

REFERENCE AND READER'S ADVISORY

The purpose of Reference Services is to be the focal point connecting the community with information resources and recreational materials. Reference services staff:

- Work together to meet the information needs of customers pleasantly, accurately and efficiently.
- Provide assistance and instruction in finding and using library materials and equipment.
- Determine the type of information resource (book, audio, electronic database, Internet) that will best meet each information request.
- Identify the information needs of current library customers and potential users in the community and provide reliable information resources to meet these needs.
- Provide reader's advisory services for library collections to appeal to and satisfy customer interests.
- Make technological information resources accessible for all.
- Present information and proactively promote awareness of information services and materials, using bibliographies, tours, group instruction, programs and displays.
- Provide community outreach and designated staff liaison with community organizations such as schools, businesses and nonprofits.

Ethics & Standards

The Rockford Public Library adheres to the American Library Association Code of Ethics. All requests for information are legitimate. Customers of all ages and circumstances are to be treated with equal attention, confidentiality and sensitivity to their particular needs. All questions are to be either answered or redirected to satisfy the customer's needs; alternatives such as other titles, interlibrary loans and community sources are suggested to the customer as appropriate.

Availability of Service

The Rockford Public Library provides reference assistance to any customer requesting it. General reference service is provided by trained staff during all hours that the library is open. The entire collection—juvenile and adult, circulating and non-circulating, in all formats—is available to customers of all ages to answer reference questions. Electronic resources are provided and maintained to maximize ease of public use.

Staff may set reasonable limits on the amount of time and level of response given to patron requests for information. Simple requests for information can usually be answered fully. More complex questions may require that patrons participate in finding needed information, with staff providing guidance and assistance. Patrons doing in-depth research or needing extensive individual reading guidance should expect to receive professional assistance, direction and library instruction, but will be expected to conduct the actual research themselves.

Staff makes use of personal knowledge, reference tools and marketing tools to meet the reading

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interests of customers.

Types of services

The Library provides in-person reference, telephone reference, e-mail reference, and virtual live-chat reference from a link on the Library's web site.

Services provided at the public reference desks include: helping the customer locate materials and general floor assistance, giving directions, finding answers to specific questions, interviewing customers to determine information needs, making referrals, giving instruction in the use of library materials and equipment, assisting with use of computer workstations and other equipment, providing reader's advisory services, and taking or assisting with holds and interlibrary loan requests.

Reference services provide information that is accurate and verified in a reliable source, which is cited. No personal opinions, recommendations, evaluations or interpretations are given. Use is made and referral is given to online sources, community information sources, interlibrary loan services and other sources of information beyond the library collection. All customer requests and uses of materials are treated as private and confidential.

Instructional/orientation services

Brief individual instruction in use of the catalog and other library tools is given. Customers are referred to classes offered for more extensive instruction in computer resources. Classes are offered to give customers sufficient instruction to use library-provided electronic resources.