



OPERATING POLICY

REFERENCE SERVICES

Goals

The goal of the La Grange Public Library is to provide quality reference and reader's advisory services to the La Grange community. We aim to build good public relations through friendly, courteous and helpful service.

Policies

The reference collections and access to Reference Services are provided to all patrons regardless of age.

Our objective is to provide accurate, timely answers to all questions.

Specially-trained personnel provide reference service during all hours that the library is open in response to all forms of inquiry, including telephone, mail and e-mail. Staff in all departments will attempt to answer questions with the materials available to them. More complex reference questions will be referred to the professional librarians in each department, with the Reference and Reader Services Department being the ultimate resource.

Questions which cannot be answered with on-site resources will be referred to appropriate outside sources.

Reference staff will use every means available to meet the patrons' information needs in the time frame specified by the patron.

Patrons' requests will be considered confidential within the bounds of identification needed to transmit the requested answer or necessary consultation with other library personnel. All questions will be treated with equal concern without regard to age, sex, nationality or purpose of the requestor subject to the following guidelines.

Guidelines

- Sources will be cited when providing information.
- Priority will be given to an in-person request.
- Off-site patrons with extensive research projects will be encouraged to come to the library for assistance.

Students with broad questions and research projects are frequent users of the library. Because learning to do research is part of the teachers' assignments, we assist students in their searches rather than provide specific answers for these large projects. We suggest reference books, databases, and other library materials, and provide instruction in using the sources.

Limitations

- We will not do genealogical research for patrons. We can help patrons to find genealogical materials in our collection and through interlibrary loan, and we can recommend specialized, local collections such as the Newberry Library.
- We will not appraise rare books or antiques, but we can direct patrons to appraisers and price lists.
- While the La Grange Public Library does provide resources for medical, legal and financial inquiries, the staff cannot provide advice in these areas or in others that require professional training.



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- Reference Services is not required to locate answers to quiz or contest questions. We will suggest sources to aid the patron in his search.
- The library does not recommend encyclopedias, dictionaries and specific reference titles for home purchase. We supply sources of evaluation, such as book reviews and consumer reports.
- A time limit of 30 minutes is placed on questions from non-residents. After 30 minutes the non-resident patron will be referred to his local library or an appropriate agency. Non-residents who purchase La Grange cards will be treated as residents.
- Reference staff will not conduct personal transactions for patrons, such as making airline or hotel reservations or making online purchases.
- Some online resources, such as subscription databases, require a La Grange library card for access outside of the library.

Evaluation of Reference Services

1. Reference Services will be evaluated periodically in terms of patrons' satisfaction and effective implementation of the above reference policy and procedures.
2. The Reference Services Policy is subject to review every other year.