



MEMORANDUM

Date: June 2, 2021

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: **May 23, 2021 Letter from Library Employees**

The letter you received claims gender discrimination based on the gender of the incumbents within a number of County departments and compares salary of Librarians and their degree requirements to those of a Deputy Sheriff position.

You have also received a letter from the Pima County Deputy Sheriff's Association requesting additional pay adjustments simply because the City of Tucson will provide a pay increase for Tucson Police Department employees.

The fact that a large percentage of Library staff are female as compared to the female staff in the other listed departments is misleading. The University of Arizona Library Science graduates in years 2020 and 2021 totaled 56 graduates, of those, 14 were male (25 percent) and 42 were female (75 percent). In the Spring of 2021, there were 195 students enrolled in the Master of Arts in Library and Information Science program, of those 32 were male (16 percent) and 163 were female (84 percent). Therefore, the population that would apply for Librarian positions within Pima County to be employed by Pima County are reflective of the pool of qualified applicants regarding gender in the community. Hence, there is no gender bias.

Regarding pay and compensation, the Library classification series will be studied in the upcoming Salary Survey and appropriate adjustments will be made.

With regard to premium pay related to COVID-19, libraries were effectively closed on March 27, 2020 to the public and were not scheduled to open for limited service until May 18, 2020 while Sheriff Deputies, law enforcement and correction officers were required to continue to provide day to day public safety support. Library staff who spent more than four hours per day at temperature taking stations did receive premium pay, as did staff who provided delivery support through the EOC.

Regarding the Stay at Home Plan and leave banks, while 4 permanent staff members and some intermittent staff did exhaust leave banks during the Stay at Home Plan, Library Administration utilized the pandemic telecommute process where applicable, and allowed staff to work half time at 14 locations providing holds pickup and food distribution to minimize the loss of leave time.

The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors

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Finally, the first page of what was sent to the board contained inaccurate information. The annual salary for a Licensed Practical Nurse is \$41,080 not \$37,918, for a Social Worker it is \$39,000 not \$37,918, for a Public Health Nurse it is \$59,384 not \$50,460 and for a IT Service Support Specialist it is \$45,801 not \$49,628.

CHH/anc

Attachment

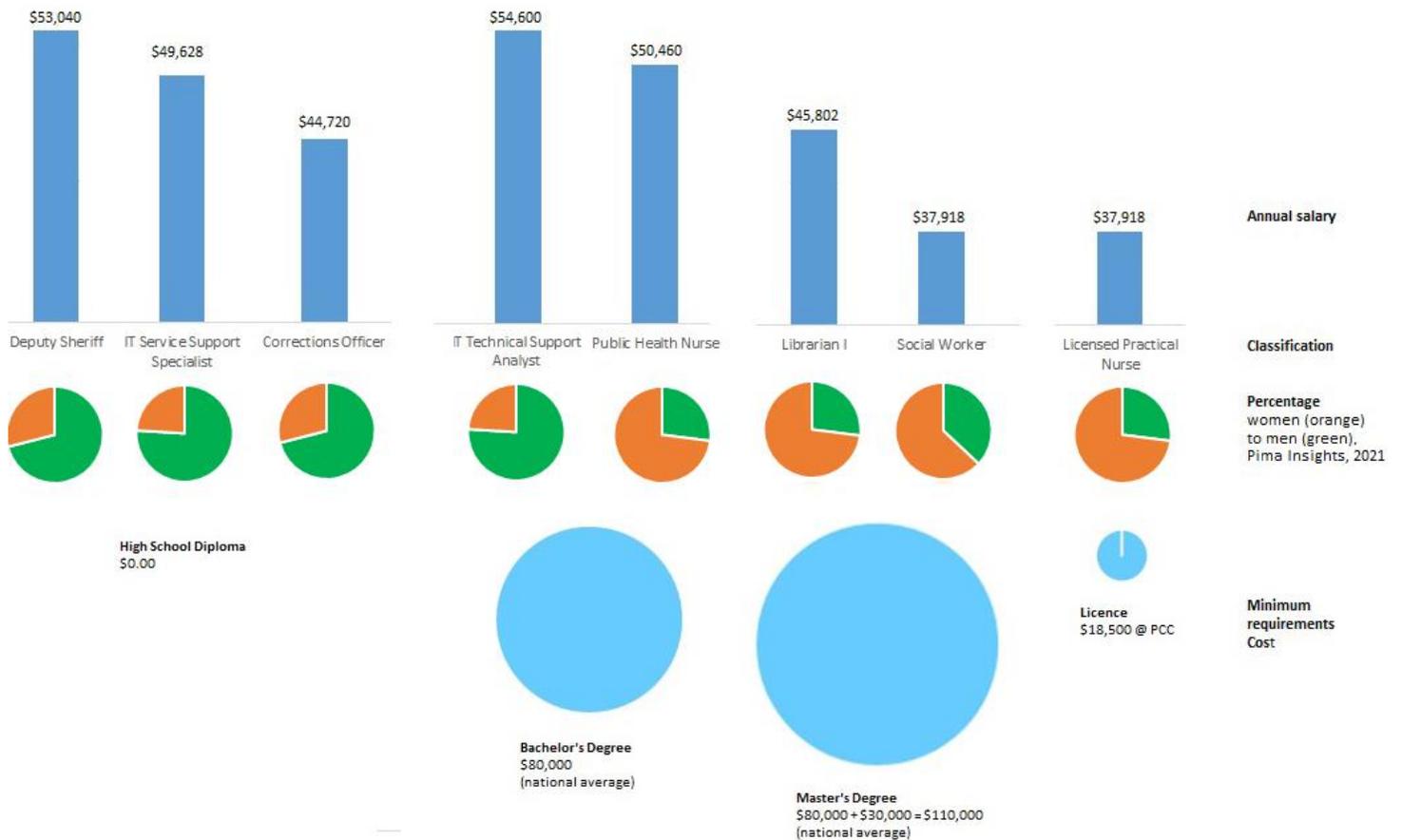
c: Jan Leshar, Chief Deputy County Administrator
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,
Health and Community Services
Amber Mathewson, Director, Library District
Cathy Bohland, Director, Human Resources

