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| Policy and Procedure Manual       | Section B 8  |
| Public Policy<br>Reference Policy | Issued : December 19, 1988, Amended June 18, 1990, Amended October 16, 1995,<br>Amended April 16, 2007<br>Approving Authority: Board of Library Trustees |

## Reference Policy

Reference service is a major role of the Orland Park Public Library. The following policy is designed to ensure that all patrons receive the highest possible level of service.

### Goals

The goal of reference service is to provide accurate answers to library patrons' questions by trained staff members during all hours the library is open.

- To provide materials and services to meet users' needs for timely, accurate, and useful information.
- To provide trained staff to assist patrons and facilitate access to the library's collections and cooperative resources.
- To assist patrons in the use of reference resources, library materials and in the development of research strategies.
- To provide readers' advisory service.
- To provide efficient referral and effective follow through including interlibrary loan and supplementary reference services to Orland Park Public Library cardholders.
- To keep the community well informed about the reference services and resources available and encourage them to make use of them.

### Ethics and Standards

The staff of the Orland Park Library strives to handle all inquiries with impartiality and confidentially in a courteous and efficient manner. Effort is made to answer all kinds of

questions. No distinction is made about the purpose of the inquiry or the use of information.

The library subscribes to the American Library Association's Code of Ethics.

The library meets the reference standards established by the Metropolitan Library System.

### **Availability of Service**

The Orland Park Public Library provides reference assistance to any patron requesting it, regardless of residency. Access to services of the Metropolitan Library System is offered only to Orland Park Public Library cardholders.

Reference service is provided by trained staff during all hours the library is open. The entire collection – juvenile and adult, circulating and non-circulating – is available to patrons of all ages to answer reference questions.

Inquiries are accepted in person, by telephone, by electronic means and through the mail. Priority is given to in-person requests. Staff will, however, complete a reference telephone question and/or Instant Message in process before attending to an in-person request. Answering reference questions has priority over staff assignments.

If information appropriate to the patron's need is not available in the library, referral will be made to local or regional resources, the Metropolitan Library System's Interlibrary Loan, and/or other libraries. Staff will verify that the needed information is available from the source referral.

Whenever possible, answers to questions will be provided during the patron's visit or telephone call. When other patrons are waiting, staff may have to limit the initial amount of time spent serving an individual patron but follow-up attention will be given. Staff will attempt to answer a patron's question within a required deadline. Otherwise, question usually will be answered, referred or a status report given within 24 hours. A longer response time will be negotiated with the patron when staff needs additional time to locate the needed information.

### **Provision of Service**

Reference staff will use all available sources of information to answer questions. This includes, but is not limited to books, periodicals, electronic databases, the Internet, government agencies, associations, and organizations. Long-distance telephone calls and/or email may be used to answer questions. Citations to sources of information will be given when questions are answered.

The librarian's personal opinion will never be given as fact. While the librarian will provide sources of information, information will not be interpreted and the librarian will not offer legal, medical, or tax advice. If it is not possible to answer a question by the above means, questions will be referred to another agency, when appropriate.

Staff will guide people doing extensive research or compiling large amounts of information to appropriate sources. Reading and interpretation of materials is the patron's responsibility.

### **Service to Schools**

In recognition of the library's role as an educational support center, the Orland Park Public Library will cooperate with all local elementary and secondary schools, along with area colleges. Assigned staff members will coordinate with local schools on assignments and services. Attempts will be made to organize the library's response to assignments that are common to several school classes. Where appropriate, books will be pulled and placed on in-house reserve to ensure that adequate resources are available for all students.

### **Fees**

Most reference service at the Orland Park Public Library is delivered without charge. Patrons using photocopiers and/or printers will be charged a per page fee. Any fees charged by the lending institution will be incurred by the patron.

### **Service to Non-Orland Park Public Library Cardholders**

The Orland Park Public Library does not provide Interlibrary Loan Services to cardholders from other libraries. Remote access to some databases is reserved for Orland Park Public Library cardholders

### **Evaluation of Reference Service and the Reference Policy**

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Library staff, administration, and the Board of Library Trustees.

**Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on: December 19, 1988, Amended June 18, 1990, Amended October 16, 1995, Amended April 16, 2007.**