Reference and Readers Advisory Services Policy

Purpose of the Reference Services and Readers Advisory Policy

The Reference and Readers Advisory Services Policy defines the goals and philosophy of reference services of the Poplar Creek Public Library District. The policy also identifies for patrons the levels of service which the library provides, based on the resources available.

Goals of Reference and Readers Advisory Services

The goal of the reference staff at the Poplar Creek Public Library District is to provide accurate information and current materials in an efficient, courteous and timely manner. Materials are purchased to assist staff in providing reference services. The purpose of Readers Advisory is to provide material to fill patron's requests and encourage them to consider new authors and titles. Reference and Readers Advisory Services are offered free to all library patrons.

Access and Service Limitations

Reference is provided in the Children's, Government Documents, Young Adult and Adult Services Departments and the Sonya Crawshaw Branch Library. In depth questions may be referred to the Main Library. Print and electronic resources are available to assist staff and patrons in answering questions. Electronic eBooks and subscription databases with remote access are available at both locations with the exception of databases that have restrictions. Information requests may be made in person, by telephone, by electronic means and through the mail. Priority is given to the in-person requests.

Responses to Requests for Assistance

Reference service is provided by trained staff during all hours the Library is open. Reference staff members will attempt to answer questions at the time the request is made and to work within the patron's time requirements. When answering a patron's reference question, reference staff will cite the resource(s) from which the information is obtained. The producers of that resource, not the Library itself, are responsible for that resources' accuracy.

Staff may assist as they are able in helping patrons with computer applications or electronic reading/listening devices and may refer patrons to appropriate books, online tutorials, or classes, or IT staff for further assistance. When assisting patrons with computer resources, staff will not enter personal information for patrons.

Staff will not provide the following kinds of assistance, which are deemed to be beyond the scope of the Library's service responsibilities.

- Interpretation, advice, or personal recommendations in any area other than the use of Library resources. This includes, but is not limited to, legal, medical, financial, or tax advice.
- Critiquing or editing patron documents, including resumes for job seekers.

- Completing forms (including online forms) for patrons. However, trained staff may assist with FAFSA forms.   Staff may refer patrons to the appropriate agency for assistance.
- Price quotes, online purchasing and contacting commercial outlets or public agencies for a patron is not permitted. Reference staff may provide contact information and inquire if an agency offers a service.
- Solving or troubleshooting problems with patron's personal computers or other electronic resources. (In such instances, staff is permitted to assist by attempting to locate relevant instructions and similar kinds of information for patrons.

One on One Library Assistance:

Reference staff may be available to work one-on-one with Poplar Creek Public Library District cardholders to assist in their information needs. Staff instructional sessions include, but are not limited to, using Library's research databases, and training on Internet, basic Microsoft products, and specific electronic devices. One-on-One sessions are generally 30 minutes. Staff reserve the right to schedule appointments for One-on-One sessions as time permits.

Ethical Considerations:

All requests are treated confidentially, courteously, and without regard to age, race, sex, social, or economic status of the patron. Names of users and the transactions which occur between users and the staff are confidential and not discussed outside a professional context.

The Library adopts and adheres to the American Library Association Code of Ethics.

Approved September 18, 2014

Amended September 15, 2016