



Policy 3035: Information Service

Adopted: *September 23, 2009*

Reviewed/Revised: *February 27, 2013; March 21, 2016; August 22, 2018; September 22, 2021*

I. Purpose

The Algonquin Area Public Library staff provides knowledgeable, personalized assistance to help patrons find and use the Library's physical and digital resources to meet the needs and interests for education, enrichment, and enjoyment. The Library's information service will be provided in response to all forms of inquiry, including in-person queries and those that come by telephone and electronic means. When possible, the Library's online resources are available to users 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Information service will be provided to all who request it regardless of their residency, age, gender, ethnicity, or views. The information desks will be staffed by the appropriate number of professionally trained staff necessary to provide quality service during Library hours. Library staff uses good judgment to prioritize questions when responding to more than one question at the same time. The Algonquin Area Public Library follows the American Library Association's Code of Ethics. All transactions with patrons are confidential and handled with courtesy and impartiality.

II. Scope of Service

Library staff strives to provide complete, accurate answers to all queries. Simple requests are usually answered fully and quickly. Complex questions may require follow up at a later time or an appointment for individual assistance. Complex questions may also require the patron's participation in the information search with staff providing guidance and advice on the search strategy and process. When questions cannot be answered fully with the available resources, staff may provide referrals to experts, organizations, and other authorities. The Library may establish guidelines to ensure fair and equal access to this service within the limitations of staff time and resources.

As information professionals, library staff 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:

- medical, legal, copyright, financial or tax advice
- completing forms (including online forms) for patrons
- extensive troubleshooting or alteration/repair of personal electronic devices
- recommendations of individual practitioners such as physicians or attorneys
- editorial or translation services
- handling of confidential information such as social security numbers, account information, or medical information (If such information is viewed inadvertently, staff makes every effort to protect customers' privacy.)

III. One-On-One Assistance

Library staff may be available to work one-on-one with patrons to assist in their information needs, though an appointment may be necessary. Staff instructional sessions include, but are not limited to, using the Library's research databases, genealogical searching, and training on specific electronic devices.