

Information Services Policy

All Library staff have a role in providing information to patrons, with Library Director and Youth Services Coordinator staff having primary responsibility for this service.

Patrons with information questions should be referred to such library staff. Trained staff are available during all Library business hours to provide direct personal assistance to patrons seeking information in person, by phone, mail, fax, e-mail, or other means of electronic communication.

The goal of information service is to provide unbiased information and referral services to Library patrons without regard to age, race, creed, sex, or disability. Each patron's questions will be given equal consideration and answers to such questions will be provided as accurately and completely as possible within a reasonable time frame. The needs of patrons will be treated with respect and courtesy. The confidentiality of patron questions will be maintained.

Information Desk Guidelines

1. Accurate statistics will be collected as required by the Illinois Public Libraries Annual Report (IPLAR).
2. If requested information cannot be located within 24 hours, the patron should be notified of the status of the request and appropriate referrals to other resources should be made.
3. Patrons may be referred to another library after verification is made that the material is currently available at that library. An offer to place a hold on an item in PrairieCat may be made to any library card holder in good standing. An offer to provide interlibrary loan service may be made to any Robert R. Jones Public Library card holder.
4. To provide the most accurate and authoritative answers possible, library staff should avoid personal opinions, with an exception for Reader's Advisory services. Staff should rely upon information obtained from reputable sources. The source of an answer should be cited.
5. Staff cannot provide medical, legal, or tax advice. Definitions and descriptions may be provided, though staff may not interpret or provide their opinion for such questions. Staff may provide print and online resources and referrals.
6. The Library maintains a basic collection of local history and genealogy materials. Staff may provide assistance with these resources and also make referrals to other local history and genealogy agencies. Library staff are not trained genealogists and do not provide extensive genealogical research for patrons.

7. Student homework is part of the learning process and is to be completed by the student. Library staff may aid in the finding of resources to help students complete their assignments.
8. Library instruction is provided including Library tours and classes in the use of the Library. Requests for tours should be made to a Coordinator at least one day in advance of the requested tour date.
9. Patrons present in the Library have priority for service over phone, text, and e-mail patron information requests; such information requests are generally limited to five questions and/or resources.
10. Library staff will assist patrons with computer/electronic device questions. Limits may be placed on computer/electronic device assistance provided to patrons at the discretion of Library staff.