

Information Services Policy

This policy is intended to provide guidelines so that information services can be delivered and maximized based on available resources. Library staff treats all questions with respect. Appropriate assistance is provided courteously and impartially to all, regardless of age, background, disability, origin or views.

A. Reference Services

Staff uses information based on accurate and authoritative print or online sources, or learned from a reliable authority. The source for an answer will be provided. Each query is treated differently. Some questions may be answered quickly and others may require the patron's participation in the information search, with staff providing guidance and advice. Due to the specialized nature of some reference questions, staff is limited in the amount of service they are able to provide on the following topics:

1. Antiques, Art Work and Collectibles: Staff will not appraise or evaluate antiques, art and/or collectibles.
2. Medical and Legal Questions: Staff will not give legal or medical advice or interpretation.
3. Mathematical and Technical calculations: Staff will provide formulas or equations needed to do a computation if found from an authoritative source.
4. Genealogy: Staff will show customers where different types of materials are located, how basic reference tools are used, and how to use equipment. Beginners interested in learning about genealogy research will be referred to introductory books on researching family history in the circulating collection and to the Manitowoc History Collection. Patrons requiring lengthy and intensive research and those individuals not able to visit the Library may be charged a fee (\$40 per hour) or referred to a local historian/genealogist.
5. Tax Information: Staff will not give tax advice. Patrons will be referred to the volunteer tax assistance programs or the IRS.
6. School assignments: Staff will assist patrons in finding resources to complete assignments, but staff members do not help in completing the actual assignments.
7. Patent/Copyright - Patrons are directed to books on copyright and patent procedures. Patent searches are not provided.
8. Computer Assistance: Staff will provide limited assistance to customers using the library computers. Those customers who need more in-depth instruction are encouraged to attend the appropriate training class offered by the Library or to consult instructional materials owned by the Library.

B. Interlibrary Loan Services

1. Patrons' requests for materials not owned by Manitowoc-Calumet Library System libraries are accepted and submitted as interlibrary loan requests. Interlibrary loan requests are filled through a Wisconsin network of libraries.
2. Requests for material not available through the Wisconsin network of lenders might not be filled.
3. Decision on whether to interlibrary loan materials rests with the Library staff.
4. Requests may be limited by staff resources. Some material may not be available.
5. Lost/damaged material fees may be charged to the patron.

C. Liability

1. The Manitowoc Public Library does not guarantee the accuracy of information contained in any materials owned or obtained by the Library.
2. The Manitowoc Public Library is not liable for any consequences or damages the user of materials owned or obtained by the Library may suffer based on actions taken or decisions made using information from the Library.

D. Confidentiality

1. All reference questions are confidential.
2. The nature of reference questions asked and the identity of the patron shall not be divulged to any agency outside without a properly executed order from a court of law.

Approved by Board of Trustees March 28, 2011