtain a specific fact or document. (See Chart 4.)
- Over one-third of respondents (38%) identified a new source of information to search through AskColorado. Almost one-third of respondents learned how the library could help them (31%) or obtained information needed for work (29%). (See Chart 4.)
- Close to one-quarter of these AskColorado users were using the service to do research for homework or another school project (24%) or to identify or contact an organization (23%). (See Chart 4.)

"This is a great service. I looked through numerous web sites to try and find this specific information, obviously to no avail. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity. I have never corresponded with a virtual librarian before and certainly will not hesitate to do so again."

- AskColorado User



**Chart 4:**  
As a result of my recent use of the AskColorado  
Virtual reference service, I...



Values do not add to 100% because respondents could select more than one outcome.

Cross-tabulations of outcomes reported by AskColorado users and their gender, age, and educational attainment were examined for statistically significant differences. Findings included the following:

- Almost one-quarter (24%) of male respondents and 16% of female respondents reported using AskColorado to learn more about a legal, social, or political issue.
- Respondents in the younger age groups used the service for homework questions. Well over half of respondents under age 18 (59%) and aged 18-24 (71%) used AskColorado to do research for homework or another school project. (See Chart 5.)
- Over one-third of respondents ages 40-59 (37%) and over one-quarter (28%) of 25-39 year olds said they used the service to obtain information needed for work. (See Chart 5.)

“Este servicio esta padrisimo es una buena fuente para encontrar facil y rapidamente lo que se esta buscando. Gracias.” (This service is a good source to easily and quickly find what you're looking for. Thank you.)

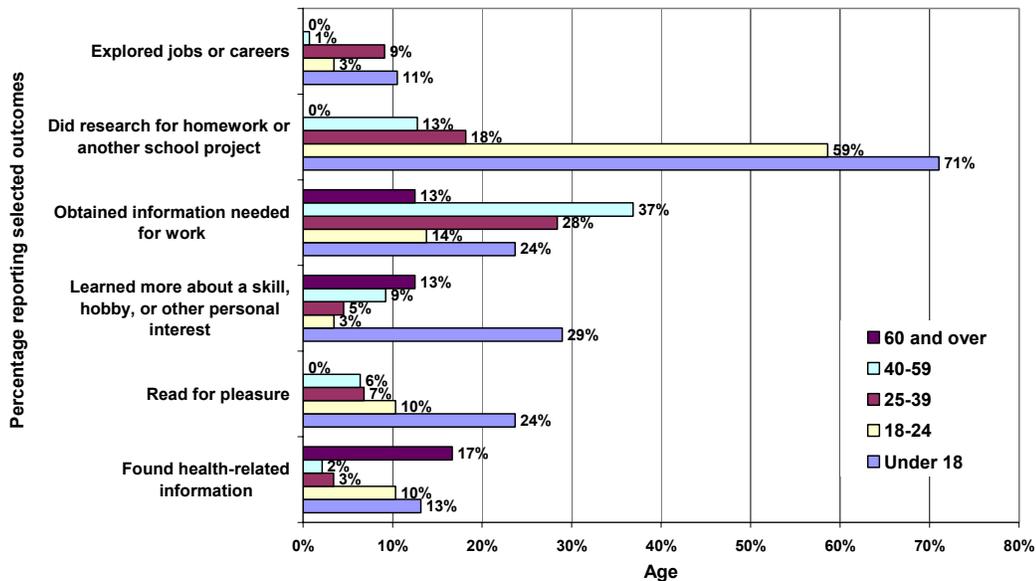
-AskColorado User

“I just discovered this service. It's one of the coolest things I've ever heard of. What a great luxury to have a librarian on call, 24/7! This is the most amazing thing.”

