



*Ontario Courthouse Libraries Association:  
Education and Experience Survey Report  
December 2018 Update*

Introduction

This report summarizes the educational competency and library experience of staff in Ontario Courthouse Libraries, and updates the 2014 report created in response to the SWOT Analysis outlined in the *LibraryCo Inc. Business Plan 2015 – 2017*, and in particular, to point seven under “Weaknesses” which states “Library services are being delivered in many associations by underqualified staff.”<sup>1</sup> The *2014 Ontario Courthouse Libraries Association: Education and Experience Survey Report* is not available on LibraryCo’s website, so OCLA wanted to make both it and the current report available to the incoming Library and Information Resource Network (LIRN) board.

Findings

The 2014 survey results “clearly indicated that Library services are being delivered by educated and experienced staff,” and this continues today. OCLA has highly educated, experienced people staffing the courthouse libraries. Ninety-Five percent of staff have a college degree or higher and over half of the staff have 10 or more years of law library-specific work experience.

Methodology

The Ontario Courthouse Libraries Association (OCLA) executive emailed a survey to all courthouse library staff on December 14, 2018 asking for the following:

Library name (optional - in the 2014 survey this answer was required)

Type (Regional, Area or Local)

Hours of work per week

Level and type of education (highest level used)

Years of library experience (law library and other <sup>1</sup>libraries).

A “Comments” section at the end of the survey provided a platform for survey suggestions and additions or clarifications of previous answers in the survey. Data on library duties was gathered, but is not included in this report.

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<sup>1</sup> LibraryCo Inc. Business Plan 2015-2017. Toronto: LibraryCo Inc. p. 6

## Organization

There are 48 courthouse libraries in the OCLA: Five Regional, 15 Area, and 28 Local. Sixty-three out of a possible 73 responses were received, for an 86.3% response rate. Sixteen regional library responses (21.9%) were received. Area libraries returned 23 responses (31.5%), and Local libraries sent in 24 responses (32.9%) (=86% due to number rounding). A chart of respondents by library name and type is not included in this survey (as it was in 2014) due to the new “optional” library name provision.