May 23, 2021

Rex Scott, District 1
Matt Heinz, District 2
Sharon Bronson, Chair, District 3
Steve Christy, District 4
Adelita Grijalva, Vice Chair, District 5

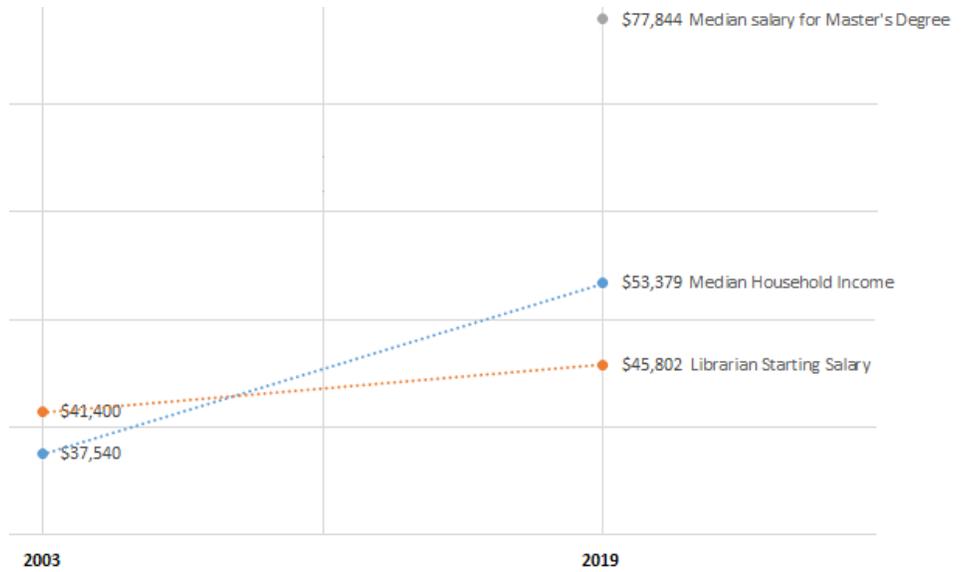
Dear Members of the Board;

The Employment Rights website states, “**Pima County provides equal access and equal opportunity in employment and services and does not discriminate.**” However, there are several departments with larger proportions of men that pay higher salaries and maintain lower requirements for employment. Armed only with a H.S. Diploma, an entry-level Deputy Sheriff will earn \$25.02 and an IT Service Support Specialist, \$23.86 an hour. Conversely, an entry-level Librarian with a Master’s Degree will take home just \$22.02 an hour. Social workers – also requiring a graduate level education – are valued at \$18.23 an hour (50 cents *less* than a Sheriff 911 Dispatcher with a GED). Practical Nurses receive the same starting pay, but need a license for this position. Even positions requiring a Bachelor’s degree pay higher salaries when the department holds higher percentages of men.



