



Three Rivers Public Library District Reference Services Policy

Purpose:

The Three Rivers Public Library District serves a diverse public with unique individual needs and levels of ability to conduct research independently. At times of peak activity within the library, it is mandatory that rules for providing reference assistance be established.

Materials:

- a. Reference service and materials are available to all persons who reside within the jurisdictional boundaries of the library regardless of the age, race, sex, social, or economic status of the patron.
- b. Reference service and materials are available during all hours the library is open and are provided in response to all forms of inquiry including but not limited to patrons in the library, the telephone, fax, and email. The reference questions of patrons visiting the library are given the highest priority.
- c. Materials in the Reference Collection may be checked out one hour prior to closing time. Reference Materials will circulate for 2 days.
- d. In addition to print materials, the library provides online resources to assist our patrons with their information needs. Online resources are available 24/7 and are accessed from the library's website. Whenever possible, the library will purchase databases and other resources that provide remote access.

Unanswered Questions:

Although every effort is made to complete questions immediately, some can remain at the end of a shift or day. Unfinished questions will be turned over to incoming staff if the patron is in immediate need of the requested information. The patron will be given an agreed-upon time frame in which the reference question will be answered. Staff members are encouraged to consult with colleagues if they need assistance with a puzzling or difficult question.

Referrals to Other Libraries:

If the staff member feels that it is appropriate to refer the patron to another library, it is required that the staff member verify that the material needed is actually there. If it is necessary to refer a patron to a corporate, university, or other special library, the staff member should make prior arrangements with the other library before sending a patron to that library.

Referrals to Other Agencies:

Referrals to other agencies may be made when appropriate. Patrons should be advised that they may contact the library for further assistance if they are not successful in obtaining help from the agency. At no time may staff refer the patron to individual practitioners--physicians, attorneys, mental health professionals, etc.