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Check it out: Projections for library occupations

Elka Torpey | April 2019

Who can help you find books, digital archives, and other resources? Library workers, of course.

[Librarians](#), [library technicians](#), and other library workers connect people with information. A core focus of their work involves organizing, preserving, and sharing library collections with the public. But these workers also engage with their communities in other ways: developing children’s programming, facilitating author visits, and referring patrons to government services, to name a few.

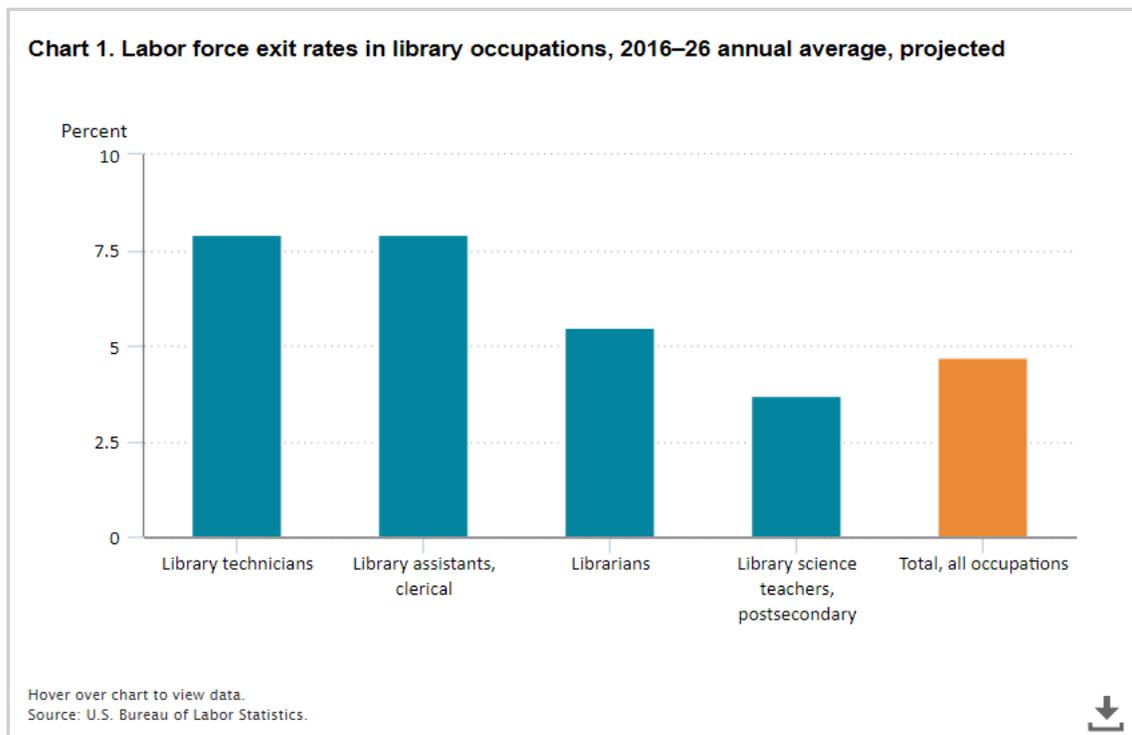
You may find them doing all of these tasks in a variety of settings, not just public libraries. And, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects opportunities in library occupations through 2026.

The charts and tables that follow highlight projected openings, employment, and more in library-related occupations.

