

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~~ Workperks) receive the highest possible level of accurate, efficient, and user-friendly service. Limited reference service will be provided to individuals from other communities.

SERVICE TO ELMHURST PATRONS

I. Availability of service

Reference service will be provided on an equitable basis by trained, Elmhurst Public Library staff to all Elmhurst patrons. Library staff will strive to provide service in a manner that preserves the privacy of the patron.

Reference service will be provided in response to all forms of inquiry. In general, if 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 over the phone. Individuals requesting large amounts of information or assistance with research projects may 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. 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 use ~~all~~ available sources of information within reason to answer questions subject to policy limitations. ~~This includes, but is not limited to, books, magazines, electronic databases, the Internet, government agencies, and associations.~~

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 an [item book](#) which is not on the shelf or not in the Library's collection, staff will ~~offer to obtain~~[assist the patron in obtaining](#) the material.

~~(NOTE: Patrons will be encouraged to obtain materials directly from Elmhurst College if available at that location. 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, Library 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-materials~~ 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.

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 [information about ILL and photocopy services](#)~~charges~~, see Circulation Policyies 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.~~

SERVICE TO NON-ELMHURST PATRONS

As time permits, limited reference service will be available to non-Elmhurst patrons. 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. Patrons contacting the Library remotely 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.

SALE/DISPOSITION OF LIBRARY MATERIAL

At the discretion of Administrative staff, the Library will dispose of withdrawn Library materials ~~in any of the following ways:~~ and Library property when the materials or items are no longer necessary. Administrative staff will make every attempt to repurpose items deemed useful by offering them to other entities. When items and materials are no longer relevant or are damaged, staff will make every attempt to recycle them.

Appropriate materials will be placed on the Book Sale shelves for the public. All materials on the Book Sale Shelves will be available on a first come/first served basis. The Library will not hold materials for specific individuals. Items on the Books Sale Shelves are offered to patrons on a donation only basis. Administrative staff is authorized to suggest a donation per item and patrons may choose to donate when taking an item.

~~Appropriate materials may also be offered to District 205 and other Elmhurst schools or to not for profit/charitable organizations at the discretion of the Library Director or Assistant Library Directors. Remaining titles will be placed in the Book Sale Room for the public.~~

~~If there is reason to believe that gift or withdrawn material may be of particular value to collectors, dealers may be contacted to bid on them.~~

~~All materials placed in the Sale Room will be available on a first come/first served basis. The Library will not hold materials for specific individuals.~~

~~The Library will accept gift material to be considered for addition to the collection or to be placed in the Book Sale Room. See section 4.3 for policy on gift material. Items in the Book Sale Room are offered to patrons on a donation only basis. Administrative staff is authorized to suggest a donation per item and patrons may choose to donate when taking an item.~~