



Information Services Policy

Operational

Purpose

The purpose of the Brantford Public Library's Information Services Policy is to communicate the Library's standards and responsibilities for the delivery of information services to the public based on resources available.

Principles

- To deliver a high quality, consistent level of service.
- To give personalized, equitable assistance to customers seeking assistance.
- To communicate to customers, a written standard of service.
- To provide accurate information, producing and maintaining information that meets the specific needs of the public.
- To acknowledge that if the Library does not have the information and resources needed to resolve the customer's request, we will refer the customer to the appropriate outside sources.
- The Policy aligns with the Brantford Public Library's Principles & Values:
 - We believe in intellectual freedom
 - We believe in access for all
 - We will be efficient and effective in all we do to provide quality service in a welcoming environment
 - We work in partnership with other organizations to further the Library's mission

Policy

Range of Services

All customers of the Brantford Public Library can expect to receive a level of information service consistent with the Mission Statement of the Library: to provide "free access to information, ideas and opportunities for discovery, and spaces in which to use and share them. Our expertise and services are accessible and help empower the citizens of Brantford."

This service includes:

- help using the library's catalogue, databases and equipment
- help conducting research for personal, educational or professional purposes
- help locating material and placing holds
- help accessing community resources

- accessing material from other institutions
- access to the Internet
- provision of accessibility tools to assist with customers with information needs

Library staff will recognize that each customer and their information needs are unique. Accommodations may be required to ensure equitable and fair service.

Types of Research

Quick Reference

Short factual answers will be provided for specific requests. Answers are provided using ready reference information or electronic resources.

Some examples of quick reference questions:

- What is the phone number/ address for City Hall?
- Do you have this book in your collection?

General Reference

For requests requiring more extensive research, customers will be guided to relevant materials in either print or electronic format.

General reference requests may include any of the following:

Genealogical/Local History Requests

Genealogical research involves specialized resources and equipment. Researchers will receive instruction in the following areas:

- searching the library's Birth/Marriage/Death database
- locating genealogical reference material
- using the microfilm reader/printer
- ordering interlibrary loan material from the federal and provincial archives

Government Documents Research

Most government documents are now obtained online, although BPL does house a small amount of physical material. Library staff will assist customers searching for federal, provincial and municipal government information, including:

- locating appropriate statutes, regulations, bill and reports in the library
- locating government material available on the Internet
- referral to the appropriate municipal, provincial or federal government agency

Health/Medical/Legal/Consumer Research

The Brantford Public Library contains a wide variety of resources for customers seeking information on matters of health, law and consumer products. Library staff will provide the following service:

- locating information using print and electronic resources
- referral to other agencies in the community

Staff do not offer opinions or interpretations and will encourage customers to consult professionals in the field to obtain the most reliable information.

Internet Assistance

The Brantford Public Library provides free access to computers with internet and Wi-Fi at all locations. Internet assistance is provided to support customers in learning to navigate both publicly available webpages and online databases provided by the library.

Staff will not enter personal information or conduct transactions on behalf of the customer.

Instructional Assistance

Instructional service is provided to customers in formal and informal instruction.

Staff will help customers through basic instruction of a variety of tasks, such as help searching the catalogue or how to use our lendable tools and technologies.

When prearranged, staff are available to give tours, give one-on-one or group instruction, and specialized instruction through programming.

The goal of instructional assistance is to support the customer in tasks on their own and encourage independent use of the library and library resources.

At any given time, there are several factors that may impact the amount of staff time available for assistance. Staff will do their best to meet needs of the customer or arrange alternative means of assistance.

Reader's Advisory

Readers' Advisory service is the act of identifying reader preferences and recommending books to readers based on current and past preferences. Based on the individual needs of the customer, staff will assist customers in suggesting the most appropriate resource; the final choice is ultimately the customers.

Customers may also consult online resources such as Bibliocommons or Novelist for reading suggestions.

School Assignment Assistance (Elementary and Secondary)

The Brantford Public Library serves a vital role as an information provider to the students of Brantford and surrounding areas. The library will provide the following services for students:

- instruction on using the library's catalogue and databases
- locating material and placing holds

For additional information, please see the Children and Youth Policy.