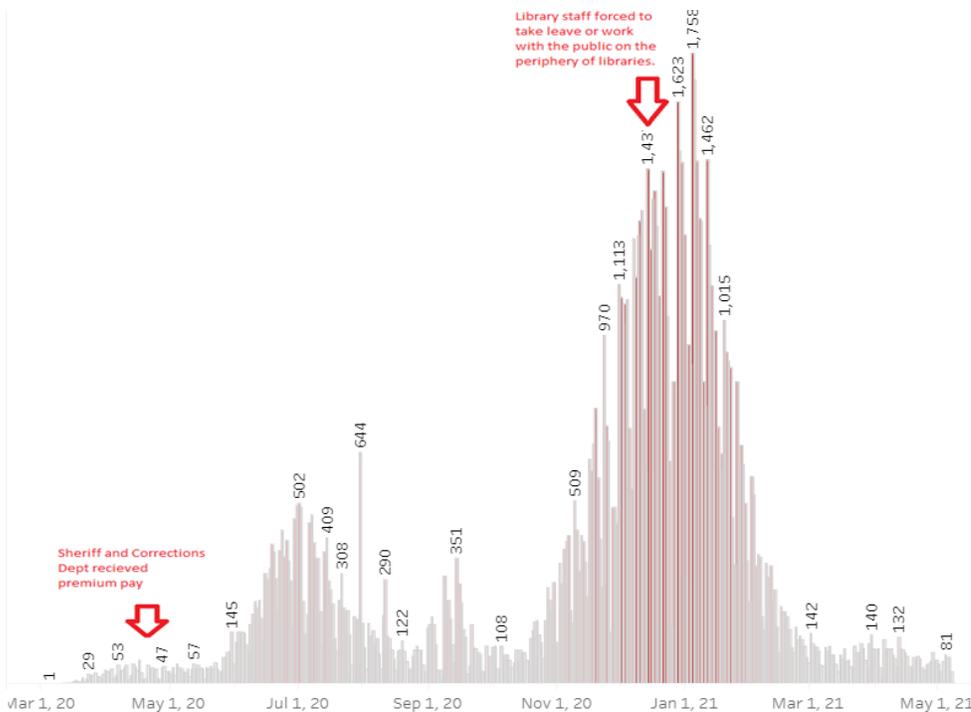
Why are individuals in County departments with greater proportions of women targeted and burdened with requirements for expensive degrees if their pay isn't commensurate with their skills, experience and responsibilities?

In 2003, Librarians with the City of Tucson had a starting pay of \$41,400 a year, a rate that was nearly \$4,000 *higher* than the median household income for Pima County at the time (\$37,540). Today, with a starting salary of \$45,802, new Librarians will earn \$7,500 *less* than the median household income (which was \$53,379 in 2019). **Currently, the median salary for an individual with a Master's degree is \$77,844**, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.



Sheriff pay scales are likely influenced by the personal risks involved in the job, but **social workers and library staff face similar safety risks along with emotional and psychological strain** as we serve individuals experiencing hardship and trauma. As the County opens recruitment for the Librarian I position, publicity states that applicants can expect to “encounter situations that require de-escalation skills. The ability to exercise quick and mature judgment in dealing with potentially disruptive, physically dangerous or abusive customers and emergencies is crucial.” In FY 19/20, the Library documented 1383 incidents related to patron behavior, 200 of which yielded calls to 911 for assistance. In 2019, we suspended 437 individuals for breaking our Code of Conduct.

Library Director, Amber Mathewson, admitted on March 26, 2021, “Library work is hard. In the best of times, you stand on the front lines of service and you never know who or what you will encounter in your day.”



