

What is a patron assist?

It is a count of the number of cash register transactions including faxes sent free of charge. This is a system statistic only and not reported on the Indiana Public Library Annual report.

What is a reference question?*

Reference transactions are information consultations in which library staff recommend, interpret, evaluate, and/or use information resources to help others to meet particular information needs.

Reference transactions do not include formal instruction or exchanges that provide assistance with locations, schedules, equipment, supplies, or policy statements.

NOTES:

- (1) A reference transaction includes information and referral service, unscheduled individual instruction and assistance in using information sources (including web sites and computer–assisted instruction).
- (2) Count readers advisory questions as reference transactions.
- (3) Information sources include
 - (a) printed and non–printed material
 - (b) machine–readable databases (including computer–assisted instruction)
 - (c) the library's own catalogs and other holdings records
 - (d) other libraries and institutions through communication or referral
 - (e) persons both inside and outside the library
- (4) When a staff member uses information gained from previous use of information sources to answer a question, the transaction is reported as a reference transaction even if the source is not consulted again.
- (5) If a contact includes both reference and directional services, it should be reported as one reference transaction.
- (6) Duration should not be an element in determining whether a transaction is a reference transaction.

- (7) It is essential that libraries do not include transactions involving only a directional service, such as instruction for locating staff, library users, or physical features within the library. Examples of directional transactions include, "Where is the reference librarian? Where is Susan Smith? Where is the rest room? Where are the 600s? Can you help me make a photocopy?"

What are instructional reference services?*

This number is a subset of and should also be included in the total number of reference transactions (08–064). It should be entered here only if your library keeps a separate count for this sort of activity. If you do not track this number independent of all other reference transactions, enter NA.

Instructional reference services include one–on–one interactions that are considered reference transactions by the national definition, but are typically far more time consuming and involved than traditional reference transactions. This number is meant to capture more involved instruction, and not simple one–off questions such as turning on a device, finding an icon, etc. They may be scheduled in advance or drop–in consultations.

Examples include help on small device use (e–readers, smartphones), computer instruction, resume help, and proctoring.

*Reference and Instructional Reference definitions were taken from the Indiana Public Library Annual Report 2022/General Instructions and Definitions. <https://collectconnect.baker-taylor.com/Instructions/IN22.pdf>