

THE COLONY PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE POLICY

Adopted by The Colony Public Library Board 10/02
Revised by The Colony Public Library Board 10/04; 02/11; 10/15

I. GOAL STATEMENT AND PHILOSOPHY OF SERVICE

The primary goal of reference service is to ensure access to information resources. The staff will utilize print resources, electronic information resources and the World Wide Web to answer questions and to find information. The staff will instruct customers in the use of electronic resources, as well as refer to these sources as part of a complete reference search strategy.

The Colony Public Library's philosophy of service is that the library customer is the most important person in the library. Service provided to customers is not an interruption of work but is rather the purpose of it.

II. GUIDELINES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Reference questions will be responded to in the order received. In the cases of conflicts or time restraints, priority service will be given to in-person requests. Telephone, email, and web form requests will receive response as promptly as possible.
- b. If it is not possible to answer the request to the customer's satisfaction with the Library's materials, the following actions may be taken:
 - i. Use interlibrary loan service.
 - ii. Make phone calls to local sources of information.
 - iii. Refer customer to other resources outside the Library, including nearby libraries.

III. MEDICAL, LEGAL, STATISTICAL, AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION

- a. Material of any type related to these fields (including tables, charts, equations, laws, regulatory or tax information, legal and medical definitions) are not to be interpreted by staff.
- b. In the case of telephone requests, information may be read over the phone, including the citation of the source; however, customers must interpret the information. Customers should be advised to read the material themselves.

IV. TAX FORMS

- a. The Library makes available copies of commonly requested forms. Staff will also assist customers in finding forms available via the Internal Revenue Service website.
- b. The Library staff is not qualified to offer assistance in tax form preparation nor to interpret tax laws. Appropriate referrals to other agencies may be suggested.

V. HOLDS

- a. Reference desk staff shall retrieve materials from the stacks for callers who inquire about the status of a particular title in the collection. If the item is on the shelf, the staff member may place a hold on the item for the cardholder. The item will be held at the circulation desk for one week.

- b. If an item that a caller or in-person customer desires is checked out, the staff member may place a hold for the cardholder. When the item is returned, the customer who is next on the hold list will be contacted via phone or email, and the item will be held at the circulation desk for one week.
- c. Customers may also place their holds on available or checked-out item via the online catalog.