



INFORMATION & REFERENCE SERVICES POLICY

Forms of Inquiry

Inquiries are accepted in person, by telephone, by electronic means and through the mail. Priority is given to in-person requests. Staff will, however, complete a telephone conversation in process before attending to in-person requests.

Responses to Requests for Assistance

Reference service is intended to be provided by trained staff during all hours the Library is open. When working at a service desk, response to patron service needs, including reference inquiries, takes precedence over other staff duties.

Requests will generally be handled in the order in which they are received. Reference staff members will attempt to answer questions at the time the request is made and to work within the patron's time requirements. If necessary, staff will inform the patron that a longer response time is needed or that assistance should be sought from another library or agency.

Staff will offer their best professional opinion when providing reader's advisory or recommending the best source to answer a question. Staff will not give opinions, advice or interpretation beyond the scope of their expertise and training in library reference work. When answering a patron's reference question, reference staff will cite the resource(s) from which the information is obtained. The producers of that resource, not the Library itself, are responsible for that resource's accuracy. The librarian will decide when all reasonable resource options have been exhausted at the Library and when it is time to cease working on a question and refer the patron elsewhere.

If it proves to be both possible and practical to do so, staff will attempt to guide and instruct patrons in the use of library resources when responding to reference inquiries.

Staff will assist as they are able in helping patrons with computer applications or electronic reading/listening devices and may refer patrons to appropriate books, online tutorials or classes for further assistance. When assisting patrons with computer resources, staff will not enter personal information for patrons.

Staff will not provide the following kinds of assistance, which are deemed to be beyond the scope of the Library's service responsibilities:

- Interpretation, advice or personal recommendations in any area other than the use of Library resources. This includes, but is not limited to, legal, medical, tax, financial, political or religious advice.
- Critiquing or editing documents, including resumes for job seekers.
- Completing forms (including online forms) for patrons, or assisting patrons in completing such forms.

- Creating accounts for patrons, such as personal email, social media, banking, financial or online shopping accounts.

Approved by the Novi Public Library Board of Trustees: January 15, 1979

Amended: May 1, 2010; October 23, 2013; June 22, 2017; May 23, 2024
