

# Reference, Interlibrary Loan, And Reader Services Policies And Procedures

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21.1

## I. POLICIES

### A. REFERENCE POLICY

The purpose of Reference and Readers Services at the St. Charles Public Library is to meet the information and entertainment needs of eligible patrons<sup>1</sup> accurately and efficiently. The Library serves a diverse public with unique individual needs and levels of ability to conduct searches independently. This policy exists to fully inform the Library staff and the public of services available to them, and to clarify the nature and extent of the services provided. The most recent Illinois Library Association standards document, *Serving our Public: Standards for Illinois Public Libraries*, provides the model for this policy.

All requests are treated confidentially, courteously, and without regard to age, race, sex, social, or economic status of the patron. Names of users and the transactions which occur between users and the staff are confidential and not discussed outside a professional context.

Adult and Youth Reference staff at all levels are required to pursue continuing education opportunities which will enable them to better meet the needs of the Library's patrons. Staff members receive in-house training regarding appropriate responses to patron questions, including reference questions. This training includes reference interview techniques, reader advisory techniques, and bibliographic instruction. All staff members are taught to treat each question with respect insofar as the level of assistance required and the topic of the question, including assisting patrons with special needs.

Assistance is given to patrons in the identification, location, and use of desired information through local and Library resources, online searches, outside sources, and referrals. Information requests are taken in person, by telephone, and online, with priority given to in-person requests. Reference services and materials are available during all hours the Library is open. All requests for information receive an answer or status report within one working day. Questions which cannot be answered with onsite resources are referred to another agency when appropriate. Such referrals are generally verified and/or mediated by staff.

In the instance of legal, medical, investment, or tax questions, the staff may only guide the patron to the resources covering that topic. No evaluations or interpretations of the information are provided, nor may staff, offer legal, investment, or tax advice, nor serve as a surrogate for a professional in any of the fields mentioned above. If patrons need such additional interpretations and explanations, they are advised to consult with their professional from the above-mentioned specialties, and/or appropriate local and government agencies and institutions such as the Kane County Law Library, the Illinois Department of Revenue, IRS, etc.

A copy of this written policy statement is available in the Library at the Adult Services Desk, the Youth Services Ask Me Desk and on the Library's website.

21.2

## **B. INTERLIBRARY LOAN POLICY**

It is the policy of the St. Charles Public Library District to make every effort to meet the information and reading needs of its cardholders. Given the extremely wide range of individual user needs, local needs cannot be met solely by the local collection. Therefore, it is the Library's policy to request from other libraries most materials needed for the purposes of study, instruction, information, recreation, or research. Transactions in which library materials are made available from one library to another are called interlibrary loans. St. Charles is an ILLINET Library and adheres to the ILLINET Interlibrary Loan Code, a copy of which is available online. Interlibrary loan services are extended to St. Charles Public Library District cardholders in good standing.

### Supplying Policy

The St. Charles Public Library undertakes to meet interlibrary loan requests in a timely fashion, within the limits of staffing and scheduling. The Library does not lend Reference materials, new items outside of the LINC Consortium, nor AV materials out-of-state, with the exception of nonfiction DVDs and Audiobooks. Items from new or growing collections, or which are available only to St. Charles Public Library cardholders are also not lent via interlibrary loan.

### Requesting Policy

The collection of the Library is shaped by the guidelines in the Collection Development Statement and the Library's official Selection Policy. When a St. Charles patron requests material the St. Charles Public Library does not own or is not able to provide immediately from its collection, Interlibrary Loan Service is offered. The Library will attempt to borrow any items that lenders will agree to loan in accordance with reciprocal agreements. ILL service is not intended to supply textbooks or materials required for coursework or other long term exclusive use. Lending libraries determine the cost of lost or damaged items. The Library may refuse to borrow items that are rare or valuable, and whose replacement value would exceed a reasonable amount.

Loan periods are determined by the lending library. ILL items are eligible for one renewal. For security, items must be returned directly to the St. Charles Public Library building. In instances when availability is limited, items may be requested again 3 months after the initial loan period.

Loan periods must be observed and failure to return items when due may result in suspension of ILL borrowing privileges, as well as associated fines and fees.

#### Photocopies

The Library will obtain photocopies needed by individual patrons.

The Library adheres to the copyright laws which limit the number of copies allowed annually from recent years' issues of an individual title. For this reason, patrons may be referred to a neighboring library where the title is owned.

Fees charged by lending libraries for microform borrowing, photocopying, and/or other fees are passed along to St. Charles Public Library patrons, with their prior approval.

21.3

#### **C. READERS SERVICES POLICY**

The St. Charles Public Library provides services to promote recreational enjoyment of books and authors of all genres and formats by providing patrons with personalized consultation, suggestions, and assistance in locating and choosing materials. Adult and Youth Readers Services also promotes reading and encourages use of Library resources.

#### **D. POLICY REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

The Library Board reviews this Policy biennially.

Adult and Youth Reference and Reader Services are evaluated annually and as required by the State Library, focusing on such factors as staff approachability, expertise in conducting reference interviews, accuracy, usefulness, and completeness of answers, and timeliness of answers.

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<sup>1</sup>. Eligible patrons are St. Charles Public Library District taxpayers, residents and cardholders, or residents of cooperating library districts.

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