

Reference and Readers' Advisory Service Policy

(Adopted by the Stickney-Forest View Board of Trustees 5/28/2014)

Reference and readers' advisory service is one of the most important functions of the Stickney-Forest View Public Library District. The following policy is designed to ensure that all patrons receive the highest possible level of this service.

Goals

The goal of reference and readers' advisory service is to provide accurate answers to Library patrons' questions by trained staff members during all hours that the Library is open.

This is accomplished by:

- Providing materials and services to meet users' needs for timely, accurate, and useful information.
- Providing trained staff to assist patrons and facilitate access to the Library's collections and cooperative resources.
- Assisting patrons in the use of reference resources, Library materials and in the development of research strategies.
- Providing readers' advisory service.
- Providing efficient referral and effective follow through including interlibrary loan, resource sharing and supplementary reference services to Stickney-Forest View Public Library District cardholders.
- Keeping the community well informed about the reference services and resources that are available and encourage their use.

Ethics and Standards

The staff of the Stickney-Forest View Public Library strives to handle all inquiries with impartiality and confidentiality in a courteous and efficient manner. Effort is made to answer all questions. No distinction is made about the purpose of the inquiry or the use of information.

The Library subscribes to the American Library Association's Code of Ethics.

The Library upholds the principles of freedom to read and freedom of access to information.

Availability of Service

The Stickney-Forest View Public Library District provides reference and readers' advisory assistance to any patron requesting it, regardless of residency. Reference and readers' advisory service is provided by trained staff during all hours that the Library is open. The entire collection- juvenile and adult, circulating and non-circulating - is available to patrons of all ages.

Inquiries are accepted in person, by telephone, digitally, and through the mail. Priority is given to in-person requests. Staff will, however, complete a telephone question and/or Instant Message that is already in progress, before attending to an in-person request. Answering questions has priority over other staff assignments.

If information appropriate to the patron's need is not available in the Library, referral will be made to local or regional resources, interlibrary loan, and/or other libraries. Staff will verify that the needed information is available from the source referral.

Whenever possible, answers to questions will be provided during the patron's visit or telephone call. When other patrons are waiting, staff may have to limit the initial amount of time spent serving an individual patron but follow-up attention will be given. Staff will attempt to answer a patron's question within the patron's required deadline. Otherwise, questions usually will be answered, referred, or a status report given within 24 hours. A longer response time will be negotiated with the patron when staff needs additional time to locate the needed information.

Providing Service

Reference staff will use all available sources of information to answer questions. This includes, but is not limited to books, periodicals, electronic databases, the Internet, government agencies, associations, and organizations. Long-distance telephone calls and/or email may be used to answer questions. Citations to sources of information will be given when questions are answered.

The Librarian's personal opinion will never be given as fact. While the Librarian will provide sources of information, information will not be interpreted and the Librarian will not offer legal, medical, or tax advice. If it is not possible to answer a question by the above means, questions will be referred to another agency, when appropriate.

Staff will guide people doing extensive research or compiling large amounts of information to appropriate sources. Reading and interpretation of materials is the patron's responsibility.

Service to Non Stickney-Forest View Public Library District Cardholders

The Stickney-Forest View Public Library District does not restrict the use of Interlibrary Loan Services for cardholders from other libraries. Remote access to most databases is reserved for Stickney-Forest View Public Library District cardholders. Access to consortium-owned electronic holdings is limited to Stickney-Forest View Public Library District cardholders and members of the consortium Libraries. Some electronic holdings are limited to Stickney-Forest View Public Library District cardholders exclusively.