

Emily Brown

LIB200

Valuing the Information Professional

10/15/11

I would love to work in public libraries, as I spent many happy hours of my childhood appreciating them. I currently reside in Chico, CA, so I could attempt to work for our County Library system. This organization has several branches across Northern California's Butte County, in six cities total: Biggs, Chico, Durham, Gridley, Oroville, and Paradise. Gridley is the furthest branch from my home in Chico, but it's only approximately 40 minutes away. As a licensed driver, this commute would be acceptable to me.

Butte County Library system was established in 1913 by the Butte County Charter. Their headquarter is located in the Oroville Branch Library, as Oroville is the county seat. Their mission is to provide all individuals, regardless of age, ethnic background, education or economic level, free access to ideas, information, and technology. As they share a common mission, and as it's a small county, each branch would really be an acceptable place for me to work.

The salary listed for Librarian on their website is \$17.08 to \$22.89 per hour, or \$35,533.47 to \$47,618.48 per year. Realistically, however, I would start at the bottom of the library job tree due to my lack of experience. Although I have two years of experience working in libraries, bookstores and directly with the public, this only qualifies me for a Library Assistant position. After two years, however, I would likely be able to move up to a Librarian position. The Library Assistant position pays \$11.80 to \$15.81 per hour or \$24,534.43 to \$32,878.56 per year. Since this would be a necessary element for my resume, I see no real way to get around beginning in a relatively entry-level position, even with my degree and previous work history. I am also taking into account the current economy and

unemployment rate. I feel that it would be a worth while experience, both in terms of learning the job as well as monetarily; the cost of living in this area is also very low, which means that my quality of life based upon the salary would be quite good.

In addition to the pay from the job, there are several benefits worth mentioning. They add to employee contributions into government programs, and they offer pre-tax withholding, allowing employees more creativity with their finances. They provide various insurance policy options. And they have a number of miscellaneous perks ranging from a generous vacation to safety footwear allowances.

Butte County Library System's retirement plan has the county paying 4.5% and the employee 2.5%. The county also matches 6.2% that the employee contributes into Social Security, and 1.45% of all contributions into Medicare. The organization offers a Flexible Spending Program which allows employees to use pre-tax dollars to pay for certain expenses. They can also choose to have a portion of the monthly Health Plan premium withheld from check pre-tax. Participation in the Flexible Spending Program has most employees having less taxes withheld for their payroll checks than otherwise.

The organization provides life insurance available for \$2.80 per month and the employee can purchase addition insurance for spouses and children. Butte County Libraries also offer health insurance for employees and their dependents which includes medical, vision and dental. The County contributes \$1207.41 per month for family coverage. Employees who have other health care and don't want to participate are offered by the County a monthly taxable Cash-Back allowance of \$403.34. They also have disability insurance for both short-term disability and a employee-paid long-term disability program. The long-term disability insurance benefit is 60% of the disabled employee's biweekly wage. There is also an option of deferred compensation.

Additionally, they offer 40 hours of paid leave for bereavement per occasion. They have 11 holidays off a year. There would also be free parking, which would be a benefit to me. They offer a tuition reimbursement of \$500 per year, vacation of 120 hours or five days per year, stand-by pay which would be \$40.00 per 8 hour shift, special pays that include a bilingual incentive and safety footwear \$100.00 per year reimbursement. And, lastly, there is a shift differential where employees get an extra dollar per hour on top of base pay for working 5pm to 7am weekdays and 7am to 5pm weekends.

In terms of Butte County Library System's costs of employing me, I think they would be benefiting from my employment, and furthermore investing in an employee with long-term goals. While the salary added with all the benefits is a significant cost to the organization, I would not require the tuition reimbursement of \$500.00 per year. I also have not had a job that provided health benefits in several years, so that would also be a factor indicating retention. Also, I have never had a paid vacation in my life. The opportunity to have one from a job that I already want to work at is another retention aspect to me for this organization. Finally, they would find that I already know far more about library functions than the average Library Assistant which means they would have to spend less time training me. This is also a savings.

I meet the requirements of the position of Library Assistant, as it only requires some college, a driver's license, and two years experience working with the general public or in bookstores. And as I would be looking to move up in the organization, build my resume, they could be relatively assured that I would stay with them for at least two years if not longer. Since I would be looking to move up from Library Assistant to Librarian after two years, bypassing the Senior Library Assistant position (which requires four years of library, teaching or bookstore experience, some college, and a driver's license), this would also demonstrate my retainability.

The output of the Butte County Library is multifaceted. Each branch has a bank of computers in addition to the normal library selection of books and other media. This resource as well as the Librarians themselves are a benefit to the unemployed job seekers who may not completely understand job opportunities online. The Librarians provide regular library functions which include assisting patrons with information requests, as well as day to day management and administrative work. I think that the success of the output can be seen by how many unemployed workers are put back into the work force thanks to the library computers and assistance and how the community around the library is enriched and positively influenced by the library run and hosted programs and events.

The community interaction is an important output of the Butte County libraries, with each branch offering a multitude of programs. These include permanent weekly story hour for children ranging from 18 months and younger to 12 year old children; the story hour days range from as many as five days a week to one day a week depending on the branch. There are also monthly programs at all the branches which include things like book club meetings, creative writing group meetings, play time meetings, thinking readers discussion group meetings, contemporary and classic movie showings, exhibits and displays of artists' work, book sales, free classes on a variety of activities, teen Wii meetings, sign language classes, chess meetings, knitting circle meetings, poetry reading meetings, teen lock-in activities, and teen shopping spree activities at a local bookstore.

