

## **Berwyn Public Library Reference Service Policy**

### **Mission**

The Berwyn Public Library is a service-oriented organization dedicated to providing materials that meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the community. The library actively provides timely, accurate, and useful information for community residents delivered in a technologically modern and professional manner. Special emphasis is placed in the following areas: to obtain and provide high demand, high interest materials in a variety of formats for persons of all ages; to encourage and stimulate the reading interest of young children and their parents; and to assist students of all ages in meeting their educational objectives.

### **Reference Mission**

The Berwyn Public Library is committed to reference services by trained staff (staff must meet the requirements established by the Metropolitan Library System's Minimum Reference Standards) during all the hours the library is open. If trained staff is unavailable, a sign will be posted notifying patrons. Reference service is available to all patrons seeking information. Access to the entire reference collection will be open to all patrons. All reference transactions will be treated with impartiality and confidentiality.

### **Scope of Reference Service**

Reference service is defined as assisting patrons to locate materials that will provide needed information and/or providing answers to factual questions. If determining the answer to a query involves reading and evaluating a large amount of material, the staff will locate suitable materials for the patron's use. All answers will be factual and sources will always be cited. Every effort will be made by staff to meet the informational needs of the patron. While staff can provide the patron with access to information, staff cannot interpret said information for the patron. Staff may not offer personal opinion, advice, or interpretation as fact. Staff is not legally qualified to offer legal, medical, or tax advice. Staff cannot give stock quotes or supply pricing information over the telephone. Since homework assignments are regarded as part of the learning process, staff cannot answer homework questions. Staff will assist the student in finding appropriate sources of information to complete the homework assignment.

### **Prompt Service**

In order to provide efficient service to all patrons in an equitable manner, certain priorities and limits have been established. In general, in-person questions will take precedence over questions received by telephone, mail, fax transmittal, email (reference@berwynlibrary.net) or other means, but all requests for information will receive an answer or status report within one (1) working day. The time spent on an individual question depends on whether others are waiting. If the question cannot be answered within that time, the staff member will offer to continue the search and contact the patron with the answer. Likewise, if an answer to a

telephone inquiry cannot be made within a few minutes, the Reference staff will take the patron's telephone number and call back. Reference staff will not read lengthy information to patrons over the phone. Telephone questions are limited to three questions per patron per day. Reference questions that cannot be answered with onsite resources will be referred to outside agencies.

## Additional Services

### Senior Computer Center

The Senior Computer Center is available to patrons 60 years of age or older. Patrons must sign in at the Service Desk before accessing a computer. During periods of heavy usage, individual computer sessions will be limited to one hour per day. Patrons may not use their own software programs or save files to the hard drive. There is a charge of 10 cents per page for printing materials. The Senior Computer Center opens at 9 a.m. and shuts down 30 minutes before the library closes.

### Career Center

The Career Center computers are available for use by adult patrons seeking career related information. Patrons must sign in at the service desk and show staff a photo ID. Patrons may only use the programs available on the computers. Patrons may not use their own software programs or save files to the hard drive. There is a charge of 10 cents per page for printing materials. The computer center terminals open at 9 a.m. and shut down 30 minutes before the library closes.

The Career Center computers are to be used only for accessing career related information. A patron found accessing other types of information will have his/her session terminated and may permanently lose the privilege of accessing these computers.

### Faxing Service

As a service to our patrons, the Reference department staff will fax patrons' correspondence to anywhere in the Continental United States. The fee charged for this service is a dollar (\$1) per page. Faxing service will be limited to outgoing transmittals only. The staff cannot accept incoming faxes for patrons. Patrons using this service must wait for a transmittal verification receipt.

**Adopted by the Berwyn Public Library Board of Trustees  
Effective December 11, 1989**

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