



Reference Policy

Reference Collection:

Fleetwood Area Public Library (FAPL) maintains a current collection of print and electronic reference materials to answer information requests from its patrons. In accordance with its collection development policy, FAPL purchases and updates reference materials annually to support the needs of the general public. FAPL is committed to building and maintaining a reference collection which is derived from the Core, Basic and Basic Plus lists endorsed by Berks County Public Libraries. Priority is given to resources that support the interests and needs of our adult patrons, as well as the curriculum of schools within our library's service area. When a reputable reference source is available free in electronic form on the Internet, that source will not be duplicated in print in the reference collection. The nature of the collection requires that it be non-circulating.

Access:

Reference services are available to all patrons of the library -regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical ability, economic or social Class.

Confidentiality:

In compliance with Pennsylvania's Act 90, the Library Confidentiality Act, the names of patrons or the nature of materials used by them will not be revealed to anyone, except by a court order in a criminal proceeding.

Services Offered:

- Reference service is available during all hours the library is open to the public.
- Library staff is trained in the use of basic reference works which enables them to assist patrons with reference questions and/or to make referrals to other libraries and agencies when appropriate.
- Reference questions, along with other services provided directly to patrons, take priority over all other duties. In-person and telephone requests are handled courteously in the order they are received. When business in the library does not permit a timely response to patron's inquiries, patrons are given the option of waiting or having the Library Director or trained staff get back to them by phone as soon as possible (at maximum within a twenty-four

hour period).

- The source of information for reference inquiries is always cited. The source's date of publication is noted when relevant, as is always the case with business, medical, or legal inquiries.
- Reference service is generally limited to brief inquiries for factual or statistical information which requires from 5-10 minutes to answer. Library staff and volunteers do not perform in-depth research for patrons. Patrons who come to the library with substantial reference needs are assisted in locating potential resources, instructed in their use, and encouraged to conduct their own research. Telephone patrons with lengthy research inquiries should be encouraged to come to the library in person for assistance.
- When the library lacks the resources necessary to answer inquiries, the library staff may refer the patron to the District Library Center reference staff (610-655-6355), or other agencies from which the desired information may potentially be obtained.
- Patrons will also be directed to Ask Here PA, a 24/7 online reference service available as part of Pennsylvania's Power Library.

Limitations:

- Lengthy research for homework assignments will not be conducted in response to telephone inquiries. Library staff will assist students to find appropriate sources and/or instruction in the use of library resources.
- No referrals will be made to individual practitioners, but rather to the appropriate county, state or national agencies.
- Genealogical research questions will be referred to the Berks County Genealogical Society Library, Historical Society of Berks County Library, or the Pennsylvania Room of Reading Public Library.
- Tax information is not provided. Patrons will be directed to online availability of tax forms and information. Staff can print tax forms, if the patron know which form they need for the standard printing fees.

Adopted by the FAPL Board of Trustees, March 28, 1995

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