

Policy Number 5.9
Title Statement on Customer Service
Section 5: Services
Effective Date February 27, 2002
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The Cobourg Public Library endorses the following statement:

UNESCO PUBLIC LIBRARY MANIFESTO

(United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

November 1994.

UNESCO'S Manifesto states that freedom, prosperity and the development of society and of individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture, and information.

The Public Library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.

It is therefore the **Customer Service Standard** of the Cobourg Public Library that:

"The Cobourg Public Library is committed to being an exceptional community resource for information, exploration, inspiration and enjoyment."

Cobourg Public Library Customer Service Statement

We recognize that our collections and services are designed to meet our library patrons' needs, and that satisfying those needs is the cornerstone of our existence and the measure of our success.

We are a service organization, and every individual within our organization is committed to serving our library patrons. Every contact with a patron, whether it is made in person, over the telephone, by letter, by fax or electronically, will be characterized by fairness, courtesy and efficiency, and will serve to confirm to our patrons that we value their business and are committed to making our interaction with them an example of excellence in public service.

Background Information on Customer Service

Good customer service means making every library patron feel valued, every time he/she uses the library. As such, the customer service provided by the Public Services staff, Information Services staff, and the Branch Services staff is very important. Good customer service can make a tremendous difference to library patrons.

“Anytime a customer comes into contact with any aspect of a [library], however remote, is an opportunity to form an impression.”

Jan Carlzor, former President of Scandinavian Airlines.

The Cobourg Public Library’s principles and values stress the importance of treating everyone with courtesy and fairness as well as providing quality customer service in a welcoming environment.

What do we know about library patrons in general?

Patrons expect good service, which from a patron’s point of view means:

Successful attainment of the product or service that is expected (tangible needs);
Within the context of a positive interaction (intangible needs).

Intangible needs of library patrons may include:

- The need to feel welcome
- Social pleasantries
- Reassurance that they came to the right place (especially important if this is the person’s first visit to the library)
- Courteous, respectful treatment
- The need to feel comfortable and in control
- The need to be understood
- Pleasant, comfortable and safe environment
- The need for privacy
- The need to become familiar with and educated about the library

Library patrons can both be Dependent and Independent in nature.

A **dependent patron** needs (depends upon):

- Library staff who are willing and able to assist them;
- Library staff who will take the time to fully understand their information needs;
- Library staff who are knowledgeable about the Library’s resources;
- Library staff who have the skills to match appropriate resources to the patron’s particular needs.

An **independent patron** needs (depends upon):

- An initial orientation to the library and its computer system;
- A user friendly arrangement of library resources, with good signage to provide direction;
- A user friendly computer system that identifies the location of materials;
- Displays offering suggested reading materials;
- Resources to assist patrons to find the materials they are seeking i.e. bookmarks, Reader’s Advisory tools, web links, finding aids, etc.;
- A current, comprehensive website.

It is important to remember that how dependent/independent the patron will be on any given day varies. This could change from one visit to another as the particular reason for visiting the library that particular day changes.

Our Work at the Cobourg Public Library

Patron Care Standards

As staff of the Cobourg Public Library, you are responsible for upholding our **Patron Care Standards**, outlined as follows:

Every Cobourg Public Library patron can expect to experience:

- Courteous, friendly and helpful service at all times
- Fair and respectful treatment without discrimination
- Staff who will endeavour to listen, find out what is required, and be sensitive to needs
- Staff who will do their best to use clear and simple language, avoid jargon, and explain technical terms
- Staff who will be sensitive and discreet and maintain confidentiality at all times
- Staff who will provide service in a knowledgeable and efficient manner

If commitments or promises are made they will be followed through on at all times.

This **standard of patron care** will apply to all transactions whether they are in person, by telephone, in writing, or electronically received.

Priorities of Service

As staff of the Cobourg Public Library, you will apply priorities for customer service in the library as follows:

- 1st requests presented in person
- 2nd requests presented by telephone
- 3rd requests sent in by mail/fax/e-mail

As staff at the Cobourg Public Library you are part of a team of individuals who build on ideas and efforts of one another, and through your exchange of ideas create a learning environment, which benefits all.