

SUBJECT: DELIVERY OF REFERENCE AND USER INSTRUCTION

EFFECTIVE: JULY 1, 2016

SUPERSEDES: 12/2014

1. PURPOSE:

- A. The Library provides service to all customers seeking information, whether in person or by telephone, fax, written, or online.

2. POLICY:

A. Access to Service:

- 1) In most cases, the question in progress shall have priority, regardless of whether the customer is in the library or at a remote location.
- 2) Actual staff time per question may vary, taking into account the extent of the sources and level of difficulty of the question. During busy times, the amount of time will not generally exceed five to ten minutes per customer. At less busy times, more time may be spent with each customer.

B. Access to Materials Not Immediately Available:

- 1) The Library provides access to items owned by the library but not immediately available by placing a request.
- 2) The Library provides access to materials not owned by the library through Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and accepts requests for purchase of additional items.

C. Copyright:

- a) The Library adheres to the provisions of the [U.S. Copyright Law \(Title 17, U.S. Code\)](#).
- b) Using Library resources to copy and distribute copyright protected materials may be an infringement of copyright law. It is the customers' responsibility to guard against the infringement of rights that may be held by others.

3. PROCEDURE:

A. Delivery of Service in Person: Assistance is given to customers who come into the library seeking answers to their questions.

- 1) *Scope* – Material Requests, Ready Reference, Standard Reference, Instruction, Referrals and Readers' Advisory, E-Government, Technology Instruction, and Operational/Directional services are all available to the walk-in customer.
- 2) *Order of Service* – The question in progress has priority, but it is often important to get something into the hands of each customer and return to

them as needed. The person who has been waiting the longest should be assisted first. If this person agrees, a question from another customer that can be answered quickly may be dealt with first.

- 3) *Callbacks* – Library staff who wish to consult with a colleague or access materials currently in use may offer to call back with the information at a later time if the customer is unable to wait.

B. **Delivery of Service by Telephone:** Customers may telephone the library to receive answers to their information needs. Telephone calls are answered in accordance with *Administrative Directive # 05, Hillsborough County Telephone Policy and Procedures*.

- 1) *Scope* – Material Requests, Ready Reference, Referrals, limited Technology Instruction, E-Government and Readers' Advisory services are available to customers who phone in. If the question cannot be answered within five minutes, the caller should be asked to come to the library or referred elsewhere for assistance.
- 2) *Order of Service* – Telephone questions are answered in the order in which they are received. A caller should only be placed on hold with their consent. Every attempt should be made not to leave the customer on hold longer than three minutes.
- 3) *Callbacks* – Callbacks are offered on an occasional basis only. Every attempt should be made to complete the customer's question during the initial call.
 - a) Library staff who wish to consult with a colleague or access materials currently in use may offer to call back the customer at a later time.

C. **Delivery of Service by Fax:**

- 1) *Scope* – Fax service draws on system-wide resources to provide customers with information that is not available in either print or digital format at one library branch.
- 2) Faxes may be sent to a customer at any Hillsborough County library location or to any other Hillsborough County fax number. Microforms, oversized or fragile material, or those with specific use restrictions set by the publisher will not be faxed.
- 3) *Response Time* – Material should be faxed to the customer within 2 hours of receipt of the request, unless another time frame has been agreed upon.

D. **Delivery of Service by Mail:**

- 1) *Scope* – Information about the library and its collections, Ready Reference, Referrals, limited Technology Instruction, limited E-Government, and Readers' Advisory services are offered to customers who write to the library requesting reference assistance.
- 2) *Response Time* – Mail questions normally will be answered within 24 - 48

hours of receipt.

- 3) *Mail Requests at Branches* – Branch staff should answer all customer correspondence received. Assistance from the staff at the John F. Germany Public Library may be required for information from specialized collections.

E. Delivery of Service by E-mail:

- 1) *Scope* – Material Requests, Ready Reference, Referrals, limited Technology Instruction, E-Government and Readers' Advisory, obituary requests, and operational/directional services are offered to customers who request assistance from the library via e-mail.
- 2) *Response Time* – E-mail questions normally will be answered within 24 - 48 hours of receipt.

F. Delivery of Service by Online Chat:

- 1) *Scope* - Material Requests, Ready Reference, Standard Reference, Bibliographic Instruction, limited Technology Instruction, E-Government Referrals and Readers' Advisory, and Operational/Directional services.
- 2) *Order of Service* – Staff should assist customers in the order that they enter the service queue, and should only work with one customer at a time until the session is completed.

G. Access to Materials Not Immediately Available:

- 1) *Requests (Holds)*: Circulating items that are currently unavailable at a library branch may be placed on hold for any customer with a valid library card using the online catalog system. The library reserves the right to limit the number of requests a customer may have.
- 2) *Photocopy Requests*: Photocopy requests for specific articles, obituaries, and/or reference materials that the library system owns can be made. Requests should be directed to the owning department or branch. Copies will be emailed or delivered to the pick-up library branch within 5 - 7 days of receipt of the request.
 - a) Photocopy requests for obituaries should be directed to the Florida History & Genealogy Library.
 - b) Photocopy requests for materials that the library system does not own should be handled as an Interlibrary Loan request.
 - c) The Library adheres to the provisions of the U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code).
 - d) Photocopies will not be provided for items available in the library's digital collections.
- 3) *Suggest a Title*: Purchase requests may be submitted at any branch, or online at hcplc.org. All requests will be evaluated by materials selection staff before purchasing.

- 4) Interlibrary Loan: The library will attempt to borrow a limited range of materials from other libraries when we do not own the requested items. Interlibrary loans will be provided in accordance with policy *LS111, Interlibrary Loans*.

4. AUTHORITY:

Pursuant to Section 5(1) of [Chapter 84-443](#), Laws of Florida, the Library Board has the duty and the responsibility, among others, to serve in a recommending capacity to the Director of Library Services and to the County Administrator in respect to all matters pertaining to the public library.

Approved:

Andrew Breidenbaugh, Director