

## **System Reference Center Reference Policy**

The System Reference Center (SRC) for the Pacific Library Partnership (PLP)\* strengthens member libraries' information service to their users. The Reference Center staff works to give depth and breadth to local resources and to provide library users equal access to information no matter what resources are available in their local libraries.

Each member library acts as an intermediary between the System Reference Center and its patrons. It is the duty of each jurisdiction to determine access to the Reference Center.

SRC will answer all questions as completely, accurately and in a timely manner as possible. The Center will utilize contract services, in-house sources, online databases, outside organizations and any other reasonable resource to obtain an answer.

Effective responses to reference questions can be achieved only with the support and cooperation of each member library. When submitting requests, members are responsible for providing as much information as possible, including the sources checked by the referring librarian as well as the patron, and what search terms have been used in search engines.

The importance of a complete reference interview cannot be stressed enough.

### **DEADLINES**

Although requests are generally handled in chronological order by date received, every effort is made to meet each patron's deadline. Since all requests are handled "as soon as possible," we request a date after which the patron cannot use the material. "Rush" requests must include an explanation for the deadline.

### **FILE CHECKS**

Call us to check our extensive file of songs, poems, quotes and how-to information.

### **INTERLIBRARY LOANS**

Retrieval of material identified by the Reference Center will be the responsibility of the referring library.

### **LETTERS, CALLS, and EMAILS**

Experts and agencies may be contacted by the Reference Center and/or its contractors. Some follow-up may need to be made by the patron. In this case, appropriate contact information will be supplied.

## **APPRAISALS OF ART, ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES**

We will provide published information on antiques and auction prices. Monetary evaluations of art objects, considerations of scarcity and condition are beyond the scope of the Reference Center. In the absence of published information, referrals to appropriate experts will be provided if available.

## **BOOK APPRAISALS**

We will supply published prices for specific editions whenever available. Patrons may also be referred to antiquarian book dealers and/or specialists.

## **GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH**

We will supply information on published family and local histories, and guide patrons to appropriate documents and sources for information. We will search the San Jose Mercury News and/or the San Francisco Chronicle for one week after the date of death for obituaries and death notices for a fee to be paid by person who orders the search. Details, order form and fee schedule are at <http://obit.systemref.org/>. However, if a PLP member library orders a search of these two papers to fulfill a request by a patron cardholder, the SRC will treat that request as a second-level reference question and will not charge the patron. Searches of other primary source material in this field are outside the scope of the Reference Center.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF PLOTS, POEMS, QUOTATIONS, TITLES**

The Reference Center and/or its contractors will search standard indexes, specialized bibliographic sources, and listservs. The identification of plots, fragments of poems, quotations and half-remembered titles often depends upon the combination of bibliographic indexing and personal memory. Appeals to "collective memory" may be initiated when standard search strategies fail.

## **LEGAL QUESTIONS**

Copies of specifically cited laws, court rulings, administrative regulations and published commentary of laws and the legal system will be provided. We cannot provide legal advice or interpretation, though referrals to legal sources may be given as appropriate.

## **MEDICAL QUESTIONS**

Factual information, published studies and/or bibliographic citations to published studies concerning diseases, medications or therapeutic treatments will be provided. Information involving interpretation or medical advice will not be provided. We will refer patrons to appropriate medical experts or agencies.

## **MARKET RESEARCH/MARKET SURVEYS**

We will search for published market surveys. When published material is not available, we may refer the patron/client to market research services.

## **ORIGINAL RESEARCH**

Reference Center staff cannot perform original research, nor compile bibliographies on demand. It is out of the scope of the Reference Center to examine primary source materials, draw conclusions, or synthesize research.

We will provide direction in search strategies and assistance with identification of resources and specialists. We will provide data, but cannot perform mathematical, analytical or interpretive calculations. Subject to the provisions regarding original research, Center staff will locate answers to single, highly specific questions.

## **PATENT, TRADEMARK OR COPYRIGHT SEARCHES**

Patrons with patent, trademark or copyright inquiries are referred to the Patent and Trademark Depository Library (PTDL) at the Sunnyvale Public Library.

## **STANDARDS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

We will provide verification and locations/sources for standards and specifications.

## **TRANSLATIONS**

The Reference Center will translate short phrases when feasible. For longer passages, it is the responsibility fo the local library to refer the patron to professional translators.

Rev. 05/05

Adopted by the Administrative Councils of BALIS, PLS, SVLS and MOBAC, 2005.

Updated 09/10 to change the name to the System Reference Center (SRC) for the Pacific Library Partnership (PLP) and reflect the Reference Center's contracting most of its research services to outside contractors.

\* The Pacific Library Partnership (PLP) is a joint powers agreement of Bay Area Library and Information System (BALIS), Peninsula Library System (PLS), Silicon Valley Library System (SVLS) and Monterey Bay Area Cooperative Library System (MOBAC) effective July 1, 2010.