

Reference Service

The Board of Library Trustees and the Indian Trails Public Library District staff believe that providing reference service is an important role of the library in support of our services strategy to develop and deliver services and materials that anticipate and exceed the needs of our members.

Section 1: Definition

Reference service, which may include research assistance, entails the location of specific facts, or the identification and provision of resources on a topic, or in-depth coverage of a topic. The level of research assistance provided will vary according to the availability of staff, the staff and customer's knowledge of the subject, the volume of other customer requests, the depth of the collection, the complexity of the question and the time frame in which the information is needed.

When staff makes the determination that the nature of the request is beyond the scope of the Library's Reference or Reader Services mission, the staff member shall direct the patron to appropriate resources and offer as much guidance and assistance as possible.

Section 2: Availability of Service

Reference service is available to all persons served by the library regardless of age, gender, religion, race, sexual orientation, social or economic status, or residency.

Reference service will be provided to library members during regular library hours. Service will be provided for all forms of requests, including in-person, telephone, mail, electronic methods, etc.

The service is provided by professional librarians and other staff trained in accordance with the guidelines and ethics of the American Library Association. Library staff uses good judgment to prioritize questions when responding to more than one question at the same time. Staff treats all requests with respect and confidentiality. Staff uses information obtained from accurate, authoritative sources.

Section 3: Priorities of Service

Members have a right to expect prompt, courteous, and accurate assistance and instruction in the use of library resources. Library staff strives to provide complete, accurate answers to all queries. Simple requests are usually answered fully and quickly. Complex questions may require follow up at a later time or an appointment for individual assistance. Complex questions may also require the customer's participation in the information search with staff providing guidance and advice on the search strategy and process. When questions cannot be answered fully with the available resources, staff provides referrals to experts, organizations, and other authorities.

Section 4: Specific Types of Questions

As information professionals, library staff is not able to provide services in other areas of professional practice. Staff does not:

- provide medical, legal, copyright, financial or tax advice
- recommend individual practitioners such as physicians or attorneys
- provide appraisals of books, artwork, antiques or other collectibles
- provide editorial or translation services
- provide career counseling advice
- conduct genealogical, patent, trademark or other in-depth research
- handle confidential information such as social security numbers, account information or medical information. If such information is viewed inadvertently, staff makes every effort to protect members' privacy.

Staff provides library materials, online resources and referrals to other organizations to address needs within these areas.

Section 5: Reference Related Fees

- Proctoring Service \$10 for non-resident member
- Interlibrary Loan Refer to Policy 3.22 - ILL