

Worth Public Library District Reference Service Policy

General:

It is the intent of the Worth Public Library District to provide quality reference service and access to the entire Worth Public Library reference collection to the public during all hours the library is open. Staff trained in accordance with the Metropolitan Library System Statement of Reference Guidelines will assist any patron who requests information or materials from the library regardless of the form of inquiry.

Reference Service Guidelines:

- A. Philosophy of Service:
 - a. Requests from users of all ages and circumstances are to be treated impartially.
 - b. Every attempt will be made to provide accurate answers within a reasonable time frame.
 - c. Requests will be considered confidential within the bounds of identification needed to answer the question.
 - d. The Library's written reference policy is available to the public online or upon request.

- B. Purpose of Reference Policy:
 - a. To provide a guideline for staff in defining services to Worth Public Library District's patrons.
 - b. To provide a statement available to patrons defining the reference service provided.
 - c. To provide standards to ensure that reference services are consistently administered at Worth Public Library District.

Reference Staff:

- A. The Head of Adult Services has principal responsibility for Reference Service.
- B. A reference team composed of professional and support staff will share the following reference responsibilities:
 - a. Patron reference interview.
 - b. Selection of reference materials using the guidelines provided by the library's Materials Selection Policy, the MLS Recommended Resources List for Adult Reference Collections, and the MLS Youth Services Recommended Reference Sources.
 - c. Participation in the evaluation and weeding of the reference and non-fiction collections.
 - d. Instruction in use of reference materials.
 - e. Referrals to other libraries and other appropriate sources.
 - f. Provide Readers' Advisory service.

- g. Prepare bibliographies for in-house use or to fulfill requests from local agencies.
 - h. Provide citation(s) to source(s) of information when answering questions.
- C. Continuing Education Requirements for Reference Staff:
- a. Attend MLS workshops as recommended by Department Heads or the Administrative Librarian.
- D. Reference training will include:
- a. Orientation to the library, including all collections, departments and services, within the first 30 days of employment.
 - b. Ongoing Reference training with a concentration on:
 - i. Skill-building techniques.
 - ii. Awareness of library resources.
 - iii. Awareness of area resources

Reference Sources:

- A. Materials
- a. Staff will utilize the current *MLS Recommended Resources List for Adult Reference Collections* and the *MLS Youth Services Recommended Reference Sources* in making their selections.
 - b. "Supplementary reference value" will be one of the criteria applied in the selection of non-fiction materials and periodicals.
 - c. The library will provide and maintain:
 - i. Current issues of *The Worth Reporter* newspaper and retain backfiles for a minimum of six months.
 - ii. Current issues of the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Sun-Times* and retain backfiles for a minimum of one month.
 - iii. Materials to provide local information, including:
 - 1. Local directory of community organizations.
 - 2. Ordinances, codes and maps for local municipal government.
 - 3. Basic information about local, state and federal government officials.
 - 4. Local history
- B. Equipment
- a. Reference staff will have access to a working personal computer with Internet access, a printer, a fax machine, and a library-provided e-mail account.
 - b. Reference staff will have access to a telephone and authorization to make calls for reference information or ILL requests.
 - c. A photocopy machine will be available to staff and public.

- C. Online Resources:
 - a. The library will have access to the MLS/SWAN database, which makes available a collection larger than its own.
 - b. The library will provide access to other online databases with reference value.

- D. Guidelines for Specific Requests:
 - a. School Assignments—Student assignments are meant to be part of an educational process. The role of the reference librarian is one of guidance in helping a patron find the material to complete homework.
 - b. Legal and Medical Questions—Staff will assist patrons who visit the library to locate information concerning legal and medical questions. Staff will not offer opinions, advice or interpretations on these matters.
 - c. Genealogy—Because of the lack of resources and limited staff, the library is unequipped to work with patrons who are engaged in genealogical research. Patrons with such inquiries will be referred to the Newberry Library or other appropriate agencies.
 - d. Appraisals—The library will not do appraisal work for books or materials of any kind.
 - e. Income Tax—Reproducible income tax forms will be made available for photocopying; patrons will make their own photocopies at the current rate charged by the library. The library also provides links from its webpage to State and Federal tax forms. Library employees will not answer tax questions, fill out tax forms, nor print tax forms and/or instructions from the Internet.
 - f. Limits on Materials—Materials which are heavily used at one time (class assignments, holiday materials, etc.) may be limited as to the number of items a patron may borrow, how long the circulation period will be, and whether renewals will be permitted.
 - g. Local History—Worth local history materials are for in-library use only. Patrons will be referred to the Worth Historical Museum for additional information.
 - h. Copyright and Patent Searches—The library does not have the resources to conduct a patent or copyright search. Patrons will be referred to appropriate agencies.

- E. Miscellaneous Guidelines:
 - a. Telephone Reference Service
 - i. The patron who comes into the library for library service takes priority over the patron who telephones.
 - ii. Individuals requesting large amounts of information or assistance with research projects will be asked to come to the library.
 - b. Charges and Fees:
 - i. Fees charged from other agencies for services or materials will be passed on to the requesting patron. A deposit may be

required for large sums, e.g. patron requested \$200.00 database search.

- c. Circulation Functions:
 - i. Reference books may be circulated overnight if approved by the Department Head on duty. These materials must be returned to the book drop before the library opens for its next working day. One dollar per day late fee will be charged for reference materials not returned on time.
 - ii. Unprocessed materials may be used in the library only.
 - iii. Special loans involving time extensions must be approved by the Department Head on duty.
- d. Overly Broad Queries
 - i. Reference requests that result in disproportionate or ambiguous search results that cannot be narrowed or refined by the patron through a reference interview, may not be completed to the patron's satisfaction. A reasonable number of sources as determined by the reference librarian will be provided. Search results requiring an excessive number of printouts must be done by the patron.
- e. Repeated Requests
 - i. Patrons making repeated requests for the same information may be directed to appropriate resources to conduct their own searches and/or print their own results.

Evaluation Process:

- A. Reference Evaluations:
 - a. Recommendations from the Reference Team for revision of the policy will be forwarded to the Library Board of Trustees for review.
 - b. The Worth Public Library District Board of Trustees will review the library's reference service policy as needed.

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Kari Fickes

President, Board of Trustees