

LA GRANGE PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

REFERENCE SERVICE POLICY

The purpose of the La Grange Park Public Library's Reference Service Policy is to establish guidelines to ensure quality information service consistent with the Library's Mission Statement and in compliance with the Metropolitan Library System's Minimum Reference Standards for Public Libraries.

GOALS:

1. Acquire materials to support the educational, informational, recreational, and cultural needs of the community
2. Provide accurate information and facilitate access to the Library's collection including electronic resources
3. Provide qualified staff to assist patrons in an efficient and courteous manner

GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE:

Reference service and access to the entire reference collection will be provided to all patrons regardless of age, sex, religion, race, or socio-economic status, by qualified staff during the hours the Library is open. Reference staff will be ALA/MLS qualified Librarians or those trained in accordance with the Metropolitan Library System's Minimum Reference Standards for Libraries.

All requests for information are considered confidential, except for identification needed to transmit the requested answer or to consult with other reference personnel.

All inquiries will be treated impartially. Every attempt is made to provide accurate answers to all inquiries. Patrons are given the source of the information as well as the answer. With the exception of reader's advisory questions, personal opinions, and recommendations are not given.

Inquiries made in-person are given priority, followed by telephone calls. All other means of inquiry are handled, as time allows, in the order received. Priority is given to in-person requests when both in-person and telephone requests are received at the same time. Staff members may ask to call a patron back if the question requires extra time to find an answer. Research projects cannot be handled over the phone. The patron will be encouraged to come to the Library for assistance. No effort is made to determine the residency of a patron before service is given. Questions that cannot be answered using on-site resources are referred to any of the following

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Reviewed:

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LA GRANGE PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

REFERENCE SERVICE POLICY

sources: local or metropolitan resources; and other libraries and experts.

SPECIAL CATEGORIES OF REFERENCE QUESTIONS:

Appraisals:

Library staff does not estimate the value of objects, such as rare or used books, works of art, coins, stamps, or antiques, or other collectibles, but will provide price guides if available.

Consumer Information:

Library staff does not interpret ratings. Recommended products from the lists in Consumer Reports and other resources may be given over the phone, with the suggestion that the patron read the entire article to understand the basis for the recommendations.

Contest Questions:

Patrons visiting the Library will be assisted in finding probable sources for answers. The Library does not assume responsibility for guaranteeing the correctness of contest question answers.

Genealogical Searches:

Library staff will provide general assistance in genealogical research, guidance in locating items in the collection and help in obtaining materials through interlibrary loan. Library staff cannot perform searches of genealogical or historical records on microform. Such records, if available, will be obtained for the patron's own study.

Income Tax Forms And Questions:

Through the Internal Revenue Service and the Illinois Department of Revenue the Library makes income tax forms available. Library staff does not have the expertise required to answer tax questions or fill out the forms. Library staff will not provide advice in interpretation of tax law or assistance in the selection of appropriate forms. Appropriate reference materials will be made available to the patron.

Internet and Databases:

Library staff will attempt to assist patrons as time permits, but the Library staff cannot provide in depth training. Trained staff may not always be available, but the Library will be able to provide materials. Library staff will not guarantee the validity of information retrieved from the Internet, but will attempt to provide the patron with tools and contextual information that will help evaluate the source.

Medical And Legal Questions:

Library staff will locate information in the medical and legal collections for the patron's perusal

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LA GRANGE PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

REFERENCE SERVICE POLICY

and interpretation. Library staff does not have the expertise required to interpret information found in these sources. Library staff will not refer patrons to individual practitioners – physicians, attorneys, mental health professionals or others.

Students' Assignments:

Every effort will be made to satisfactorily answer the student's question(s) and provide the sources for information and reasonable instruction needed to use those sources. However, the student is responsible for completing the assignment.

If every effort has been made by the Reference Librarian and the student to locate information without results, the student will be encouraged to return to the teacher for further instructions or an altered assignment. A note to this effect may be given the student if the Reference Librarian feels it is justified.

When notified of an assignment requiring a large number of students to research a topic, the Library will set aside all available materials on special reserve for in library use only.

Proctoring Exams:

Library staff will provide proctoring for exams. Arrangements must be made in advance. Proctoring will be administrated by the staff member on duty.

CIRCULATION OF REFERENCE MATERIAL:

Materials held in the Reference Collection are allowed to circulate overnight, at the discretion of the Reference Librarian. Materials may be checked-out 1/2 hour before the Library closes and are due the next day 1/2 hour after the Library opens.

REFERENCE SERVICE FEES:

1. There is no charge for interlibrary loan items obtained within the State of Illinois. There is a \$3.00 fee if an item is obtained from outside the State of Illinois. Permission to obtain items from out of state will be requested before these items are acquired.
2. There is no charge for photocopy requests unless the supplying library charges a fee. Permission to obtain items that may have fees will be requested before these items are acquired.
3. Ten pages of reference material may be copied at no charge, but after the ten free pages, \$.10 per page is charged.

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LA GRANGE PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

REFERENCE SERVICE POLICY

4. The overdue fee for reference materials checked out overnight is \$2.00 per day per item.

EVALUATION:

The Reference Service Policy will be evaluated every three years by staff and administration.

Reference service will be evaluated annually by staff and administration when the survey of output measures is taken. It may also be evaluated periodically through the year by other measures suggested by the Metropolitan Library System.

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