

## Health Sciences Librarian

### ■ Job Description

Health sciences librarians are information specialists. They provide physicians, nurses, allied health personnel, and other health care providers with material and resources on medical techniques, procedures, and current research. Like all librarians, they select and purchase materials; organize these materials into a manageable collection; develop and maintain a catalog; help users find information; and administer the library, performing such tasks as managing personnel, budgeting, and planning.

Health sciences librarians also acquire additional knowledge relating to the health sciences such as an understanding of biomedical reference works and on-line resources, searching skills on these databases, and the principles of organization of biomedical science information. They often work closely with professionals who have highly specific information needs and who rely on the health science librarian to search and retrieve materials.

### ■ Job Settings

Hospitals; schools of medicine, dentistry, nursing, veterinary medicine, and allied health; pharmaceutical companies; research facilities; federal and state government facilities; and health care associations and foundations. Librarians may also work for publishers or database vendors, or in consulting or teaching.

### ■ Projected Need

Slower than average growth in the employment of librarians is expected nationwide. However, opportunities for librarians with specialized training or experience in medicine or other health fields should be good. In addition, librarians with experience in computerized library systems will be in strong demand.

### ■ Salaries

Nationally, medical librarians with two years or less of experience average \$40,080 per year, according to the Medical Library Association. Average annual salary for all medical librarians is \$49,955. Library directors can earn up to \$125,000 per year.

### ■ Related Careers

Health science writer, health educator

### ■ Differences in Training

The minimum education for most positions is a master's degree from a school of library and information science accredited by the American Library Association. As preparation, a bachelor's degree in a life science is useful, but undergraduate study in the behavioral and social sciences, physical sciences, and computer science are all excellent preparation. Many graduate library schools offer special courses or internships in health sciences librarianship.

In the Midwest, programs are available in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin. For a list of accredited library education programs contact the American Library Association, 50 E. Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611.

### ■ Related Educational Programs

The programs of study listed below are the recommended areas of study to pursue for this occupation. Clicking on these will lead to files that show in-state and national schools that offer these programs.

*The following link(s) will take you to CIS for more information. CIS requires an ID and password that can be obtained at <http://cis.ilworkinfo.com/loginhelp/login.asp>*

### [Library Science](#)

### ■ Credentials

The Medical Library Association recommends that health sciences librarians be credentialed through membership in the Academy of Health Information Professionals. A master's degree from an accredited library school, current employment in the health information field, and evidence of knowledge in core areas of health information science fulfill the minimum requirements for credentialing.

### ■ Resources

Medical Library Association  
65 East Wacker Place, Suite 1900  
Chicago, IL 60601-7298  
Phone: 312.419.9094  
E-mail: [info@mlahq.org](mailto:info@mlahq.org)  
<http://www.mlanet.org>

Click on “Careers” in the right side bar. Select “Career Exploration: Find Out What It Takes to Become a Medical Librarian!”

The MLA offers a variety of scholarships and grants to assist qualified students in graduate library science programs and to enable practicing health sciences librarians to take advantage of opportunities for continuing professional development.

American Library Association  
Office for Library Personnel Resources  
50 East Huron Street  
Chicago, IL 60611  
Phone: 800.545.2433  
E-mail: [ala@ala.org](mailto:ala@ala.org)  
<http://www.ala.org>  
Select “Education and Careers.” Click on “Careers in Libraries” in the left side bar.

The American Library Association offers a number of scholarships to graduate library science students ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000.