-AskColorado User



**Chart 5**  
**Percentage of Respondents Reporting Selected Outcomes of**  
**AskColorado Use by Age Group**



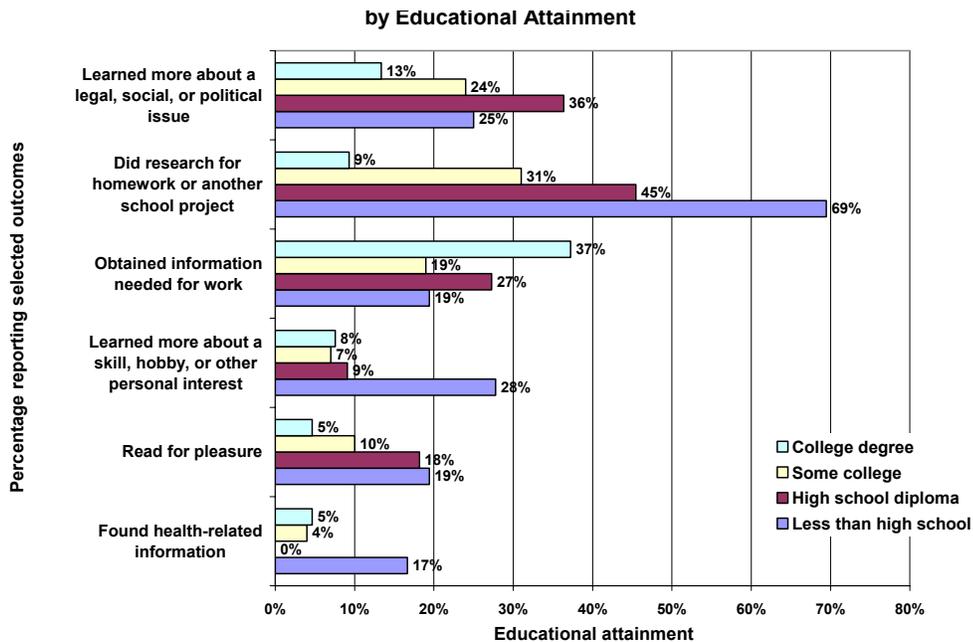
- Those with a college degree used AskColorado to obtain work-related information almost three times as often as the next most frequently cited outcome – learning more about a legal, social, or political issue (37% versus 13%). (See Chart 6.)
- Almost one-third (31%) of respondents who listed their education as “some college” indicated they used the service to do research for homework or another school project. Almost one-quarter (24%) of these users learned more about a legal, social, or political issue by utilizing AskColorado. (See Chart 6.)
- Respondents with a high school diploma also seem to be pursuing further education. In this group, 45% indicated they did homework or schoolwork with AskColorado’s help. Over one-third (36%) of this group also learned more about a legal, social, or political issue and over one-quarter (27%) obtained information needed for work. (See Chart 6.)
- Over two-thirds (69%) of the users with less than a high school education reported using the service to do research for homework or another school project. (See Chart 6.)

“What a great service! It feels so good to know that there are trained people there to help you when overwhelmed with a large research task. The staff person that I spoke with was very helpful and friendly. I will definitely recommend this service to ALL of my classmates!”

- AskColorado User



**Chart 6**  
**Percentage of Respondents Reporting Selected Outcomes of AskColorado Use**  
**By Educational Attainment**



"I had not used AskColorado before, and I am amazed at how quickly I was able to get the information I needed. I did not realize until I asked my question, that I would be communicating in real time with a librarian. I will be telling people about this great service -- I hope you don't mind!"

- AskColorado User

By all indications, the AskColorado virtual reference service has been well-received and has successfully fulfilled a wide array of information needs during its first year of operation. Use of the service is on the increase, and in February 2005 AskColorado librarians answered a total of 6,483 questions, the majority of them from K-12 students.

Starting in late 2004, a second series of customer satisfaction and outcome surveys was made available to AskColorado users. This continuing commitment to evaluating this online resource over time will provide a greatly enhanced view of how – and how well – the service is being utilized by its patrons.

Visit the AskColorado virtual reference service at <http://www.askcolorado.org/>.



