

## ATTACHMENT F

Policy Reviews: Reference Policy, Lost/Damaged Policy, Receipts and Refunds

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## REFERENCE POLICY

### PURPOSE

Reference is a major service of the Elmhurst Public Library, and Library staff will make every effort to ensure that patrons are aware of this service and receive assistance in meeting their informational needs. The following policy is designed to ensure that Elmhurst patrons (persons with EPL cards, people with access to an Elmhurst Business Library Card, Elmhurst residents, or persons with an EPL Business Sticker) receive the highest possible level of accurate, efficient, and user-friendly service. Limited reference service will be provided to individuals from other communities ~~as outlined at the end of this policy.~~

### SERVICE TO ELMHURST PATRONS

#### I. Availability of service

Reference service will be provided on an equitable basis by ~~professionally-trained~~, Elmhurst Public Library staff to all Elmhurst patrons ~~regardless of age during all hours that the Library is open. The entire collection will be available for reference purposes to patrons of all ages. All requests for information will be handled impartially and with confidentiality.~~ Library staff will strive to provide service in a manner that preserves the privacy of the patron.

~~During hours when the Library is closed, access to a cooperative ready-reference service will be provided through a link on the website.~~

Reference service will be provided in response to all forms of inquiry, ~~including in-person, electronic, telephone, fax and mail.~~ In general, if ~~telephone or chat~~ transactions cannot be completed within five minutes, a patron will be contacted later with the desired information. Typically, a response or status report will be provided within 24 hours.

Due to time constraints and the difficulty of accurately communicating large amounts of data, only a limited amount of directory, stock price, or statistical information will be provided by library staff. ~~by telephone: a reasonable amount of reference information will be mailed, emailed, or faxed to patrons upon request.~~ Individuals requesting large amounts of information or assistance with research projects may ~~will~~ be asked to come to the Library or be instructed on how to locate the information themselves.

#### II. Service priorities

In-person requests will take precedence over other requests to the extent that they can be answered while the patron is waiting. There is no set limit to the amount of time that may be spent on a reference question; the librarian will decide when all reasonable sources have been exhausted. When other patrons are waiting, staff will generally defer complex questions to a less busy time. ~~Patrons will then be notified of the outcome of the search.~~ Questions requiring further research will not be accepted without the patron's name and contact information.

### **III. Sources and types of information provided**

Reference staff can ~~will~~ use all available sources of information to answer questions subject to policy limitations. This includes, but is not limited to, books, magazines, electronic databases, the Internet, government agencies, and associations, ~~and personal acquaintances.~~ 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. When the requested information is not readily available through Library sources, patrons may be referred to another organization with subject-specific expertise.

Staff will guide people doing extensive research or compiling large amounts of information to appropriate sources. Post-secondary students will be directed to their college or university library when EPL resources are insufficient. When a patron requests a book which is not on the shelf or not in the Library's collection, staff will offer to obtain the material. (NOTE: Patrons will be encouraged to obtain materials directly from Elmhurst College if available at that location. ~~Elmhurst College students will be referred to the Elmhurst College Library for interlibrary loans of academic material.~~) If the material is needed immediately, staff will try to locate it at another local library and have it held for the patron to pick up. Every reasonable effort will be made to fill each request and answer each question fully and accurately.

### **IV. Homework Assignments (Elementary and Secondary Students)**

In recognition of the Library's vision of providing access to information for work and learning. Reference staff will cooperate with Elmhurst elementary and secondary schools in handling homework assignments. Assignment alerts will be solicited from the schools, and preparations will be made to deal with large assignments. Where appropriate, books will be pulled and placed on in-house reserve to ensure that adequate resources are available for all students. Instruction in the use of library materials will be provided if desired, but in general, homework questions will be treated like all other reference questions. ~~Access to live homework help will be provided through the Library's website.~~

## **V. Fees**

Reference service will be provided free of charge except when charges are levied by a supplying agency. The patron will be responsible for these charges. For ILL and photocopy charges, see Circulation Policies 5.4 and 5.4.1.

Patrons specifically asking staff to print material (articles, tax forms, recipes, etc.) will be charged the standard fee for printing per page. Staff may print some material for patrons free of charge while researching a reference question. Typically, if more than 10 pages are printed during the course of a question, staff will start charging for printing. Information will be emailed when possible.

~~Up to ten pages of material printed by staff while researching a reference question will be provided free of charge; the standard fee for printing will be charged for larger amounts or print-outs of pages specifically requested by the patron.~~

## **SERVICE TO NON-ELMHURST PATRONS**

As time permits, limited reference service will be available to non-Elmhurst patrons. Remote access to electronic databases is not available to non-Elmhurst patrons due to licensing agreements. Non-residents who visit the Library will be guided in finding resources but will be referred to their local libraries when the information sought is not readily available at the Elmhurst Public Library. Telephone callers will be referred to their local libraries if the information requested cannot be provided quickly. Elmhurst information, which is unavailable elsewhere, will be emailed or mailed only in the case of requests from outside the Chicago metropolitan area.

## **PERIODIC REVIEW**

This reference service plan will be periodically reviewed by the adult and kids' reference staff, administration, and the Board of Trustees, although changes may be made as the need arises. The quality of reference service will be evaluated periodically by Library staff.

The Library's written reference policies will be made available to the public on the Library's web site and in print on request.

## **LOST/DAMAGED MATERIALS FEES, RECEIPTS AND REFUNDS**

### **FEES FOR LOST/DAMAGED MATERIALS**

Patrons reporting lost material will be required to pay the cost of the item as listed in the computer or the average retail price for that type of material - whichever is higher - plus a processing fee. ~~For cataloged paperbacks, the average retail price for nonfiction will be the price of "trade" publications while the average retail price for fiction will be the price of "mass market" publications.~~ In addition to paying for the material, individuals losing catalogued library material will also be responsible for paying a processing fee to cover the costs associated with removing the item from the collection and preparing a replacement. Fees will be set by Administrative staff based on average processing costs.

Rather than paying for lost Elmhurst Public Library materials, individuals have the option of purchasing a new replacement copy for the Library and paying the processing fee. ~~Fees for damaged material may include the total cost of replacement depending upon the extent of the damage.~~ This does not apply to lost or damaged items obtained through LINKin or Interlibrary Loan.

When material has been damaged beyond repair, and the replacement cost has been paid, ownership of the material may revert to the patron on request, if the Library can no longer use the material.

### **RECEIPTS**

Receipts are issued at the time of payment for lost material. A receipt listing the price paid for the material and any fees collected will be given to the patron.

### **REFUNDS**

**No refunds will be issued for lost materials that have been paid for by a patron. Once an item has been paid for by a patron, ownership of the material reverts to the patron.**