

Geneva Public Library District is committed to responding accurately and in a timely manner to information service requests. The purpose of this written policy is to assure the quality and consistency of information services.

### 1. Access

Access to Library collections and information services are provided by qualified staff to all patrons regardless of age or place of residence at all times the Library is open. In the event that a librarian is not available, another staff member is designated to handle inquiries or take information for referral to a librarian at a later time. Remote access to electronic resources through the Library's web site is available to valid Geneva Public Library District cardholders. All patrons are treated with equal concern and every request for information is handled impartially.

### 2. Service Response

Library staff responds to information service requests made in person, by telephone, via electronic means, or through the mail. Answering information service questions has priority over other staff assignments. Patrons are assisted on a first-come, first-served basis. Telephone questions that cannot be answered in a few minutes and/or during times of heavy in-library use will be returned as soon as possible. Questions received by mail or electronic means from outside the area will be answered if the information is unique to Geneva. Requests for information are either answered or referred within 24 hours. Every attempt is made to provide accurate answers to questions. Requestors will be informed of title, date, and name of sources used to answer questions. Questions that cannot be answered will be referred to local or metropolitan agencies when appropriate. If a question is referred to another agency, the requestor will be notified accordingly.

### 3. Fees

Information service is provided free of charge. Any fees charged by other agencies supplying materials may be passed on to the requestor.

### 4. Special Categories

Information is provided for any question without regard for the patron's use of that information, including homework, trivia, or contest use. There are special categories of information which require specific guidelines.

a) Legal and medical information: Library staff does not give medical or legal advice, interpretation, or opinion. Staff does not attempt to condense or abstract information. Telephone responses are limited to short definitions or descriptions read from standard dictionaries or encyclopedias. Medical and legal sources are quoted verbatim, and the patron is informed of the source from which the information is taken. No referrals are made to private or individual sources. Patrons requesting names of legal or medical professionals will be referred to local lawyer referral services or physicians referral services.

b) Consumer information is available in several printed and electronic reference sources. Lengthy articles and product lists are not read over the telephone, and interpretation of the results of consumer research is not made. Appraisals are not made, but price guides are provided where possible.

c) Information on taxes is provided from print and/or electronic sources. Tax forms may be provided as a courtesy to the public. Library staff does not provide tax advice, interpretation, or opinion. Patrons are expected to make and pay for their own copies of tax forms needed at the current rate charged by the Library. Patrons will be referred to established help lines if necessary.

d) Library staff provides general assistance to patrons engaged in genealogical research, guidance in locating items in the collection, and help in using the resources of interlibrary loan. Request for basic or simple genealogical information, such as photocopies of obituaries or birth announcements when a date is known, are answered when possible. Extensive genealogy research requests received by mail or email are returned to the sender or are referred to the local genealogical society.

e) Request for translations of materials in a foreign language are referred to a professional translator.

f) Every effort is made to assist students with homework question(s) and to provide instruction needed to use reference sources. The student is expected to use the sources to meet the requirements of the assignment. Quick factual homework questions will be answered.

g) Extensive compilations (bibliographies, lists, statistics, etc.) and exhaustive literature searches are not prepared for individuals or businesses. Patrons are directed to appropriate resources for such research.

## 5. Library Instruction

Requests for library tours, library orientation or instruction, or special class and organization library visits are welcome. Any special needs or requests should be specified at the time the appointment is made. All requests are subject to the Library's schedule.

## 6. Ethics

All patrons are treated impartially and their questions are handled confidentially within the limits of necessary consultation with other reference personnel. Library staff are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the American Library Association Statement on Professional Ethics.

## 7. Evaluation

In order to determine the quantity and effectiveness of information services, surveys are performed as specified in the current edition of *Serving Our Public: Standards for Illinois Public Libraries*. Library staff participates in other evaluation activities determined to be useful in measuring quality of service and collection.

Adopted: 2-28-91  
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