

## REFERENCE SERVICES POLICY

### **POLICY:**

- I. **Philosophy of Service:**

Good reference service involves identifying the patron's information need and proceeding to fill that need accurately, efficiently and courteously using the resources available to the librarian in print and/or electronic format; also to include consultation with colleagues and referral to other agencies if necessary and appropriate. The Library's building will not serve as a boundary to reference service so that inquiries will be accepted electronically, via Fax and telephone, as well as those made in person.
- II. **Definition of Reference Service:**

Reference service takes a variety of forms including direct personal assistance, use of directories or signage, exchange of information found in a reference source, readers' advisory assistance as well as assistance with direct end-user access to library computers and electronic resources.
- III. **Reference Standards:**
  - A. Librarians will assist patrons in the use of the Library's resources and teach basic research skills when needed and/or requested by the patron.
  - B. Librarians will handle all information requests. If information is available, it is provided to the patron without judgment on its worth or significance.
  - C. Each information query will be considered to be of equal merit regardless of the age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual preference orientation, English language proficiency or status of the individual making the query.
  - D. Librarians will provide bibliographic verification of items both in the Library and not owned by the Library and will assist patrons in obtaining materials through interlibrary loan when appropriate.
  - E. Librarians will rely upon information obtained from authoritative sources to ensure accuracy. Staff will avoid giving personal opinions, philosophy or evaluations of information. Citations for information found will always be provided.
- IV. **Parameters of Service:**
  - A. Maximum time to be accorded in-person patrons will be determined by the pace of activity in the reference area, the number of available staff and the

Librarian's professional judgment as to the library's capacity to fulfill the patron's needs.

- B. Telephone reference is intended to provide short, factual information and therefore be of relatively short duration. When the demands of in-person service exceed staff time available, callers will receive a message explaining that a librarian will return their call as soon as possible. This means that in-person patrons will receive priority over those calling on the telephone or sending a query via email.
- C. With the implementation of virtual or "chat" reference service, librarians will provide real-time response to queries using web-based email technology. On implementation, schedule and length-of-session boundaries for real-time service will be established and publicized.