

Service Policy for the Reference and Reader Services Departments

Mission Statement of the Glenview Public Library

The Glenview Public Library provides a welcoming environment that encourages lifelong learning with access to the world of information and ideas. The Library's innovative programs and services strive to educate, enrich, inspire and entertain to meet the needs of a diverse community, fostered by a dedicated staff committed to excellence in customer service.

Approved by the Glenview Public Library Board of Trustees, May 21, 2003

Reference and Reader Services Mission

Reference Services Department librarians and staff strive to effectively meet the information needs of its community of users by bringing the Library's extensive collection of materials and resources together with users and potential users through a variety of quality services and programs to answer immediate informational needs and to provide lifelong learning opportunities.

The librarians and staff of the Reader Services Department seek to provide quality services and programs that spark curiosity for adult and teen library patrons by providing materials for recreational reading, viewing and listening and encouraging opportunities for lifelong learning. Library staff strives to provide prompt, accurate information in a timely manner, including appropriate referral to outside resources, to all library patrons during all hours that the Library is open.

The purpose of this policy is to describe the scope of these informational and readers' advisory services and to provide standards for a consistent, high level of service in each of the Library's service areas. Each service area also has a manual which covers procedures specific to that service area.

In the fulfillment of this mission, the Reference and Reader Services Departments adopt these objectives:

- To provide personal assistance without discrimination to those using library services
- To select, acquire and organize sources of information and materials to meet the needs of library users
- To identify and promote the informational and recreational needs of potential users in the community
- To cooperate with other community agencies and organizations in their efforts to serve the community
- To ensure that library users receive a consistent level of service
- To present programs and classes on reference and readers' advisory services, library use and reference resources, in the Library and within the community

Reference and Reader Services Staff

Staff members at all service areas in the Reference and Reader Services Departments, whether professional or paraprofessional, serve as the link between library resources and the patron. As such, it is important that staff members be:

- Knowledgeable about library materials and services
- Open and approachable; friendly, but professional
- Able to communicate effectively
- Discreet in the handling of questions that may be confidential or sensitive in nature
- Able to exercise good judgment both in the interpretation of policy and the handling of special situations
- Actively involved in showing patrons, whenever possible, where resources or facilities are located, rather than providing verbal directions or pointing to the material

New staff members shall receive orientation to the appropriate Department, to the Library as a whole and to the North Suburban Library System. Ongoing training is necessary in order to provide the highest level of service. Participation in library activities, ranging from formal classroom instruction to informal groups sharing professional ideas, is encouraged, as is membership and participation in the Illinois Library Association, the Public Library Association and the American Library Association.

Library Users and Service Priorities

Library users are all people seeking information or materials, whether in person, by telephone, by FAX, by mail, by e-mail or through CHAT or other virtual reference avenues. The needs of each library user are taken seriously and treated with the utmost respect and confidentiality. Service to the public has priority over all other tasks. Simultaneous requests shall be managed at the staff member's discretion with regard to urgency, complexity and availability of staff resources. In general, in-person questions shall take precedence over questions received by telephone, mail, e-mail or other means. Staff shall make every attempt to respond to voice mail requests within one hour, with either the information requested or a status report. If staff cannot answer a request immediately, he or she shall obtain contact information from the patron in order that the patron receives a response within 24 hours.

Online Resources and Other Sources of Information

Staff providing reference and readers' advisory services frequently reach beyond the reference, fiction, nonfiction and audiovisual collections of the Library and in-house expertise, by drawing on the resources of other organizations. These may include interlibrary loan, consulting with individual experts, consulting external information sources, regardless of medium, and by accessing information via the Internet and through online resources.

Online Research Databases

The Glenview Public Library subscribes to many electronic resources to meet the informational needs of its users. This service is available to all patrons within the Library and via remote access to Glenview Public Library cardholders. Staff shall use and recommend to patrons appropriate electronic resources, either from the Internet or from library subscription databases, to answer reference questions. Staff shall offer suggestions to patrons who are using Internet workstations and help within the limits of their expertise, in determining whether a resource is authoritative. Staff shall not guarantee the validity of information retrieved from the Internet, but instead attempt to provide the patron with tools and contextual information that help to evaluate the resource.

