



Jackson County Public Library

Information Services Policy

Information services link people with resources to fulfill informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs.

Library staff in all departments and branches should be aware of the types of questions received and apply the protocols for assisting people in finding the information.

Reference and information questions will be answered efficiently, accurately and as completely as possible within these guidelines. Customers will be assisted in the use of the library and bibliographic tools. If it is not possible to find an answer using the library's resources, additional resources will be sought if the person so desires.

All people seeking help at the library will be treated with respect and courtesy without regard to sex, age, ability, ethnic background or subject interest. If help is not sought directly and a person appears to be in need of assistance, staff should approach the person and inquire whether assistance is needed. The extent of personal service to each individual must be delivered with regard to the number of people to be served, complexity of materials, amount of information needed, and other assignments of the staff.

Types of Service

The library provides a variety of information services. The level of assistance is based on need, staff competencies and time constraints, as described below.

- 1) **Directional Requests** seek assistance in locating various areas of the library and should be within the expertise of all library employees.
- 2) **Reference** usually requires a search and the use of a number of sources to arrive at a complete answer. These inquiries generally should be referred to Information Services staff or in their absence to a staff member familiar with library resources. The Information Services staff will guide and assist the customer in pursuing an answer while providing informal instruction in how to search, evaluate and use library resources to his/her best advantage. Authoritative sources should be consulted to answer the question, and the customer should be told the source of the information provided. When Information Services staff determines that a request cannot be answered or has been answered only in part with the resources of the library, the customer will be referred when appropriate to another source and assisted where circumstances warrant in contacting that source.
- 3) **Library Orientation and Instruction** includes showing individuals or scheduled groups the use of finding aids such as the online catalog, indexes, bibliographies, reviews, electronic products, the Internet and its specialized search tools, as well as library equipment accessible to the public. All staff members are encouraged to develop at least minimal familiarity and

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Tel: (812) 793-2927
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Medora Library
27 West Main Street
P.O. Box 400
Medora, IN 47260
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Outreach Services
Serving Jackson County
Tel: (812) 522-3412 x1241

www.myjclibrary.org

competency with resources and equipment in order to provide the best service possible. Customers may be referred to online and other instructional materials available for learning additional features of the equipment.

Bibliographies and other finding aids or database search results are compiled at the request of agencies and community groups within the limits of available staff time and with priority for material of general interest. Bibliographic projects should be reviewed by staff members with expertise in the subject area and must be reviewed and approved by department managers and the Library Director.

- 4) **Location of Material** may involve public service staff checking whether a specific desired item is in the library's collection. If it is, but is not immediately available, staff should attempt to instruct the customer in placing a hold or may place a hold for the person. When an item is not located, staff will refer the customer to the Information Services staff for assistance.

If the library does not own the item, library staff will purchase the item, borrow it from another library, or locate the information elsewhere. Reference materials generally do not circulate. Reference material may, under exceptional circumstances, be checked out through the library circulation system for a specific brief period and subject to immediate recall. These loans are made only at the discretion of the department managers or designated staff members.

- 5) **Content** of an information request is provided to the best of the Information Services staff abilities and without bias.
- 6) **Interlibrary Loan** service at the library is part of an information network for the exchange of library materials that begins with the nearest libraries, extends to all of the United States and can reach around the world. This service is offered whenever the information requested cannot be filled by the resources of Evergreen Indiana or the Statewide Remote Circulation System (SRCS) and is within the scope of the library's Interlibrary Loan policy and the regional and national Interlibrary Loan code.

In return, the library shares its resources in accordance with the code while always giving its own customers priority in the use of resources.

- 7) **Community Information** is developed by the Information Services staff. Information on and referral to governmental and community services and organizations designed to serve needs of the community is compiled into an online database.

Copying of Material

The library adheres to the laws of the United States governing the copying of all materials and encourages customers and staff to do likewise. Notices about copyright requirements are posted near reproduction equipment in the library. Within these guidelines staff may make photocopies and printouts for people in filling information requests. Copies and printouts are \$.10 for black copies and \$.25 for color copies.

Priorities of Service

To manage workflow, Information Services staff often must answer first those questions requiring least effort, followed by those requiring sustained effort that must be balanced with other assigned duties. Staff will attempt to obtain the requested information within two working days of receiving a request and will keep customers informed of the status on requests requiring more time.

People needing extensive library instruction or general reference service may be requested to visit the library to participate in the process. The library will respond to requests originating outside the library district in as timely a manner as possible and may refer requestors to their local libraries for information generally available.

Response

The library will invoice for copies and postage when printed responses are requested. Written responses to questions will be made within seven days, if possible, and copies of correspondence will be retained as necessary.

Confidentiality

Customers are not asked to identify themselves in any way before reference service is provided. As much as possible under library conditions, confidentiality is assumed and respected. Without breaching confidentiality, questions may be referred to other staff members considered to have greater expertise in addressing a particular information request. Information about requests will not be revealed to others who may inquire about the nature or subject of the request.

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