

## **REFERENCE POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

This written policy sets guidelines for Adult and Youth Services staff in delivering services to patrons as well as answering patron questions about the library's reference services. The policy is for the purpose of reaching the library's larger goals and to equitably serve all patrons, regardless of age, race, sex, social and economic status, religion, or ability.

### **ETHICS, CONFIDENTIALITY & IMPARTIALITY IN THE REFERENCE TRANSACTION**

The reference staff of the Itasca Community Library (ICL) endeavors to handle all reference queries with impartiality and confidentiality.

### **SCOPE OF REFERENCE SERVICE**

#### **Availability of Service**

Reference service is provided to patrons regardless of residency. If the material requested is not available at the ICL, all efforts will be made to locate the material or to obtain the material by interlibrary loan. Non-Itasca library cardholders will be referred to their local library for interlibrary loans outside the SWAN system.

#### **Priorities of Service**

Reference service will be provided in response to all types of queries regardless of communication method. However, in-person requests take priority over telephone, e-mail, and other electronic communication. The librarian will determine when all reasonable sources have been exhausted and if the number of queries is excessive. There is no set time limit for answering queries. Questions will be answered or responded to within 24 hours.

The reference staff will search all in-house and online sources to locate the requested information. The reference staff will gather the appropriate sources for the patron. The patron is responsible for evaluating and synthesizing the material.

Our goal is to empower people to become active learners and librarians are here to provide the tools necessary to perform technology-related tasks independently. Requests for more extensive help and/or training require a one-on-one appointment, made in advance with one of our librarians. While some requests for in-depth technology help may be fielded during Tech Office Hours, we recommend that you confirm in advance with one of the librarians that your query is appropriate for that service.

Requests for and/or completion of lengthy research is not considered a role of the public reference librarian. Research and reference differ in terms of time required, sources employed, and ease of determination of search strategies. Research is the more involved of the two. Patrons needing extensive compilations (bibliographies, lists, statistics, etc.) or research will be directed to the appropriate resources and will be provided assistance but patrons will need to work independently thereafter.

## **Special Categories**

Limitations may be placed on specific services that may include but not be limited to the following: Advice in the areas of medicine, law, and taxes; interpretations of legal information; interpretations of religious texts; appraisals, genealogical research; tutorial services; or entering of personal information in forms, either online or in print.

Librarians are not required to give personal opinions or information on any topic. To protect the privacy of library staff, work schedules will not be divulged.

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