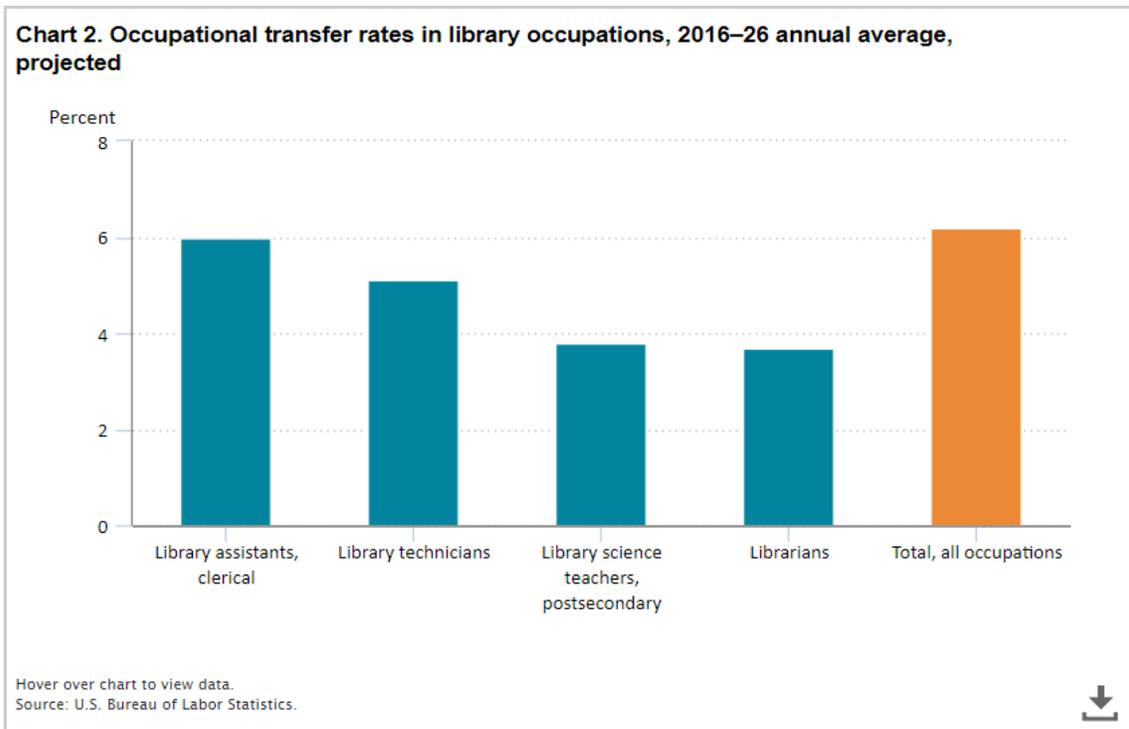
Openings projected

Occupational openings indicate how many opportunities are expected each year, on average, over the projections decade for people entering an occupation. These openings arise from projected labor force exits, occupational transfers, and employment growth.

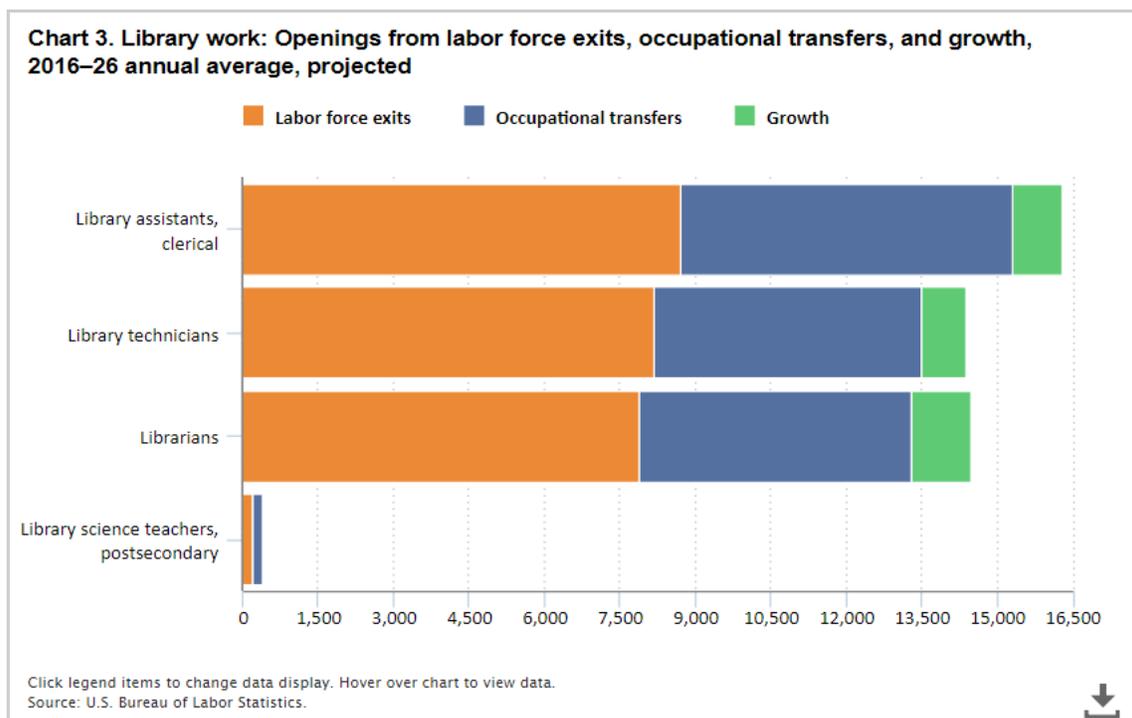
As chart 1 shows, BLS projects most library occupations to have higher-than-average rates of labor force exits from 2016 to 2026. Workers might exit the labor force for a variety of reasons, such as to retire or to care for family.



In contrast, occupational transfer rates are projected to be lower than average in library occupations. (See chart 2.) Transfer rates measure when workers permanently leave one occupation for another. These low transfer rates may indicate that library workers are less likely than other workers to change occupations.

