

Colorado Public Librarians Eligible for Public Assistance

ED3/110.10/No. 247

December 20, 2006

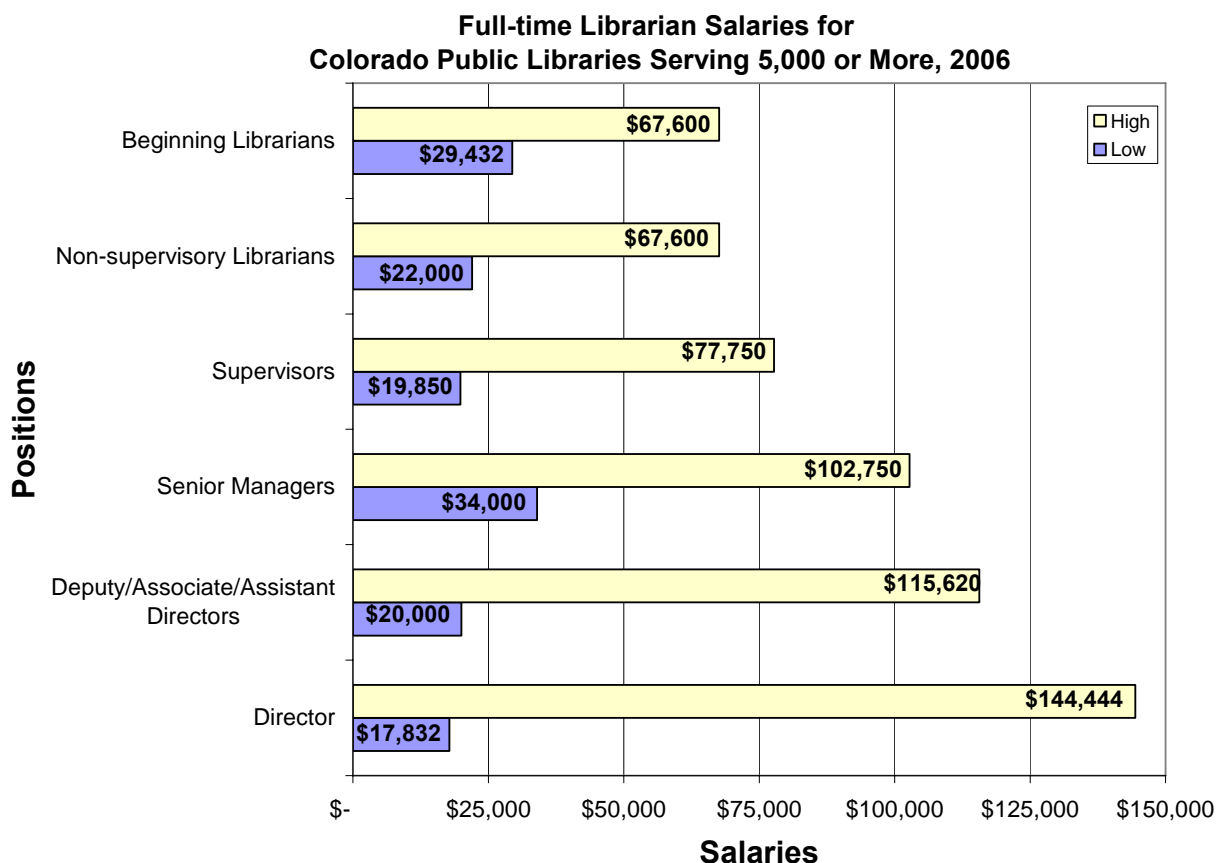
Based on the results of the 2005 Colorado Public Library Annual Report, many librarians in Colorado earn salaries that meet the income eligibility criteria for public assistance programs. These benefits are based on income and generally calculated for a family of four.

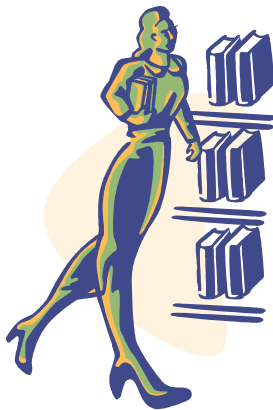
Out of the 114 public libraries in Colorado, 63 or 55% provide services to populations over 5,000. The information in this report focuses on the data collected from these 63 libraries.

Salaries range from \$17,832 to \$144,444. Interestingly, both the lowest and highest salaries reported were for the position of Director.

The Colorado Public Library Annual Report is a survey conducted each year by the Library Research Service. The cited report is based on current salaries reported as of January 1, 2006. Libraries are requested to provide responses in a variety of areas. A section of the survey is focused on salaries. Libraries report the lowest and highest salaries paid for each position. Since there is only one director per library, the actual salary of this position is reported.

