

Oregon State Library Answerland Program FAQ

What is Answerland?

Answerland is a reference service initiated electronically, often in real-time, where patrons use computers or other devices to communicate with reference librarians without being physically present. Oregonians can live chat, e-mail or text a librarian with a reference question 7x24. Access is available on most library websites and at Answerland website (<http://answerland.org>). The service is staffed by professional librarians.

How many Oregonians use Answerland?

In 2013-2014 there were 34,460 visitors to Answerland. 32,367 were chat, 1,138 were e-mail and 955 were text. This number has been fairly steady over the last three years.

How is Answerland staffed?

Questions are answered during business hours by Oregon librarians and volunteers. Questions received after business hours are answered by libraries employed by an “after hours” service paid for as part of the project. The service will be staffed by a librarian, who will oversee the day-to-day operations of the service, including recruiting volunteers, training librarians on virtual reference service, scheduling, etc.

How is Answerland funded?

Answerland is one of the projects that the State Library pays for with Library Service and Technology Act funds provided by the federal government. We have been contracting with Multnomah County Library since 2003 to host and manage Answerland. After June 30, that money will be used to pay for Answerland at the State Library.

What is the budget for Answerland for 2015-2017?

The budget is \$397,156, \$148,915 for personal services and \$248,241 for services and supplies.

Why is this service being moved to the State Library?

The State Library has statutory responsibility for statewide cooperative reference service. Answerland has been fulfilling this responsibility since 2003. The State Library Board, library community and Multnomah County Library all agree that this statewide service should be directly managed and housed by the State Library.

How will moving the service to the State Library impact Multnomah County Library and current Answerland staff?

Multnomah County Library will no longer receive LSTA funding for this specific project after June 30, 2015. Both staff currently assigned to this project will be re-assigned within Multnomah County Library on July 1, 2015.