

## Reference-1 Adult Information Service Policies & Procedures

Date of original motion: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of review: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### POLICY

#### **A. Goals and Objectives**

Providing information service is a major function of the Brockville Public Library (BPL). In fulfilling the goal of providing adult information services, the BPL's objective is to meet the information needs of our patrons and customers - culturally, educationally, and recreationally.

The adult reference department of the BPL sees itself as the community's primary information resource. In fulfilling its goal, the BPL seeks to provide its clientele with adequate information resources through the services of qualified, trained personnel. If it is not possible to find an answer using BPL's resources, other libraries, agencies and community resources shall be utilized.

#### **B. Level of Service**

Emphasis will be placed on providing patrons with the most appropriate source of information, rather than specific answers, and on teaching patrons to use the **resource** independently.

#### **C. Who Performs Reference Service**

The Adult Information Services Librarian and qualified staff (those who have graduated from either a Library Technician or Ministry of Culture Excel program) may perform this vital service. Information services staff are encouraged to work as a team and to consult with each other. They should always confer with professional staff if a question requires in-depth research. Staff should never tell a patron that the Library does not have the information requested. Staff should always assume that the Library can provide the required information.

### PROCEDURES

#### **A. Reference Interview**

Staff shall treat all customers seeking help at the Adult Information Desk with respect and courtesy and greet them with a smile. During the course of the reference interview, the staff person will make eye contact, try to put the person at ease and indicate interest in the request. During the reference interview, staff will ask open-ended questions to draw out as much information as possible. During the interview, the staff should summarize and paraphrase the question to ensure that both the customer and the staff person have the same understanding of the question. Points to be covered in the reference interview should include whether there is a deadline, and the level required, and the format required (basic or technical, print or electronic resource, etc.). When staff feel that the question has been answered, he/she should always ask the patron, "Does this completely answer your question?" If the reply is negative, staff should continue with the reference interview.

**B. Customer-Staff Interaction**

When assisting customers, staff will accompany them to the appropriate locations rather than rely on a verbal description or gestures. When customers seek assistance using equipment, staff will accompany them to the location. This is an opportunity to demonstrate the proper use of the equipment and explain any policies considered important. If others are waiting for assistance, staff should assure them that they will be helped as soon as possible.

**C. Patron Confidentiality**

Patron's confidentiality must be respected at all times. Patrons are not required to identify themselves in any way before reference service is provided.

**D. Disabled Customers**

The Library accommodates the needs of disabled patrons by providing accessible work spaces, and access to a desk-level OPAC and Internet stations. For the print handicapped, the Library offers computers equipped with print enhancement software and special keyboards. There is also a magnification reader available to enable visually challenged customers to read both library materials and personal papers. As time permits Staff will retrieve items from the stacks and assist physically challenged customers in selecting other items such as talking books.

**E. Types of Reference Service**

1. Quick Reference

Questions which require specific factual answers - the name of a local MP, address for the German embassy in Canada, the population of Japan, etc. - are known as "quick reference" and can frequently be answered immediately using the resources kept at the information desk for this purpose, or using the Internet. When locating phone numbers or addresses, staff should advise the patron of the publication date of the source. It is worthwhile to verify some facts in at least one additional source as errors can occur in reference books, and websites. When assisting customers with government statutes and other legal materials, staff should alert them to the possibility of amendments. In general, government Internet sites are more up-to-date than a loose-leaf service, which in turn is more likely to be kept up-to-date than a bound volume.

Reference materials kept at the reference desk and in the librarian's office may be used only in the library. Customers must fill out a sign out sheet indicating their name and telephone number along with the item they are borrowing.

2. In-depth Reference

In-depth reference requires a more lengthy search and the use of a number of sources, both print and electronic, to arrive at a complete answer. Staff will guide and assist the customer in pursuing this search while simultaneously providing informal instruction in how to search and use library resources to the best advantage. This involves interpretation of the on-line catalogue, as well as use of the various indexes to magazine articles and other specialized reference tools. The aim is to teach the patron how to

research for information. However, if a patron prefers, information staff will do the search to the extent that time permits.

### 3. Consultation

Some customers may also require consultative assistance in defining more difficult questions and deciding on their scope and method of approach. Staff will provide this service as time permits.

