

***Salary Schedule
and
Step Plan
for
Public Libraries***

**A Method for Establishing Wage Levels for Library
Employees Other than Directors, with a Suggestion for
Developing Step Plans for Salary Management**

Winding Rivers Library System, 2009

Salary Schedule and Step Plan for Public Libraries

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Introduction

Library directors continue to ask for guidance in determining fair wage levels for their employees. The *Minimum Compensation Recommendations for WRLS Area Library Directors* have for several years offered specific pay rates for library directors for the various certification and population ranges in Wisconsin. It is a similar recommendation for the other position levels in libraries that is requested repeatedly. The requirements for directors are fairly standard for any given population, with many of the requirements stated in *Wisconsin Administrative Code*, but that is not the case for other library positions. These requested recommendations have not been offered in the past because positions within a library can vary so much from institution to institution, with an "assistant" position requiring a differing array of skills, education, and responsibilities from place to place.

Nevertheless, recognizing the need and desire for help, we are now offering this brief proposal to help libraries think through the process of establishing equitable wage levels for all their employees. While it includes some specific pay rates, it is actually an explanation of how to envision a structure or schedule for compensation. It discusses the salary schedule and how to develop one, and it also discusses the merits and composition of a step plan. We hope this will provide practical help with the issue at hand. If it is still not enough, the only realistic way to provide building level detail is to undergo an analysis of your current situation and have a plan specifically designed for your library. WRLS has provided this assistance in the past and will do so in the future upon request from the local director and library board.

Rationale

Following is a structure for determining wages for the staff of a public library. Since libraries vary so much in size and the number and nature of positions, it is difficult in a general document to recommend specific wage levels that will work for every institution. That is why Winding Rivers Library System is offering a structure to help directors and boards develop their own precise salary structure.

The content of the proposal is derived from practices and protocols that are used in public and private institutions to assure equitable and consistent treatment of employees. Underlying these practices is a premise that **a business or enterprise should base compensation on the requirements and responsibilities of the position, and comparison with similar types of positions outside the library are entirely valid as long as position responsibilities and educational and experience qualification are comparable. In addition, whatever mechanism is used to provide wage increases to employees, it should be as fair and objective as possible, avoiding subjectivity at all levels.**

The proposed wage rates directly reflect the demands of the positions. An investigation of regional pay levels for comparable work was undertaken to help determine the entry level recommendations, but keeping in line with the local economic environment was not the primary rationale for the proposed wages.

In an ideal situation, the process of developing a salary schedule will involve a series of activities, to include:

1) reviewing the characteristics and developing or revising detailed job descriptions for each position authorized by the library board;

2) ranking and rating the fully described and analyzed positions; then

3) grouping positions into classes or levels of responsibility and qualifications, so that the resulting structure has similar types of positions placed in a single class;

4) considering the desirability and practicality of developing a step plan to help the institution manage salary adjustments over the long term, to inform all employees of what to expect in regard to wages over their tenure, and to provide a uniform and fair method of determining pay rates for newly hired employees;

5) adopting a strategy for implementing any new salary schedule and step plan that will hold employees harmless while placing every employee on her or his proper step over a specified, limited number of years, based on their time in service.

This ideal situation can be realized only on an institutional basis; it is not possible to provide a general solution that addresses each of these matters in any detailed, meaningful way. Therefore, what follows starts with the defined classes or levels from Category A of the *Position Classifications for Wisconsin Public Libraries* published in 2005 by the Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries. Since the large majority of libraries in Wisconsin are in communities of fewer than 3,000 people, Category A seemed most representative. Some terminology has been altered to reduce confusion.

Comparing the responsibilities of your various library positions with those specified in the following job descriptions will help you determine which levels your positions are at relative to the proposed salary schedule rates.

David L. Polodna, WRLS Director

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Position Classification Summary: Qualifications

Level/Class Title:

Qualifications:

I / Library Director

Minimum required formal education (at least a Bachelors degree preferred if less than that is required); Wisconsin certification at required level (or ability to obtain); four years of library work experience; supervisory experience. Experience working with institutional governing bodies and community organizations.

II / Assistant - Specialist

Two years post-high school credits, Bachelors degree preferred; two years work experience in the specialty area of the position (e.g., children's services, technical support); supervisory and customer service experience; library work experience preferred.

III / Clerk

High school diploma; two years work experience involving public / customer service.

IV / Aide

High school student or graduate (at least sixteen years of age); no experience required.

The classes described above are meant to broadly represent the typical position levels found in most public libraries in communities under 6,000. Larger libraries will have additional levels depending on the organizational structure and the total number of employees and mid-level supervisors.

Library Job Description

Position Level and Title: I, Library Director

Job Title: *Library Director*

Job Summary: Under the direct supervision of the Library Board of Trustees, administers the public library with responsibility and authority 1) for organizing and managing the operation of the library and 2) for planning, directing, and coordinating its program of service to the community. Serves as personnel director and liaison with municipal, county, library system, and with community organizations.

