

Chatham-Kent Public Library

Information Services Policy

Purpose

Access to information is a core service of Chatham-Kent Public Library (CKPL). This policy outlines how this service will be provided to the Chatham-Kent community.

Goal

CKPL's goal is to connect library information, resources and services with potential users in a timely manner. This service is provided at all times that the library is open either virtually or through in person assistance. The library educates users about digital and information literacy as a way of improving the community's access to information.

If it is not possible to find an answer using CKPL resources, staff reach out and refer patrons to other libraries, community partners, agencies, and resources.

It is beyond the scope of library staff to provide personal opinions, analysis or interpretation of on subjects including but not limited to medical, legal, financial or religious information.

Types of Service

CKPL provides a variety of information services to patrons via CKPL's virtual reference service Ask CKPL and in person at all 11 branches. It is a tiered service, in that most questions can be answered by all staff, but the most complex questions are referred to the Chatham Information Desk staffed with subject specialists. The Ask CKPL virtual reference service offers CK community members information assistance via the telephone, email, texting and Facebook chat.

Quick Information

A quick information question can be answered promptly and does not require the extensive use of library materials or resources. A quick information question does not require an in-depth reference interview.

Reference Questions

A reference question is a user request to find in-depth information on a subject or how to use library resources that requires staff expertise in searching and interpreting questions. A reference interview is defined as a conversation between a member of the library reference staff and a library user for the purpose of clarifying the user's needs and aiding the user in meeting those needs.

- Genealogical/Local History Requests

- Genealogical research involves specialized resources and equipment (available in some branch locations).
- In depth genealogical requests received by email or mail will be forwarded to the Local History Librarian and charged a fee in accordance with the current fees and fines.
- Government Documents
 - Staff assisted searches for federal, provincial and municipal information and forms.

Local History Research

CKPL will collect and preserve materials which illustrate the growth and development of the City of Chatham, Kent County and Chatham-Kent.

For published fiction by local authors, CKPL will collect and preserve works of a historic nature. Contemporary published fiction by local authors will be collected and circulated in the regular collection.

Local history materials may be used for viewing within the Library only and will not circulate unless duplicates are available.

CKPL also has a Local History Digital Collection, featuring a fully indexed collection of directories, almanacs, municipal documents, Kent History Society publications and books by local authors. Continued efforts to grow our Digital Collection will be explored as funding permits.

For further information regarding the donation of materials to these collections, please refer to CKPL's Collection Development Policy and Gift Collection Policy.

CKPL will provide regular reference service to individuals, organizations, municipal departments and groups interested in the Local History collection. Inquiries not received in person or that require in depth research performed by staff will be charged a rate based on the amount of time spent researching the topic. See the Schedule of Library Fees and Fines for current rate.

Reader's Advisory

Reader's Advisory involves recommending specific titles and/or authors to a patron following an assessment of the individual's reading preferences and interests. Reader's Advisory combines staff knowledge of the collection with a variety of specialized print and electronic resources.

Technology

Technology support aids in providing access to information. Staff assist users with technology questions that focus on the library's technology-related services and resources.

Orientation/Tours

Staff provide orientation services to groups or individuals.

Community information

CKPL staff connect patrons to local information, agencies and/or services in and outside of Chatham-Kent.

Interlibrary Loan (ILLO)

If material required by the patron is not available within CKPL's collection, library staff will attempt to borrow it from other libraries in accordance with CKPL's Interlibrary Loan Policy.

Collections

CKPL will maintain a general Reference collection, including local history materials, which are not for circulation. Staff also rely on digital library resources for research.

Priority of Service

When staff are at a public service desk, service to the public has priority over all other duties. During periods of peak use and/or staff shortage, the amount of service provided will be based on the number of patrons to be served.

Patron Confidentiality

Patron confidentiality is respected at all times in accordance with CKPL's Privacy Policy.

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Background Documents: Circulation Policy, Interlibrary Loan Policy, Rules of Conduct Policy, Privacy Policy, Gift Acceptance Policy

For more information or alternative formats of this document, please email cklibrary@chatham-kent.ca.