

## Reference Policy

The delivery of reference and information service is central to the East Moline Public Library's mission and commitment to serving the needs of its community.

This policy is intended to provide broad overall guidance to those who deliver reference service. The delivery of reference service requires the Library staff to be knowledgeable, approachable, sensitive, courteous and efficient. Quality reference service depends upon effective interviewing, attentive listening, and connecting patrons with resources that will answer their information needs. Every request for reference assistance is considered legitimate.

This policy recognizes the need to maintain flexibility in the delivery of reference service. It is appropriate to adapt service to meet individual customer needs. East Moline Public Library reference and information services should satisfy patron's information needs either by using sources on hand, or by referral to resources located elsewhere. Personal opinions are not part of reference assistance.

### DEFINITIONS

Reference Service is the assistance given to patrons in the pursuit of information.

A reference question is defined as an informational contact which involves the knowledge, recommendations, interpretation or instruction in the use of one or more information sources, by the member of the library staff.

Reference includes providing help with the catalog and library computers, reader's advisory service, database and online assistance, bibliographic verification, interlibrary loan assistance, referral services, research assistance, school assignments, consumer information, and individual and group instruction.

### ACCESS

The East Moline Public Library will provide reference service to all its patrons on an equal, nondiscriminatory, and nonjudgmental basis without regard to the race, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, background, appearance, or personal view of the patron making the inquiry of the subject matter being researched. Patrons do not need to be registered East Moline Public Library cardholders to use Library facilities, reference materials or reference services.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

The Library recognizes that its records identifying the names of library users with specific materials, computer database searches, interlibrary loan transactions, reference queries, requests, or other specific uses of the library are confidential in nature.

This information will be disclosed only upon the request or consent of the individuals or groups whose library privileges are directly affected or pursuant to a court order that shows cause and is in proper form as required by local, state or federal law.

Library staff will immediately refer the request for information on reference transactions to the Director.

All staff are expected to honor the confidentiality of reference questions. Failure to do so is grounds for dismissal.

#### PRIORITY OF SERVICE

The East Moline Public Library responds to all requests for reference and information services whether made in person, by telephone, mail, fax, or electronic means. Individuals present in the building take first priority for service over telephone calls or other communications. Whenever possible, answers to questions will be provided during the patron's visit or telephone call. Questions will be responded to within one day of receipt during the library's open hours. Patrons will be advised if their requests for information require longer response time.

#### SPECIAL CATEGORIES

1. Medical, financial and legal questions – Definitions and descriptions are given, but staff will not offer opinions, interpretations, nor attempt to abstract or condense information.
2. Contest/trivia questions – Contest and Trivia questions are treated as any other information request.
3. Homework questions – Homework questions are treated as any other information request. With the assumption that research is part of the learning process, we will assist students in the use of basic reference tools, indexes, and sources in the general question.
4. Genealogical questions – The library has basic genealogical materials, but the library does not undertake original research. Patrons will be offered the use of interlibrary loan services and/or referred to the appropriate libraries or agencies.