

Carlsbad Public Library

Information Services Policy

Carlsbad Public Library strives to effectively meet the information needs of its diverse service community by maintaining a broad collection of current, accurate resources and offering the assistance of friendly professional library staff in accessing those resources.

Reference service involves identifying a person's information need and fulfilling it accurately, efficiently, and pleasantly, using the resources of the Library or by referral to resources in other libraries or agencies.

The purpose of this policy is to describe the scope of the library's informational services and to provide standards for a consistent high level of patron service.

A. Information Service Standards

The Carlsbad Public Library regards every information request as important. All questions will be given equal consideration, and each will be answered as accurately and completely as possible within a reasonable time limit. The Library affirms the standards of equal access to information and the rights of persons to use the library, which shall not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views, as outlined in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights.

1. All information requests will be handled in a timely manner. If information is available, it will be provided to patrons without judgment on the information's moral or inherent worth. Other than copyright restrictions as defined by law, no limitations will be placed on the way in which patrons may utilize the information provided.
2. The information needs of every library patron will always be taken seriously and treated with the utmost respect and confidentiality.
3. Information provided by the Information Desk staff is always based on accurate sources from a reliable authority. Answers to questions will always be verified and a source cited, even for common knowledge information.
4. Since many patrons are reluctant to request aid, it is the responsibility of the Information Desk staff to anticipate public needs and offer service when it appears needed.
5. While on desk duty, service to the public takes precedence over other library duties, and service to patrons in the library takes precedence over telephone, written, email, or online inquiries.
6. Neither the patron's nor the staff member's personal opinions and beliefs shall influence the quality of service given. Staff members shall not offer their personal opinions on social issues, politics, religion, etc. to patrons.

B. Ethics and Confidentiality

1. Library staff shall make information service available to all persons on an equal basis, regardless of age, gender, race, creed, religion, or disability. All requests for information shall be treated with a high degree of confidentiality. When necessary, reference staff may consult internally with other library staff members to obtain the requested information.
2. Patrons shall have the option to pose their information requests privately to the library staff, away from the Information Desk.
3. Information about a patron, or inquiries made by a patron, shall not be divulged by library staff to any outside person or agency, except to comply with Homeland Security rules and regulations or legal court order.

C. Special Inquiries and Interlibrary Loans (ILL)

1. When answering inquiries pertaining to legal or medical information, library staff will provide pertinent material but may not interpret the information, as this requires specialized knowledge which the library staff does not have. Staff will assist the patron in locating such expert assistance.
2. Telephone and email information service should be used for short, factual requests. Patrons may be asked to visit the library in person if more extensive assistance is needed.
3. Extensive research of Internet, periodicals, bibliographic, or electronic resources is beyond the scope of the Library staff to perform. Staff may refer patrons with in-depth research needs to outside agencies.
4. Readers' advisory services are available at the Information Desk. Staff will assist patrons in locating and selecting materials in a variety of formats and genres to suit their needs. In response to such inquiries, library staff members may offer recommendations based on expressed patron preferences and knowledge of library resources.
5. Should the Library not have specific material(s) requested by a patron on hand in its collection, Interlibrary Loan requests may be initiated to obtain the material(s) from another library. Refer to the Interlibrary Loan Policy for details.

D. Electronic Databases and Internet Resources

Carlsbad Public Library subscribes to many electronic resources to meet the informational needs of its users. These services are available to the general public inside the library and by remote access to library cardholders.

1. Staff shall use and recommend to patrons appropriate Library electronic resources to answer information inquiries and assist patrons in accessing databases.

2. Staff shall offer suggestions to patrons using the Internet workstations and help within the limits of their expertise. Staff cannot guarantee the validity of information obtained from the Internet, but shall instead provide tools and recommendations to help patrons evaluate the credibility of the resource for themselves.

E. Community Information

1. The Information Desk staff shall strive to maintain and make available to the public current information on local community resources, agencies, and events. Pamphlets, flyers, maps, or other material handouts shall be made available as provided by the issuing agency. However, this collection may not include information on all available local events or programs.
2. Library staff may refer patrons to local agencies or groups to meet specific information needs.

F. Instruction

1. Instruction and orientation in library use may range from basic individual instruction on how to use the catalog, website, reference materials, or electronic databases to more formal group instruction designed to substantially increase patron knowledge of library materials, services, or digital literacy.
2. Group instruction classes will be offered to the public as permitted by library staffing and scheduling needs. Topics covered will be determined by the class instructor. All such classes will be free of charge.

G. Loan of Reference Materials

1. In order to assure that frequently consulted resources are always available to the public, materials designated “Reference” do not normally circulate. However, in order to accommodate special needs or situations, the Information Desk staff may allow one item at a time to check out for a shortened loan period. Such allowances will be made on a case by case basis.