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# THE U.S. LABOR MARKET FOR LIBRARY WORKERS, 2002-12

ED3/110.10/No. 224

March 31, 2005

Librarian retirements are at what some believe to be an all-time high. Many in the field are also concerned about the apparent extent to which library jobs are being re-structured and, sometimes, eliminated. In this seemingly unstable climate, several questions come to mind:

- How many jobs are there for library workers generally—and librarians in particular?
- How many of those jobs will be vacated in the foreseeable future?
- How many library jobs will be created or lost?
- Are there enough people to fill the library positions that will be available?
- How well (or poorly) are these jobs compensated?

Data that can help decision-makers begin to address these questions are available in Occupational Employment, Training, and Earnings Data accessible via the Bureau of Labor Statistics website. (See <http://data.bls.gov/oep/noeted/empoptd.jsp>.)

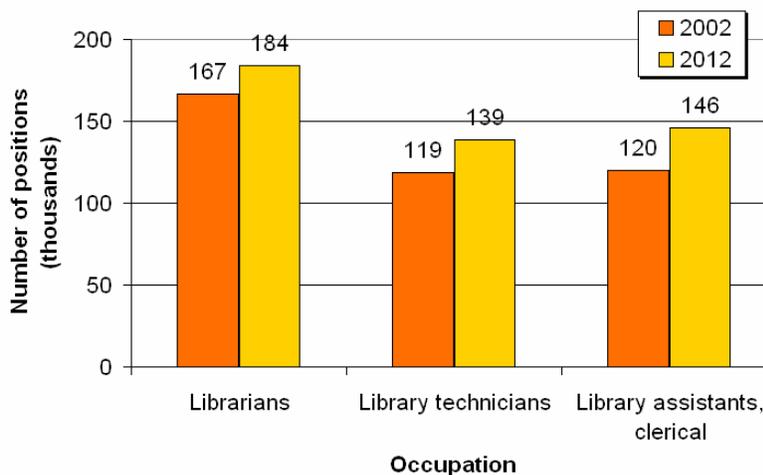
BLS defines three library occupations—librarian, library technician, and library assistant (clerical). For definitions of these occupations, see the sidebar, Standard Occupational Classification Definitions.

## Number & Types of Library Jobs

In 2002, there were 167,000 librarians, 119,000 library technicians, and 120,000 library assistants—a total of 406,000 library jobs. By 2012, it is expected that there will be 184,000 librarians, 139,000 library technicians, and 146,000 library assistants—a total of 469,000 library jobs. (See Chart 1.)

These figures indicate that the nation's libraries employ a substantial number of people. In 2002, the number of library workers—406,000—was about equal to the 2002 Census population of Sacramento, California (407,000). In 2012, the projected number of library

**Chart 1. Total Employment for Library Workers, 2000 & 2012**



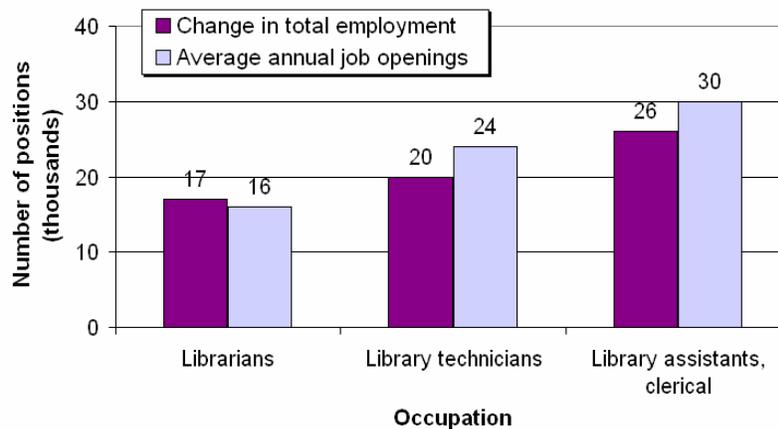
workers—469,000—will fall almost equidistant between the 2002 Census populations of Cleveland, Ohio (478,000) and Long Beach, California (462,000).

