

APPENDIX H - CUSTOMER USE AND CONVENIENCE GUIDELINES

Charles County Public Library has a history of successful customer service. In both public meetings and an online survey, library patrons clearly articulated their appreciation for the Library's knowledgeable, friendly staff. To keep that focus on the customer, it is imperative that the Library continue to focus on simplifying and automating key functions/tasks that no longer depend on staff to perform. These include:

- Self-check in all libraries establishing a system standard of at least 90 percent circulation via self-check
- Online program registration
- Online meeting room reservations
- Online library card registration
- Online payment of fees and fines
- Automated reserve pick-up 24/7
- Automated materials return 24/7
- RFID technology that supports inventory control and automated collection services, reduces staff time in managing and handling library materials and facilitating return of materials to the shelves for faster availability for the customer that under the current staff intensive process
- Customized email alerts to patrons of reserves, programs, etc.
- Customized secure personal reading logs for patrons

The automation of such routine tasks frees up knowledgeable and experienced library staff to provide an increased high-touch customer experience in areas that are most important to the customer, such as:

- assisting with computers and other technologies.
- teaching classes on computing and new information technologies.
- engaging in outreach to schools and community groups.
- planning, arranging and presenting programs on a variety of topics for all age levels
- providing staff with continuing education in new service models, information technologies, etc. to be able to better assist customers.

Self-service technologies give customers greater control over their library experience. While not all customers will embrace self-service, extensive experience in the industry has shown, that with proactive staff promotion and support most come to appreciate and use them within about six months to a year and appreciate the fact that staff are now more available to help them in other more important ways.

A supported self-service plan includes:

- Automation – Self-check, ergonomic materials return (check-in and sort) systems and possibly automated materials handling systems.
- Electronic Services – library card and program registration, payment of fines and fees, meeting room booking, reader's advisory.

- Information Services Redesign – centralized telephone infrastructure allowing centralized phone services, chat, blogging, RSS feeds, and other electronic delivery systems.
- Intuitive Buildings – simplified and centralized service points, consistent and well-placed external and internal signage, merchandised collections, designed future adaptability, intuitive layout of stacks and furnishings.
- Process Simplification – time and motion studies, standardized work processes based on best practices, reconfigured staff areas facilitating streamlined workflow and maximized productivity.
- Employee Training – staff training in technology and streamlined procedures, cross-training for flexibility, available staff to help and instruct patrons in use of self-service technology.