



ZION-BENTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

REFERENCE POLICY

REFERENCE SERVICE

Reference service is available to all persons served by the Library regardless of age, gender, religion, race, sexual orientation, social or economic status, or residency.

All staff members are expected to treat each question asked with respect, regardless of the level of assistance required or the topic of the question. Names of users and the transactions that occur between users and the staff are confidential and not discussed outside a professional context.

Reference service includes, but is not limited to:

- finding specific information or materials
- navigating the library catalog
- providing basic instructions for use of library computers and software
- introducing use of digital resources
- assisting with use of library equipment
- providing information needed for school assignments, consumer information, etc.
- checking availability of materials at other area libraries.

Staff members do not offer personal opinion, advice, or interpretation as fact when providing reference service. The Library assumes no responsibility for damages caused or for decisions made from information gathered or obtained at the Library.

As information professionals, staff members are not able to:

- provide medical, legal, copyright, financial, or tax advice
- recommend individual practitioners, such as physicians or attorneys
- appraise property, including collectibles
- provide editorial or translation services
- provide in-depth career counseling, genealogical, patent, trademark or other research
- handle confidential information such as social security numbers, bank and credit card account information, or medical information

Staff members will not:

- assist with illegal or unethical activities
- provide tutorial service
- do student's homework
- type documents or complete online forms

The level of research assistance provided and response to the number of requests from an individual will depend on the:

- availability of staff
- staff and patron's knowledge of the subject
- volume of other requests
- depth of the collection
- complexity of the question
- time frame in which the information is needed



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Requests may require follow up at a later time and may require the patron's participation in the information search with staff providing guidance.

1-to-1 Tutorials

When the nature of the request is beyond the scope of the Library's reference service, the patron may make an appointment with a specially trained staff member or be referred to a different organization or agency for personal assistance.

Adopted 11/24/2015, Revised 08/27/2019