Overall, BLS predicts that library employment will increase by 15.5 percent between 2002 and 2012; but relative increases in library positions are greater as one descends the hierarchy of library jobs. Over the same period, library assistant jobs will increase by 21.7 percent; library technician jobs, by 16.8 percent; and librarian jobs by 10.2 percent.

### Ten-Year Change in Library Employment & Annual Job Openings

Projected change in total library employment between 2002 and 2012 is substantial. During that interval, the number of people working in libraries is expected to grow by an estimated 63,000, including 17,000 librarians, 20,000 library technicians, and 26,000 library assistants. (See Chart 2.)

**Chart 2. Change in Total Employment and Average Annual Job Openings for Library Workers, 2002-12**



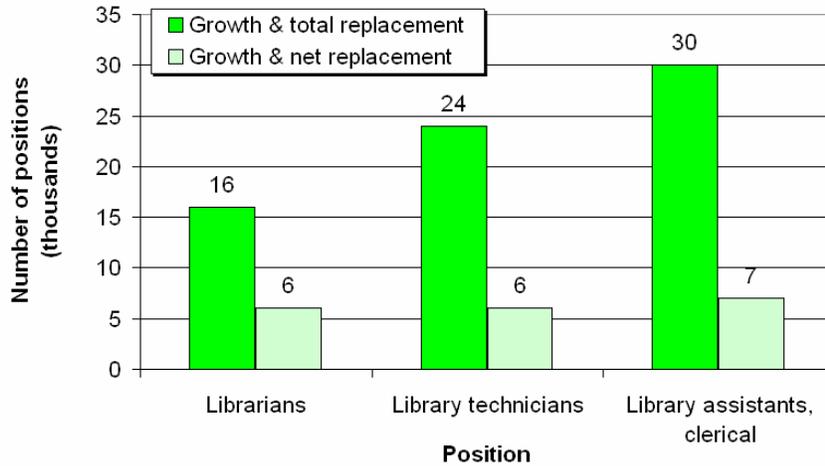
New entrants into the field will fill these newly created jobs as well as vacancies for existing positions. The average annual number of library job openings is expected to be 70,000, including 16,000 librarians, 24,000 library technicians, and 30,000 library assistants.

### Annual Library Job Openings: Growth & Replacement

BLS reports two figures related to annual job openings: growth plus total replacement and growth plus net replacement. Growth refers to the anticipated increase in library positions between 2002 and 2012. Total replacement refers to the number of workers in such jobs who must be replaced because they retire, leave their jobs for other reasons, or die. Net replacement adjusts total replacement by subtracting the anticipated number of new entrants into the field from the number who retire, leave their jobs for other reasons, or die. Thus, net replacement is always a lower figure than total replacement.



**Chart 3. Average Annual Job Openings for Library Workers, 2002-12**



Growth plus total replacement indicates the number of library positions that are expected to be open during the average year between 2002 and 2012. For the same period, growth plus net replacement indicates the average annual number of positions that will require new entrants into the field.

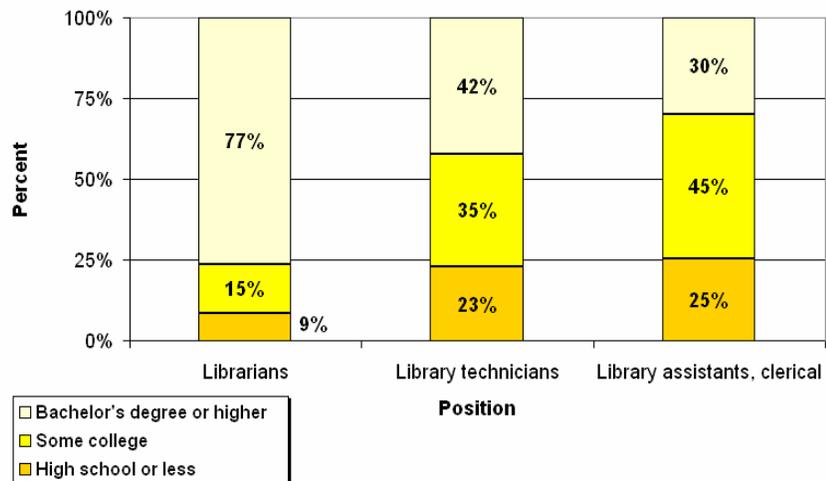
The relationship noted earlier between position rank and expected numbers of open

