



## Overdue: Pay Equity for Library Workers

### Library Workers and the Poverty Line

- Entry-level library positions can easily leave employees below the poverty line.
- Even such workers whose wages surpassed Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut-Off line for a family of three, could easily be among Canada's working poor.

### Library Workers' Wages are Lower than Wages in Traditionally Male Jobs

- The average full-time, full year Canadian woman's salary in 1998 was 72.2% of the average Canadian man's salary. It actually dropped to 71% by 2003.
- Traditionally male jobs in the municipal sector are typically higher paying than traditionally female jobs in the library sector, despite the equally valuable work that library workers contribute to society.
- Many entry-level library positions make as little as 64% to 82% of similar municipal labourer jobs.
- Also, it can take up to 3 years for these library workers to reach maximum pay while many municipal jobs have no increments at all.
- Over the 3 years it takes for women in entry-level library jobs to reach the top increment, they can earn \$21,000 to \$41,000 less than traditionally male municipal labourer jobs with no increments.
- This lost income is enough for a down payment on a house or condominium, or for putting 1 or 2 children through university.

### Low Municipal Library Wages Compared to Other Sectors

- There is also great wage variance between entry-level municipal library workers and library workers in K-12 and post-secondary libraries, many of whom have benefited from pay equity gains in the last decade.
- K-12 and post-secondary library assistants can earn up to 22% more than municipal library assistants.
- The average of maximum hourly pay rates of the highest wage librarian positions in Vancouver, Port Moody, Coquitlam, Burnaby, North Vancouver, Surrey and Richmond in 2005 is \$31.35
- This is more than \$2/hour lower than what comparable library positions in the federal government earn after the large Public Service Alliance of Canada pay equity settlement of 1999.
- Also, municipal librarians earn significantly less than librarians at UBC and SFU (over \$39.00/hour) and at Capilano and Douglas colleges (over \$41.00/hour).

## **Pay Equity Gains for Library Workers Elsewhere in Canada**

- Pay equity legislation in Ontario led to job evaluation in Mississauga in the late 1990s. There, a Library Assistant II saw a \$5,000 increase in salary, while Senior Librarians, received a \$10,000 increase in salary.
- In Toronto, entry-level library workers received pay equity improvements of 24%, while other positions improved by 17-20%.
- Federally, library workers benefited from the PSAC Pay Equity court settlement more than any other group in PSAC: averaging more than \$5,000 more per year.
- Municipal librarians in Vancouver and Toronto have seen an increasing gap in their wages after Ontario pay equity legislation: it is now a \$7/hour wage gap. Further, it takes 25% longer for GVRD librarians to reach the maximum wage level than librarians in Toronto.

## **Pay Equity Now**

- Pay equity is the best way to address gender discrimination. Gender-neutral point-weighted job evaluation and comparing male and female wage lines are critical elements in achieving equity.
- Addressing job factors like skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions can lead to pay rates that do not discriminate against workers in traditionally female jobs.
- Other tools to achieve pay equity include across the board wage increases, eliminating increments and increasing base pay.