

The following outlines survey results as of September 2006 of a study planned by the American Library Association in 2002 and announced in the December 2003 issue of *American Libraries* – “Association, Know Thyself: ALA embarks on a mission to document its demographics,” by Mary Jo Lynch.

ALA Membership Looking a Little Younger

Believe it or not, we know very little about members except what they tell us when joining or renewing an ALA membership. After more than a year of haggling over the questions, ALA only started collecting member demographic information in May 2005 through a voluntary online survey. The information reported will be used to improve programs and services, present ALA statistics to policymakers and potential funding groups, and respond to questions from the press and members themselves. The survey is located at <http://www.ala.org/memberdemog> and periodic updates will be made to the study findings, online at <http://www.ala.org/ala/ors/reports/reports.htm>.

By November 14, 2005, 3,289 eligible responses had been reported, and by September 12, 2006, 9,132. Not surprising, ALA members are predominantly women, white, and born between 1940-1959. However, the September data review indicates a rise in members age “under 35” reporting.

Overall, these findings closely align to the distributions found in a study to be released by ALA in October 2006 of the library industry as reported by Americans in the 2000 Census. Estimates for gender, age, race/ethnicity and disability status from the Census data were applied to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) library data. Little variation was found between those distributions and those of ALA membership (see Tables 1 and 2). Figure 1 presents the race/ethnicity of ALA members. The Census estimates for gender are 82% female and 18% male; ALA is 80% female and 19.3% male (with a .49% non-response rate for this question).

The most pronounced alignment gap appears between the Census estimates for the library industry and ALA member responses in age categories. Figure 2 presents that comparison. Whereas the 2000 Census data indicate workers clustering in the mid-to-upper age ranges, ALA members responding to the demographic survey as of September 2006 are clustering in the lower age ranges. Further member response is required to determine if this is a stable pattern, or simply a reflection of those responding as of September 2006. The race/ethnicity responses have remained stable in the two analysis periods prior to September, as have gender and disability status.

Table 1: ALA Member Demographics, September 2006

ALA Member Characteristics	September, 2006 (response 9,137, about 14%)
Gender	80% Female 19% Male
Age	54% of membership was born between 1940-1959; 38.5% between 1960-1979
Race/Ethnicity	89% White 4.5% Black/African American 3% Hispanic or Latino 1.4% Native American 2.7% API
Degrees Earned	74% ALA-MLS 2.7% non ALA-MLS 29 % Master's in addition to the ALA-MLS 2% PhD
Disability status	3.5% reported a disability

Table 2: Percent Credentialed Librarians US Census and ALA Membership, by Race/Ethnicity

	White	African American	Hispanic / Latino	Native American, inc. Alaskan	API	Two or more
Census Estimates, 2000	89%	5%	2%	Less than 1%	3%	1%
ALA Member Demographic responses, 2006	89%	4.5%	3%	1.4%	2.7%	1.4%

Figure 1: Percent ALA Membership by Race/Ethnicity

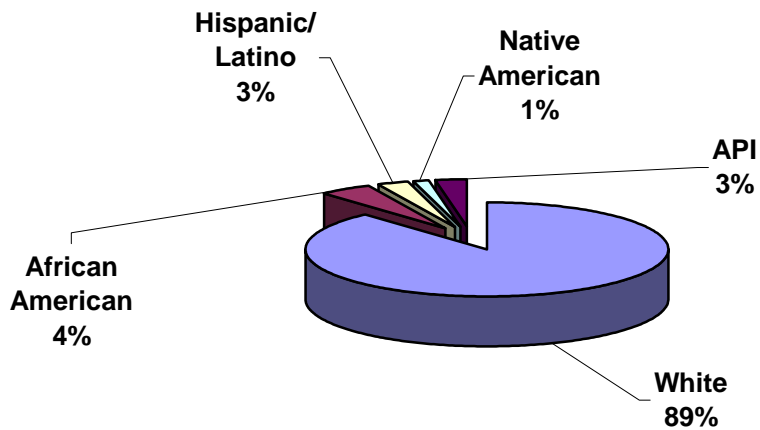
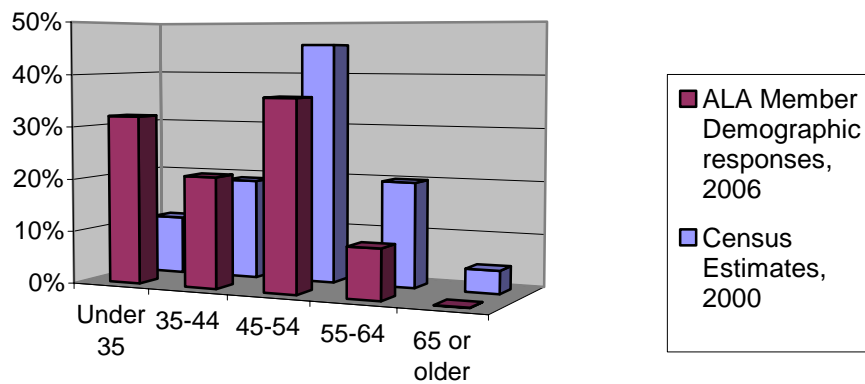


Figure 2: Percent Credentialed Librarians US Census and ALA Membership, by Age



How library workers compare with other professions:

Looking at all workers in the US was challenging, as employment categories and analysis don't easily parallel our profession. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) *Women in the Workforce: A Databook* (May 2005) estimates 217,000 librarians in the workforce – making our membership representative of only about 30% of the librarian workforce. The BLS study estimates 83% of librarians reported gender as female – more than the 89% reported by our members to date (<http://www.bls.gov/cps/wlf-table11-2005.pdf>).

It is difficult to compare our profession even when looking at national figures for management and professional employment. The most notable parallel in overall workforce data is the aging of the baby-boomers and their continued presence in the workforce (<http://www.bls.gov/cps/#charemp>). Our members are more highly educated than the average worker and are highly skewed to females, but our member ratio of white and Black/African American is similar to national figures (*Household Data Annual Averages. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 25 years and over by educational attainment, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.* <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat7.pdf>).

Looking at non-profit sector data found few similarities (*Characteristics of workers in nonprofit organizations.* Denis Johnston and Gabriel Rudney, Bureau of Labor Statistics. <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1987/07/art4full.pdf>). We continue to be more highly educated and a more female-based profession. The only parallel with the non-profit sector was in the race and ethnicity of professionals – 85% white, 9% Black, and 4% Hispanic.