

# Reference Services Policy

*Approved by: Library Board of Control, Date: Jun 2016*

## **Introduction**

The Bossier Parish Library offers reference services in support of its mission to open doors to ideas and information by providing access to an array of materials, programs, and technologies that inform, educate, and entertain.

## **Service Philosophy**

Reference Services assist, educate, inform, and empower library users in all areas of knowledge through availability of expert staff and access to a broad range of authoritative resources and collections.

- Reference service will be provided without bias.
- Service delivery will not be affected by the category of user, the potential use of the information, or the format in which the information is contained.
- Staff will not interpret or evaluate information when the specialized skills of another profession are required including but not limited to medical, legal, and financial advice.
- The number of patrons waiting for help may restrict the time available to help any one patron; however, staff will strive to provide effective service to all patrons.
- During busy periods, preference may be given to the patron in the library over the patron on the phone.
- In order to adequately serve all patrons in the library and on the phone, staff has the right to limit the number of calls and questions per patron on a daily basis.
- When an immediate answer cannot be provided, staff may ask to call the patron back when the desired information has been located.

## **Delivery of Reference Service**

The Library will receive and answer reference questions using a variety of communication methods including:

- E-mail
- Telephone
  - Provided for short, factual questions which do not require an extensive response
  - When a research request is phoned in, staff may encourage the patron to come to the library in person if the appropriate materials are accessible in the library.
- Website
- Text-a-librarian service
  - Available Monday – Friday, 9 am – 5 pm
  - Questions received after 5 p.m. or on weekends through e-mail, website, or our text-a-librarian service will be answered on the next business day.

Staff may recommend electronic resources and may make referrals to other libraries and organizations when those collections would better meet the patron's needs.