

Librarian

Help people find what is true, run the collection and keep the doors open. A master's degree job that is mostly about people.

TYPICAL PAY

\$68,270

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$44k to \$104k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

6 to 7 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Public libraries, school and university libraries, law and hospit...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 English, history and a language. Get a job or volunteer shift at your local library or school library, which also tells you whether you actually like the work.
- 2 Bachelor's degree, any subject** 4 years
 Subject knowledge helps later. Science, law or a foreign language can be the thing that gets you a specialist post.
- 3 Accredited master's degree** 2 years
 A master's in library and information science accredited by the American Library Association. Many are available fully online, part time, while you work.
- 4 Work in a library while you study** During the degree
 Part-time circulation or assistant work during the master's is close to essential. Employers hire the graduate who already knows a library floor.
- 5 Add a state certification if you want schools** Varies by state
 Most states require a school librarian to hold a teaching license or a school library media endorsement on top of the degree.

Pros and cons

- + Work that is genuinely useful to people with few other options
- + Stable employment and often a pension
- + Loan forgiveness applies cleanly to public employers
- A master's degree is required for a job paying under \$70,000
- Employment is projected to grow only 1 to 2 percent through 2034
- Many first posts are part time or split between branches

Good to know

Almost everyone in it has a master's

When people in this job were surveyed, 96 percent said a master's degree was required. Very few occupations are that uniform, and it is why the accredited degree is treated as the license this profession n...

It is a shrinking headcount

About 142,100 librarians and media collections specialists work in the United States, and federal projections expect growth of only 1 to 2 percent through 2034. There are still around 13,500 openings a year,...

Optional boosts

Law librarian. Medical and hospital librarian. Systems and metadata. Archives and special collections.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Librarians and Media Collections Specialists (25-4022.00)

O*NET OnLine: Librarians and Media Collections Specialists

American Library Association: accredited programs

American Library Association: directory of accredited programs

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/librarian>



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