

# **REFERENCE POLICY**

## **I. MISSION STATEMENT**

The North Judson-Wayne Township Public Library regards as valid every reference question asked by any patron. All questions will be given equal consideration and answered as accurately and completely as possible within a reasonable time limit. Reference service will be available to all patrons, and no questions asked by a patron will be considered unanswerable.

## **II. REFERENCE SERVICE DEFINED**

Good reference service involves identifying a person's information need and proceeding to fulfill it accurately, efficiently, and pleasantly, using the resources available in the Library system, and including referral to resources in other libraries or agencies, if necessary. It also includes providing instruction in Library use.

## **III. OBJECTIVE**

The Library will provide reference services as effectively as possible. Patrons will have the opportunity to receive instruction in the use of sources and facilities but will not be denied information on the basis of whether or not they learn or accept instruction.

## **IV. STANDARDS**

1. All information requests are to be handled. If information is available, it is provided to patrons without making a judgment on its moral or aesthetic worth.
2. No effort will be made to determine whether Library users are entitled to Library cards before reference service is given except to decide whether or not information material will be checked out or interlibrary loan requested.
3. The needs of every Library patron will always be taken seriously and treated with utmost respect and confidentiality. Discussion of any individual or group or their inquiries, outside the professional context, is strictly prohibited without the consent of the patron.

4. While on desk duty, service to the public takes precedence over any other duties, and service to the patron in the building takes precedence over telephone inquiries.
5. It is not sufficient for the staff to wait for a patron to request assistance. Since many patrons are reluctant to request aid, it is the responsibility of staff to anticipate public needs and offer service.
6. Information given should be based on reliable sources or authorities. Opinion, evaluation or interpretation by staff, even when requested, is not given as fact. Answers to reference questions will only be given after the answer has been verified and a source cited, even for the most common knowledge.
7. Neither the patron's nor the staff member's personal opinions and beliefs should influence the quality of service given.
8. Staff shall not offer their personal opinions on social issues, politics, religion, etc. to patrons.
9. Lengthy searches may be beyond the Library's capabilities. Staff should consult with the Director when asked to undertake an extensive search.
10. Telephone reference service should be used for short, factual information questions which do not require extensive reading or (any) interpretation on the staff member's part.

## **V. ORDER OF SERVICE**

The following reference services will be offered:

1. In-house library patrons (first come, first served)
2. Telephone inquiries
3. Mail reference

Adopted 9/8/1998  
Reviewed 4/13/2004  
Reviewed 6/12/2007  
Revised 5/14/2013