

## Law libraries and law librarians around the world: United States of America

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Short essay about several aspects of the law library profession in the United States of America: educational requirements, professional regulation, labor market, salaries, associations, labor union, events, monograph competitions, prizes and tributes.

**Keywords:** Law library – United States of America. Law librarian – United States of America.

## Bibliotecas jurídicas e bibliotecários jurídicos ao redor do mundo: Estados Unidos da America

Breve relato sobre vários aspectos das bibliotecas jurídicas e dos bibliotecários nos Estados Unidos, enfocando: formação acadêmica, regulamentação profissional, mercado de trabalho, salários, instituições associativas, concursos de monografias, prêmios e tributos.

**Palavras-chave:** Biblioteca jurídica – Estados Unidos da América. Bibliotecários jurídicos – Estados Unidos da América.

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### 1 INTRODUCTION

In the United States of America, some law students and lawyers discover that they like working in law libraries (doing legal research, for example) and decide to become law librarians. On the other hand, some librarians become law librarians without prior law school education. And some people become legal information professionals outside of law libraries. In other words, in the U.S., people may work in law librarianship and the legal information profession with various backgrounds and find themselves in various professional settings.

While law libraries, like other kinds of libraries, have been affected by technological and economic changes, hundreds of law libraries (in law schools and law firms, for example) in the U.S. employ law librarians, typically at higher salaries than the average librarian. Once in the profession, law librarians and other legal information professionals can enjoy various professional opportunities, including participation in national or local organizations, writing articles, and entering competitions.

This paper is a summary of several aspects of the law library profession in the U.S. For more information about the profession, the best source to consult would be the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) (<http://aallnet.org/>).

## 2 EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

In general, a law librarian should have – or be close to completing – either a master's degree in library or information science (MLS, MIS, or MLIS)<sup>1</sup>, a law degree (JD)<sup>2</sup>, or both. The degree(s) required or preferred may depend on the employer or the position.

The widest range of law librarian positions is available to people with both degrees. However, many law librarian positions are available to those with only the MLS degree. (Some law librarians who start with only an MLS degree later get a JD degree.) Relatively few law librarian positions are available for those with only the JD degree.

The MLS degree would typically need to be from a master's program accredited by the American Library Association (ALA) (<http://www.ala.org/accreditedprograms/directory>). The JD degree would typically need to be from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA) ([http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal\\_education/resources/aba\\_approved\\_law\\_schools.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/aba_approved_law_schools.html)). Some employers may accept non-U.S. equivalents to MLS or JD degrees.

Some universities offer a joint JD/MLS degree. Some MLS programs offer a specialization, certificate, or course of study in law librarianship. Some other MLS programs offer one or more courses in law librarianship or legal resources.

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<sup>1</sup> MLS = Master of Library Science; MIS = Master of Information Science; MLIS = Master of Library and Information Science.

<sup>2</sup> JD = Juris Doctor.

For more information, see <http://www.aallnet.org/mm/Careers/lawlibrarycareers/Education-Requirements>.

### **3 PROFESSIONAL REGULATION**

With the exception of some government libraries, there is no specific law regulating the professional activity of law librarianship or establishing the requirements to be a law librarian. Various federal and state laws, while not directed specifically at law librarianship, have an impact on law librarianship, such as copyright laws restricting the copying of documents and laws or regulations prohibiting unauthorized practice of law.

The largest professional organization of law librarians – the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) – and its chapters and sections are not governmental entities. The ALA and ABA, which regulate the educational institutions that train future librarians and lawyers, are also not governmental entities.

### **4 LABOR MARKET**

Law school libraries, law firm and other private law libraries, and government law libraries are the three most common employers of law librarians. Some law librarians – or persons who have been or have the qualifications to be law librarians – work in other positions at law schools, law firms, and governmental entities, and in other settings such as legal publishing companies and database providers. A small percentage of law librarians are self-employed.

Law librarians (or persons qualified to be law librarians) – especially those who work outside libraries – may have a position or title other than "librarian." Examples of such titles are "legal information professional," "legal researcher," or "knowledge manager."

### **5 SALARIES**

There is no minimum salary for law librarians, except insofar as minimum wage laws regulate all employment.

According to the 2015 AALL Salary Survey (<http://www.aallnet.org/mm/Publications/salary-survey>), the average salary for law librarians ranged from \$48,405 for public services librarians to \$160,027 for a director or chief librarian. The average

salaries for law librarians (most commonly in the \$60,000-70,000 range) are higher than the average salaries for most other types of librarians (most commonly in the \$40,000-50,000 range)<sup>3</sup>.

**TABLE 6: SALARIES OF REPORTING PROFESSIONALS BY AREA OF JOB TITLE\***

This year salaries are reported based on job title rather than job assignment. This allows the survey to be more responsive to the changing information environment.

