Reference Service Policy

I. Purpose

A. The Mount Prospect Public Library Reference Service Policy is designed to:
   1. Describe the reference services offered by the library;
   2. Delineate the extent to which these services are provided and to describe any limitations upon those services;
   3. Describe the duties of library staff.

II. Equity of Service

A. Reference services and materials are available to all individuals regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity/expression, physical appearance, physical or mental ability, socioeconomic level, education level and any other legally protected characteristics of the individual.

III. Scope of Service

A. The library provides assistance to help patrons find and use information, library materials and equipment, and online resources.
B. Reference services and materials are available during all hours the library is open and are provided in response to phone, email, chat, and in-person inquiries.
C. The library uses judgment to prioritize questions when responding to more than one question at the same time.
D. All requests are treated with respect and confidentiality. Names of users and the interactions which occur between users and staff are confidential and not discussed outside a professional context.
E. The library strives to provide complete, accurate answers to all queries. When questions cannot be answered fully with the available resources, the library provides referrals to experts, organizations, and other authorities.
F. The library also provides readers', listeners', and viewers' advisory services in support of patrons' informational and recreational needs.
G. The library may require that patrons schedule an appointment for requests that require more in-depth or lengthy assistance.
H. The library offers exam proctoring as a service to Mount Prospect residents, subject to staff availability. While we make every effort to accommodate requests, proctoring is limited by the specific requirements of the exam or testing institution. The library reserves the right to decline proctoring if those requirements cannot be reasonably met within the available resources.

IV. Limitations of Service

A. As information professionals, the library is not able to provide services in other areas of professional practice. Certain types of assistance are beyond the scope of the library's service capacity, including but not limited to:
   1. Medical, legal, copyright, financial, or tax advice.
   2. Recommendations of individual practitioners such as physicians or attorneys.

3. Providing editorial or translation services or typing documents.
4. Completing forms in any format.
5. Extensive, frequent, or in-depth troubleshooting, modification, or repair of personal electronic devices.
6. Handling or entering of confidential information, including but not limited to personally identifiable information such as social security numbers, credit card numbers, login credentials, financial data, medical and health information, account details, and other sensitive data.

B. For topics that require subject expertise beyond staff capacity, the library will guide the patron to materials and resources available on the topic of interest. Patrons may be advised to consult with a professional in the appropriate field for additional information or advice.
C. The library may limit the amount of time and level of response provided to an individual in order to equitably serve all patrons.
D. The Mount Prospect Public Library assumes no liability or responsibility for the use of its reference services or for the accuracy, completeness, or outcomes of any information provided.

Revision History
07/17/2025, 06/26/2018, 07/2016, 07/2014, 06/20/2013, 07/2011, 06/18/2009, 04/15/1999, 06/20/1996