

REFERENCE SERVICES

TFML Policy No. 9

This policy defines Reference Services provided by TFML and establishes a basis for delivery of services. The policy serves as the foundation for developing procedures and provides clarification for patrons who may have questions concerning reference services.

9.1 Goals

Reference Services goals are:

9.11 To acquire materials which meet the informational and recreational needs and interests of the community.

9.12 To provide accurate information and facilitate access to the Library's collection and to the collection and services of the Metropolitan Library System.

9.13 To provide qualified staff to assist patrons in an efficient and courteous manner.

9.2 Scope of Services

Reference Service is provided by specially trained staff during all hours the Library is open. Reference assistance is available to patrons at the Library and via mail, fax, telephone, email, or the Internet.

9.21 Patron Eligibility

Reference Services are available to all TFML Library cardholders and those who have a valid Metropolitan Library System card from other libraries. Use of the public access computers is available to anyone with a valid library card; Western Springs residents will be given preference.

9.22 Reference Services Priority

Questions are addressed in confidence and with impartiality. No distinctions are made regarding the purpose of the inquiry or the intended use of the information. Patrons are provided with both the information requested and the source.

9.221 Sequence of Response

Priority is given to an in-person request; telephone, fax, e-mail, and Internet requests are subsequently addressed. Staff, will, however, complete a reference telephone conversation in progress before attending to an in-person request.

9.222 Timeliness of Response

Whenever possible, answers to questions are provided during the patron's visit or telephone call within one hour of inquiry. During busy periods time spent serving an individual may be limited.

9.23 Limitations

Responses requiring reading and evaluating extensive text sources will be provided but the requestor is expected to read and synthesize materials: follow-up attention will be provided if more information is needed. Reference staff will do their best to provide answers to questions using all resources available to the Library. Reference librarians will provide instructions to patrons on how to find and use resources that contain the information they seek.

9.24 Materials and Services Availability

9.241 Materials

All resources to which the Library has access are made available to patrons of all ages. Referrals are made to local or metropolitan agencies, to the Metropolitan Library System and to other Libraries.

9.242 Services

Access to the Interlibrary Loan Service of the Metropolitan Library System is provided through TFML to patrons with a valid Metropolitan Library System card.

9.3 Fees

Most reference questions can be answered without charge for the service. If an organization does charge a fee to provide needed information, the requesting patron will be notified of this fact and agree to pay the cost before Library staff proceeds with the transaction. No surcharge will be added.

9.4 Ethics and Standards

TFML subscribes to the American Library Association's Librarian's Code of Ethics, the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom To Read Statement (attachments). The Library meets the reference standards established by the Metropolitan Library System. A copy of our reference services policy is available for patrons to consult in each of the public areas of the Library. Further clarification can be sought from the Heads of Departments or from the Director.

9.5 Evaluation of Services

An annual evaluation is made by the Director and Department Heads to determine how effectively the Library is fulfilling its

Reference Services goals. Patron input will be sought and incorporated into the evaluation process as necessary and appropriate to insure its validity. The Library Board of Trustees will review the evaluation to assess needs and to authorize changes in the program as necessary.

Attachments: Code of Ethics
Library Bill of Rights
Freedom to Read Statement

Adopted: 10/22/96
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