

Appleton Public Library  
**Reference and Readers Advisory Policy**

**Purpose**

The Library provides Reference and Reader's Advisory service to help people find information, select library materials and use library and other information resources. Staff responds to varied information needs using the library collections to the fullest extent possible and identifying sources beyond the library whenever necessary. Staff uses professional judgment to assess needs and provides information, assistance or instruction appropriate to individual requests.

**Policy**

1. Staff replies to all requests for information and will accept questions:
  - a. in person
  - b. over the phone
  - c. by fax
  - d. through the mail
  - e. via e-mail.
2. Although all requests for assistance will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis, priority will be given to in-person inquiries over other kinds of inquiries in event of a tie.
3. Reference transactions are confidential under Wisconsin Statute 43.30.
4. In providing information, especially in the subject areas of law, medicine and human biology, consumer information, personal finance/tax information, staff will use professional judgment while avoiding personal interpretation and recommendations.
5. Staff does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, sexual preference or disability in the provision of reference services.
6. Staff may set reasonable limits on the amount of time and level of response given to patron requests for information. Simple requests for information can usually be answered fully. More complex questions may require that patrons participate in finding needed information, with staff providing guidance and assistance. Patrons doing in-depth research or needing extensive individual reading guidance should expect to receive professional assistance, direction and library instruction, but will be expected to conduct the actual research themselves.
7. The reference interview is a vital part of reference or reader's advisory transactions. Because telephone, fax, e-mail and mail do not allow face to face interaction and follow-up, misinterpretation is always a possibility. Therefore, only brief definitions or descriptions can be read over the telephone or sent via mail, e-mail or fax. Sources are always quoted

verbatim without interpretation.

8. In order to ensure equitable access, staff may impose reasonable limits on the use of resources and facilities such as study rooms, the Internet and other computer workstations.
9. Reference materials are circulated only under special circumstances and are subject to the approval of designated authorized staff. Patrons who check out reference books must be cardholders in good standing with OWLSnet. Reference materials are loaned for the shortest time possible.
10. Reference and Reader's Advisory service complies with copyright and other applicable restrictions in the use of library materials.
11. Reference and Reader's Advisory service is provided in a manner consistent with the Library Bill of Rights and the American Library Association Code of Ethics (1995).

*--adopted by the Library Board of Trustees, January, 1998*