

**ESTHERVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**Policy on Staff Support to Patrons**

The Estherville Public Library strives to provide responsive, friendly, and helpful service to our patrons, including reference and reader's advisory services, assistance locating and checking out materials, and using the technology and materials provided by the library. Our goal is to empower patrons through education and offer the support they need to learn new skills and utilize our resources.

- Library staff do not have medical, legal, tax, or other professional services training and are prohibited from offering advice in those or other areas best served by trained professionals. Library staff may only assist patrons in locating information about those services and providers, and may not recommend specific service providers.
- Patrons should not share personal, private, or financial information with library staff, and library staff should maintain patron privacy by avoiding situations in which such information is viewable.
- Library staff may assist patrons with accessing computer programs, offer instruction on using computer programs, and answer questions about program functions. Staff may not prepare finished materials for patrons such as filling out forms and applications, typing documents, or formatting graphical materials such as flyers, invitations, or business materials. Library staff do not have training in all applications you may wish to use, but can provide general assistance related to the function of our computers and browsers.
- Library staff may assist patrons in scanning or copying materials at the printer/copier. If patrons have large amounts of copying, they should receive instruction in how to use the machine so that library staff are free to assist other patrons. Copyright responsibility belongs to the patron making the copies. Staff may refuse to assist with copy machine (or digital lab) functions which they feel may be in violation of copyright laws.
- Patrons with a need for extended one-on-one assistance will be asked to make an appointment to meet with a specific staff member. Programming schedules, meeting preparation, and providing for the needs of other patrons must be considered as we determine how much time we can spend on one patron's requests for assistance. The patron may need to accept a referral to other agencies if staff feel their requests go beyond the services the library can provide.

**Approved: 6/4/2019**