

6.00 Policies & Procedures—Reference

Mission Statement

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The Reference Department of the McAllen Memorial Library serves our community by searching for and sharing information on topics of local interest and in response to questions from members of our community. We develop a collection of materials and sources upon which we rely to provide accurate, current and relevant information. Those materials may be in any format the library supports. Questions may be asked during in-person visits or via telephone calls, email, mail or through our website.

6.1 Patron Requests for Purchase

The McAllen Public Library welcomes purchase suggestions from our users. Patrons who wish to suggest the purchase of a book, periodical or audiovisual item that we do not own should talk with a reference staff member. The reference staff member will record information about the item and the contact information for the person requesting the purchase and forward it to the appropriate selector for consideration.

Library staff will give reasonable consideration to all suggestions. However, not all suggested items will be purchased.

6.2 Circulation of Reference Materials

Generally, reference materials do not circulate. However, selected reference titles may be checked out for short term use, at the discretion of the librarian on duty. Patrons' desire to use reference material off-site must be balanced with the general expectation of users that reference books will be available in the library. Other factors, such as the item's rarity, price and condition will also be taken into account. All requests to borrow reference materials are to be directed to the reference librarian on duty at the time.

6.3 Proctoring of Examinations

The McAllen Public Library Reference Department provides examination proctoring services during Library hours. Exams are proctored by the professional librarians according to the availability of personnel and resources. Users are required to make advance arrangements with the staff. This service is available at all locations within the library system at no charge. Photo identification is required of all students using the Library's proctoring service. The college, university or school offering the examination may have other requirements which will be followed as closely as possible by the Library.

6.4 Tax Forms

The Library provides a limited variety of tax forms from the Internal Revenue Service free of charge from January 2 to May 31. Library staff will help patrons acquire from the IRS website forms the library does not carry. A printing fee may be required. Library staff is not authorized or trained to give tax advice.

The Reference staff will oversee the ordering, displaying, and maintaining of tax forms. Tax forms which are available in the library are displayed in an updated chart on the library's website.

6.5 Resources for the Visually Impaired

Resources available for the visually impaired patron at McAllen Public Library include large print books, and the Talking Book Program, a talking book service. In addition, onsite aids help make library services more accessible.

Large Print Books

The Library has many large print books, including fiction and nonfiction titles. The majority are complete, unabridged editions of the works of popular authors.

Talking Books

The Library offers a talking book library in partnership with the Talking Book Program of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The program provides free library service to Texans of all ages who are unable to read standard print material due to visual, physical, or reading disabilities, whether permanent or temporary. We provide application materials for the program, and can forward completed applications.

Onsite Aids

The library provides various sizes of magnifying glass to assist in reading books and personal materials.

6.6 Obituary Requests

The McAllen Public Library offers patrons a free obituary research service in connection with our archived collection of *The Monitor*, McAllen's daily newspaper, on microfilm. Requests are responded to as soon as possible in the order they are received.

Obituary requests may be submitted by:

- Email: genref@mcallen.net
- Phone: (956) 681-3060
- Online: <http://www.mcallenlibrary.net/research/obituaries>

Patrons are asked to limit their requests to a maximum of four obituaries at a time and to provide the following information:

- Requestor's name
- Requestor's mailing address
- Requestor's phone number
- Requestor's email address (optional)
- Name of the deceased
- Birth date of the deceased
- Death date of the deceased
- Location of death (city and/or county)

If an obituary is found, a copy will be sent gratis by the means which suits the patron:

- Email
- Mail

6.7 Referrals

Library staff welcomes all questions, but some may require professional expertise beyond what staff can reasonably provide. In those instances, referrals to outside agencies will be made, as appropriate. Generally, library staff are not trained or authorized to:

- give financial, tax, legal, or medical advice

- evaluate antiques or other possibly valuable items
- provide in-depth translation services
- fill out forms or applications for patrons
- provide professional proofreading

6.8 Study Rooms

Study Rooms at McAllen Public Library are intended primarily for individual and group study and small meeting purposes. Patrons may reserve study rooms at all three McAllen Public Library locations in one four-hour block of consecutive time. Patrons are limited to *one use* of a Study Room per day as either an individual or as part of a group.

