

	THE CORPORATION OF THE COUNTY OF LAMBTON LAMBTON COUNTY LIBRARY POLICY MANUAL			
	Subject:	Reference and Information Services Policy	Section R02	Index #08
	Effective Date:	September 6, 2023	Approved By: Lambton County Council	
	Revision Date:	June 7, 2023		
	Drafted on:	June 7, 2023		

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish and define the type of reference and information services Lambton County Library offers and provide guidance to front-line library staff who deliver customer service.

POLICY

Lambton County Library’s information services connect people with resources to fulfil their informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs. This policy describes information services at the library and guides library staff when answering reference questions.

RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the Manager, Library Services.

DEFINITIONS

“Reference Question” - a standard reference transaction is a request for information made directly by a library user that involves the knowledge, use, recommendation, interpretation or instruction in the use of one or more information sources or bibliographic tools by library staff (for example: “How can I find out when Alexander Mackenzie was born?” or “Can you help me find information on the internet about fishing in Ontario?”).

REGULATIONS

1. All users seeking information will be treated equitably and with respect to meet their individual needs, regardless of sex, age, ability and ethnicity. The Library will provide welcoming spaces and library services to Indigenous peoples and will work in collaboration with Indigenous communities and individuals to share elements of First Nations culture with non-Indigenous persons.
2. Employees will respect and protect the confidential and private nature of requests for information.
3. Employees will answer all reference questions efficiently, accurately, and as completely as possible. All questions will be considered important and legitimate, unless it becomes clearly apparent that they are otherwise.
4. Employees will be guided by the Ontario Library Association's Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual and the Canadian Federation of Library Association's Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries.
5. Employees will help the user find the information and will provide instruction on how to use library resources based upon the user's needs. Employees will provide the following services:
 - a. Quick Reference: These questions can usually be answered immediately using library and online resources.
 - b. General Reference: These questions usually require a more in-depth process to arrive at a complete answer and may as a result require a mutually agreed upon timeframe to complete.
6. Employees will refer users to the inter-library loan service (ILLO), other libraries, agencies and community resources if it is not possible to find an answer using library or online resources.
7. The following priorities will apply to users seeking reference assistance:
 - a. 1st Priority – requests presented in person
 - b. 2nd Priority – requests presented by telephone / voicemail
 - c. 3rd Priority – requests received by email / mail / fax / direct message
 - d. 4th Priority – requests received via the interlibrary loan network.
8. Print and electronic reference collections are maintained by library staff with a focus on the currency and relevancy of the material, and in accordance with R02.03 Collection Development Policy.
9. Employees will use the definition of "reference questions" set forth by the provincial government and / or the Ontario Library Service.
10. Statistics about reference questions will be collected and analyzed in an effort to evaluate information services.
11. Lambton County Library will comply with the requirements of the Annual Survey of Public Libraries related to the submission of reference statistics.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS (if required)

Ontario Library Association's Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual
Canadian Federation of Library Association's Statement on Intellectual Freedom and
Libraries.

Lambton County Library Collection Development Policy (R02.03)

POLICY HISTORY

REVISION	DATE	PREPARED BY
Created	November 1979	Chief Librarian
Revised	April 12, 1995	Chief Librarian
Revised	August 1, 2023	Manager, Library Services