



REFERENCE SERVICE POLICY

Purpose

This policy establishes guidelines to ensure the quality and consistency of reference and information service offered by trained library staff. The goals of reference service in the La Grange Park Public Library are to:

- Provide accurate information and facilitate access to the library's collection, including electronic resources
- Provide qualified staff to assist patrons in an efficient and courteous manner

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

Guidelines

Reference service and access to the entire 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 *Serving Our Public: Standards for Illinois Public Libraries* published by the Illinois Library Association.

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. No effort is made to determine the residency of a patron before service is given. 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 and then chat/IM sessions. All other means of inquiry are handled, as time allows, in the order received. Staff members may ask for a patron's contact information if the question requires extra time to find an answer. When necessary, the librarian or staff member may temporarily limit the time spent with one patron. Patrons with in-depth questions and who are in need of technology tutoring are encouraged to schedule an appointment with a librarian for up to one hour. If further instruction is needed beyond the one hour appointment, patrons will be referred to appropriate classes and institutions for further instruction.

Scope

Questions that cannot be answered using on-site resources are referred to other libraries and experts or local or metropolitan resources.

Staff members are not authorized to make purchases for or act as an intermediary between patrons and the marketplace (i.e. online shopping). In no case may a staff member be given a patron's personal credentials such as user name, password, or credit card information.

Library staff does not have the expertise required to give legal, medical, tax, or financial advice. All efforts will be made to direct patrons to authoritative sources for answers to their questions.

Library staff will help patrons with basic computer operations and applications and refer patrons to appropriate books, online tutorials, or classes for further assistance. Library staff will not guarantee the validity of information retrieved online, but will attempt to provide the patron with tools and contextual information that will help evaluate the source.

Adopted: 11/89

Reviewed:

Revised: 11/92, 11/95, 12/98, 10/02, 7/06, 8/09, 9/13, 5/16