

Using the Information from the Wisconsin Public Library Staff Compensation Summary Report

This document provides guidance on effectively utilizing the data presented in the Wisconsin Public Library Staff Compensation Survey Report.

Overall Guidelines. Please keep in mind:

- The Toolbox analogy. Consider the Report as one tool in a larger toolbox for determining library staff compensation and benefits. Use the data in conjunction with other existing market studies, wage rates and other data wherever possible to support arguments for equitable compensation. Consider also that library wages collectively are low compared to other public and private area jobs. Use of the Report with other data sets will assist in aligning compensation with the larger job market in your area.
- The data is a snapshot in time. Although the data is relatively current, the Report represents a snapshot of compensation from early 2023. Survey data should be aged forward, consistent with market wage growth (recently 3-5% annually) to the middle of the budget year (lead/lag), beginning of the budget year (lag), or end of the budget year (lead) to help plan future wage changes and forecasting.
- Sample sizes may be small in some cases. Categories with less than five respondents are typically not reported in compensation reports, but the SRLAAW Workgroup requested all data be included (and not redacted) for the benefit of decision-makers to provide better context.
- Collaboration is important. Consult with your boards and governing municipalities on use of the data within the Report. Use of the Report without a municipal or regional context for compensation can increase tension unnecessarily with your governing authority. Compensation strategies should also be tailored to your library's specific needs, culture, and capacity. Focusing on compensation with an equity lens can be one way to start the conversation with your board and municipality.
- The 70% threshold. When matching positions to survey data, focus on the essence of the role rather than relying solely on job titles. Aim for at least a 70% job match based on job summaries and functions.

Using the Report.

- Determine if the essence of the job title and description sufficiently matches the position at your library. Aim for at least a 70% job match based on job summaries and functions. If the 70% threshold is not reached, examine similar titles and descriptions for a possible match.
- For each position, two sections that indicate the state region and resident population for respondents are identified. Both sections correlate with geographic segmentation commonly used by the survey administrator, Carlson Dettmann Consulting, in other compensation studies they oversee.

- Once you have identified the correct job title and description, pay attention to the # or Orgs column in the table and keep in mind the sample size you are viewing for the region and resident population sections. Make note if the sample size is small or does not appear representative.
- Locate the rows that align with your region and resident population and make note of the min, mid and max hourly rate averages for each section. How you weight the averages for region and resident population data is at your discretion, but higher resident population generally has a correlation to increased compensation. Keep also in mind that some respondents did not have a “min/mid/max” range to work with and only reported an hourly rate in the “mid” column. If unsure of which hourly rate to consider, use the number in the “mid” column.
- Within each row there is also data showing the number of respondents that acknowledged the matching position at the library either (a) required an MLS degree, (b) was eligible for benefits at some level, or (c) was eligible for paid leave. Data related to benefits and paid time off are included in the Report at pages 19-20.

Library System Role.

Library systems are uniquely positioned to leverage data within the Report because of their familiarity with the local job market and needs of member libraries. Systems can support member libraries in the following ways:

- Training and one-on-one consultation. Consider holding group training or offering one-on-one consultation to directors or trustees to address their specific questions and concerns about the compensation study report.
- Budget Integration: Collaborate with member libraries to integrate the Report findings into their budgeting process. This ensures that the study's recommendations are considered when allocating resources for staff compensation.
- Job Description Review: Help libraries review and update their job descriptions based on the compensation study's insights. This can align job roles more accurately with state standards and aid in fair compensation.
- Communication Strategies: Offer communication strategies for member libraries to share the compensation study results transparently with key stakeholders. This can help in maintaining trust and understanding regarding any potential changes.
- Feedback to Study Providers: Act as a conduit between member libraries and the SRLAAW Workgroup responsible for the compensation study, relaying feedback, questions, and suggestions for future improvements.

Next Steps and Future Plans.

- WLA Conference session. Representatives from SRLAAW, DPI and Carlson Dettmann Consulting will be on hand to discuss the Report findings and provide information on how to use the Report.
- Data visualization. As part of the agreement with Carlson Dettman Consulting, the SRLAAW Workgroup has received all the raw data from the report and will consider how best to provide access to the library community through data visualization tools or other methods.
- Iterative process. While definitive plans for conducting another compensation survey have yet to be made, there have been discussions about making compensation reporting a systematic process that will repeat and improve with each iteration.
- Municipal Comparisons: The next iteration of the survey will include more data on comparable municipal positions. Initial drafts included limited data that was found to be misleading.
- Contracted Positions: The current Report doesn't encompass contract employees, though many libraries employ them. The next iteration of the report is likely to incorporate data or guidance on contract workers and compensation.