

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MIDLOTHIAN PUBLIC LIBRARY REFERENCE POLICY</b></p>
--

Providing reference service is an important role of the Midlothian Public Library. The library's purpose in offering reference service is to satisfy the information needs of the community in a manner consistent with the library's Mission Statement. The library strives to have trained staff available during all hours of operation. At such times that a Reference Librarian is unavailable, an appropriate sign will be posted, and other staff members will endeavor to assist patrons with information requests.

Any library patron who requests information or materials will be assisted. If information appropriate to the patron's need is not available in the library, patrons may be referred to other local libraries or agencies. Midlothian Public Library cardholders may also request additional materials through the Interlibrary Loan process.

***SERVICE TO NON-RESIDENTS***

Non-residents will be assisted with local library resources. If the request requires resources beyond the Midlothian Public Library, patrons will be referred back to their home libraries for service.

***FORMS OF INQUIRY AND RESPONSE***

Reference service will be provided in response to various forms of inquiry, including telephone, fax, mail or e-mail. Inquiries are answered in the form the librarian feels is the most expedient.

***RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS***

Requests will generally be handled in the order in which they are received. Requests submitted by patrons in the library are given priority over telephone requests that are received at the same time. Staff members will attempt to answer questions at the time the request is made and to work within the patron's time limits. This may not be possible for complex questions. In such situations staff will inform the patron that a longer response time will be necessary. Staff will also inform the patron if it becomes necessary to refer the questions to an outside agency.

When answering a patron's reference question, staff will cite the resource(s) from which the information is obtained. The producers of that resource, not the library itself, are responsible for that resource's accuracy. The librarian will decide when all reasonable resources have been exhausted at this library and will also decide when it is time to refer the question to another agency or to cease working on a question. Staff will offer no interpretation, advice or personal recommendations in any area other than library science.

Whenever possible and practical, library staff who are responding to reference inquiries will also attempt to guide and instruct patrons in how to use library resources.

Students working on homework assignments will be directed to resources and given assistance with their use.

Electronically retrievable information, such as online databases, is provided to patrons according to terms of the library's computer and Internet use policies.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MIDLOTHIAN PUBLIC LIBRARY REFERENCE POLICY</b></p>
--

***FEES***

There is no charge for reference service. However, charges assessed by outside agencies and costs incurred for providing photocopies and printouts will be passed on to the patron. The patron will be notified in advance of any such charges.

***ETHICS AND STANDARDS***

All transactions with patrons will be treated with equal importance and confidentiality. Patron records will be disclosed only by force of legal authority.

***AVAILABILITY OF SERVICE***

Midlothian Public Library Reference Service is available during all the hours that the library is open. All staff members providing reference service must read and understand the written reference policy.

The reference policy and the reference service of Midlothian Public Library will be subject to review by the staff, the director, and the library board every three years, as recommended in *Serving Our Public: Standards for Illinois Public Libraries*.

***PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF REFERENCE POLICY***

This is a public document. Copies are available upon request.