



REFERENCE SERVICES POLICY

2/14/2017

Purpose

To support the mission of the Library to provide access to informational, educational, and recreational experiences through the collection, programming, and technology.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for staff to ensure all patrons receive consistent service.

Reference service is defined as personal assistance provided to users and potential users of information. Reference service takes a variety of forms including but not limited to direct personal assistance, bibliographies, displays, readers' advisory assistance, and direct access to information. The Riverside Public Library strives to provide current, accurate, and useable information in a responsive, prompt and friendly manner.

Guidelines

Service is provided in accordance to the [guidelines](#) and ethics of the American Library Association. All inquiries will be handled impartially. Reference service is provided to everyone who requests it regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, language proficiency, sexual orientation, or purpose of inquiry. All reference inquiries are confidential.

Reference service will be provided in response to all forms of inquiry including but not limited to in person, phone, email, online, etc.

Trained staff is available to answer questions when the Library is open. Reference staff will be MLS qualified librarians or staff trained according to the [standards](#) and ethics of the American Library Association.

Responding to patron inquiries takes precedence over all other staff duties (except in the case of an emergency). Priority is given to requests made in person, followed by over the phone, then via email/online. All other inquiries are handled in the order they are received. If a question cannot be answered immediately, a patron's contact information may be taken for follow up. Staff may limit the amount of time spent working on a patron's inquiry. For in-depth technology questions, patrons may be asked to book a one-on-one appointment with a librarian at a later time.

Every attempt is made to provide complete, accurate answers to all inquiries and sources will be cited. If staff is unable to answer a question in-house, they may consult another expert, organization, or authority on the topic.

Reference staff will not offer personal opinion, advice or interpretation as fact. Staff will provide information but not interpretation in the areas of law, taxes, medicine, health, and appraisals.

This policy will be evaluated periodically by the Library Director, appropriate staff, and the Library Board of Trustees.

See American Library Association *Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers*:

<http://www.ala.org/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinesbehavioral>

Approved by the Board of Trustees November 15, 1988

Amended by the Board of Trustees January 17, 1989

Amended by the Board of Trustees February 11, 1992

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