

Library Manpower Requirements Studied

The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics has recently issued a report entitled "Library Manpower—a Study of Requirements and Supply." Highlights of the report follow:

Employment in libraries is expected to grow more slowly over the 1970–85 period than during the decade of the 1960s. The total number of persons in library occupations is projected to rise from about 235,000 in 1970 to 374,000 in 1985. In line with recent trends, employment of library attendants and assistants is expected to rise more sharply than that of librarians, as nonprofessional staff members are assigned increasing responsibility for routine library work. Between 1970 and 1985, total librarian employment is projected to rise from 115,000 to 167,000, or 41 percent; employment of attendants and assistants is expected to increase from 120,000 to 212,000, or 77 percent. Compared with the rapid expansion which took place in the 1960s—much of it stimulated by unprecedented levels of federal support for library services—employment growth over the projected period is expected to be much slower. Furthermore, growth is expected to be slowest during the 1970s, with much of the overall 1970–85 increase occurring after 1980.

Employment of school librarians is projected to grow from 52,000 in 1970 to nearly 80,000 by 1985. Much of this growth will not occur until the 1980s, when school enrollments are projected to turn sharply upward.

Employment of public librarians is projected to rise from 26,500 in 1970 to 33,000 by 1985. Contributing to the relatively slow growth of librarian employment in public libraries is the increasing utilization of paraprofessional personnel in these libraries.

Employment of academic librarians is projected to rise from 19,000 in 1970 to 27,000 in 1985. Most of this growth will occur during the 1970s, because of rising college-level enrollments. Employment growth in academic libraries is expected to come to a virtual halt after 1980, however, because of the anticipated drop in enrollments.

Employment of special librarians is projected to rise from 17,000 to 22,500 between 1970 and 1985. The demand for special librarians represents a net reflection of changing occupational patterns in those industries employing special librarians.

The main source of demand for librarians

through 1985 will be replacement requirements. The number of librarians needed to replace those who retire, die, or leave the labor force for other reasons will greatly exceed the number required to fill newly added positions. Over the entire 1970–85 period, replacement needs are expected to account for three out of four job openings for librarians—compared to less than half of the openings in the 1960s.

To meet projected requirements for growth and for replacement, job openings for librarians are expected to average 11,200 a year between 1970 and 1985. Based on past patterns of entry into the profession by new bachelor's and master's library science degree recipients, an estimated 9,000 new graduates are likely to enter the labor force as librarians every year from 1970 to 1985. This means that the number of jobs open to persons other than new graduates is likely to be sharply curtailed. Only 2,200 jobs a year are expected to be available to persons seeking reentry, delayed entry, or transfer to the occupation. While in the 1960–70 period new graduates filled about 40 percent of all openings, they will be available to fill 80 percent of openings created by growth and replacement needs in the 1970–85 period. The employment situation for persons other than new graduates is likely to deteriorate accordingly.

Educational requirements for beginning librarians have been upgraded substantially in the past five to ten years. As a result, job prospects in the 1970s and 1980s for entering librarians without the graduate degree in librarianship appear to be severely limited. Such openings probably will be found, for the most part, in small libraries where the salary level is too low to attract fully trained personnel.

Despite the generally tight job market for beginning librarians, demand is expected to remain strong over the 1970–85 period for library personnel with certain types of specialized training: community outreach personnel, media/audiovisual specialists, and computer specialists. ■ ■

ACRL Membership

March 31, 1974	11,520
March 31, 1973	13,687
March 31, 1972	10,395