Specific Responsibilities:

Administrative Duties (50%)

- Act as the library board's executive officer, and implement the policies and goals established by the library board.
- Develop the annual library budget for review by the library board and participate in its presentation to local officials.
- Manage and expend funds within established guidelines.
- Recruit, select, hire, supervise, and evaluate library staff. Oversee the staff training program. Recommend improvements in staffing, organization, and salaries and benefits. Plan and conduct regular staff meetings.
- Prepare library board meeting agendas and necessary reports in cooperation with the board president, and notify the board of scheduled meetings. Post notification of meetings to satisfy open meetings requirements.
- Direct and supervise the maintenance of library buildings and grounds.
- Conduct ongoing evaluation of existing library policies and procedures, and submit recommendations for improvement to the board.

Service and Collection Development Duties (20%)

- Oversee the library's ongoing collection development plan and supervise the selection, purchase, and withdrawal of library materials in accordance with that plan.
- Conduct ongoing evaluation of existing library programs and services, and submit recommendations for improvement to the board.
- Encourage and coordinate a long range planning process involving the board, staff, and community. Establish a method for regular review of progress towards goals stated in the plan.

Miscellaneous Duties (30%)

- Provide assistance to the public for routine library services on a scheduled basis for some portion of each week.
- Develop and administer the library's overall public relations plan; prepare press releases and make presentations to community groups.
- Represent the library at the system level and actively participate in other professional library organizations.
- Perform other related work as assigned by the library board.

Specific Qualifications:

Ability to work within a confidential environment.

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with trustees, staff, volunteers, government officials, the public, and community groups.

Ability to delegate workloads and work schedules, and to effectively utilize the human resources available to the library.

Ability to understand, develop, interpret, and enforce library policies, rules, and procedures.

Ability to effectively communicate ideas and information in both verbal and written form.

Ability to interpret statistical data, analyze information, evaluate programs, and prepare clear and concise reports and recommendations.

Ability to gain a working understanding of current and developing technologies as they relate to library operations.

Ability to foster and maintain positive public relations for the library.

Library Job Description

Position Level and Title: II, Assistant - Specialist

Job Title: *Library Assistant*

Job Summary: Under the direct supervision of the Library Director, performs paraprofessional work serving library patrons directly and indirectly, including assisting patrons with the full range of services at the public service desk. May have supervisory and decision-making responsibilities

Specific Responsibilities:

- Manage the cataloging of all library materials, regardless of format, making them ready to be circulated or placed on the shelf.
- Plan, organize, and conduct library services and programs in assigned areas, such as children services.
- Assist in hiring, training, scheduling, and directing library aides.
- Plan special interest displays, programs, and projects as assigned by the director.
- Provide assistance from the public service desk with all aspects of regular public service: checking in and checking out, patron registration, ready reference, reader's advisory, and enforcement of library policies.
- Oversee the mending of damaged materials to make them once again ready for patron use.
- Assist in the updating of library procedures; collect and organize statistics.
- Provide guidance to the library clerk and aide at times when the director is not present.
- Maintain inventory of supplies needed for processing and other tasks. Prepare list of purchases and submit to director.
- Perform other related work as assigned by the library director.

Specific Qualifications:

- Ability to direct and supervise the work of other staff.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality of library patron information.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, supervisor, and the public.
- Ability to understand and interpret library policies, rules, and procedures.
- Ability to gather statistics, analyze information, and write reports.
- Ability to provide assistance with all aspects of regular public service.
- Ability to use computer software and manage computer technology.
- Ability to communicate effectively with staff and public.
- Ability to follow detailed directions and maintain a regular work schedule.

Library Job Description

Position Level and Title: III, Clerk

Job Title: *Library Clerk*

Job Summary: Under the direct supervision of the Library Director, performs clerical work to address the needs of library patrons directly and indirectly, including assisting patrons at the public service desk.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Perform circulation desk procedures, such as checking in and checking out materials, registering patrons, collecting fines, etc.
- Check in deliveries of interlibrary loan materials.
- Perform data entry and filing as assigned.
- Process, withdraw, repair, and recondition library materials.
- Shelve library materials and read shelves.
- Sort and route mail.
- Assist with library programs and displays.
- Perform bibliographic checking as assigned.
- Assist patrons with the mechanical operation of Library equipment.
- Answer directional questions and refer patrons to appropriate personnel.
- Perform other related work as assigned by the library director.

Specific Qualifications:

- Ability to maintain confidentiality of library patron information.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, supervisor, and the public.
- Ability to understand and interpret library policies, rules, and procedures.
- Ability to provide assistance with all aspects of regular public service.
- Ability to use computer software and library business machines.
- Ability to communicate effectively with staff and public.
- Ability to follow detailed directions and maintain a regular work schedule.
- Ability to sort in alphabetic or numeric order, and to develop a working understanding of the library's classification system.