### 4. Reader's Advisory Services

**Readers' advisory service is a patron-oriented library service for fiction and non-fiction readers and includes both print and audio-visual formats. A successful readers' advisory service is one in which knowledgeable, nonjudgmental staff help readers with their reading needs.** Good reader's advisory service requires that library staff be very familiar with the **Library's collections** and be able to make use of **a number of different print resources, the Internet, and specialized online databases.**

### 5. Location of Material

If a specific item requested by the customer is not immediately available, staff will suggest that the customer reserve it at the circulation desk. If BPL does not own the item, staff will offer interlibrary loan. If a customer is having trouble locating a book in the stacks, staff will check the computer to confirm the location, and status. If necessary, staff will check all possible locations for the patron. If this search is unsuccessful, staff will check the item history for the last date borrowed.

### 6. Referral

It is the policy of the Brockville Public Library to have an active liaison with other service agencies in the community. This policy is reflected in mutual referral of clients and sharing of information whenever appropriate. If it has been established by the staff that a request for information cannot be answered or has been answered only in part with the resources of BPL, then the patron will be referred when appropriate to another source and assisted whenever possible in contacting that source. Such assistance may take the form of initiating an interlibrary loan request or by provision of a phone number and/or address and any other pertinent available information. When appropriate, staff will offer to make the contact on behalf of the patron.

### 7. Special Information Collections

The Brockville Public Library maintains and gives service from its special collections as follows:

- a) Federal and provincial government documents
- b) Local history
- c) Brockville newspapers on microfilm
- d) Information files
- e) Newspapers
- f) Periodicals
- g) Online databases

## 8. Telephone Requests

Customers initiating inquiries by telephone will receive full staff attention. If the staff person is unable to deal with requests immediately, arrangements will be made to return the call within an agreed-upon time period. If it is a long-distance call, staff should ask the customer to call you back at an agreed upon time. Staff should ask customers needing extensive research service to come into the library to participate in the research process. However, if the customer lives out of town, staff should verify that the Library has sufficient resources on the topic in question to justify a visit.

## 9. Interlibrary Loan Service

It is the policy of the Brockville Public Library to function as part of the Internet-based resource-sharing network within the Southern Ontario Library Service and in cooperation with other library systems across Ontario and Canada. Reference staff shall offer interlibrary loan whenever the information requested cannot be filled. Both books and talking-books are available through interlibrary loan. Staff will inform the customer that it takes about two weeks for the material to be sent to the Library and on occasion can take even longer.

## 10. Proctoring Exams

The Brockville Public Library offers a proctoring service for customers in accordance with the Library's role of supporting life-long learning.

The fee for this service is \$25/exam and the student is responsible for any incidental costs, such as postage to mail back the test. Payment is due on the day the exam is written.

Students are responsible for verifying that the Library's procedures satisfy the requirements of the testing institution. The institution requiring proctored testing is responsible for making sure that the library staff receives the examination.

Proctors will enforce any time limits that are placed on the exam, as well as other rules set forth in the examination materials. The use of cell phones or visiting with others is prohibited.

The Brockville Public Library will not be responsible for any delayed tests, nor for any completed tests once they leave the Library's possession and have been mailed back to the educational institution or association.

## F. Priorities of Service

Customers will be served in turn. During periods of peak use and/or shortage of staff, the extent of personal service to each individual may have to be curtailed. At such times, the following priorities are applied:

- 1st - requests presented in person
- 2nd - requests presented by telephone
- 3rd - requests received via email
- 4th - requests received via interlibrary loan
- 5th - requests sent in by mail

## **G. Questions for Exams, Quizzes, and Puzzles**

Where it can be identified that a question is for an exam or a contest, in the interest of fairness to other participants, the customer will be asked to come to the Library and participate in the search for the information.

## **H. Reference Collection**

No items from the Library's reference collections are available for public loan but shall be kept permanently in the library for consultation by customers and staff. This collection will include materials such as microfilm, newspaper clippings, single and multi-volume encyclopedias, dictionaries, almanacs, directories and atlases, as well as any other materials which the reference librarian deems useful.

Online reference tools will be considered for purchase. Currently the library subscribes to EBSCO's Masterfile Premier, Auto Repair Reference Center and Novelist. We also have free access to the Knowledge Ontario databases through the Government of Ontario.

With regard to collection development, emphasis will be placed on keeping the most basic and important materials up-to-date; for example, encyclopedias should be updated every five years, almanacs annually, etc. Specific reference tools will be added as needed to fill subject gaps and customer needs. As a selective depository library, care will be taken to choose items from the Ontario Government Publications Monthly Checklist and from the Weekly Checklist of Canadian Government Publications. Particular care will be taken to keep legal and medical materials current. The Library will also purchase multiple copies of any materials pertaining to local history, local biographies, as well as current topics of interest to Brockville citizens. In addition to monographs, the library collects and maintains local newspaper clippings and publications and arranges them by topic into various information files.

