Policy #15 Morton Public Library District

Reference Services Policy

**Introduction**

Staff trained to provide reference service and materials are available all hours the library is open. The Morton Public Library District staff will respond to all reference and information questions efficiently, accurately, completely, and in a timely manner. All requests for information receive an answer or status report within one working day. Questions which cannot be answered with onsite resources are referred to another agency. Such referrals are verified and/or mediated by library staff. Reference includes providing help with the catalog and library computers, readers’ advisory service, database and online assistance, interlibrary loan assistance and individual and group instruction.

**Access**

The library will provide reference services and materials to all persons who reside within the jurisdictional boundaries of the library regardless of the age, race, gender, national origin, economic status. Patrons do not need to be registered Morton Public Library District cardholders to use library facilities, reference materials or services. Service is provided in response to all forms of inquiry including but not limited to patrons in the library, the telephone, mail, e-mail, fax, or other forms of technology as they emerge. The reference questions of patrons visiting the library are given the highest priority.

**Confidentiality**

The needs of library patrons are treated with respect. Names of patrons and the transactions which occur between patrons and the staff are confidential and not discussed outside a professional context.

**Services**

Insofar as it is possible, reference service shall not only meet but also anticipate patron needs. The library shall provide instruction in the effective use of its resources. Such instruction can include individual explanation of information resources, the creation of guides and instruction sheets, formal assistance through tours and group presentations, video presentations, or other forms of technology as they emerge.

**Limits of Services**

In the instance of legal, medical, investment, or tax reference questions, the staff may only guide the patron to the material available on the topic of interest. The staff may not evaluate or interpret the information provided nor may the staff define the meaning of terms, offer investment advice, select income tax forms, or serve as a surrogate for a professional in any of the fields listed above. If all materials within the library are beyond the understanding of the patron, the patron will be advised to consult with their professional from the above listed fields for additional information or advice.

Reference materials regardless of format may not be removed from the library. Exceptions to this rule require the permission of the Library Director.

**Evaluation of Reference Service and the Reference Policy**

The library will evaluate its service every three years to assure that the service furthers the institution’s goals, and the goals reflect the needs and interest of the communities serviced.

Adopted June 9, 2009

Revised January 19, 2016