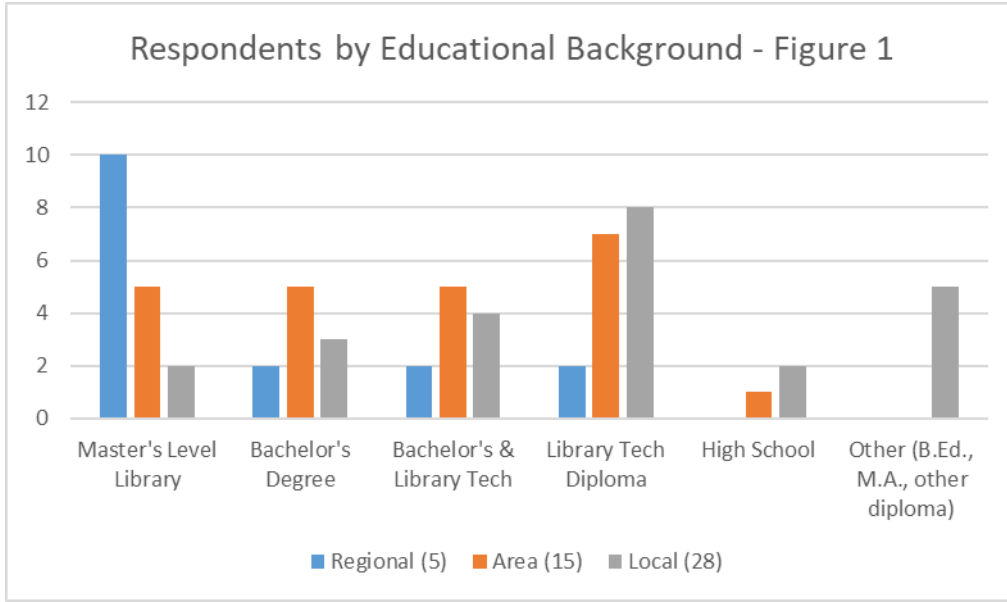
### **Part 1: Education**

OCLA has 17 library staff with a Master’s level of library education and 10 with a Bachelor’s degree. Eleven staff members have a Bachelor’s degree + Library Technician diploma, and 17 with a Library Technician diploma. Three library staff have high school diplomas (with two out of the three currently taking or have taken justice or library courses). Five staff have “Other” education such as Master’s or College non-library degrees/diplomas. Amongst the staff, there are people with a non-library Master’s, Bachelor of Education, paralegal diploma, a law clerk, logistics, and human resources education, and certificates in Records & Information Management and Justice & Public Safety. Many staff are working on diplomas and degrees as they work either part-time or full-time in a law library. LibraryCo Inc.’s education bursaries offered to Library Assistants, Technicians, and Librarians are an excellent way of ensuring staff has an opportunity to continue their education.

Table 1 provides the data for Figure 1, indicating the highest education level obtained by survey respondents in all courthouse libraries:

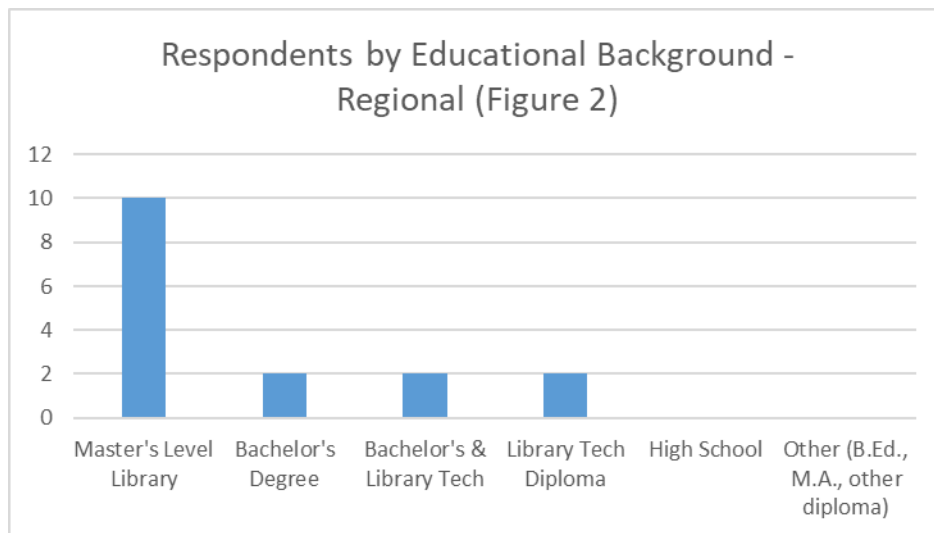
Respondents by Educational Background (Table 1)

	<b>Regional (5)</b>	<b>Area (15)</b>		<b>Local (28)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Master's Level Library</b>	10	5		2	17	27
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	2	5		3	10	16
<b>Bachelor's &amp; Library Tech</b>	2	5		4	11	17
<b>Library Tech Diploma</b>	2	7		8	17	27
<b>High School</b>		1		2	3	5
<b>Other (B.Ed., M.A., other diploma)</b>				5	5	8
<b>Total</b>	16	23		24	63	

