

Fairport Public Library Reference Services Guidelines

Library Mission Statement

The Fairport Public Library, using both its own resources and those available through the Monroe county Library System, shall endeavor to meet the educational, informational, and recreational needs of the residents of the Fairport Central School District on a free and equal basis through professional, courteous, and friendly service. The library shall be innovative while maintaining sound fiscal management. The library shall strive to be an integral and cooperative part of the community and to promote the concept of life-long learning.

Mission Statement for Reference Service

The Fairport Public Library will strive to provide access to accurate information or materials in response to user requests in an efficient, courteous, impartial, and timely manner.

Purpose of Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that all users of the Fairport Public Library receive the same levels of service based on uniform procedures and to provide a basis for training and evaluating staff performance.

Goals of Reference Service

The Fairport Public Library recognizes the following goals for reference service:

- 1) To provide accurate and timely answers to information requests using resources available at or through the library.
- 2) To assist patrons in the use of library resources and in the development of research strategies.
- 3) To provide efficient referral and effective follow-through on questions that cannot be answered adequately at this library.

Availability of Service

Library patrons will have access to reference services and sources whenever the library is open. At least one professional librarian will always be on duty. Answering reference questions will have priority over other staff assignments.

Resources

Reference staff will use a variety of available resources to answer questions. This will include but not be limited to books, periodicals, online sources, other libraries and agencies. The library's reference collection is essential to the provision of reference services and therefore is not available for circulation. The librarian will decide when all

reasonable resources have been exhausted at this library and when it is appropriate to refer the question to another library or agency.

Forms of Inquiry

Reference service will be provided in response to all forms of inquiry, including requests made in person and those that come by telephone, fax, mail or e-mail. In order to provide the most accurate response possible, personal follow-up with patrons may be initiated by library staff if inquiries are received by fax, mail or e-mail. Inquiries are answered in the form the librarian feels is the most expedient.

Response to Questions

An effort will be made to answer all types of questions. Distinctions are not made regarding the purpose of the inquiry or the use of the information. Requests will generally be handled in the order in which they are received. Requests submitted by patrons in the library are given priority over telephone requests. When answering a patron's reference question(s), staff will cite the resource(s) from which the information is obtained. The producer of any resource, not the library itself, is responsible for that resource's accuracy.

If answering a particular reference question would require extensive research, interpretation or evaluation of information, the patron will be asked to review and evaluate the resources themselves. In such instances, staff will provide research guidance and instruction in the use of library resources. Staff will offer no interpretation or advice in any area other than library science.

Fees

Fees are not charged for reference service. The library will, however, generally pass on to the patron charges assessed by other libraries or agencies and costs incurred for providing photocopies and printouts. The patron will be notified in advance of any such charges.

Ethics and Standards

Fairport Public Library subscribes to the principles described in the American Library Code of Ethics (Appendix A). All transactions with patrons and all patron records will be kept confidential as prescribed in New York Civil Practice Law and Rules, Section 4509 (Appendix B), and applicable federal law.

Evaluation of Reference Service and Review of the Guidelines

Reference services staff will continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of reference services on an informal basis. Suggestions from the public are always welcome. These guidelines will be reviewed and revised as times and circumstances require.