

TITLE: Information Services Policy
POLICY NUMBER: 520
EFFECTIVE DATE: 09/22/2022
REVIEW DATE: September 2023
SUPERSEDES: Reference Policy (2017)



Article 1: Purpose

Waukegan Public Library is dedicated to supporting the lifelong learning, recreational, and informational needs of people of all ages through access to library materials and electronic resources, a variety of technology and equipment, and staff research, instruction, and advisory services. Information services are free and available at both library locations by well-trained, approachable, and knowledgeable staff during all hours of operation, with access to the library's website, databases, and electronic resources available 24/7.

Article 2: Standards and Ethics

Section 2.01 - Equal Access to Information

To maintain the trust of patrons and respect for the library profession, staff will act in accordance with federal and state law, and guidelines and standards set forth in approved Waukegan Public Library policies, including its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion policy, and the American Library Association's Code of Ethics, treating all users on an equal basis and all requests with impartiality, confidentiality, and respect.

Section 2.02 - Service Goals

In addition to upholding standards and ethics delineated above, Library staff will strive to reach the following goals as they work on behalf of the patron.

To provide thorough and accurate information in an efficient, courteous, and timely manner, including consultation with other staff or referral to other libraries, agencies, or organizations

To provide service that is most convenient to the patron whether in person (in-person, one-on-one technology instruction) or remotely (by phone, email, chat or text services, or mail)

To guide and instruct patrons in accessing and using library resources, including technology training, so they can feel confident and empowered to navigate future information needs

To provide patrons with referrals to other agencies and libraries as necessary

To provide readers', listeners,' and viewers' advisory services in support of patrons' informational and recreational needs, and to inform patrons about services and resources available from WPL, such as the development of research and instructional guides, reading lists, and online tutorials.

Article 3: Information Services

Section 3.01 - Scope of Services

Some topics, including but not limited to, legal, medical, investment, tax issues, and appraisals may require professional services and expertise. In these instances, staff will assist with comprehensive research without offering interpretation of findings, and refer patrons as needed to non-profits, governmental agencies, educational or social support agencies, or provide access to national or local helplines and services that will allow the patron to continue their research or obtain further assistance.

Requests regarding local history and obituaries may take several days to complete. When working with a patron on such questions, staff will provide an estimate of the time required to provide an answer.

Section 3.02 - Recommendations

Aside from library materials, equipment, or resources, staff will not endorse a particular consumer product or service gathered as part of an information services request.

Section 3.03 - Assistance for Spanish-speakers

The Library employs bilingual staff who can conduct reference interviews, technology training, and assist with other patron needs. For specific translation services beyond our abilities or expertise, staff will refer patrons to other appropriate resources. Sign language interpreters or other accommodations require (7) seven days' notice.

Section 3.04 - Notary Services

The Library has a Notary Public with limited availability. We encourage patrons to make an appointment to ensure a Notary is available and confirm the requirements for completing forms, such as having a photo ID and that all signers are present. Staff are not attorneys licensed to practice law in Illinois and may not inspect or give legal advice about any forms given to them to notarize.

Section 3.05 - Voter Registration

Voter registration is available at the Lake County Clerk's office. Registration online, by mail, during early voting, or on Election Day are allowed in Illinois. Staff are available to assist patrons in navigating the process of registering to vote and refer them to comprehensive voter rights and support pages on the Library's website.

Section 3.06 - One-on-One Assistance

We encourage patrons to take advantage of the wide variety of scheduled technology training, research and genealogy, and educational support programs offered at the Library. Group training experiences are an effective way to learn in a collaborative environment and make community connections.

When unable to attend scheduled classes, the Library's Reference Services staff are available by appointment to work one-on-one with patrons when extended personalized training or assistance is required or requested. Examples of such one-on-one sessions include using the Library's research databases, how to use Library apps to download electronic materials, setting up an email account, and tablet and smartphone basics.

Waukegan Public Library's Education and Literacy Department also offers one-on-one appointments and specialized programs, services, and technology training on a variety of educational and literacy supports, such as functional literacy, health literacy, and digital literacy.

Article 4: Loaning of Reference Materials

At staff's discretion, items for in-library use only may be borrowed by Waukegan Public Library cardholders for overnight use or up to (3) three days. High demand items, multi-volume sets, and titles costly or difficult to replace are not available for loan.

Article 5: Fees

The Waukegan Public Library does not charge a fee for information services or technology assistance provided by staff. However, there may be fees for photocopies and printouts, as well as other charges by outside agencies. Staff will receive approval from the patron before completing any activity that would incur a cost.

Article 6: Related Library Policies

Confidentiality and Privacy
Library Ethics & Statements
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
Fines and Fees

Policy Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years as recommended by Standards for Illinois Public Libraries, 3.0.