

BONDURANT COMMUNITY LIBRARY



REFERENCE SERVICES POLICY

Purpose

The Bondurant Community Library, in accordance with its mission to provide its citizens with access to information and lifelong educational services, offers assistance to the public in locating materials and information on any subject. This service will be accomplished by using the library's collection of print and non-print resources, as well as electronic and Internet sources, according to the principles and guidelines listed below.

Reference Services

The Bondurant Community Library staff will:

- Provide information in the form of short answers to specific requests for information, general questions, and guidance for locating materials to patrons in the library, using the telephone, or over the Internet, or through the mail.
- Provide access to reference volumes on a universal list of subjects that are accessible to the public, and also provide assistance for finding information within the library's reference collection.
- Provide assistance and basic education on using the library's electronic databases, computer equipment, the Internet and World Wide Web, and other resources that foster access to knowledge.
- Demonstrate research skills and assist patrons in basic methods of finding information using online and print resources.
- Manage the library's Interlibrary Loan services to assist patrons with reference services.
- Provide reference resources through the Library's website.
- Provide verification of items in the library's collection upon request.

- Refer patrons to other organizations, libraries, and outside agencies when requested information is beyond the library's scope.
- Encourage the public and advocate for the goal of improving citizens' basic information literacy skills and general knowledge.

Resources

The library will collect and provide reference resources of a nature that reflects the information needs and desires of our community, as well as reference resources that cover the scope of general knowledge. These resources may be print or non-print in nature, with an emphasis on providing the most current information available in order to ensure the accuracy and quality of the information.

Limitations of Reference Service

While the goal of the library is to provide the most complete information possible, there are limits to certain types of information services the library can competently provide. In these cases, the staff may refer the patron to another source for more information. The following general guidelines detail the nature of some of these limitations:

- **Legal and Medical Questions:** While library staff may be able to locate certain legal or medical information, it is not within the professional capability of that staff member to interpret or judge the quality of that information. Patrons are advised to seek out lawyers and medical professionals regarding specific legal or medical advice and interpretation. Also, some questions may be beyond the scope of our collections.
- **Technical and Computer Troubleshooting:** Library staff are able to locate specific troubleshooting and repair information for electronic and computer equipment; however, the library cannot assume any liability for repair work done using information gained from the library's resources. Staff members are not able to interpret or suggest repair procedures for technical equipment.

- **Collectible Items and Value Judgments:** It is not within the capability of library staff to judge the financial value of collectible items, including fine art, antiques, rare objects, coins, stamps and other items. Library staff may provide patrons with materials to assist judging values of collectibles, but the patron is advised to consult with appropriate financial appraisers to determine values.
- **Extensive Research and Student Assignments:** Library staff can provide assistance using research resources, finding appropriate materials for research, and determining the quality of such materials. However, it is the patron's responsibility to handle extensive research requests (defined as research requiring more than ten minutes of dedicated staff time) on their own, once shown what materials can be used. Likewise, with student assignments the library staff may show and demonstrate informational materials to students. However, the library staff cannot be responsible for doing work assigned to the student.

Library reference services will be provided in accordance with the American Library Association's Guidelines for Medical, Legal, and Business Responses available at the Reference and Users Association, a Division of the American Library Association Website.

Philosophy and Confidentiality of Service

Library staff will provide nonjudgmental, factual information services to persons of all ages, races, and backgrounds while keeping the confidentiality of all information requests. The library's intent is to provide equal attention and effort to every information request, though times spent on any given reference question will vary according to the needs of the individual.

Library Staff will also avail themselves of continuing education opportunities whenever and wherever it will enhance the quality of the library's reference services.

Adopted by the Bondurant Community Library Board of Trustees:

3/2009

Revised:

10/2012, 4/2015, 5/2019

Reviewed: 2/2021