positions, both vacated and new, focused on growth plus total replacement. Growth plus net replacement figures indicate that the numbers of new entrants required annually to occupy foreseen library jobs is at least 19,000. That number includes 6,000 librarians, 6,000 library technicians, and 7,000 library assistants. (See Chart 3.)

### Educational Attainment of Library Workers

The fact that most librarian jobs require higher educational qualifications than library technician and library assistant jobs—usually a master’s degree from a program of library and information science accredited by the American Library Association—is reflected by the self-reported educational attainment levels of library workers. More than three out of four

**Chart 4. Educational Attainment of Library Workers Ages 25 to 44, 2002**

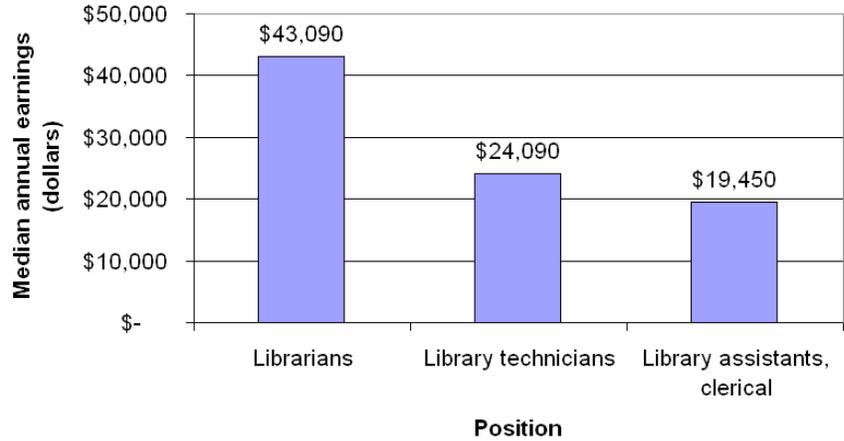


librarians (77 percent) report having a bachelor’s or higher degree. Only two out of five library technicians (42 percent) and less than one out of three library assistants (30%) report having such a degree. (See Chart 4.)



Curiously, the lowest BLS category for which educational attainment is reported is “high school or less.” It is somewhat unusual to lump together those who graduated from high school with those who did not. That said, fewer than one in ten librarians were reported in this category, compared with about one out of four library technicians (23 percent) and library assistants (25 percent).

**Chart 5. Median Annual Earnings for Library Workers, 2002**

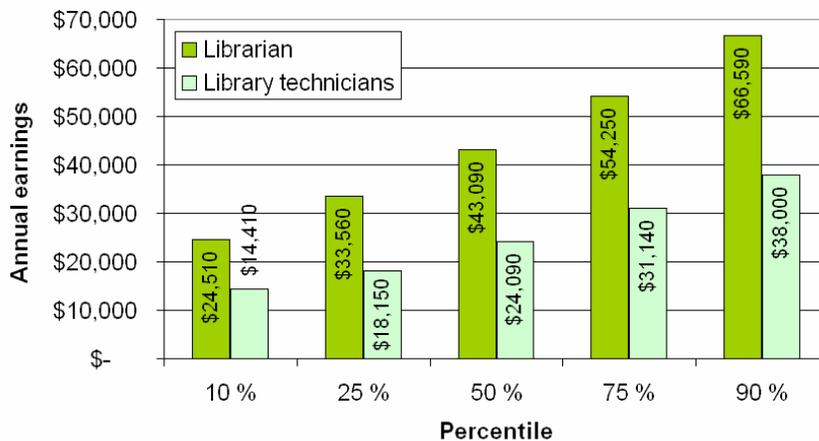


**Median Annual Earnings of Library Workers**

BLS reports median annual earnings for library, museum, and related workers for 2002. It is no surprise that the typical librarian earnings—over \$43,000—are very substantially higher than typical earnings of library technicians—over \$24,000—and library assistants—less than \$20,000. (See Chart 5.)

