



## WESTMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY

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westmontlibrary.org

Providing the community keys to lifelong learning

### **Reference Service Policy**

#### **Purpose**

One of the fundamental roles of a public library is to provide reference service to its residents. The Westmont Public Library is committed to providing the highest quality of reference service for the entire community. Staff seek to provide accurate information in a timely manner in response to all informational requests. The purpose of this Policy is to assure the quality and consistency of reference service by providing guidelines and scope of service.

#### **Guidelines**

Reference services and access to the entire reference collection are provided to patrons of all ages. Trained staff provide reference service all hours the library is open. A professional librarian, or other staff member who meets training and/or experience requirements, works at the 1st and 2nd floor Service (Reference) Desks. Reference staff will conduct expert reference interviews to determine the reference/research needs of the library user and provide professional reference service all times.

The staff respond to all requests for information, whether submitted in person, by telephone, e-mail, or other form of communication. All requests are handled with impartiality and confidentiality with no distinction made about the purposes of the inquiry. The library is not liable for how patrons choose to use the information acquired from staff members.

Staff assist patrons until questions are answered to the best of our ability or referred to another staff member or agency for completion. When necessary, the librarian or staff member may temporarily limit the time spent with one patron. Patrons with in-depth questions are encouraged to take advantage of the scheduled book-a-librarian service for up to one hour when staff are available.

Staff help patrons with basic computer operations and applications and refer patrons to appropriate books, online tutorials, or classes for further assistance. When assisting with computer resources, staff will not enter personal information for patrons.

#### **Search Scope**

Reference librarians utilize various resources when conducting searches for patrons. Depending on availability, staff might utilize print materials, online databases, and authoritative websites. Staff cannot endorse specific products or offer recommendations nor can they offer advice on business, legal, tax, medical inquiries or appraisals.

#### **Accuracy**

Every attempt is made to provide accurate answers to all questions. When possible, staff will refer patrons to authoritative, reputable sources and offer supporting documentation or information upon further inquiry. Patrons have a right to be informed of the sources used to answer their questions.

#### **Fees**

Reference services are provided for free but occasionally fees are requested to help cover the cost of a search. Fees may include printing or photocopying, faxing, and fees assessed by a database or other agency. Patrons will be informed of fees and associated costs prior to completing a request.

**Approved by the Westmont Public Library Board of Trustees on April 21, 2015**