## **I. Using the Internet As A Reference Tool**

Reference desk staff will use professional judgement to determine whether Internet resources can provide appropriate, authoritative answers to questions. Staff will offer suggestions to customers who are using Internet workstations and will help in determining whether a resource is authoritative. Staff will not guarantee the validity of information retrieved from the Internet but will attempt to provide the customer with tools and information that will help to evaluate the resource.

## **J. Using Online Databases As A Reference Tool**

The library subscribes to various online databases. Access to these databases is free of charge. The Library charges a printing fee of \$0.25 per page.

For first time users, staff will provide a training session, showing patrons how to utilize this service. Access to our databases is also available from home with a valid library card number. Staff will provide assistance for access from home.

## **K. Microfilm Reader/Printer**

The library has various Brockville newspapers dating back to 1832 in microfilm format. Customers can book the microfilm reader/printer for two hour sessions by phone or in person at the reference desk. The Library charges a printing fee of \$0.50 per page.

For first time users, staff will provide a training session, showing the customer how to load, use and print from the microfilm reels.

**L. Work Environment**

Loud conversations and disruptive behaviour intrude on a quiet study environment. Staff will remind patrons to speak softly in public areas. Abuse of patrons, staff or library property is not tolerated and patrons not responding to warnings by library staff will be asked to leave the library. (See Facilities Policy 9 – Rules of Conduct)

Vandalism and other undesirable behaviour should be dealt with immediately and reported to the CEO.

**M. Housekeeping**

At the beginning of the shift, reference desk staff should read and make note of any news left from other staff members. During quieter moments at the desk, staff will have an opportunity to re-shelve books in the reference stacks and on the new and popular shelves as well as shelf read the reference collection. At the end of a shift, staff should put away all reference material, tidy the reference desk, note statistics for the day and leave a note for the next staff member on duty regarding any pertinent information.

**N. Statistics**

The following usage statistics shall be collected by reference staff:

- a) Telephone books and other reference materials
- b) Microfilm reels
- c) Internet sign-ups
- d) Online database use
- e) Reference questions answered
- f) Group study room use
- g) Internet training

## Reference-2 Internet Use Policy

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The Brockville Public Library provides free Internet access to the public to ensure equal access to information to meet the educational and recreational needs of the community.

The Internet is an unregulated worldwide environment. Some information found on the Internet may NOT be accurate, complete, or current. Users must assess the validity of the information found. Users should be aware that the Internet is not a secure medium and that third parties may be able to obtain information about users; activities. The Library assumes no responsibility for the security and privacy on on-line transactions.

The library's open access policy allows children access to all of the library's resources. It is the parent's responsibility to monitor their child's Internet use. Children under the age of 10 may not use the Internet unless accompanied by an adult.

The library does not manage the content of the information accessed through the Internet and assumes responsibility only for the information provided on its own home pages. The Library is not responsible for the site content of links or secondary links from its home pages. The Brockville Public Library assumes no responsibility for any direct or indirect claims, damages, or costs, howsoever caused, sought by users or third parties arising from its provision of access to Internet services.

Brockville Public Library's users are subject to federal, provincial, and municipal legislation regarding Internet use, including provisions of the Criminal Code regarding obscenity, provocation of hate, and child pornography. The use of the Library's Internet services for illegal purposes is prohibited.

Certain copying or distribution of material found on the Internet may infringe on copyright or other intellectual property rights. The Library is not responsible for such infringements.

In order to use the Internet or any computers at the library, all patron's MUST agree to the following:

- Users may book a maximum of 120 minutes of computer time per day including the express stations. Bookings may be made in person only.
- Reservations will be held for a maximum of 10 MINUTES after the scheduled start time.
- Users may not send, receive, or display text / graphics which are illegal or may reasonably be construed as obscene or offensive. THERE IS ZERO TOLERANCE FOR PORNOGRAPHY.
- Patrons may be required to show identification.
- Due to space limitations, no more than 2 people may use a station at the same time, and both must be signed-up in the daily log.
- Users who want to download files may buy a CD from the library for \$1.50. The library will not be responsible for loss or damage (e.g. viruses) when downloading.
- Patrons may book up to one week in advance.
- Printouts are 25 cents per copy. There will be no discounts for large amounts of printing. Patrons are responsible for every page they print out. IF YOU ARE UNSURE HOW TO PRINT JUST ONE PAGE, ASK FOR HELP AT THE REFERENCE DESK.

**Failure to follow these guidelines WILL result in the user's computer and/or library privileges being suspended indefinitely.**