

Hinsdale Public Library

Reference Policy

Purpose

The Hinsdale Public Library Board of Trustees has established the following policy to guide the provision of reference services that meet state and national standards and is tailored to the Hinsdale community.

Terms

Reference Service

“Reference service” refers to the provision of answers, information, instruction, direction, and recommendations to patrons of all ages, either upon request or in anticipation of need, using all available resources.

Goals of Reference Service

- To provide thorough, efficient, timely, accurate reference service and access to resources
- To treat all requests for reference service with respect, impartiality, and confidentiality
- To offer well-trained, approachable, knowledgeable staff to assist Library patrons
- To select, acquire, and organize information and resources to meet the needs of the community
- To utilize all of the Library’s technological resources and all means of communication in the provision of Library service
- To inform patrons about services and resources available from the Library
- To provide instruction in the use of Library resources as appropriate
- To provide patrons with thoughtful referrals to other agencies and libraries as necessary
- To provide easy access to accurate and up-to-date community information, including community newspapers
- To provide services and materials regardless of the age, race, sex, or social or economic status of the patron
- To provide technology training

Availability of Service

Library staff provide reference service to patrons and other Library staff. Each department has a particular area of expertise, but all Library staff are able to answer basic questions and to provide referrals as necessary. Reference service is available at all times the Library is open. In general, online resources are available 24 hours per day.

- Library staff will endeavor to answer all questions, requests and recommendations within 24 hours of receipt.
- Library staff will notify patrons if questions, requests and recommendations cannot be completed within 24 hours and will provide updates.

Hinsdale Public Library

Reference Policy

- Patrons whose questions exceed the Library's scope and resources will be referred to an appropriate resource or institution.

Standards and Ethics

In order to maintain the trust of the patron and respect of the profession, in their provision of reference service Library staff will act in accordance with federal and state laws, the guidelines and standards of conduct as set forth by the American Library Association and the Library's [Confidentiality](#) of Records Policy. Accordingly, all staff will:

- 1) Keep reference interactions confidential and respect each patron's right to privacy with regard to information requested or materials sought or received, borrowed or loaned, as well as any resources consulted.
 - a) Provide answers to information requests only to the person with the original request, unless otherwise permitted by the patron.
 - b) Avoid retaining unnecessary or duplicate records.
- 2) Prevent personal beliefs from interfering with professional duties and make no judgments as to the legitimacy or value of any given request.

Special Circumstances

In the instance of legal, medical, investment, or tax reference questions, the staff may only guide the patron to the material available on the topic of interest. The staff may not evaluate or interpret the information provided nor may the staff explain the meaning of terms, offer investment advice, select income tax forms, or serve as a surrogate for a professional in any of the fields listed above. If all available resources do not adequately answer the patron's request, the patron will be advised to consult a professional in the field for additional information or advice.

Reference materials are circulated only under special circumstances and with the approval of authorized staff.

Access to certain services or resources may be prioritized for Hinsdale Public Library cardholders. The Library adheres to license agreements which require cardholder authentication for remote access to certain online resources.

Related Library Policies

Copies of the following related policy statements are available at any of the Library's service desks or on the Library's website:

[Confidentiality of Records Policy](#)

Hinsdale Public Library

Reference Policy

See Also

American Library Association's Code of Ethics

<http://ftrf.org/ala/oif/statementspols/codeofethics/codeethics.cfm>

Policy Review and Revision

This document will be reviewed by the Board at least every two years.

Hinsdale Public Library Board of Trustees

Approved and Adopted by Library Board on December 12, 2000.

Revised 11/5/02, 10/28/08, 5/22/12, 06/23/15.