

# Hinsdale Public Library

## Reference Policy

### Reference Service

“Reference service” refers to the provision of answers, information, instruction, direction, and suggestions (advisory services) 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 and accurate reference service
- To provide efficient and timely 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 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, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, economic class, or range of abilities of the patron
- To provide technology training on hardware and software available through the Library and technologies used to access library resources
- To provide readers', listeners' and viewers' advisory services in support of patrons informational and recreational needs

### Availability of Service

Library staff provide reference and advisory service to patrons and other Library staff. Any staff member may provide this service and may also refer patrons to colleagues with subject or departmental expertise. Staffed reference service is available at all times the Library is open. In general, online resources are available 24 hours per day.

- Library staff endeavor to respond to all questions, requests and recommendations during the initial interaction or 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.
- Library staff may recommend that patrons schedule an appointment for requests that require in-depth one-on-one instruction.
- Patrons whose questions exceed the Library's scope and resources will be referred to an appropriate resource or organization.

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### 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

Some topics, including but not limited to legal, medical, investment or tax issues may require expertise beyond staff training. Library staff will guide the patron to materials and information available on the topic. Patrons may be advised to consult a professional in the field for additional information or advice.

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

[Confidentiality of Records Policy](#)

### See Also

[American Library Association's Code of Ethics](#)

### 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, 08/22/17, 11/19/19.