

# Hinsdale Public Library

## Reference Policy DRAFT 2022

### 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 by applying the reference interview process
- To provide service most convenient to the user (in-person (consultations, roving, or walk-ups) or remotely (chat, phone, email))
- To treat all requests for reference service with respect, impartiality, and confidentiality
- To offer well-trained, approachable, knowledgeable staff to assist 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 HPL, including the development of research guides, reading lists, and instructions.
- To provide instruction in the use of Library resources as appropriate
- To empower patrons to navigate future information needs
- To explain how to think about information systems in order to find needed resources
- 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 HPL 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

Hinsdale Public Library (HPL) staff provide reference and advisory service in response to an information need. 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 HPL is open. In general, online resources are available 24 hours per day.

- Staff endeavor to respond to all questions, requests and recommendations during the initial interaction or within 24 hours of receipt.
- Staff will notify patrons if questions, requests and recommendations cannot be completed within 24 hours and will provide updates.

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- Staff may recommend that patrons schedule an appointment for requests that require in-depth one-on-one instruction.
- Staff may refer patrons whose questions exceed the HPL's scope and resources to an appropriate resource or organization.

### Standards and Ethics

In order to maintain the trust of the patron and respect of the profession, in their provision of reference service HPL 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 HPL's [Confidentiality of Patron Library 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. HPL 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 HPL cardholders. HPL adheres to license agreements which require cardholder authentication for remote access to certain online resources.

### Related Library Policies

[Confidentiality of Patron Library 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.

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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, 8/23/22.