

Three Examples of Library Policies & Disclaimers

What library staff can do: Teach you to use library resources to accomplish your research goal. **What library staff can't do:** Type or proofread your document. Provide medical, legal or business advice or opinion. Do your homework for you.

Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library

<http://tscpl.org/consult-a-librarian/>

Reference services provide patrons with assistance in identifying, locating, and using resources within the Law Library's collection. The information conveyed by reference librarians does not constitute legal advice. Reference librarians will not perform research, nor will they interpret legal materials (e.g., legal documents, case law, or statutes). If legal advice is required, the patron should seek the assistance of a licensed attorney.

University of Kentucky College of Law Library

<http://library.law.uky.edu/content.php?pid=340283&sid=2782207#9696133>

Librarians may not:

- Perform research on behalf of any patron. Examples: Please find for me the statute of limitations in [Tennessee] for tort actions. What forms do I need to file for bankruptcy?
- Review or interpret legal documents.
- Identify any statute, case opinion, regulation, rule, etc. as the answer to a legal question presented by a patron.
- Make referrals to or recommendations of specific attorneys.

Policy Justification:

1. Advising people what the law is and how it applies to their particular situation constitutes giving legal advice. We are librarians, not lawyers, and we are not authorized to practice law in the State of Tennessee (or anywhere else). Only lawyers are permitted to advise people about the law and how it applies to them. Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 23-3-101 et. seq.; *In re Rose*, 314 B.R. 663 (Bankr. E.D. Tenn. 2004).
2. Legal research can be complicated, even for what appears to be a simple question. The answer to any legal question might vary dramatically based on all sorts of different facts. We, as librarians, cannot know all of the facts that apply in each patron's situation, and we would be doing a disservice to our patrons if we tried to perform research for them

without knowing everything that could bear upon and cross-references to follow based on their knowledge of their own situations.

3. Doing legal research for all callers would quickly overwhelm our librarian faculty. It is fairer to all of our patrons and to our librarians to say to everyone, “[P]lease come in to the Law Library. When you come in, we will help you find and use the sources you need to do your own research.”

Credits: Gallagher Law Library, University of Washington, Reference Services Statement; State of Oregon Law Library, Legal Reference Policy; Connecticut State Law Library, Legal Reference Policy.

Taken from Statement of Policy from University of Tennessee, College of Law, Joel A. Katz Law Library

<http://law.utk.edu/law-library/services/library-policies/>

http://the-librarian-in-training.blogspot.com/2010_03_01_archive.html