



POLICY

Policy Type: Library Services **Policy Number:** 03-10
Policy Title: Information and Readers' Advisory Services

Definition:

Information/Readers' Advisory services are those services which link people with resources to fulfill informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs.

Service Philosophy:

All patrons seeking help at the Library will be greeted in a friendly manner and, regardless of sex, age, ability and background, will be treated equally, with respect and courtesy. The staff will answer all reference and readers' advisory questions efficiently, accurately and as completely as possible and will be guided by the CLA Statement on Intellectual Freedom. All questions will be considered important and legitimate, unless it becomes clearly apparent that they are otherwise.

Types of Services:

St. Thomas Public Library provides a variety of information services to patrons that are described below:

- Quick Reference
These questions can usually be answered immediately using library resources .
- General Reference
General reference usually requires a more lengthy search and/or the use of a number of sources to arrive at a complete answer. The Information Services staff will guide and assist the patron in pursuing the answer while simultaneously providing, as required, informal instruction in how to search and use library resources to the best advantage.
- Readers' Advisory
St. Thomas Public Library will ensure the operation of a readers' advisory service. Readers' advisory is the process of matching readers and viewers to materials. It has more to do with a patron's leisure reading than their informational needs . Any

requests which fit into a readers' advisory category carry just as much weight as an informational request.

- Consultation/Interpretation

A patron will be referred to the information in the Library but the information will not be interpreted by Library staff.

- Library Orientation, Instruction and Student Assistance

An important component of the duties of the Information Services staff working at the Information Desks is that of familiarizing the patron with all library services and giving instruction in the use of the public access catalogue, indexes, databases, Internet resources, the George Thorman Local History collection, microfilm reader/printer, technology and other library materials and equipment. The level of assistance provided will depend on the resources and staff available.

Students and researchers are given all information services available to other groups. Students and researchers will be given instruction in the use of the available searching tools and assisted in their searches.

Information Services staff will provide formal library orientation and instruction to individuals or groups if requested, and if time available.

- Referral

It is the policy of St. Thomas Public Library to maintain active liaison with other service agencies in the community. This policy is reflected in mutual referral of patrons and sharing of information whenever appropriate. If it has been established by the information Services staff that a request for information cannot be answered or has been answered only in part with the resources of St. Thomas Public Library, the patron will be referred, when appropriate, to another source and assisted, where circumstances warrant, in contacting that source.

- Bibliographic Services

Staff will assist patrons in the creation of bibliographies using the Library's catalogue.

- Special Information Collections

Staff will assist patrons in performing genealogical searches to the extent of their resources and expertise. Reference material may, under exceptional circumstances, be lent out on short term loan. These loans will be made at the discretion of the Public Services Librarian.

- Telephone, Fax, Email, Mail and other Electronic Requests

Patrons initiating enquiries by telephone, fax, email, mail and electronically will receive full staff attention. Staff will endeavour to respond to telephone, email, fax, mail and other electronic requests within 24 hours.

Patrons needing extensive research service (extended reference) will be requested to visit the Library to participate in the research process.

- **Interlibrary Loan Service**

St. Thomas Public Library provides interlibrary loan service in accordance with our Interlibrary Loan guidelines in the Circulation Services Policy.

Development of Reference Collection:

The Public Services Librarian is responsible for developing and maintaining the reference collection, in both print and electronic form, according to the needs of the community.

Priorities of Service:

The extent of personal services to each individual is dependent on the number of patrons to be served. The following priorities are applied:

- 1st priority - requests presented in person
- 2nd priority - requests presented by telephone
- 3rd priority - requests sent in by mail/email/online
- 4th priority - requests received via the interlibrary loan network

If a staff member cannot answer a request immediately, they will obtain contact information for the patron and see that the patron receives an answer within 24 hours . Unfinished questions at the end of a shift will be turned over to incoming staff. The Library is committed to meeting the needs of patrons with disabilities and will provide, upon request, alternate formats and communication supports.

Assessment and Evaluation:

To assess and evaluate information services, and to comply with the requirements of the Annual Survey of Public Libraries, statistics on reference questions will be kept and analyzed.

Staffing:

The Information Services desks will be staffed continually from the time the Library opens until it closes whenever possible by a qualified, trained staff member.

Staff who work at the Information Desks are primarily responsible for providing information and readers' advisory services to patrons. However, all Public Services staff are encouraged to work as a team to assist patrons.

Patron Confidentiality:

Patron's confidentiality is respected at all times, in compliance with government legislation. Patrons are not asked to identify themselves in any way before reference

or readers' advisory service is provided.

Related Documents:

- CLA Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom
- Policy # 03-01 Collection Management
- Policy # 03-11 Circulation
- Policy # 03-12 Children's & Teens' Services

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Supercedes Date: October 16, 2013

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