ASSIGNMENT	No. Rec'd.	% of Total	Low Salary	High Salary	Average Salary	Median Salary
Access Services Librarian	10	2.10%	\$25,000	\$68,000	\$42,329	\$39,396
Adult/Public Services Librarian	14	2.90%	14,000	70,000	42,510	43,000
Archivist	32	6.70%	17,000	65,000	44,763	42,750
Assistant Director	5	1.00%	29,000	45,000	34,400	32,000
Branch Manager/Library Manager	9	1.90%	28,000	50,000	36,444	31,000
Business Analyst	6	1.30%	38,000	67,500	55,083	56,250
Cataloger/Catalog Librarian	13	2.70%	25,000	56,000	37,897	40,000
Children's/Youth Services Librarian	21	4.40%	26,325	56,000	43,818	44,000
Collection Development Librarian	5	1.00%	32,000	69,000	50,200	45,000
Data Analyst/Scientist	7	1.50%	41,000	95,000	72,571	75,000
Digital Asset Management	6	1.30%	37,500	115,000	62,167	50,250
Digital Services Librarian	9	1.90%	32,000	62,000	45,778	47,500
Electronic Resources Librarian	5	1.00%	34,000	53,000	43,300	44,500
Head Librarian	4	0.80%	40,000	59,300	48,825	48,000
Information Services Librarian	4	0.80%	30,025	47,000	38,781	39,050
Librarian	56	11.70%	19,798	80,000	44,892	42,000
Library Associate/Library Assistant	21	4.40%	14,560	44,000	31,090	33,000
Library Director	25	5.20%	24,000	118,000	46,164	40,000
Library Specialist	6	1.30%	27,000	42,500	34,083	33,750
Library Technical Assistant	5	1.00%	20,000	45,000	29,560	26,000
Library Technician	8	1.70%	21,000	52,000	34,975	35,000
Medical Librarian	3	0.60%	25,000	44,000	36,333	40,000
Metadata Librarian	5	1.00%	38,000	67,500	47,500	46,000
Outreach Librarian	8	1.70%	37,500	64,000	51,558	52,500
Reference & Instruction Librarian	37	7.70%	17,000	74,000	43,221	42,000
Research Assistant	4	0.80%	38,000	52,500	43,375	41,500
Research Librarian	12	2.50%	38,000	68,000	49,992	48,250
School Librarian	16	3.30%	30,000	96,000	46,094	44,250
School Library Media Specialist	25	5.20%	35,000	87,500	50,362	47,900
Software Engineer/Developer	10	2.10%	36,000	170,000	85,450	78,500
Special Collections Librarian	4	0.80%	26,000	42,500	35,250	36,250
Systems Librarian	5	1.00%	40,000	57,000	50,400	53,000
Technical Services Librarian	6	1.30%	34,237	48,775	43,169	44,000
Teen/YA Librarian	35	7.30%	28,912	54,000	38,596	37,000
UX Designer/Researcher	37	7.70%	37,000	120,000	78,075	77,500
<b>TOTAL ANSWERING</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14,000</b>	<b>170,000</b>	<b>46,987</b>	<b>43,000</b>

This table represents placements of any type reported by job title but only salaries reported as full-time. Some individuals omitted placement information, rendering some information unusable. Comparison with other tables may show different numbers of placements and average and median salaries.

Fonte: ALLARD, 2015.

## 6 ASSOCIATIONS; LABOR UNION

The largest nationwide association for law librarians is the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), founded in 1906 and now representing approximately 4,500 law librarians and related professionals (<http://aallnet.org/tm/about>).



The AALL includes 31 regional or local chapters – for example, Atlanta Law Libraries Association (ALLA), Law Librarians Association of Wisconsin, Inc. (LLAW), and

<sup>3</sup> See table 6 of ALLARD, Suzie. Placements & Salaries: Explores all data. 23 oct. 2015. Library Journal, 2015. Disponível em: <http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2015/10/placements-and-salaries/2015-survey/explore-all-the-data-2015/>.

Southwestern Association of Law Libraries (SWALL) (<http://aallnet.org/mm/Member-Communities/chapters/chapter-websites>). The AALL also has several special interest sections (<http://aallnet.org/mm/Member-Communities/sis/sis-websites>) and caucuses (<http://aallnet.org/mm/Member-Communities/caucuses/caucus-websites>).

Annual membership in the AALL is \$242, discounted to \$61 for retired and student members. Each special interest section membership is \$20. Sometimes the employer of an AALL member will pay the membership fee and some or all of the costs of attending the annual conference.

Some law librarians in the U.S. are active in the Special Libraries Association (SLA) Legal Division (<http://legal.sla.org/>) or foreign or international library associations such as the International Association of Law Libraries (IALL) (<http://iall.org/>).

There is no labor union specifically for law librarians in the U.S.

## 7 RESEARCH

The AALL conducts some nationwide research about law librarians. A regular research publication is the AALL Biennial Salary Survey (<http://www.aallnet.org/mm/Publications/salary-survey>). Some other research publications are included in the list at <http://www.aallnet.org/mm/Publications/products>.

## 8 JOURNALS

Journals for law librarianship include the Law Library Journal (<http://www.aallnet.org/mm/Publications/llj>), Legal Reference Services Quarterly (<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/wlrs20>), and AALL Spectrum (<http://www.aallnet.org/mm/Publications/spectrum>). Articles in Law Library Journal and Legal Reference Services Quarterly are typically several pages long and often contain footnotes. Articles in AALL Spectrum are typically shorter and not footnoted, though they often mention other resources.

While many legal information professionals write articles for these journals, some also write articles for law reviews or other legal journals, or engage in other forms of writing such as books and blogs.

## 9 EVENTS

The largest event for law librarians is the AALL Annual Meeting & Conference (<http://www.aallnet.org/conference>). The AALL conference allows law librarians and related professionals to give and attend presentations and workshops on a wide variety of subjects within law librarianship; to obtain information about products and services for law libraries from vendors such as legal publishers; and to meet fellow legal information professionals. The annual conference is held in a different city each year.

AALL chapters and other organizations such as law firms and legal publishers may hold or sponsor other events for law librarians on an annual or other basis. An example is the SCALL Institute (<https://scallinstitute.org/>).

## 10 MONOGRAPH COMPETITIONS; PRIZES AND TRIBUTES

The annual AALL Awards Program (<http://www.aallnet.org/mm/Member-Resources/AALLawards>) includes awards for legal literature, distinguished service, and several other categories. Various AALL committees (<http://www.aallnet.org/mm/Leadership-Governance/committee/activecmtes.aspx>) choose the award winners pursuant to published criteria and procedures.

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