



Office of  
Commonwealth Libraries

December 10, 2012

Dear Library Director:

Thank you for your interest in the Office of Commonwealth Libraries' statewide virtual reference service called Ask Here PA. The opportunity to participate in Ask Here PA is ongoing and I am pleased to provide you with information about how to do so. Ask Here PA offers patrons immediate reference assistance, regardless of their location. By sharing a system and pooling human resources and expertise, Ask Here PA enables libraries to offer a service that most could not provide independently. Ask Here PA utilizes QuestionPoint software from OCLC and is available to the residents of Pennsylvania 24/7.

Please note: libraries are not required to contribute staff time or submit a partnership agreement in order for your patrons to access Ask Here PA. All citizens of Pennsylvania are permitted to use the service regardless of participation by their library. However, we hope it is your wish to support the service through contribution of staff.

The following is required of libraries interested in staffing Ask Here PA:

1. Submit an Ask Here PA partnership agreement form to the Office of Commonwealth Libraries.
2. Select a Site Coordinator (The Site Coordinator should be a supervisory level staff member within the reference department. This person will serve as the liaison to Ask Here PA staff.)
3. Provide staff to Ask Here PA. The number of hours contributed will be negotiated between your Site Coordinator and the Ask Here PA Coordinator.
4. Provide staff for training. Training will occur either at your library or a nearby library.
5. Add links from your website to the Ask Here PA service and promote Ask Here PA to your users.

Please contact Cindy Pitchon, the Ask Here PA Coordinator, by e-mail or phone with any questions. You may contact Cindy at 215-222-1532 or [pitchon@hslc.org](mailto:pitchon@hslc.org).

Sincerely,

Susan Pannebaker  
Director  
Bureau of Library Development



Office of  
Commonwealth Libraries

December 10, 2012

Dear Library Director:

The Office of Commonwealth Libraries is accepting applications from libraries to become participants in Pennsylvania's statewide live chat service, Ask Here PA.

Ask Here PA provides the residents of Pennsylvania with synchronous online reference assistance, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. While the service is available to all residents of Pennsylvania regardless of whether or not your library participates, the benefits to participating libraries are:

- Add a new library service in a cost effective way
- Become part of an innovative and popular service
- Reach new patrons and improve service to current patrons
- Add a new reference statistic that counts in online times
- Staff trained on a cutting edge service
- Participating libraries provided with a unique interface to the service that captures local use statistics via links through your web site
- Provided with a completely customizable e-mail submission form and full online reference management system

If you have any questions regarding the application form, contact HSLC at [support@accesspa.org](mailto:support@accesspa.org) or 215-222-1532.

Sincerely,

Stacey Aldrich  
Deputy Secretary of Education and  
Commissioner for Libraries

Enclosure

# Ask Here PA

## Information and Instructions

**Please mail or fax this application to:**

**Mail:**

Cindy Pitchon, Dir. of Public Services  
HSLC  
3600 Market Street, Suite 550  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

**Fax:**

215-222-0416  
Attention: Cindy Pitchon (Ask Here PA)

### Submission

Submit the application and participation agreement to HSLC. Applications must be complete with all attachments and enclosures when submitted.

### How to Apply

This package includes information about eligibility and other requirements, an application form and agreement form. Please read the entire package before preparing the application, and

- Review the eligibility requirements and policies.
- Obtain the appropriate authorization signatures.

### Eligibility Requirements

Staff that contribute time to the Ask Here PA collaborative service must have an MLS or be certified to be a Librarian in Pennsylvania. Additionally, as a collaborative reference service, participants must have a strong commitment to sharing the expertise of their reference staff.

# Ask Here PA Application and Agreement Form

Library Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Library Director \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Our library has: (please select one)

4 or more professionals on staff

3 or less professionals on staff

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Telefax \_\_\_\_\_

*Site Coordinator* (Please see item d on page 6.)

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Telefax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Enrollment/Population Served (in numbers) \_\_\_\_\_

Library Website \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

State Representative District \_\_\_\_\_

State Senatorial District \_\_\_\_\_

**This commitment is made for a period of one year and is automatically renewed or it can be terminated by the participating library or the Office of Commonwealth Libraries. Libraries may not alter this agreement. Commonwealth Libraries will continue to underwrite Ask Here PA contingent upon funding.**

**ASK HERE PA PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT**

As a partner library in the Ask Here PA service, the undersigned agrees to work with the Office of Commonwealth Libraries, HSLC and other participating libraries to provide service in the statewide collaborative virtual reference service.

\_\_\_\_\_ agrees to:  
Institution and/or *Library Name*

- a) Send staff to training (training will occur locally or regionally)
- b) Contribute staff time to the collaborative service
- c) Promote use of the Ask Here PA service to library users, including providing links to the service from the library's website
- d) Appoint a staff person to be your institution's Ask Here PA Site Coordinator. (The ideal representative to serve as Site Coordinator would be someone who is responsible for reference staff, scheduling, and enjoys promoting and integrating new technologies.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Authorized Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name - Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Title)