

Basic Reference Collection

In any public library, large or small, a reference collection helps answer questions and serves as a foundation for further research. With the advent of the Internet, reference service has changed dramatically and large reference collections are no longer as necessary as they once were, but a few good sources are still useful. Not everyone has access to the Internet, and sometimes it's easier and faster to look something up in a book.

Reference sources should be chosen using the same standards as other non-fiction: accuracy, authoritativeness, currency, and appropriateness to the collection and the needs of your community. Ultimately a good basic reference collection is a collection which is best for you, the director and for the audience whom you serve. What follows is a basic list of sources that you might include in your reference collection.

Basic Reference Sources (print and online) for Public Libraries-

Almanac – general almanac or an almanac specifically for children or special almanacs such as the one for farmers

Dictionary – English, Spanish, or other languages appropriate for your community

Encyclopedia – print or online, general (multi or single volume), or subject specific for your community

Atlas & Maps – world atlas, United States road atlas, New Mexico maps, local maps

History – general New Mexico, general United States, general world, or subject specific for your community

Genealogy – general guide books and the following Web site: [National Archives](#), [Daughters of American Revolution](#), [Family Search](#)

Legal – basic guides like those available from [Nolo](#), forms - <https://nmsupremecourt.nmcourts.gov/legal-forms/views.php> and <http://www.nmbar.org/legalresearch/legalforms.html>

State – *New Mexico Blue Book*, and the following Web sites: [NM.Gov](#), [NM Legislature](#), [NM Statutes](#) and [NM Administrative Code](#), [State Bar of NM](#), [Supreme Court Law Library](#), [UNM Law Library](#), [Taxation & Revenue NM](#)

Federal – *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, and the following Web sites: [USA.Gov](#), [Internal Revenue Service](#), [Social Security Administration](#), [Health.Gov](#), [Census](#), [Thomas](#), [Small Business Administration](#), [Bureau of Land Management](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [National Weather Service](#)

Local – phone book, business directory, tourism guides/brochures

El Portal (magazine and newspaper articles) - <http://www.elportalm.org/>

Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers - <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

Library of Congress - <http://www.loc.gov/>

New Mexico Basic Reference Sources (print and online) for Public Libraries –

New Mexico Blue Book – print or online (when available)

[New Mexico.Gov](#)

Legislative Almanac (current year, print and/or online - <http://www.nmelectric.coop/index.php>)

Place Names of New Mexico

New Mexico history

New Mexico road atlas

New Mexico maps – road, tourism, Bureau of Land Management, county, major cities

Local history

Local maps

Local newspapers

Directory of city, county officials and services

Local Chamber of Commerce publications

Local telephone directories

If you would like guidance regarding specific titles to purchase or sites to hot link, please contact:

Calderone, Laura (505) 476-9763 Laura.Calderone@state.nm.us
Reference Services Manager
Public Services Bureau

Thornton, Lori Smith (505) 476-9717 Lori.Thornton@state.nm.us
Bureau Chief
Public Services Bureau