

FORT BEND COUNTY LIBRARIES MEETING/CONFERENCE ROOM POLICY

The mission of Fort Bend County Libraries is to bring people, information and ideas together to enrich lives, expand minds, and strengthen our diverse community.

Policies and Procedures for the use of meeting rooms in the Fort Bend County Libraries have been developed in accordance with its mission and are hereby established by Commissioners Court. Responsibility for implementing the policy rests with the Manager in charge of a branch library. The County Librarian retains authority for enforcing this policy.

(1) General Rules

- a. Library activities and programs are given first priority for scheduling of meeting rooms.
- b. All meetings must be open to the public and to the media.
- c. All meetings must be contained to the reserved room and not extend to hallways or other areas of the library.
- d. Smoking of any kind (including E-Cigarettes and vaping) and other tobacco products are not permitted. No lighted candles or open flames may be used.
- e. No items may be affixed to the walls (e.g., banners, posters, decorations).
- f. No animals, except Service Animals, will be allowed in meeting rooms unless they are an integral part of a scheduled program. Such animals must be under the control of the presenter, leashed, or caged at all times.
- g. The length of time that a meeting room is reserved must include time for setting up and for returning the room to good order.
- h. Groups comprised of persons 18 years and younger must have at least one (1) chaperone for every eight (8) guests. Chaperones must be at least 21 years of age and must be present throughout the duration of the function. Applicants must be 21 years of age or older.
- i. A group may reserve only one room at one location for use at a time.
- j. No noise or ambient sound permitted from rooms.
- k. No sales of products, services, or memberships, with the exception of author appearances.
- l. Library logo may not be used for any publicity purposed, including but not limited to invitations, flyers, and social media.
- m. All attendees are subject to the rules listed in the Library Rules of Conduct Policy. The failure of any patron to comply with the FBCL policies will result in their removal from the library.
- n. Users shall not post, exhibit, or allow to be posted, any signs, advertisements, show bills, posters, or flyers, inside or outside any part of the building, except as authorized by the library.

(2) Meeting rooms may not be used by:

- a. Groups whose use of a meeting room would interfere with regular library functions;
- b. Groups whose activities involve more than normal wear and tear on meeting rooms;
- c. Groups meeting for private and/or social activities such as showers, birthday parties, weddings, auditions, and recitals;
- d. Groups that have flagrantly or repeatedly violated library meeting room policies;
- e. Persons involved in polling, campaigning, or petitioning.

(3) Publicity must neither state nor imply that the library is either sponsoring or endorsing a program or meeting unless such is the case; neither shall publicity state nor imply that attendance is limited to group members. The use of Fort Bend County Libraries' logo is strictly prohibited. Publicity must not give out the library's phone number as an information contact.

(4) No fees are allowed including but not limited to admission, membership, refreshments, or participation in a group.

(5) Applications for use of meeting rooms

- a. Applications for meetings may be completed online. If not completed online, application forms may be returned in person, by mail, or by email. The person responsible for completing and submitting a meeting-room application will be considered the official contact person for the group.
- b. A completed *Application for Use of Meeting Room* form must be received by the branch at least one week prior to the meeting date. Rooms may be scheduled up to three months in advance. Applications will be accepted and scheduled in the order received.
- c. **In order to encourage the most-equitable use of meeting rooms, only one meeting at a time may be scheduled; following a meeting, a group may schedule another if the room is available at the desired time.**

(6) The library reserves the right to change or cancel reservations if an emergency occurs, or if a special library program intervenes. The group may be assigned to another location, or, if no other accommodation is available, the meeting-room commitment will be cancelled. A guest group may postpone or cancel a scheduled meeting, but must notify the branch at least 48 hours in advance. The meeting may be rescheduled if a room is available.

(7) Choice of hours

- a. Meeting rooms may be used, as available, during regular library hours. Meetings must be concluded and the room vacated at least 30 minutes prior to regular library closing time.
- b. Any group that fails to vacate library premises at closing may be denied future use of meeting rooms.

(8) Room setup

- a. The number in attendance at a meeting must not exceed the seating capacity of the meeting room. Open aisles must be maintained within the seating arrangements to provide clear access to exits.
- b. Setup for the meeting room (tables, chairs, etc.) is the responsibility of the group reserving the room and must be done only during the reserved time. All tables and chairs must be put away.
- c. Applicants shall familiarize themselves with the facility before applying. Fort Bend County provides only the tables and chairs that are listed in Appendix A of the Meeting/Conference Room Policy. No additional furniture may be brought on library property.

(9) Library-owned equipment: Use of library-owned equipment must be requested at the time of application. Changes in requirements can be requested no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting and are subject to availability of the equipment. At the time of the meeting, no additional equipment or changes in equipment may be requested. In case of malfunction of equipment, contact library staff for assistance. An individual, to be named by the group, must be instructed in the use of library-owned equipment (e.g., audiovisual equipment) prior to the meeting by branch library staff. Groups failing to abide by library-equipment policies may be denied future use of meeting rooms.

(10) Group-owned equipment

- a. Groups providing their own laptop/device must visit the library at least 48 hours in advance, at a time scheduled by the library staff, to determine the capability and compatibility of the equipment.
- b. Groups providing their own equipment or display materials are responsible for transportation to and from the meeting rooms. Library staff should not be asked to assist.
- c. The library is not responsible for equipment, supplies, or other materials owned by a guest group and used in the library. The library cannot store equipment and/or materials and supplies belonging to guest groups.

(11) The person reserving a room will be responsible for maintenance of order. This person must:

- a. Be responsible for the group's compliance with library rules and protection of library property.
- b. Notify the building manager when the meeting room has been cleared.
- c. Assure that the room is left in good order.

(12) If refreshments are served, sack lunches and finger foods are suggested, but catered meals may be permitted if special arrangements are made when a room is reserved. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed. Food is to be served only in the scheduled room, and group members must not carry food or drink throughout the building.

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