Rusk and Cummings (2011) article says that the public library is an important key to revitalizing a downtown area. They have found them to increase a community's capacity for economic activity and vitality, especially in diverse urban populations. While Butte County doesn't exactly fit that description, I believe that the communities surround the Butte County libraries benefit a great deal. Rusk and Cummings (2011) also discuss how public libraries engaging young people and parents in reading programs, providing public access computers, and educating the public on sustainable

energy practices can make the library a local anchor for economic, environmental and overall development of communities. I feel that public libraries, especially in this area of Northern California, are particularly important for the economic and overall development of communities. The programs they provide, and the way they organize public resources for the community make them very valued organizations. In some areas, the library is the only free, trusted space that children, teenagers, and adults can go to. Rusk and Cummings (2011) recommend that libraries think outside of the box and look to become partners with other organizations in the community to better create a space for all. I think that the Butte County Library has already started to do that, and will continue to do so in the future.

The Butte County Library system receives contributions in many forms from various information professionals, and as a Library Assistant I would contribute in a variety of ways. In regards to patron relations, I would assist by processing book requests, finding the correct book for the patron, check in and out books by procedure, renew books by request, and create new patron records. I would be available for contact with the public in person, by phone and by instant messaging if available. I would put items on hold, advise patrons on status of requests, notify patrons of items available, and locate and route materials to other branches as requested. I would assist patrons in the use of general use computers and specialized software. I would provide information and interpretation in regards to library services, policies, and procedures.

In regards to administrative contributions as a Library Assistant, I would prepare, generate, review and mail overdue notices, and refer delinquent accounts as required. I would identify unreturned materials that are lost, missing or damaged for removal from the library's computer database. I would coordinate and communicate with organizations to promote library services and programs to the public. I would coordinate and implement recruitment efforts to attract and attain

volunteer tutors, train and supervise volunteers, monitor progress of literacy students and tutors and provide materials, support and recommendation for improvement as well as conduct follow up action. I would perform routine maintenance on, troubleshoot and install updates on computers and peripheral equipment, schedule repairs on items beyond the capabilities of library staff, and assist information systems technicians as required. I would coordinate and perform work site visits, organize and conduct outreach programs and activities to include ESL adult literacy and fundraisers. I would attend and participate in a variety of meetings, workshops and training sessions. I would identify, order, and maintain general and specialized office supplies and equipment, perform minor repair of books and audio visual equipment. I would gather, compile and analyze computerized statistical data for ongoing library records. I would develop and prepare forms, reports, and related documents. I would maintain and file paperwork, maintain records of grants, letters and other materials. I would search and utilize online resource sites for programs, reports, activities collection materials and other functions.

My personal contributions to the position would be multiple. I have been residing in Chico for two years after living in other parts of the country and the world. I chose this area because it fits a certain criteria; I'll be here for a good while. Even if the position I get is outside of Chico, as long as it's Butte County, I'll be content to stay. I would like to point out that I have excellent customer service abilities. My phone etiquette is very good; I have been complimented on my phone voice. I enjoy organizing things and I have been praised by multiple clients and employers for my natural efficiency. I have nine months experience working in a library, not just shelving books and running inventory, but also working the front counter, assisting patrons in a number of activities. This included checking books in and out, updating the database when a patron paid off overdue fines, and creating overdue fine letters to be sent out. I also assisted patrons with finding books, using the computers, and understanding the general organizational layout of the library.

I have also had over two years of customer service, some of which occurred in a bookstore setting. I have an above average understanding of computers and a good understanding of general office equipment. I also know conversational level American Sign Language. This could be a large benefit depending on the community. I have experience training coworkers in a variety of settings on a variety of skilled work. I work well in teams and also working on my own. I have experience filing in multiple office settings. I prioritize my work efficiently based on numerous criteria that includes factoring the important deadlines of numerous tasks, projects, assignments and demands. I enjoy helping people and I'm a very hard worker. I'm also very consistent, both in demeanor and in my time management. I'm very reliable. I have an excellent work ethic. Ideally, I would be accepting this position while still in school or recently graduated. If I am still in school, it would not be a conflict with the full time hours because of the flexible nature of this online program. I would be easier to train since I am in a learning mode and my reading and class work is library geared anyway.

In conclusion, I feel that my worth is above average to any organization like Butte County Library system. To them specifically, I would be an ideal hire. Even though I am not a local, I love the area and plan to stay here. I am willing to be hired as an entry level Library Assistant. I will already have my master's degree, saving them money and time. My other job experiences would be a positive attribute to them. My youthful energy, fierce loyalty, and dedication to the job and the organization would be tangible and immediately notable.

References:

Butte county library. (n.d.) In *Butte County*. Retrieved by <http://www.buttecounty.net/Library.aspx>

Library assistant. (n.d.) In *Butte County Human Resources*. Retrieved by

<http://agency.governmentjobs.com/buttecountyca/default.cfm?action=agencyspecs>

Rusk, Michael D. & Cummings, Ellen. (2011). Libraries and the local economy: partnerships for economic growth (a presentation to the Oklahoma library association, March 30, 2011).

*Community & Junior College Libraries* Vol 17, Issue 2, 53-61. doi:

10.1080/02763915.2011.591708