The following chart illustrates by position, both the highest and lowest salaries reported by Colorado public libraries.





Out of the 63 libraries, 30 reported paying full-time salaries that meet the income limit of \$35,797 for several public assistance programs in Colorado. In fact, the lowest salaries reported in all of the six major positions qualify for some type of public assistance. Public assistance is based on financial need with an upper income limit for several programs of \$35,797, for a family of four. Various levels of benefits are provided based on different income limits.

The following table lists the income limits for several public assistance programs available in Colorado.

Table 1

**Colorado Public Assistance Programs and Income Eligibility Requirements
Based on 2005 Poverty Guidelines for a Family of Four**

Program	Income Limit
CHP+**	\$35,797
Colorado Indigent Care	\$35,797
Low-income Energy Assistance	\$35,797
School Lunch	\$25,155 (free lunch) - 35,797 (discounted lunch)
Medicaid (Children)	\$19,350-25,735 (limits depend on age of children)
Food Stamps	\$25,155

** Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+) is a low-cost health insurance program for uninsured Colorado children ages 18 and under whose families earn or own too much to qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford private insurance.

Surprisingly, the position of supervisor is paid the least by the most libraries, demonstrating that responsibility and rank does not always mean higher pay. The largest percentage (41%) of libraries reported low salaries of less than \$35,797 for supervisors. The second largest percentage (35%) of libraries reported low salaries of less than \$35,797 for beginning librarians

The following table summarizes by position, both the number and percentage of libraries reporting salaries below the income eligibility level of \$35,797 for certain types of public assistance.



Table 2

**Colorado Public Libraries Serving 5,000 or More
Reporting Full-time Salaries below \$35,797**

Positions	Total Libraries Reporting	Libraries Reporting a <u>Low</u> Salary below \$35,797		Libraries Reporting a <u>High</u> Salary below \$35,797	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Beginning Librarians	23	8	35%	5	21%
Non-supervisory Librarians	29	8	28%	3	10%
Supervisors	32	13	41%	6	19%
Senior Managers	32	3	9%	1	3%
Deputy/Associate/Assistant Directors	23	4	17%	4	18%
Directors*	60	N/A	N/A	8	13%

* Because each library has only one director's salary to report, those libraries who reported a salary below \$35,797 are counted in the High Salary portion of the table.

The salaries reported for several positions meet income eligibility criteria for particular types of public assistance. For the specific number of libraries reporting salaries that qualify for public assistance in each position, please see Table 2.

The following table illustrates by position, each public assistance program for which a qualifying salary was reported. For example, at least one library reported a salary for the position of Director which qualifies for all of the following benefits, Colorado Indigent Care, Low Income Energy Assistance, CHP+, School Lunch, Medicaid for Children and Food Stamps.



Table 3

Positions in Colorado Public Libraries for Which Salaries Qualify for Public Assistance by Program, 2006*

Position	Public Assistance Programs					
	Colorado Indigent Care	Low-Income Energy Assistance	Child Health Plan Plus	School Lunch	Medicaid (Children)	Food Stamps
Director	■	■	■	■	■	■
Deputy/Associate/Assistant Director	■	■	■	■	■	■
Senior Manager	■	■	■			
Supervisor	■	■	■	■	■	■
Non-supervisory Librarian	■	■	■	■	■	■
Beginning Librarian	■	■	■			

*Based on criteria for a family of four.

In addition, if two people in a family of four worked at libraries and earned the lowest salaries reported for directors (\$17,832) and supervisors (\$19,850), their combined income of \$37,682 would qualify for the School Lunch program, Colorado Indigent Care, Low-Income Energy Assistance, and Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+).

In summary, many public librarians in Colorado are paid salaries that qualify for public assistance if the sole support of a family of four. There are several reasons why some public librarian salaries are low. One rationale is that public libraries serve the community and are funded with tax dollars, therefore salaries are kept at a minimum. However, if librarians must apply for public assistance in order to support their families, is paying low salaries a cost-effective use of public resources?

Sources:

Colorado Public Library Annual Report. 2005. Compiled by Library Research Service.

Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute. "Federal Poverty Measures Fact Sheet." April 2005.

"Colorado Medicaid Facts." July 2005. retrieved 12 Dec 2006 from http://www.aap.org/advocacy/washing/elections/mfs_co.pdf.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Author: Daphne Eastburn, Senior Research Analyst
Library Research Service • 201 East Colfax Avenue, Suite 309 • Denver, Colorado 80203-1799
Phone 303.866.6900 • E-mail: lrs@lrs.org • Web site: www.LRS.org