Referrals to Other Libraries or Agencies

If the staff member deems it appropriate to refer the patron to another library or agency, he or she shall provide the name, address, and telephone number of the agency to the patron, verifying the information, if possible, in advance with the library/agency to which the patron is being directed. Referrals shall not be made to individual practitioners, such as physicians, attorneys or other individuals. When referring a patron to another library for a title not available at the Glenview Public Library, staff shall call ahead to verify on-shelf status, reserving the item in the patron's name.

Interlibrary Loan

Requests for materials not held at the Glenview Public Library are accepted and considered for purchase; an item request not fulfilled within six months may be submitted as an interlibrary loan request, if not available through a CCS library. If available from a CCS library, a hold may be placed on the title. A Glenview Public Library card is required for all purchase requests, holds and interlibrary loan requests. Final decision on whether to purchase requested materials rests with the Library's Collection Manager. Glenview Public Library reference materials are not available for interlibrary loan.

Sources

Staff shall rely upon information obtained from reputable sources in order to give the most accurate and authoritative answers to questions. The source of the information shall be cited. Staff shall not give personal opinions, philosophy or evaluations.

Definition and Scope of Reference and Research Assistance

Reference service entails the location of specific facts, or the identification and provision of resources on a topic, while *research* assistance involves the 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. Lengthy research for individual customers that requires extensive staff time to collect data from multiple sources, including comprehensive bibliographic or electronic searches, copying of materials and collating items, is not within the scope of the Glenview Public Library's reference or research assistance.

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

Reader Services

A variety of readers' advisory services are available to library patrons. They incorporate the same public service principles that guide library staff in all patron Reference Service interactions, whether the patron is researching information, looking for a magazine article, using public Internet computers, browsing the audiovisual collection for the most current Grammy winners, looking for a favorite author's most recent book or asking for a *read-alike*. When a patron asks for a reading, movie or music recommendation, the staff member conducts a brief informal conversation aimed at determining the needs of the patron. During the course of the conversation, the staff member suggests materials that the user may enjoy based on input from the patron. This interaction may take place at the desk, in the stacks or while in the process of aiding patrons in searching the library OPAC, and may involve both fiction and nonfiction titles. When appropriate to the patron's needs, the staff member shall direct the patron to print and/or online readers' advisory resources.

Programming

Reader Services programs, movies and other programming events include staff-led book discussion groups, the Summer and/or Winter Reading Programs for Adults and Teens, Teen Gaming Nights and adult enrichment programs. Reference Services provides programs in genealogy, business and consumer health as well as Internet/ computer instructional workshops. All of the programs play an important role in the Library's provision of Reference and Reader Services. Library staff also promotes library services and resources by preparing bibliographic tools, presenting talks or participating in events sponsored by local organizations and other community groups.

Outreach Services

The Glenview Public Library Outreach Librarian in the Reader Services Department provides outreach services to nursing homes, the Senior Center, adult family homes, convalescent centers, senior housing and mobile home parks and the homebound. Qualifying individuals, who are vision-impaired or who suffer from certain types of learning disabilities, may receive books and magazines on tape through the Voices of Vision service. In addition to a TTY telephone, the Library has books in large print and audio formats, assistive listening devices for use by patrons inside the building, video magnifiers and an ADA computer workstation with a variety of assistive software, book scanning and Braille keyboard and printing capability. The Library also provides assistive listening devices and a video magnifier for patron check-out. The Glenview Public Library Outreach Services are available only to persons living within incorporated Glenview Village limits.

Instruction and Orientation Services

Instruction and orientation in library use may range from basic individual and class instruction on how to use catalogs, reference tools, computer applications and the Internet, to more formal assistance designed to increase the patron's knowledge of the Library's materials and services, as well as to provide timely, thorough and accurate responses to the requested information. Upon request, staff shall provide tours of the Library and its collections in accordance with staffing and scheduling needs.

Loan of Reference Materials from the Reference and Reader Services Departments

Reference materials do not circulate because these resources are required to conduct ongoing daily service routines of library staff. Reference resources are the tools of librarians and their work. Extended absence from the shelf would interrupt the provision of timely, correct and appropriate information to library users and other staff.

Specific Types of Questions

Particular kinds of questions are often problematic and place unusual demands on service to the public. The following general guidelines are provided to clarify for staff and patrons the level of assistance that can reasonably be expected in these areas:

School Assignments

Questions regarding school assignments shall be treated as any other request for information or reference assistance. If every effort has been made by the staff member and the student to locate information without results, the student shall be encouraged to return to the teacher for further instructions or an altered assignment. A note to this effect may be given to the student if the staff member feels it is justified.

