



OPERATING POLICY

REFERENCE SERVICES

Goals

The La Grange Public Library (“Library”) strives 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 and reader’s advisory services are provided to all patrons regardless of age, race, sex, or social or economic status.

The Library’s objective is to provide accurate, timely answers to all questions.

Specially trained personnel provide reference and reader’s advisory service during all hours that the library is open, in response to all forms of inquiry, including in-person, 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 Adult and Teen Services Department being the ultimate resource.

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

Reference staff will use every means available to meet 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 the purpose of the requestor and will be subject to the following guidelines:

Guidelines

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

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

Limitations

- Staff will not do genealogical research for patrons. Staff can help patrons to find genealogical materials in our collection and through Interlibrary Loan and can recommend specialized, local collections such as the Newberry Library.

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- Staff will not appraise rare books or antiques but can direct patrons to appraisers and price lists.
- While the Library will provide resources for medical, legal, and financial inquiries, the staff cannot provide advice in these areas or in others that require professional training.
- The Library will not recommend encyclopedias, dictionaries, or specific reference titles for home purchase but will supply sources of evaluation, such as book reviews and consumer reports.
- 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 Public Library card for access from outside of the library.

Evaluation of Reference Services

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