Career Planning and Employment Support

Library staff will help customers identify the necessary print and electronic resources to attain specific career or employment goals. This service includes:

- locating school calendars and career-oriented print material
- locating web sites featuring employment listings
- instruction on conducting market research
- referral to other agencies in the community
- tools for creating resumes and applications

Interlibrary Loan

If material required by the customer is not available in the Brantford Public Library's collection or does not align with our Collection Development Policy, library staff may attempt to acquire it from other libraries or government agencies through interlibrary loan. Fees may apply for some academic libraries and borrowing is subject to the rules of the lending institution.

Library Orientation

Library staff will provide orientation services to individuals or groups. Group orientation is subject to availability of staff and must be booked in advance. Orientation service includes familiarizing customers with library services and providing instruction in the use of public access catalogues, databases, internet and equipment. Library staff will also aid customers in locating resources housed in various collections.

Community Information

The Brantford Public Library serves as a focal point for the collection and referral of community information. Library staff will aid customers in identifying and contacting the appropriate community agency in Brantford and surrounding areas.

Research Skills

Library staff will support the development of research skills, including providing information about how to evaluate and refine data as accurate, relevant, and well-sourced.

Special Services

Some specific groups of customers or types of research may require additional aid. The Brantford Public Library will provide the following services:

Laurier Students

Brantford Public Library serves as a resource centre for the Brantford campus of Wilfrid Laurier University. Library staff will provide orientation, instruction and assistance for the following resources:

- OMNI and BPL catalogue
- Laurier collection
- database searching
- circulation and document delivery services

Out of Town Customers

Customers not residing in Brantford can expect to receive the same level of service as those living in the area, with respect to:

- internet access
- instruction on using the library catalogue and in-library access to databases
- locating material
- help using equipment (microfilm readers, photocopier)
- in-library access to materials

Brantford Public Library has reciprocal borrowing privileges with several neighbouring library systems. Reciprocal borrowing allows for customers of those municipalities to access free membership privileges at Brantford Public Library. Information about reciprocal borrowing arrangements, including a current list of participating library systems, can be found on the Library's website.

For customers in other municipalities, borrowing library materials is possible with a non-resident membership card (\$40 annual fee).

Home Delivery Service

Residents of Brantford who are unable to visit the library in person can participate in the Home Delivery Service, through either a delivery or pick up service. Library staff will provide the following services:

- selecting appropriate material for customers (based on reading preferences or personal requests)
- delivery and pick-up of material from the customer's residence

The delivery service will provide customers with new materials every four weeks. The pick-up service can offer a more flexible schedule for those customers who have family, friends, or a caregiver to pick up library materials at an arranged time.

Service Priorities

When staff are assigned to a public service shift, delivery of service to the public has priority over all other duties. Staff will serve customers in the following priority order:

1. Requests in person
2. Requests by telephone
3. Requests by email/online
4. Requests by mail

If a staff member cannot answer a request immediately, staff will obtain contact information for the customer and see that the customer receives an answer as soon as possible.

Unfinished questions at the end of a shift will be turned over to incoming staff. Staff members who lack expertise in a particular subject area are encouraged to consult with colleagues if they need assistance.

Service Standards

All information requests are referred to the information desks, which are set up to be as full service as possible, meaning most tasks should be able to be completed at any service desk. The library offers information service by trained staff whenever the library is open. Staff will always use the most up-to-date information available from accurate printed or online sources or learned from a reliable authority. Where appropriate, sources will be provided for answers given.

Staff will not provide personal opinions, analysis or interpretation of medical/legal/financial/religious information. Customers will be encouraged to consult a professional in the appropriate field.

The decision of what information sources to check and the length of time spent on a question is at the discretion of the staff. Staff will guide to customer in search strategies and information tools but will not perform the research for them.

Public Service staff will be:

1. Knowledgeable about library materials and services
2. Courteous and approachable
3. Able to communicate effectively with people
4. Discreet in the handling of questions which might be confidential or sensitive

Staff should offer to take customers to the appropriate area unless the customers indicate that they know how to locate materials on their own. If customers indicate a willingness to locate materials on their own, staff may provide verbal directions and/or point out the location.

History

Supersedes: Not applicable

Background documents, related policies: Privacy Policy, Internet Access Policy, Ontario Public Libraries Act R.S.O. 1990 Chapter P.44, Municipal Freedom of Information and

Protection of Privacy Act, 1990

Approval Date: December 2010

Revision History: September 2021

Projected Review Period: Not applicable

Author: Manager, Public Services

Approval Level: Brantford Public Library Board