



## **Reference Service at the Farmington Community Library**

Reference service at The Farmington Community Library is one of the most vital and visible expressions of the Library's purpose and mission and is key to each of the Library's service roles—our overarching role to provide an environment that fosters lifelong learning, as well as our primary roles—providing information assistance, popular and current topics and titles, and serving our children, and our secondary service roles—providing a community commons, fostering cultural awareness, offering business and career information, and offering local history and genealogical resources.

Reference service is defined as personal assistance provided to users and potential users of information. Reference service takes a variety of forms including direct personal assistance, directories or signs, exchange of information culled from a reference source, readers' advisory assistance, dissemination of information in anticipation of user needs or interests, and direct end-user access to an electronic source or information .

The Library actively publicizes the scope, nature, and availability of the information services it offers. It employs those media most effective in reaching its entire user base or selected segments of that base.

The Library periodically surveys and assesses the information needs of our community, and creates local information products to fulfill those needs not met by published materials, by selecting print and digital sources of information and providing ready access to the same, and by collecting and creating access to the services and resources of local, regional, and state organizations. Based on the community's known needs and interests, the Library also provides information even if it has not been explicitly requested.

The Library's buildings shall not be a boundary to its information services. We continually identify and employ external databases, agencies, and services to help meet the information needs of our community.

The Library participates in consortia and networks to obtain better and more cost-effective access to information sources and services.

When the Library is not able to provide a patron with needed information, we will refer either the patron or the patron's question to some other agency, an expert, or another library which can provide the needed information.

The Library uses or provides access to information systems outside the Library when these systems meet information needs more effectively and efficiently than internal resources can.

It is the policy of this Library to consider each individual information query to be of equal merit regardless of the age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual preference, English language proficiency or status of the inquirer. Our intention is to accord equal attention and effort to each inquiry, although the time spent by staff on a question may vary in response to the perceived needs of the patron, the information resources (both staff and collections) available and the method of receipt of the inquiry.

Information requests may be accepted in person, by telephone, by electronic mail, or using a form available on the Library's Web site.

## Reference Service Management

Library coordination of reference services includes management and training components:

- the development, implementation and review of policies and procedures relating to these services;
- the development, implementation and evaluation of competency- and skill-based training efforts;
- the recommendation of enhancements, additions, and/or deletions to print and digital resources consonant with the Library's Collection Development Policy;
- resource discovery and maintenance of library-based Web pages, both external and internal;
- the purchase of training materials and documentation; and
- the development and implementation of marketing efforts.

Site management of reference services at each branch is the responsibility of the Branch

Heads working with Department Heads or their designees. Responsibilities include:

- maintenance and reconciliation of statistics for all reference services, including preparation of monthly statistics;
- maintenance of equipment coordinated with the Administrative Office;
- maintenance of user documentation for digital resources;
- supervision and evaluation of staff performance and proficiency levels; and
- maintenance of supplies used in providing such services.

## Staff Training

The Farmington Community Library views the ability to search print and digital reference sources as a basic service skill for all full-time and part-time employees. All staff is required to master basic reference competencies which are detailed in the Adult Department Procedures. Professionals are required to master all levels of reference competencies. Training will be conducted in-house on a time frame determined by the Branch Heads or Departments Heads. However, the Library will provide the opportunity and training to any staff wishing to learn a higher level competency. The Library will also identify appropriate vendor workshops and send staff members. In addition, the Library will provide current support documentation and training manuals/materials to assist staff with their training and use of reference materials.