

# SPOTLIGHT *on* COMPETENCIES

**The Library Education Committee is dedicated to helping libraries incorporate competencies into their training and staff development efforts. Each month we will highlight one of the OLC competencies by providing a short definition, a few related skills or behaviors, and resources for more information. As always, we want to know how your library uses competencies. Please send your stories to [cathy.wilkymacky@cincinnatilibrary.org](mailto:cathy.wilkymacky@cincinnatilibrary.org)**

## COMPETENCY: Reference

**Definition:** Understanding the importance of determining customer needs (children, teens, and adults) and researching and locating answers in a timely manner, while providing accurate information; the ability to use various technologies and informational databases; providing clear and comprehensive information in response to requests.

### Select Skills and Behaviors:

- Strong interpersonal communication skills
- Ability to interview customers and to accurately determine need
- Provides help where needed, respects a person's right to browse, and answers questions regardless of their nature or purpose
- Assists and instructs customers in basic information gathering and the use of library resources
- Identifies, interprets, and accesses varied information sources—including but not limited to the library catalog, Internet, reference collections—appropriate to the customer's needs, providing consistently accurate answers to inquiries
- Continually updates knowledge of available resources

### Training Resources:

- *Conducting the reference interview* (video)
- *Mining "The Net" for information: using Internet for reference* (video)
- ORE on the Web (online training at [www.olc.org/Ore/index.html](http://www.olc.org/Ore/index.html)) Modules include exercises and quizzes, plus Ohio library photos, stories, and links.
- Ross, Catherine: *Conducting the reference interview: a how-to-do-it manual for librarians* (book)
- *Tools of our Trade: reference sources for real life issues* (video)
- *Tools of our Trade: individualized library service* (video)
- *Using the Internet as a reference tool: a how-to-do-it manual for librarians* (book)

### Training Opportunities:

[www.ceohio.org](http://www.ceohio.org)

### Complete List of Competencies:

[www.olc.org/CoreCompetencies.asp](http://www.olc.org/CoreCompetencies.asp)

### More Information:

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