

Reference and Reader's Advisory Policy

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to assure the quality and consistency of reference service by providing guidelines for staff and the community.

2. **General Statement**

The Shorewood-Troy Public Library welcomes and encourages the use of its services and facilities by all patrons. Staff members are committed to providing information services that fulfill the needs of library patrons.

3. **Scope**

All library patrons

4. **General Guidelines**

- a. In order to provide access to ideas and material that supports the cultural, educational, and recreational enrichment of the community, the Shorewood-Troy Public Library provides Reference and Reader's Advisory Services. These information services are provided by qualified professional librarians during all hours that the library is open.
- b. Library staff identifies information needs and fulfills them accurately and efficiently, using resources available in the library, online through subscription or other credible resources, and other libraries or agencies, if necessary. Staff also provides instruction in library use upon request.
- c. Staff replies to all requests for information from patrons in person, by phone, mail, various social media, and e-mail. All requests for assistance are provided on a first-come, first-served basis, with priority given to those within the library.
- d. Staff does not discriminate based on age, gender, race, sexual preference, disability, or appearance in providing reference services.
- e. The informational needs of every library patron will always be taken seriously and facilitated with objectivity, respect, and confidentiality.
- f. Providing advice and suggestions for recreational reading is an essential service in a public library. Each patron's reading tastes will be taken seriously and without judgment. However, when performing Reader's Advisory services, personal interpretation and recommendation are unavoidable.
- g. For requests that require more thorough research, staff may request contact information, and will provide a response within 48 hours.
- h. Service is provided in a manner consistent with the Library Bill of Rights, the American Library Association Code of Ethics, and copyright law.

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Approved by the board 2/9/17; Reviewed 4/7/21

5. Limitations

- a. Information particularly in the subject areas of law, medicine, consumer information, religion, politics, and personal finance/tax information, is presented without interpretation, advice, analysis, or personal recommendation.
- b. Staff will not engage in conversation or debate of a personal nature, including but not limited to religious or political beliefs, or their personal lives.
- c. Patrons may not request to work exclusively with a particular staff member.
- d. Staff set reasonable limits on the amount of time and level of response given to patron requests for information. In order to ensure equal and fair access to reference services, patrons are limited to 15 minutes of consultation, either consecutively or in aggregate, with reference librarians up to three times per day, for a total of 45 minutes.
- e. For patrons who require additional assistance or research for complex questions, staff can provide direction and instruction on library resources with the expectation that patrons conduct their own in-depth research. Book-A-Librarian sessions may be booked for instructional purposes. See the Book-A-Librarian Policy for more information.
- f. Patrons must comply with the library's Code of Conduct Policy when engaging in reference services. Patrons who continuously breach these limitations will have their usage of the library suspended for a period of time.
- g. General assistance is provided in genealogical research. Reference staff does not conduct genealogic research for patrons.
- h. Staff does not provide editorial, typing, or translation services.