Latecomers beyond fifteen minutes will forfeit their reservation. Due to high demand, Study Room time is not renewable. No Study Rooms will be reserved within 30 minutes of closing. Users are asked to finish their work and vacate the Study Rooms 15 minutes before the library closes.

No room may exceed the maximum stated occupancy listed below.

Study Room users are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous manner. Rooms are not soundproof; persons using amplified presentation devices are expected to do so in a way which does not disturb other study room users or library patrons in general. Discussions should take place at quiet conversational levels. Lights must be kept on at all times and appropriate behavior in a public space is expected. Repeated failure to follow study room policies may result in losing the right to use a Study Room.

Patrons are expected to clean up, remove trash, and wipe the whiteboard (if used). Those who leave rooms untidy may lose future study room privileges.

Children 10 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult or responsible guardian in the Study Rooms.

At the Main Library, patrons may reserve study rooms daily on a first come, first served basis at the North Information Desk, South Information Desk, Children's Service Desk, and Teen Service Desk. Patrons may call ahead for a *same-day* reservation of a study room. Covered beverages are permitted in the Study Rooms. Food of any kind is not permitted in the Study Rooms. Glitter, glue, paint, and any other substance that might cause damage to the carpet or tables are prohibited. Patrons who leave their Study Rooms for more than 15 minutes risk losing their Study Rooms. The Main Library offers fourteen study rooms for patron use:

- Study Rooms 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, and 14 accommodate one to four persons.
- Study Room 9 accommodates two to six persons.
- Study Rooms 4, 5, and 12 accommodate four to eight persons. Due to high demand, a minimum of four people is required to book these rooms.
- If a four-person Study Room is not available, users are encouraged to visit the Quiet Reading Room or use one of the many tables positioned throughout the library.

Lark Branch and Palm View Branch patrons may reserve study rooms up to two weeks in advance at the Lark Branch or Palm View Branch Reference Desks. Water is permitted in the Study Rooms. All other beverages and food of any kind are not permitted in the Study Rooms. Each Branch location offers two Study Rooms for patron use:

- Study Room A will accommodate one to fifteen persons.
- Study Room B will accommodate one to twelve persons.

6.9 Adult Programming

Adult programming is coordinated by the adult services staff. Programs sponsored by the Library are meant to appeal to community interests and needs.

Requests from individuals to present library programs may be considered using the following criteria:

Presentation quality, relevance to the Library's mission and service goals, community needs and interests, presenter background/qualifications/reputation, availability of program space, budget and staffing considerations, and relevance to other City-sponsored programs, exhibits or events.

Program participants will be accommodated on a first come, first served basis, either with advance registration or at the door.

Certain adult programs may be "adults only" and will be designated as such in the program advertisements.

Library programs will be open to the public and offered free of charge in most cases.

Presenters who present a program free of charge on a broad topic (example: first-time home buying or investments) may make available their business card at the end of the program with prior approval by Library Administration. The presenter may not solicit contact information of attendees. Requests must be made in writing to Library Administration, prior to program scheduling, in such cases.

If approved in advance, the Library may permit the sale of books or recordings made by presenters and performers in conjunction with a Library sponsored program. The Library will neither be involved with, nor provide staff assistance with, sales transactions. All plans to sell such items must be arranged in advanced and approved by Library Administration or its designee.

Library programs will not begin or end outside of the Library's normal operating hours. Exceptions must be approved in advance by Library Administration or its designee.

The Library's policies regarding food and drink, appropriate uses of the facility and its equipment, the presence of animals, etc. will be followed by guest presenters, unless exceptions have been approved in advance by Library Administration or its designee.

The Library does not endorse the views or opinions expressed by guest presenters or performers.

All library policies are available at any service desk in the library and on the library's website:
www.mcallenlibrary.net.