

## Policy: Operational - Information Services

Effective Date: March 2014

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Next Year of Review: 2027

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### Purpose

Providing access to information is a core service of the Bruce County Public Library. Information services link 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.

### Scope

This policy applies to all library staff.

### 1. Guidelines (or Application)

1. All users seeking information **or services** will be treated equally regardless of heritage, education, beliefs, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, physical or mental ability, language, income, or ethnicity.
2. Library staff will answer all information questions efficiently, accurately, and as completely as possible, **without judgment**. Staff will be guided by the Board's policy on Intellectual Freedom and ~~will be guided by~~ the Ontario Library Association's Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual. All questions will be considered important and legitimate, unless it becomes clearly apparent that they are otherwise.
- ~~3.~~ **Patrons are responsible for interpreting and applying information. It is beyond the scope of library staff to provide personal opinions, analysis, or interpretation of subjects.**
4. **Library staff will not complete online or print applications or make financial transactions on behalf of patrons.**
5. Library staff will assist the user in finding information and will provide instruction on how to use library resources based upon the user's needs.

### Types of Service

1. Library staff evaluate, select, and purchase information resources in print and digital formats to meet the needs of Bruce County residents and in accordance with the Collection Development Policy.
2. Staff provide the following information services:
  - a. Quick reference: These questions can usually be answered immediately using directories, almanacs, and online resources.
  - b. General reference: These questions usually require a lengthier search and/or the use of a number of sources to arrive at a complete answer.
  - c. Readers' Advisory: Readers' Advisory is a patron-oriented library service that supports an individual's reading interests. Non-judgmental and knowledgeable library staff recommend books and other library materials to patrons based on preferences provided by the patron.
  - d. Branch Orientation/Tours: Staff provide orientation services to groups or individuals.
  - e. Technology Help: Library staff provide basic instruction on a variety of tasks to support patrons learning and navigating online, as well as information on library technologies. Instruction requiring significant staff time should be pre-arranged with library staff.
3. If an answer is not found using library resources, patrons may be referred to other libraries, agencies, or community resources. Staff will be familiar with local resources to facilitate information sharing.
4. When staff are at a service desk, service to the public has priority over all other duties. Several factors may impact the amount of staff time available for assistance. Staff will do their best to meet the needs of the patron. The extent of individual service to each person will depend on the number of users in need of service. The following priorities will apply:
  - a. 1st priority - requests presented in person
  - b. 2nd priority - requests presented by telephone/voice mail/chat service
  - c. 3rd priority - requests sent in by mail/fax/e-mail

## Confidentiality

1. Library staff will respect and protect the confidential and private nature of requests for information, in keeping with the privacy provisions of Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, other applicable legislation, and library policies.
2. To assess and evaluate information services, and to comply with the requirements of the Annual Survey of Public Libraries, non-identifying statistics on information services questions and activities will be kept and analyzed.

## Related Documents

Bruce County Public Library - Collection Development Policy  
Bruce County Public Library - Confidentiality & the Protection of Privacy  
Bruce County Public Library - Interlibrary Loan Policy  
Bruce County Public Library - Intellectual Freedom Policy