

Reference Policy

Reference service will be provided at all times the library is open. All reference questions are treated confidentially; and the needs of each library user are taken seriously and addressed with professionalism and respect. Requests for and completion of lengthy research is not a traditional role for the public reference librarian. Patrons requiring extensive research may be directed to other sources or assisted only as staff time permits.

Procedures:

In-person requests receive priority over telephone, fax, mail, and electronic requests. No library card is required for users who request basic in-house reference service.

Referrals: Referrals to other agencies may be made when appropriate. At no time may staff refer the patron to individual practitioners such as physicians, attorneys, accountants, etc.

Staff members must be impartial when responding to inquiries about local businesses, such as restaurants, lodging, stores, and shops. The library is neutral in promoting local commerce; therefore, an appropriate response would include several choices from which the inquirer could choose.

Research: Staff members will search for information with quality, reliable resources. Staff members shall avoid giving personal opinions, philosophies, and evaluations. Even when requested, the opinion of a staff member should never be stated as fact.

Telephone, Mail, Fax, and Email questions: It is the library's policy to respond to all reasonable reference inquiries made by telephone, mail, fax, and email. Telephone reference should be used for short, factual information questions that do not require extensive reading and interpretation.

Genealogy requests: The library will provide brief genealogy searches of local history materials. The requests must be mailed, emailed, or faxed stating the specific information desired including names, dates, etc. The patron will be billed for copies and return postage.

Special Issues: Research for school assignments will be treated as any other request for reference assistance. Staff members may never give a personal appraisal regarding a patron's possessions.

Medical, Legal, and Tax Questions: The library does not provide advice in the areas of medicine, law, and taxes. Information found in printed sources may be provided, but not interpreted by staff members. Under no circumstances may staff members offer opinions or advice about medical, legal, or tax issues.

Computer Usage: Computer usage requires the patron to have basic computer skills. The library has a limited number of staff members; therefore it is necessary to limit the amount of time a staff member can devote to a patron. Staff assistance is limited to basic instruction in the use of the public access catalog, log-on procedure for Internet and computer users, and assistance with printing and saving documents.