Contest Questions

Staff shall treat simple, factual questions in the same manner as all other **Reference** questions. Some contest questions are tricky and may have more than one answer that appears to be correct. The Library cannot guarantee that the answer provided is the correct answer for any specific contest. Staff shall not conduct lengthy searches or interpret contest rules.

Stock Quotations

Stock quotations for currently traded securities are generally available online. Stock quotations for an exact date and stocks that are not available online shall be verified, whenever possible, from the Library's microfilm collection. The staff member conducting the microfilm search shall attempt to contact the patron within the established 24-hour response time.

Consumer Evaluations

Staff shall assist patrons in locating objective product information by instructing them in the use of *Consumer Reports* and other related magazines and buying guides. These resources include general indexes, print or non-print that may lead to product evaluations in additional periodicals. Staff shall not recommend specific products, services or practitioners.

Book, Antique, and Art Appraisals

The Library staff is not able to make appraisals of books, works of art, antiques, coins, stamps, currency or other collectibles. Patrons seeking such information shall be referred to standard print or online price guides and/or encouraged to consult appropriate professional services.

Critical Analysis of Literary Works

Library staff shall not provide critical analyses, interpretations, editorial suggestions or judgments regarding the merit of literary works.

Genealogical Questions

Library staff shall provide general assistance in genealogical research, guidance in locating items in the collection and assistance in locating and using resources available through interlibrary loan or online resources. Staff shall not perform actual genealogical research for patrons.

Translations

Staff shall provide brief translations only, if a staff member with the appropriate expertise is available.

Compilations and Literature Searches

Reference or readers advisory research entails the location of specific facts, or the identification and provision of resources on a topic. Staff is unable to undertake exhaustive searches or extensive compilations (bibliographies, lists, statistics, etc.) or comprehensive literature searches for patrons. Patrons needing this type of research shall be directed to the appropriate resources and offered assistance as staff time allows. Staff shall gather resources relevant to the patron's request. Selection from a range of relevant information and interpretation or development of an argument or theme shall be the responsibility of the patron. All materials retrieved shall be held at the appropriate service desk for pick-up by the patron.

Mathematical Calculations

Staff shall look up mathematical tables and formulas for patrons upon request. Calculators shall be provided, if needed, but staff shall not perform calculations for patrons.

Medical and Legal Questions

Staff shall provide information in response to legal, medical or business reference questions, but shall not serve as interpreters or advisors. Staff shall provide instruction in the use of resources, enabling users to pursue information independently. If the patron has difficulty understanding the information, an alternative source shall be sought. If no appropriate sources can be located, the patron shall be referred to the legal, medical or financial community for interpretation of the information. For specific medical requests, brief definitions and descriptions from published sources, such as dictionaries, medical encyclopedias, drug dictionaries or text books shall be given in person or over the telephone. These sources shall be quoted verbatim with no advice or interpretation given. The patron shall be informed of the source(s) of the information provided.

Tax Questions

Staff shall not provide help in the selection or preparation of tax forms, preparation of tax forms or interpretation of tax law or tax rulings. Patrons needing assistance beyond that provided by customary reference resources shall be referred to other agencies or organizations.

Patent Searches

Library staff may supply information concerning patents but cannot perform complete patent searches. Patrons in need of this type of research may visit the Chicago Public Library, the Illinois State Library or consult an attorney.

Obituary Searches

Reference staff shall research obituaries online. Staff shall perform a microfilm check of local newspapers if an approximate date of publication is given. Research to determine accurate dates of publication is the responsibility of the patron requesting the information.

Ethics/Confidentiality

The Library staff will strive to make service available to all patrons on an equal basis, regardless of age, gender, race, creed, religion or disability. All questions and requests for information shall be treated as confidential in the sense that, except as may be required by law, the nature of the question asked and the identity of the patron shall not be discussed with other patrons, and shall not be divulged beyond that necessary for the orderly and effective administration of the Library and the Reference Service. When referring reference or readers' advisory questions between staff members, discussion about the nature of the question asked and the identity of the patron shall be kept to the minimum required by the referral.