King County Law Library Legal Information Service Policy

Summary:

The King County Law Library will provide information service in support of the legal research need of the courts, the bar, and the public.

Purpose:

This policy defines the information service the Law Library staff will offer to the patrons at the King County Law Library. These guidelines ensure that patrons from the legal community, the courts and the general public receive optimum service without violating ethical guidelines on the unauthorized practice of law outlined by the American Bar Association, the Washington State Bar, and the Revised Code of Washington.

Implementation Guidelines:

The King County Law Library staff will assist the judiciary in securing all information they deem necessary to their research of legal issues, and will provide legal information service to all patrons by facilitating access to the materials in the Library's collection.

The Library staff will assist its patrons in locating sources for information not held by the Library.

The Library staff will provide finding aids to the collection.

The Library will publish a column in the Seattle - King County Bar Bulletin to keep the legal community informed about collection developments, services offered, and new programs and policies. The Library will seek to enhance the collection with materials designed for use by the layperson seeking legal information.

The Library staff will respond to telephone inquiries regarding the Library's holdings on a particular subject and will suggest alternative sources for materials not in the collection. Time permitting, the staff will respond to specific short answer requests. However, the staff will not read statutes, regulations, court rules, or extended passages from other sources over the phone. Patrons in the Library receive priority over the telephone patron.

Because of the ethical and legal implications surrounding the unauthorized practice of the law, patrons must be advised that the Library staff may not engage in the following activities: read materials to a patron, perform legal research; answer a legal question; advise any patron on the status of the law on a particular issue; recommend that any patron contact a particular attorney; explain legal procedure, court rules or jurisdiction; or interpret the text of a statute, legal opinion, or administrative regulation.

(Revised 01/08/1993)