

REFERENCE POLICY

The library recognizes the provision of reference service to its patrons as one of its chief functions. Because of the vast scope and specialized nature of reference materials the library staff realizes the impossibility of having the best and/or most recent information on every conceivable topic immediately available on the local level. For this reason it will be the goal of the library staff to:

1. answer the question from available sources or
2. refer the patron to a more appropriate resource to obtain the desired information or
3. initiate appropriate interlibrary loan procedures to obtain needed material or
4. refer the question to the county library or other appropriate information center for further investigation.

While it is the desire of the library staff to provide patrons with the requested information, there are limits which must of necessity be imposed:

- A. Patrons with legal questions will be directed to the Arizona Revised Statutes or other books on law that the library may have in its collection. In no instance will a librarian or other staff member attempt to interpret the laws for a patron. The law materials acquired by the library will generally be those suitable for a layman. Patrons with complicated law-related questions should seek competent legal counsel.
- B. Patrons with medically related questions will be directed to one of the standard medical reference books or to the general layman's medical collection the library holds. The library staff will not interpret medical information for the patrons.
- C. Patrons with questions relating to appraisal of value of an object or piece of property will be guided to any relevant materials the library might hold on the subject, but in no way will the library staff attempt to appraise any such object or offer opinions concerning possible value.
- D. The library's role in handling genealogy or heraldry questions will be that of directing the patron to the appropriate materials in the library's collection. Patrons will be referred to another agency where more materials on this subject are known to exist and where specialized assistance is available. The library will not attempt to do interlibrary loan for genealogy materials.

Library staff will make efforts to obtain requested telephone numbers to agencies such as governmental organizations, chambers of commerce or associations, but will expect the actual contact by telephone to be made by the patron asking for the information. Library telephones will not be available for use by the public. Library staff will not as a matter of course make long distance telephone calls to answer patron requests.

Telephone patron requests are welcomed; however, when the library staff determines that the quantity of information requested is sufficient to warrant it, the staff member may ask the patron to come into the library to examine the material held on the subject. The staff will not read long passages from various sources, nor is it their place to synthesize or interpret information for the patron.

Because the library has a limited number of telephone lines, under most circumstances the caller will be asked to give a name and telephone number where he or she can be reached with the answer to the query posed, rather than being asked to hold. This is to insure the opportunity for other patrons to complete calls to the library, rather than being discouraged by a busy signal.

It will be the duty of the library staff person handling patron reference requests to guide the patron in the use of reference tools and in the location of materials on a given topic. It is not the responsibility of library staff to conduct research for patrons or handle interpretation of data for patrons.

The library staff wants to assist the patrons in finding exactly the right information needed. For this reason it is often necessary to ask questions of the patron to clarify the problem and determine an appropriate search strategy. This is not done to discourage the patron or to invade the privacy of the person with an inquiry. It is merely intended to provide the best possible answer in the shortest length of time. The staff considers no question to be too small or insignificant. We want to serve you if we can.

The library does perform on-line searching for requests when staff warrants its necessity. Library staff does not perform searches "on demand" due to limited resources, staff time and computer availability.

GENERAL DISCLAIMER

Library staff tries to provide the best service possible; however, materials in the library may not be accurate, complete, or current. Apache Junction Public Library disclaims any warranty of the accuracy, authoritativeness, timeliness, or usefulness of the information obtained from its reference services. Apache Junction Public Library shall have no liability for any direct, indirect, or consequential damages related to the use of the information contained in, or obtained through its reference services.