

Library Policies of the Mercer Public Library

X. Reference Service Policy

The Mercer Public Library:

- Will provide personalized assistance to help patrons find information and locate and use library materials. Patrons may make reference requests in person, by telephone, or through mail or email correspondence.
- Will provide assistance to anyone regardless of age, background, disability, origin, or views, and will maintain confidentiality for all information requests. Priority will be given to patrons from the town of Mercer, Iron County, and surrounding areas, and to patrons requesting information on the local community and local history.
- Will assist patrons in the use of the library and teach basic research methodology when appropriate. This may include providing help in developing a research strategy and advice on whether a trip to the library would be worthwhile for individuals who telephone or correspond by letter or email.
- Will provide bibliographic verification of print and audiovisual items, and will assist patrons in obtaining materials through interlibrary loan when necessary.
- May refer library users to other agencies and libraries in pursuit of needed information.
- May use not only the library's resources in printed form, but consult appropriate digital resources, the regional resource library, and other agencies by telephone and online in pursuit of "ready reference" information. Staff will provide information based on accurate and authoritative print or online resources, or from a reliable authority, and will cite sources when answering requests.
- Will use professional judgement when providing information in the areas of law, medicine, consumer information, personal finance, and taxes, and will refrain from making interpretations or recommendations. MPL cannot guarantee the accuracy of information contained in library materials or other materials obtained by the library, including online resources.
- May set reasonable limits on the amount of time and resources dedicated to patron requests for information.