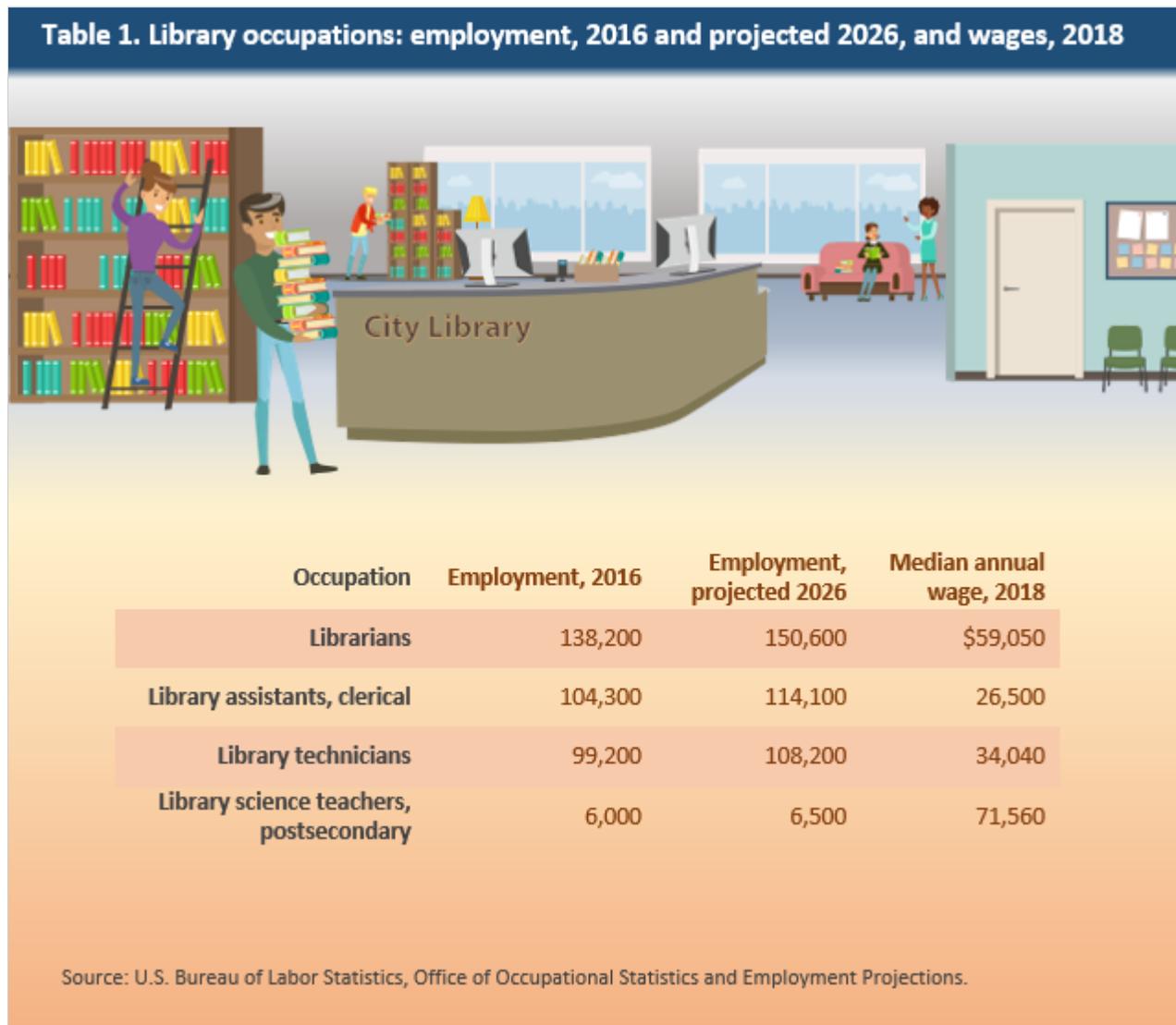


Taken together, labor force exits, occupational transfers, and employment growth are projected to result in more than 45,000 openings each year, on average, in library occupations. As chart 3 shows, most openings for these occupations are expected to stem from workers leaving, rather than from newly created jobs.



Employment and wages by occupation and industry

Of the occupations shown in table 1, wages for [postsecondary library science teachers](#) (\$71,560) and librarians (\$59,050) were above the median for all occupations (\$38,640) in 2018. Postsecondary library science teachers had the smallest employment (6,000) in 2016, while librarians had the largest (138,200). And by 2026, librarians are projected to have 150,600 jobs.



Many librarians work in public libraries run by local governments, but that’s not the only place they are employed. Special librarians, such as law, medical, and corporate librarians, work in settings other than school and public libraries. As table 2 shows, the largest industry employer of librarians in 2016 was elementary and secondary schools. This industry is also expected to add the most jobs for librarians over the projections decade.

Table 2. Librarians by industry: employment, 2016 and projected 2026, and wages, 2018



Industry	Employment, 2016	Employment, projected 2026	Median annual wage, 2018
Elementary and secondary schools	47,600	51,100	\$60,780
Local government, excluding education and hospitals	41,100	44,100	53,060
Colleges, universities, and professional schools	25,900	28,900	64,130
Information	7,500	9,400	56,970
Junior colleges	4,800	5,100	63,550
State government, excluding education and hospitals	2,200	2,200	58,020
Federal government	1,500	1,500	87,200
Legal services	1,300	1,400	74,850
Hospitals	1,200	1,300	58,340

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections.

For more information

Read more about employment projections for library occupations, as well as hundreds of others, in the [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#). To better understand the projections data, including [occupational separations](#) and [projected growth](#), visit the [Employment Projections site](#).

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