

Policy #15 Morton Public Library District Reference Services Policy

Introduction

Staff trained to provide reference service and materials are available all hours the library is open. The Morton Public Library District staff will respond to all reference and information questions efficiently, accurately, completely, and in a timely manner. All requests for information receive an answer or status report within one working day. Questions which cannot be answered with onsite resources are referred to another agency. Such referrals are verified and/or mediated by library staff. Reference includes providing help with the catalog and library computers, readers' advisory service, database and online assistance, interlibrary loan assistance and individual and group instruction. The library will make efforts to keep the community well informed of the reference services available and encourage them to make use of them.

Readers' advisory answers questions that have more to do with the patron's leisure reading than their informational needs. Readers' advisory covers both fiction and nonfiction titles. Readers' advisory shall be provided in the following methods: formal or informal readers' advisory interviews with staff; bestseller lists; read-alike bookmarks; displays; genre labels; library resources such as NovelList and book talks. Readers' advisory is provided to all ages and without judgement of reading tastes or interests.

Access

The library will provide reference services and materials to all persons who reside within the jurisdictional boundaries of the library regardless of the age, race, gender, national origin, economic status. Patrons do not need to be registered Morton Public Library District cardholders to use library facilities, reference materials or services. Service is provided in response to all forms of inquiry including but not limited to patrons in the library, the telephone, mail, e-mail, fax, or other forms of technology as they emerge. The reference questions of patrons visiting the library are given the highest priority.

Confidentiality

The needs of library patrons are treated with respect. Names of patrons and the transactions which occur between patrons and the staff are confidential and not discussed outside a professional context.

Services

Insofar as it is possible, reference service shall not only meet but also anticipate patron needs. The library shall provide instruction in the effective use of its resources. Such instruction can include individual explanation of information resources, the creation of guides and instruction sheets, formal assistance through tours and group presentations, video presentations, or other forms of technology as they emerge. Print and electronic resources are available to assist

staff and patrons in answering questions. Electronic ebooks and subscription databases with remote access are available with the exception of databases that have restrictions.

Reference staff may be available to work one-on-one with patrons to assist in their information needs. Staff instructional sessions include, but are not limited to, using Library's research databases, training on Internet, basic Microsoft products, and specific electronic devices such as e-readers. One-on-one sessions are generally 30 minutes. Staff reserves the right to schedule appointments for one-on-one sessions as time permits.

In recognition of the library's role as an educational support center, the Morton Public Library District will cooperate with District 709 schools and private schools within the library's service area. Library staff will pull books and provide them to the schools or will place them on in-house reserve to ensure adequate resources are available for all students. Instruction on library databases may be provided to schools served by the library.

Limits of Services

In the instance of legal, medical, investment, or tax reference questions, the staff may only guide the patron to the material available on the topic of interest. The staff may not evaluate or interpret the information provided nor may the staff define the meaning of terms, offer investment advice, select income tax forms, or serve as a surrogate for a professional in any of the fields listed above. If all materials within the library are beyond the understanding of the patron, the patron will be advised to consult with their professional from the above listed fields for additional information or advice.

Evaluation of Reference Service and the Reference Policy

The library will evaluate its service every three years to assure that the service furthers the institution's goals, and the goals reflect the needs and interest of the community served.

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