

Policy on Staff Support to Patrons

The Pittsylvania County Public Library strives to provide responsive, friendly, and helpful service to our patrons, including reference and reader's advisory services, assistance in locating and checking out materials, and using the technology and materials available at the library. Our goal is to empower patrons through education and the support they need to learn new skills and make informed choices.

- 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 may assist patrons in scanning or copying materials at the printer/copier. As noted in the Copier policy, 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.
- Exceptions to this policy may be made to assist patrons with temporary or permanent disabilities.
- During public health emergency periods in which staff are *required* to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face masks, and patrons and the general public are *advised* to wear PPE such as face masks by local, state, or federal health officials, staff members may refuse to assist patrons who elect not to wear the recommended PPE in one-on-one settings requiring close and prolonged interpersonal interaction, such as but not limited to helping patrons with computer issues. Staff *must assist all patrons with general circulation services* regardless of the patron's choice to not wear recommended PPE.

Approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2018; approved with revisions July 2020.