



Reference Service

Adopted: 03/02/1994

Revised: 7/26/2006, 2/22/2023

Reference Service Mission:

The Adult and Youth Services Departments of the Linda Sokol Francis Brookfield Library together strive to meet the personal, recreational, educational, and business information needs of all Library users through the provision of prompt, accurate, and useful reference service.

Reference service will be provided in response to all forms of inquiry, whether in person, telephone, or other remote, electronic means. It is the goal of the reference staff to facilitate member access to needed resources and, further, to encourage members to seek staff assistance in the use of library materials. In the provision of reference service, staff will uphold standards of member confidentiality, impartiality, and intellectual freedom, and will make no distinctions or judgments about the use or purpose of the information requested.

Purpose of Policy:

This Reference Service Policy provides guidelines for Library staff to ensure that members consistently American Library Association Code of Ethics and meets the reference standards established by the Illinois Library Association.

Description of Collection:

The Library's reference collection consists of print and electronic materials of a popular nature targeted to a general audience and which meet the needs of the Brookfield community. Staff use a variety of both professional and popular review resources to ensure the currency, accuracy and completeness of collections.

Service Priorities:

Service to the public has priority over all other tasks. Simultaneous requests will be managed at the reference staff's discretion with regard to urgency, complexity and availability of staff resources. In person, telephone, e-mail, and Internet reference requests will be handled in the order they are received. Complex questions may require an appointment for individual assistance, made at the convenience of the member and staff person. Complex questions may also require the member's participation in the information search with staff providing guidance and advice on the search strategy and process. Staff may need to limit the amount of time and level of response provided to a member. If a staff member cannot answer a request immediately, they will obtain contact information from the member and see that they receive a response within twenty-four hours, or take steps to ensure that the request is handled by the staff person most knowledgeable.

Sources:

Reference staff will rely upon reputable sources in order to provide accurate, authoritative assistance to members, and will use professional judgment to determine whether the most appropriate source is available in print, via subscription electronic databases, on the free Web, or other means. Regardless of

the source of information—local, consortial, print or electronic—reference staff will provide members full, complete citations of the source(s) used.

Referrals to Other Libraries or Agencies:

If the reference staff deems it appropriate to refer the member to another library or agency, the staff person must verify that the material sought is, in fact, available at the agency. If it is not possible to call the agency immediately, staff will encourage the member to call ahead before traveling to the agency. Staff will provide the agency's contact information to the member.

Legal, Medical, Financial and Tax Information:

Reference staff will provide legal, medical, and financial information that is as current and factual as possible. The staff person providing such information will make it clear that the information given is not intended as a professional opinion and should not be interpreted as such by the member. Staff are not able to advise on medical, legal, copyright or financial matters outside of discovering factual information about the query. Staff will demonstrate / instruct on form completion but will not complete forms requiring personal or confidential information such as job applications, account information, or medical information.

School Assignments:

The role of reference staff is to guide students to appropriate material or potential sources needed to complete homework assignments. In this capacity, staff will assist students with, but will not complete, homework assignments.

Staff:

Trained reference staff will be available to members at all times the Library is open.

Procedure for Policy Review:

A copy of this policy will be available for member perusal at all public service desks. Together with the Library Director, Managers of Youth and Adult/Teen Services will continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of reference service. Feedback, ideas, and suggestions from the public are always welcome.