



REFERENCE SERVICES POLICY

I. Purpose

- A. The Sun Prairie Public Library Reference Services Policy ensures that patrons receive knowledgeable and personalized assistance in finding appropriate information and selecting and using library resources for patrons of all ages.

II. Overview of Services

- A. Reference service is provided for patrons of all ages at the library service desks.
- B. Library staff answers requests in a variety of ways:
 - 1. In-person at library service desks.
 - 2. By phone.
 - 3. Via email on the library's web site.
 - 4. By mail.
- C. Library staff provides instruction to patrons on the use of library resources:
 - 1. Print, and electronic resources.
 - 2. LINKcat and subscription databases.
 - 3. One-on-one training sessions by appointment.
 - 4. Impromptu, brief instruction in the use of library resources.
 - 5. Classes on use of library materials and equipment.
 - 6. Tours of the library.

III. Priorities and Limitations

- A. Questions will be responded to in the order received, with priority service given to in-person requests, on a first-come, first-served basis.
- B. Library staff may set reasonable limits on the amount of time and level of response given to patron requests for information. All reference transactions, unless otherwise stated below, will be handled within 48 hours:
 - 1. Telephone requests are limited to short, factual questions.
 - 2. Mail, email and telephone requests will be answered within one week of receipt of request.
 - 3. Library staff will assist students in finding answers to homework questions, but will not complete the work for them.
 - 4. Library staff will assist patrons with in-depth research by providing library instruction, but patrons are expected to conduct the research themselves.
- C. Library staff may refer information requests to other South Central Library System libraries, state and local agencies, or use the Outerlibrary Loan System to obtain materials from outside South Central Library System when appropriate.

IV. Service Ethics

- A. The Sun Prairie Public Library Reference Policy follows the standards set by the [Code of Ethics of the American Library Association](https://www.ala.org/tools/ethics). (<https://www.ala.org/tools/ethics>)

- B. Assistance will be provided courteously and impartially to all.
- C. Library staff will provide accurate, timely, up-to-date information from authoritative print, online, and electronic resources, or from a reliable authority.
 - 1. The complete citation of the source used to provide information, including title, author, and date of publication, will be given to the patron.
 - 2. Library staff will use professional judgment and will avoid giving advice when providing information to patrons, especially in the areas of legal, political, medical, financial, taxes, and consumer information.
 - 3. Responses will be provided in the most expedient and convenient manner.
- D. All library transactions are treated confidentially as required by Wisconsin Statute 43.30.
(See the [Library's Confidentiality Policy](#).)

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