Library Job Description

Position Level and Title: IV, Aide

Job Title: *Library Aide*

Job Summary: Under the direct supervision of the library director, oversees the shelving of materials and the proper order of the stacks. Provides other support services as needed under the direct guidance of an assistant, a specialist, or the director.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Shelve library materials and maintain consistent and proper order of the stacks, to include performing shelf reading on a regular schedule.
- Maintain the periodicals area by putting out new issues on a daily basis and placing older issues in the proper holding area.
- Empty book drop and take returned items to the proper place for check in.
- Shift ranges of materials if room is needed in certain areas of the stacks.
- Assist with library programs and displays.
- Provide back-up assistance to the public service desk staff by checking materials in or out when needed.
- Assist with keeping book display areas neat and interesting.
- Perform other related work as assigned by the library director.

Specific Qualifications:

- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, supervisor, and the public.
- Ability to understand and interpret library policies, rules, and procedures.
- Ability to communicate effectively with staff and public.
- Ability to follow detailed directions and maintain a regular work schedule.
- Ability to sort in alphabetic or numeric order, and to develop a working understanding of the library's classification system.

Salary Schedule

The salary schedule presented below was built from the top down, beginning with WRSL's recommended minimum hourly rates for the directors. The chart considers municipalities with populations up to 15,000. The 2010 minimum recommended wage for directors is being used as the entry level wage. Wages for other positions in the library follow from the director's wage and are also considered entry level wages.

The targets were as follows and were based on educational and experiential requirements and levels of responsibility of the various class levels:

Class II to be 35% lower than Class I,

Class III to be 15% lower than Class II.

Class IV is pegged at legal minimum wage for all population ranges since it is essentially a student level position with minimum responsibilities.

Population =	I - 1199	1200 - 2999	3000 - 5999	6000 - 14999
<u>CLASS</u>	<u>Grade III(A)</u>	<u>Grade III(B)</u>	<u>Grade II</u>	<u>Grade I(A)</u>
I - director	\$15.25	\$18.50	\$21.60	\$25.75
II - assistant	9.90	12.05	14.00	16.75
III - clerk	8.40	10.25	11.90	14.25
IV - aide	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25

Step Plans

The following step plan is meant to illustrate how a step plan might be constructed. The number of steps in a plan and the intervals between achieving steps is somewhat arbitrary. Too many steps can be cumbersome to manage, too few can create frustration for employees since movement is limited or comes infrequently. If steps come every year then the plan is essentially a cost of living adjustment (yet totally ignoring the actual change in the cost of living), but if steps are spread out over too many years they provide little motivation for staff to make a stronger commitment to the library. This illustration provides five (5) steps through which employees can advance over their work life if they achieve satisfactory annual performance appraisals. The step plan is conceptually a longevity plan, but is designed to reward only successful time in service. Therefore, while it is not a merit plan, it does recognize achievement and positive contributions to the organization. If an employee were to receive a less than satisfactory appraisal or be placed on rehabilitative probation during a year prior to or in which he or she was to receive a step increase, the increase could be withheld until problems specified in the substandard appraisal are remedied. The illustration below uses the salary schedule for the **Grade III(A)** library from the earlier chart (page 9).

Step 1 is an entry level step. **Step 2** is provided on January 1 following successful completion of the employee's second (2nd) year of work for the library. **Step 3** is provided on January 1 following successful completion of the employee's fifth (5th) year, **Step 4** on January 1 following successful completion of the employee's seventh (7th) year, and **Step 5** on January 1 following successful completion of the employee's tenth (10th) year. After the eleventh year of employment, an employee receives only cost-of-living adjustments. Each year for which a cost-of-living adjustment is provided by the library board, the entire salary schedule and step plan is revised upward by the percentage (or amount) of increase provided. Rates presented below are dollars per hour and represent only wages, not benefits.

Class	Entry	2	3	4	5
I	15.25	16.00	16.80	17.30	17.80
II	9.90	10.40	10.92	11.25	11.60
III	8.40	8.82	9.26	9.54	9.83
IV	7.25	7.60	7.98	8.22	8.47

The gap from the entry step to step 2, and from step 2 to step 3 is approximately 5%. The gap from step 3 to step 4, and step 4 to step 5 is approximately 3%. Because of the effect of percentage increases, the entire schedule/plan may need to be reviewed and corrected every decade or so.

Implications of Applying the Salary Schedule and Step Plan

A classification and salary schedule is meant to bring order and fairness to the compensation of workers in an organization. Once in place, the schedule allows each employee to understand 1) why he or she is being compensated at a particular level and 2) what to expect in regard to pay advancement over time. The schedule, if applied properly, assures that all workers with similar responsibility and job requirements will be compensated in a uniform, objective manner. It further helps an employee understand why individuals at different class levels are paid at different rates. Finally, the schedule provides a concise tool for dissemination of the compensation practices of a public institution where this information is a matter of public record.

The appropriate way to implement a new salary schedule is to determine the proper placement of each employee within his or her proper step range, giving each person credit for years in grade. In the case where an employee is already paid at a rate above the proper step level, the employee should continue to be paid at his or her current rate until enough time passes for them to qualify for the next step increase that would raise the employee's rate. A governing board should strive to implement a new schedule in a manner that will hold all employees harmless, assuring that no individual is hurt by the change.