

Reference Policy

Reference service is the provision of information in response to a patron's inquiry. Fondulac District Library provides reference services to all library patrons, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, disability, socio-economic status, or residency. Library patrons do not need to be library card-holders to receive reference services, and these services are available during all hours the library is open.

The following services are provided by adult and youth services staff:

- Reader's advisory
- Assistance using the library's physical and digital collection
- Assistance using the library's resources, including equipment and databases
- Referral services
- Interlibrary loan and resource sharing
- Research assistance

Reference assistance may be requested in person or remotely by mail, by phone, by email, via social media, or by website chat. When the patron requesting assistance is not in person at the library, staff may inform the patron that the staff person will need to get back with them if an extensive search is required or additional time is needed to fulfill the request. When a patron is unable to provide adequate information remotely, staff may ask the patron to come to the library to ensure accurate information is obtained to fulfill the request.

The library strives to provide accurate, up-to-date, relevant information of local, national, and universal importance. Staff provides basic training and assistance in the use of library technology and equipment. Staff will not give opinion as fact or offer legal, medical, consumer, tax, or financial advice. Research and homework help are limited to locating resources and offering introductory training in using those resources. The reading, interpretation, and use of the materials is the responsibility of the patron.

Staff will not read or recreate lengthy lists, long passages of statistics, or technical, medical, or legal information to patrons contacting the library remotely. Staff will request the remote patron visit the library personally or provide an alternative communication method, such as email, to see or review a copy of the information.

Instruction in the use of the library collection and resources, including the use of equipment and digital materials, may be provided through group tours, programs, and one-on-one training as time and resources are available.

Library staff cannot provide typing services or assistance with inputting credit card numbers, passwords, or other private information. Library staff can provide limited guidance to help patrons using devices, but patrons are expected to execute all digital tasks including typing, submitting forms, and sending correspondence.

The library does not charge for instruction, cursory research assistance, or reader's advisory. Fees will be charged for the use of other library services as noted in other library policy.

For students, homework is intended to be a learning experience for the student. The service provided by library staff may be dependent on the nature and purpose of the assignment, the difficulty of the search, and the age and sophistication of the student. As appropriate, staff will assist students to find sources, provide instruction in the use of the sources, and assist them in the search.

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