

Adams-Pratt Oakland County Law Library Reference Services Policy

Purpose

The Adams-Pratt Oakland County Law Library assists the public and county employees with their information and research needs. Reference Services are provided in an accurate, timely, and courteous manner. The purpose of this policy is to define the scope of reference services available to patrons and to ensure an equal level of quality service from the library staff.

Goals

1. The Library will acquire and maintain a collection of legal materials in a variety of formats that is accurate, up-to-date, and meets the information needs of the library's patrons.
2. Staff will provide instruction in the use of the library and its resources.
3. The Library will assist patrons in identifying and locating materials either in its own collection or through referrals to other libraries or agencies.

Overview of Services

- Reference services are provided to any person who enters or contacts the library regardless of whether or not they live in Oakland County.
- The needs of every library patron will be taken seriously and treated with the utmost respect.
- Library staff will answer reference requests received in any one of the following methods: in-person at the reference desk, telephone, email, fax, mail, or any other electronic methods.
- Library staff will respond to reference requests as soon as possible. In-person and telephone questions are answered the same day. For questions submitted remotely (email, mail, fax, or any other electronic methods) patrons can expect a response within three days. Extensive questions can be received remotely, but patrons will be encouraged to visit the library in-person if possible for additional assistance.
- All reference questions will be given equal consideration and each will be answered as completely as possible within the framework established by this policy.
- Library staff will provide accurate information from authoritative print and online sources to patrons.

- Reference questions and information requests from library patrons are treated as confidential information. The materials used by patrons and their information queries posed to the library staff will not be discussed or disclosed except within a professional context.
- The library belongs to several consortia and cooperatives to obtain access to information sources and services it cannot provide on its own. As part of these services, customers have the ability to inter-loan materials from other libraries.
- The library provides the opportunity for patrons to request materials not owned by the library through the “Oakland County Library Suggest Materials for Purchase Form.” Suggestions will be evaluated and added if they meet the selection criteria specified in the library’s collection development policy. Please see the *Oakland County Library Collection Development Policy* for further information.

Priorities and Limitations

1. **Computer Use:** Library staff will assist patrons in using the library’s online catalog and its electronic resources. Staff will not instruct patrons on how to operate a computer and use software in detail including, but not limited to, typing documents, working with a mouse or establishing an email account.
2. **Legal Research:** Staff will assist patrons on how to find and use legal reference materials. By law (MCL 600.916), library staff cannot:
 - Do legal research
 - Give legal advice
 - State opinions on legal issues
 - Interpret the law, regulations or court cases
 - Select legal forms
 - Choose or recommend language for use on any form or legal document
3. **Genealogy Research:** Staff will assist patrons in identifying genealogy resources in its collection and will instruct them on their use. Staff will not perform genealogy research for the patron.
4. **Medical Research:** Library staff cannot provide medical advice, interpretation, or assist in self –diagnosis and drug identification.
5. **Student Assignments:** Library staff will direct students to legal sources that may be useful in the completion of their homework. Staff will not answer homework or test questions.

6. **Tax Information**: The Adams-Pratt Oakland County Law Library makes tax forms available to its patrons. Library staff cannot select forms, interpret regulations or provide advice.

Adopted by the Oakland County Library Board
September 26, 2007

Amended: November 28, 2017