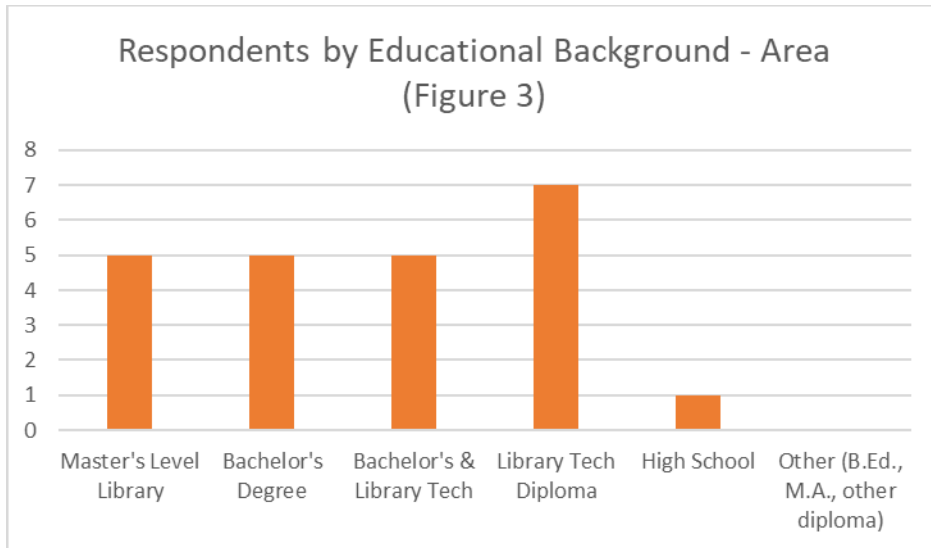


Below is a breakdown of education levels in each type of library:

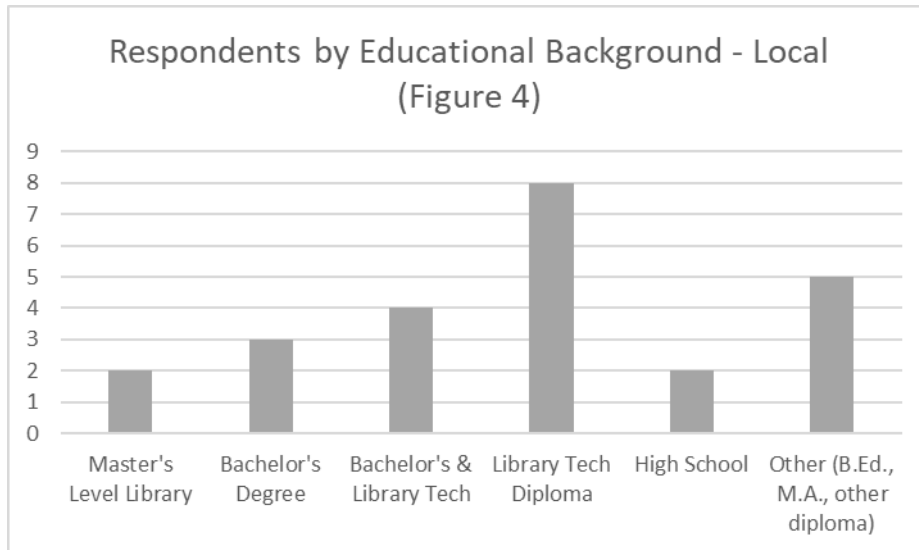
#### Regional Libraries



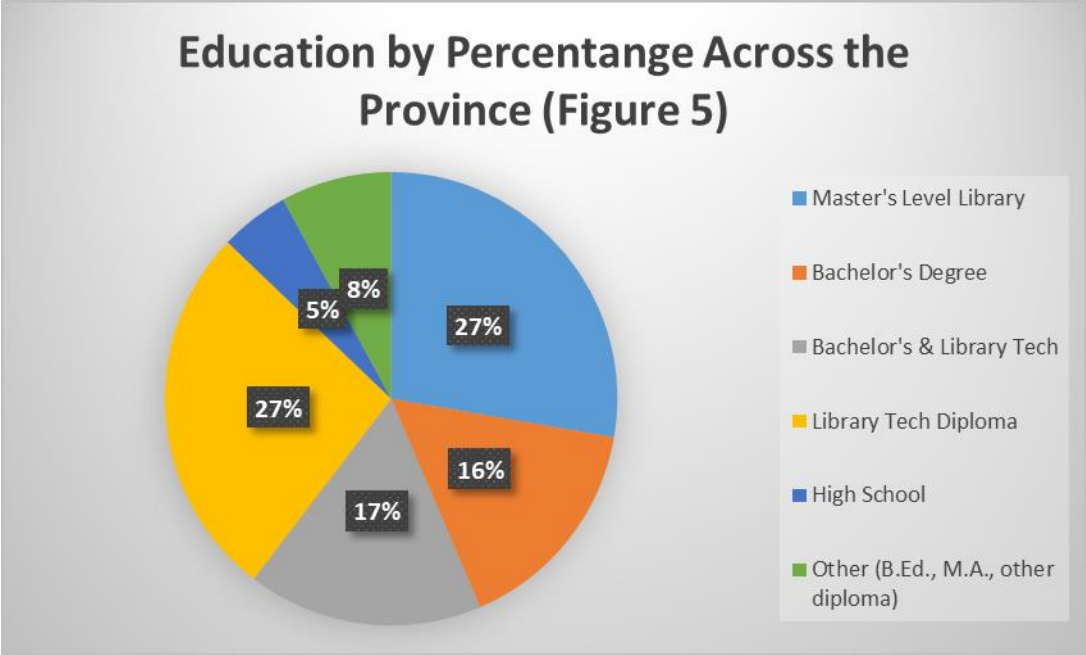
Area Libraries



Local Libraries

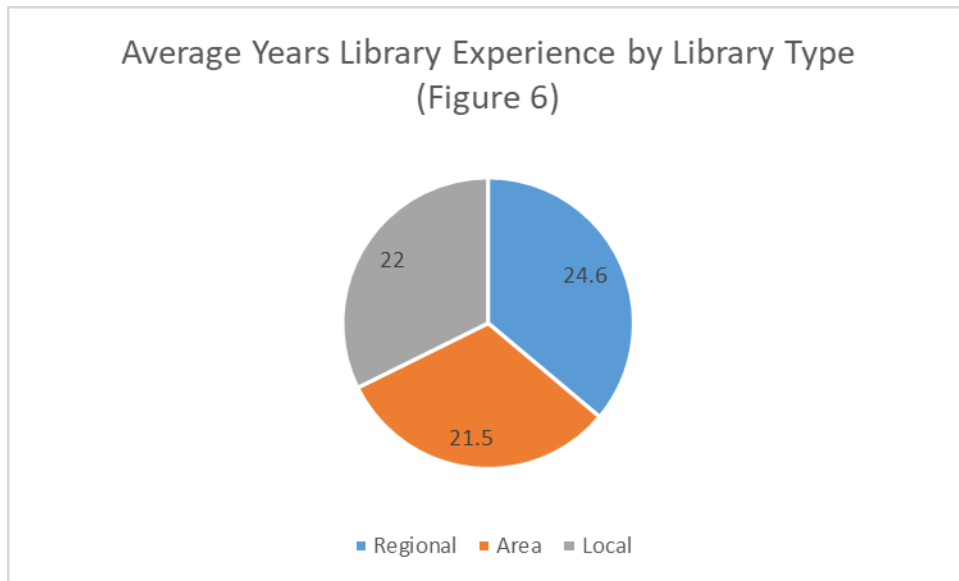


Education by Percentage across the Province

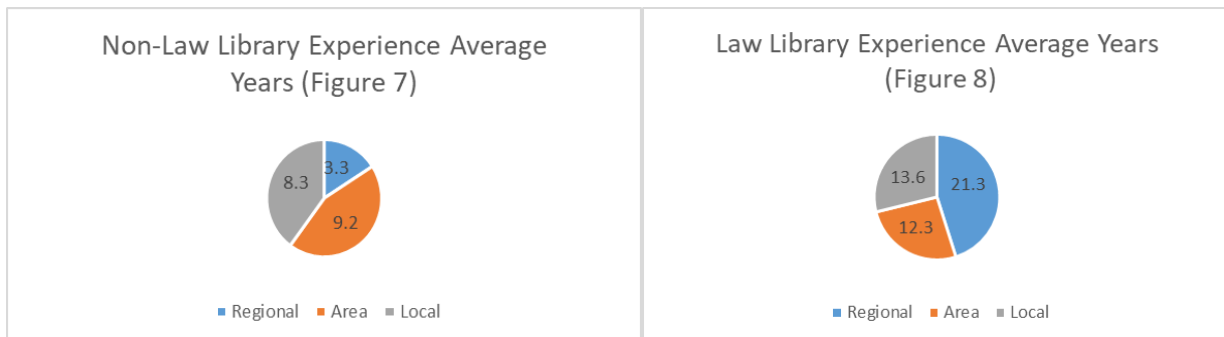


## Part 2: Experience

Since the 2014 survey, the average library experience in years has slightly increased in both regional and area libraries, and slightly decreased in local libraries. The 16 regional library respondents had an average combined library experience of 24.6 years. The 23 area respondents had an average of 21.5 years combined library and law library experience, or just about equal. The local staff had a slightly lower average of 21.9 (22) years combined library experience. Figure 6 breaks down the average years by library type:



The chart above is a combination of the following two charts, which indicate general library experience separate from law library experience. Of note is that regional staff has many more years experience in a law library than any other type of library:



The data for the pie charts above come from the following Table 2:

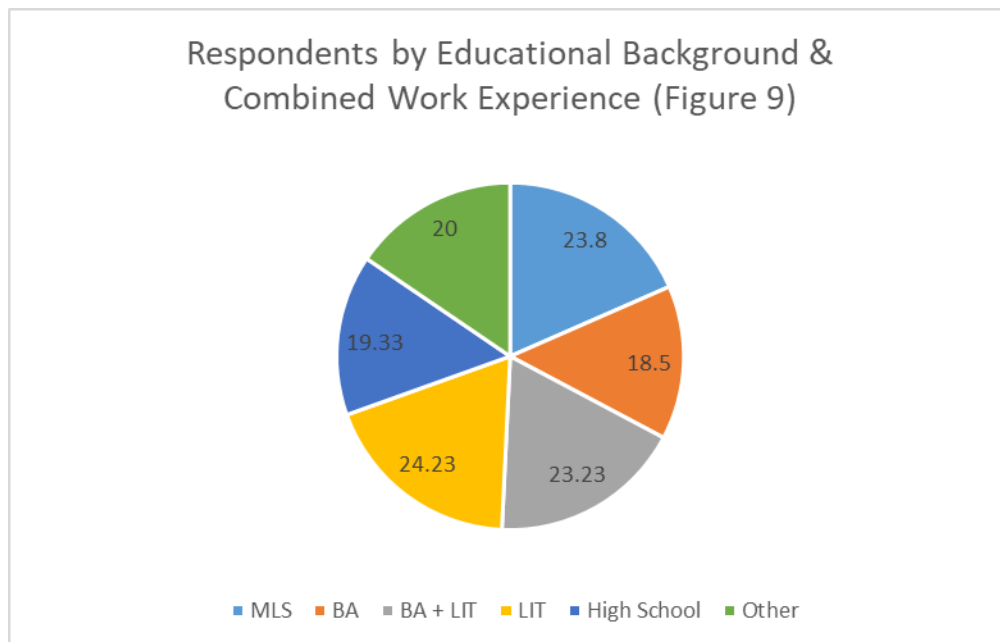
	Respondents	Non-Law Library	Law Library	Years Combined
Regional	16	3.3	21.3	24.6
Area	23	9.2	12.3	21.5
Local	24	8.3	13.6	21.9
Total	63	20.8	47.2	68

Table 3 breaks down the respondents by educational background and shows the average combined work experience for each level of education. The most notable difference from the previous survey in 2014 is the average years experience in libraries has increased by over 7 years for staff with a Master’s level of library education—from 15.73 to 23.8. The other education levels remain very close to the 2014 levels except for a slight decrease in years—from 21.22 to 18.5 for staff with Bachelor’s level education.

Respondents by Educational Background and Combined Work Experience in Years (Table 3)

	Respondents	Average Years Combined
Master's Level Library	17	23.8
Bachelor's Degree	10	18.5
Bachelor's & Library Tech	11	23.23
Library Tech Diploma	17	24.23
High School	3	19.33
Other (B.Ed., M.A., other diploma)	5	20

Figure 9 shows the Table 3 data in pie chart form:



## Conclusion

Overall, there are more than 78.67% of respondents in the Ontario Courthouse Libraries system that possess either, or a combination of, a Master's level of library education, a Master's degree, a B.Ed., a Bachelor's degree, or a library technician's diploma. The system also benefits from a vast amount of combined library and law library experience, with an average of over 20 years at all library types, regional, area and local. Through continuing education the respondents work at showing the value they provide to their Association, library, and to the system as a whole. The Ontario Courthouse Libraries Association views that the level of education and experience reflected in the system are its strength. OCLA staff continue to demonstrate the importance and value of life long learning.