

# VII. Reference & Reader's Advisory Services

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## Definitions

- **Reference Services** include providing answers to informational questions and materials that support patron research.
- **Readers' Advisory Services** involve matching patrons with fiction and nonfiction materials to meet their recreational needs.

The library's goal is to provide the best possible services by trained staff in a timely manner. These services are provided during all hours that the library is open and self-guided resources are available on the library's website.

## Reference Guidelines and Standards

- **Impartiality and Confidentiality.** All requests for information will be handled impartially and confidentially. Service will not be denied or abridged because of religious, racial, social, economic or political status; or because of mental, emotional or physical condition; age; or sexual orientation. Staff members treat all questions with equal respect.
- **Extensive Research Sources.** Staff will guide people doing extensive research to appropriate sources. Reading and interpretation of materials is the patron's responsibility.
- **Reasonable Time.** Staff will spend a reasonable amount of time on reference requests; however, patrons wanting large amounts of information will be directed to other sources or agencies so that they may continue their research on their own.
- **Updates.** If a reference transaction cannot be completed within one working day, the patron will be notified with a status report on their request.

The library adopts and adheres to the ALA Statement of Professional Ethics.

## Types of Information Not Provided

- **Confidential Information.** Requests for names, addresses or telephone numbers are never answered from the library's patron data file or online patron records since these are considered to be "confidential information" and are covered by the library's Confidentiality of Records Policy and the State of Illinois' Library Records Confidentiality Act. (75 ILCS 70).
- **Certain Databases.** Remote access to some databases is reserved for Mahomet Public Library cardholders.
- **Personal Opinions and Interpretations.** The library staff's personal opinion will never be given as fact, nor will the library staff offer interpretation of information or legal, medical, or tax advice.

## Readers' Advisory Services

The reading tastes of library patrons are taken seriously and without judgement. Library staff will suggest materials without personal bias. When the items are not on our shelves, staff will assist patrons with other options for materials, including digital formats and requesting items through interlibrary loan.