

REFERENCE SERVICES POLICY

Standards and Goals

The staff of the Berwyn Public Library strives to answer all questions with no distinction made about the purpose of the inquiry or use of the information. Inquiries will be treated in a courteous and efficient manner. All questions are handled in confidence and with impartiality.

The library subscribes to the American Library Association's Code of Ethics.

The library meets the reference standards established by the Reaching Across Illinois Library System.

The goals of the Berwyn Public Library's reference services are:

1. To provide service to all patrons regardless of age, race, or socioeconomic status.
2. To provide patrons with accurate answers to their questions in a timely efficient manner.
3. To assist patrons in the use of reference resources, library materials, and the development of research strategies.
4. To keep the community well informed about reference services and resources.

Collections

The Berwyn Public Library's reference collections consist of print and electronic materials of a popular nature targeted to a general audience. The library consortium's *Core Reference List for Public Libraries* will be used as a guide to ensure the currency and completeness of the reference collections.

Guidelines

1. Responding to patron questions takes precedence over all other staff duties.
2. Reference inquiries are accepted in-person, by mail, telephone, or electronically. In-person inquiries are given priority when received simultaneously with other requests.
3. Citations to sources of information will be given when questions are answered.
4. Staff will either provide the information requested or give the patron a status report within one working day.
5. If information appropriate to the patron's needs is not available in the library, a referral will be made to the appropriate resource or organization.
6. Staff will assist as they are able in helping patrons with computer applications and will refer patrons to appropriate books, online tutorials, or classes for further assistance.
7. Medical, legal, and tax information requests will be referred to the appropriate resources and /or sources of information. Staff cannot interpret or give opinions concerning medical, legal, or tax inquiries.
8. Excessively lengthy research cannot be conducted by staff, appropriate referrals will be made.
9. Staff cannot enter personal information when assisting patrons with online resources.

10. When offering telephone assistance for City Directory and Crisscross Directory, up to three addresses/phone numbers will be provided per phone transaction.
11. Staff cannot critique or edit patron documents, including resumes for job seekers. Referrals will be made as appropriate.
12. Staff cannot perform patent searches. Patrons requesting this type of service will be referred to the Harold Washington Library or advised to consult an attorney.
13. Staff is not able to make appraisals of books, works of art, coins, or other collectibles. Patrons seeking this type of information shall be referred to standard print or online price guides or they will be encouraged to consult appropriate professional resources.
14. Homework Alerts will be accepted from teachers, school librarians, and students to assist in the homework assignment.
15. Staff will offer assistance to all students in obtaining information and materials for assignments. However,
 - a. Staff cannot proofread assignments.
 - b. Staff will guide students toward sources and instruct them in their usage but cannot do their homework.