

Almy Landauer

Circulation Librarian at Fletcher Free Library, Burlington

Testimony for the Working Group on the Status of Libraries:

Focus on Staffing, July, 22, 2022

Do libraries have enough staff?

The ability to provide 21st century services to Vermonters is directly related to the level of staffing (and other things). I have found in my 15 years of working in VT libraries and getting to know many librarians and libraries that I have not worked in, that many libraries are understaffed. Too often we must rely on volunteers for things like tech support or grant writing. Too often, especially in our small libraries, the librarian(s) does not have enough paid hours in the week to take on projects and programs that would greatly benefit their community, or participate in professional development activities.

Do library professionals get adequate compensation and benefits?

Absolutely not. As a whole librarians and non-librarians who work in libraries are seriously underpaid for their skill level and education. Library work is often undervalued and overlooked by the folks in power in a town or city. As a whole we have not done a good job of advocating for ourselves. Another issue is that so many libraries especially outside Chittenden County and our larger cities, offer only or mostly part time jobs (partly to keep the cost of benefits down). These jobs pay less and the vast majority do not offer benefits. This results in a reduced pool of good applicants and/or high turnover in many cases.