

Riverside Public Library Reference Service Policy

GENERAL INFORMATION

The mission of the Riverside Public Library:

The Riverside Public Library offers the people of the Village of Riverside access to informational, educational and recreational experiences through the collection, programming and technology. The Library places an emphasis on providing a welcoming environment in order to encourage patrons of all ages to develop or continue an interest in reading and learning. The Library values its historical significance, as well as that of the Village of Riverside, and fosters the landmark building's atmosphere of grace while seeking innovative ways to provide service to all patrons.

PURPOSE OF REFERENCE POLICY:

Reference service, provided by Adult and Youth Services Departments at the Riverside Public Library, is one of the most vital and visible expressions of the Library's purpose and mission.

Reference service is defined in this plan/policy as personal assistance provided to users and potential users of information. Reference service takes a variety of forms, including direct personal assistance, bibliographies, displays and pathfinders, exchange of information culled from a reference source, readers' advisory assistance, dissemination of information in anticipation of user needs or interests, and direct end-user access to an information system via electronic hardware and software.

Riverside Public Library strives to provide current, accurate, and useable information in a responsive, prompt and friendly manner. To achieve this, reference staff in both the Adult and Youth Services Departments will:

- Be well-trained in reference interviewing techniques
- Participate in continuing education opportunities in order to stay knowledgeable about reference and readers advisory resources and to keep current with new technologies
- Provide readers' advisory assistance
- Provide bibliographic instruction
- Keep the community well informed about reference service and resources
- Use the *Metropolitan Library System Statement of Reference Guidelines* as a model for interacting with the public.

ETHICS

- In serving their users, Riverside Public Library librarians adhere to *The Code of Ethics of the American Library Association*.
- Library staff treat all patrons and their requests with respect. Reference staff consider each individual information query to be of equal merit regardless of the age, gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, English language proficiency, sexual orientation of the library patron or purpose of inquiry.
- All reference inquiries are confidential.

POPULATION SERVED

- Reference service is provided to all who request it.

REFERENCE DESK STANDARDS

- Reference service is provided by professional librarians or trained staff during all hours the library is open.
- Responding to patron questions takes precedence over all other staff duties.
- Reference staff will either provide the information or a status report within one working day of receiving a question.
- If reference staff are unable to answer a question after using all relevant in-house and online resources as well as consulting with other reference staff, they may consult other libraries, institutions, or organizations.
- Reference staff give patrons the source of information. If a patron is sent to another agency, reference staff will verify that the agency has the information.
- Reference staff may not offer personal opinion, advice or interpretation as fact. Reference staff will provide information but no interpretation in the areas of law, taxes, and medicine/health.
- Reference staff will be afforded off-desk time after each four hours of on-desk time. Recognizing that long hours of public contact can make excellent service difficult, every effort will be made to accommodate this need in scheduling.
- Reference service is considered a function of the entire library staff. Staff not directly involved in the provision of reference service will be trained to refer reference inquiries to appropriate staff.
- Reference librarians are careful to see each information transaction through to the end. Appropriate practice, such as “Does this completely answer your question?” will be instituted.

Forms of Inquiry

- Reference service is provided in response to all forms of inquiry. If an answer to a question cannot be relayed effectively through a phone call, letter or electronic

means, the patron will be asked to come to the library to use the materials. If a visit to the library would entail a hardship, other arrangements will be made.

Evaluation and Review of *Reference Service Plan/Policy*

Reference and information services are reevaluated periodically by the Adult Services Manager, the Youth Services Manager and the Director.

The Riverside Public Library *Reference Service Policy* is subject to review by the Board of Trustees every three years, and it is available to the public.

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

Amended by the Board of Trustees June 13, 2000

Amended by the Board of Trustees April 14, 2009

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April 2009