The Sheriff Department and Corrections were the only departments that received premium pay for added risk in working with the public in April 2020 as Covid cases averaged about 50 per day. But in November and December, 2020 - as Covid cases skyrocketed to 1,200+ a day while libraries were open to the public - the Board of Supervisors used the term “stay-at-home-plan” instead of a “stay-at-home order” to avoid paying staff premium pay while they served customers who often failed to observe six foot distancing or keep their masks on properly.

During the 2nd shutdown, library staff were forced to burn through their leave banks, go without pay on furlough, or place themselves in danger by continuing to work with the public throughout those three weeks. **We were encouraged to partake in self-care so as not to get too overwhelmed.**

“Libraries are the lifeblood of neighborhoods,” Amber Mathewson wrote in an email to staff (March 2021):

“It is a testament to your dedication and passion that we found ways to continue to provide services to people. Fighting through the anxiety and fear, you built an entirely new service model. Stretched thin, learning new service points and numerous safety protocols, you served 474,506 people, provided food for 71,077 people, provided 128,039 computer sessions, and circulated 1,280,117 items. You sustained the vitality and relevancy of our libraries during an incredibly dark year.”

Library staff are told how important our work is to the community, but our wages tell a different story. We’ve internalized an expectation to act as the ultimate public servant – altruistic, subordinate, and self-sacrificing. It’s improper to ask for a raise, to rock the boat, to question our leaders. It goes against library spirit to bring up monetary concerns. We’re so busy advocating for others, we ignore our own devaluation and discrimination. And yet the American Library Association reminds us that **“We must overcome the stereotype of the library worker as the selfless, dedicated and devoted worker, who is in the profession to do good and who will accept pay that does not reflect their status as professionals.** We must contribute substantively to the fight for pay equity—it is our fight too.”

Women were recruited to library work in the late 1800s Carnegie boom when they were needed and it was legally and morally acceptable to pay them half as much as men for the same work. Today, the skills and responsibilities of librarians are such that this position requires a Master’s Degree. How can we - as a Library Department - work towards anti-racism practices, to advocate for the underserved when we ourselves are deterred from taking pride in our work and demanding equitable pay? **As we work to recruit new Librarians, particularly BIPOC individuals, we must live up to our ideals and make sure they are fairly compensated for their roles in the community.**

New Librarian recruits are being asked to:

- **Perform professional level operational and supervisory work** relating to the provision of library services to children and adults,
- Demonstrate a commitment to serving underserved and multicultural communities.
- Provide outstanding customer service to a diverse spectrum of customers of all ages, backgrounds, and socioeconomic status,
- Have a willingness to be adaptable and responsive in a rapidly changing work environment, and
- Be technologically adept with PC troubleshooting skills.

County Administrators often point to budgetary restraints when faced with requests for fair pay, arguing that the market establishes salary norms. But service-oriented professions – education, social work and librarianship - predominately exist in the government sector *outside* of the market. Salaries and funding levels are set by policymakers. **As they set a new budget, Pima County Supervisors have an opportunity to rectify discriminatory pay scales that trickle up and down to all positions within a department.** Further, as minimum wage reaches \$15 an hour, Administrators must address increased wage compression affecting employees as separate classifications with varying levels of requirements and responsibilities merge into one pay rate. Thankfully, the property values used to calculate taxes have increased by six percent this past year. Pima County is also receiving over \$200 million in federal support. Now is the time to increase wages for all County employees and establish annual merit increases that will fairly reflect an employee’s many years of service.

Pima County workers – male, female, nonbinary and transgender individuals – all have families, and families benefit when gender-based pay inequities are removed. If some individuals are receiving pay that is misaligned with their level of education and experience simply because historically those fields were filled with women, they all suffer discrimination. **If we A.R.E. Pima County – accountable, respectful, and ethical – we must abolish gender-based discriminatory pay practices this fiscal year.**

Sincerely,

Monica Bujak, District 5
Brian Chanecka, District 5
Karen Greene, District 5
Justine Hernandez, District 2
Tara Foxx-Lupo, District 2
Elizabeth Langley, District 3
Kara Mills, District 5
Tenecia Phillips, District 2
Georgia Taylor, District 2
Katie Westfall, District 5
Annemarie Wicks, District 1