Differences in compensation among as well as between librarian and library technician jobs are further illustrated by examining selected percentile statistics. Half of librarians earn between about \$33,500 and \$43,000. The top ten percent of librarians earn over about \$66,500, but the bottom ten percent earn less than approximately \$24,500.

**Chart 6. Percentiles for Annual Earnings of Librarians and Library Technicians, 2002**



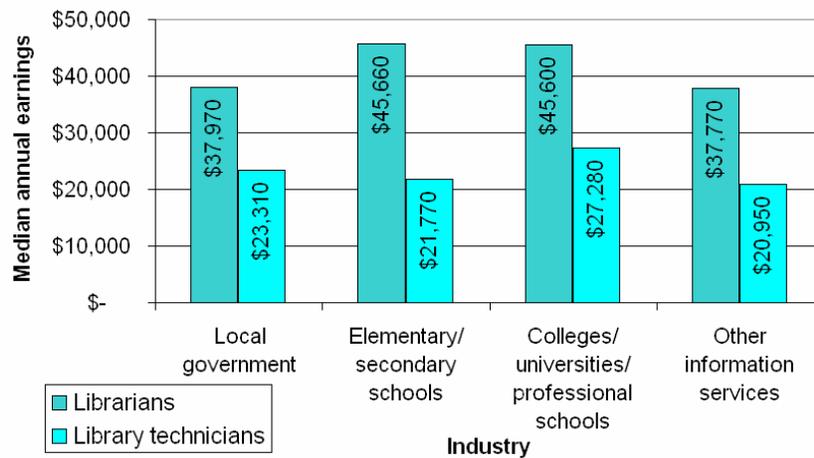
Similar differences are seen for library technicians. Half in those positions earn between about \$18,000 and \$31,000. The top ten percent of library technicians earn over \$38,000, but the bottom ten percent earn less than approximately \$14,500. (See Chart 6.)

BLS also reports median annual earnings of librarians and library technicians by industry.



In 2002, the sectors that reported the highest median annual earnings for librarians were school and academic libraries. Similarly, librarians employed by local governments (mostly public librarians) and those employed in “other information services” (i.e., special librarians and what are sometimes called “information brokers”) were almost tied with median earnings of approximately \$38,000 a year. Library technicians were best paid by academic libraries—at more than \$27,000 annually—and lowest paid by other information services—less than \$21,000 annually. (See Chart 7.)

**Chart 7. Median Annual Earnings for Librarians and Library Technicians by Industry, 2002**



The professional literature on library retirement, retention, and recruitment issues is a relatively new, but rapidly growing one. In late 2004, the Library Research Service of the Colorado State Library and the University of Denver released a report titled Retirement, Retention, and Recruitment (the 3 Rs): the Future of Librarianship in Colorado. The product of a Fall 2003 survey of library workers and LIS students, this is believed to be the first comprehensive statewide study examining the interaction of these three sets of issues. The report on this study also includes a comprehensive review of the literature to date. (See <http://www.LRS.org>.)

In 2005, the biennial update of the BLS data reported herein can be expected in the November issue of the Monthly Labor Review. That update will cover the period from 2004 to 2014. (See <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/mlrhome.htm>.) Those projections will also be included in a future edition of the Occupational Outlook Handbook. (See <http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm>.)

In late 2006, watch for reports from a two-year study examining the future of librarians in the workforce (2006-16). This study is being conducted at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and was funded by the Institute for Museum and Library Services.

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