



Meeting Room Policy

Intended Use

The primary function of the meeting rooms is to provide space for Library sponsored and co-sponsored programs. When not in use by Worcester County Library, rooms are open and available for public use. Gatherings shall be open to the public and must observe Library rules. The Library reserves the right to attend any events and meetings held in its facilities (except lawful executive sessions of government bodies) to verify that no illegal activities are taking place on the Library's premises and to ensure that Library policies are being followed. The use of meeting rooms for library programs is subject to the Worcester County Patron Conduct Policy.

The Library has the right to cancel existing reservations and to refuse future reservations to users who fail to abide by the meeting room policies and regulations. Failure to comply with these regulations including failure to check-in or check-out, late-cancellations, blocking fire extinguishers or fire exits, or failure to clean the room will jeopardize future access to meeting rooms at all locations. Exceptions to the regulations may be made at the discretion of the Branch Manager.

There will be no sales of products or services and no collection of admission fees, except for continuing education or certification programs in which admission fees cover the cost of supplies and materials. The organization which reserves library meeting space will notify the library via email, at least 10 business days before the first scheduled training, to confirm the civic/non-profit organization arranged for the training materials fee to be collected independently by their organization. No funds/donations may be solicited or collected at the library except for fundraising sponsored by the Worcester County Library Foundation. The Library has the right to allow admission charges and/or the sale of products by any entity presenting a program sponsored by or in cooperation with the Library.

There will be no collection of admission fees or tuition, sales of products or services or other direct fundraising activities. Groups using the library may not charge admission or make monetary collections, regardless of whether these collections are designated as voluntary. Exceptions may be made for library sponsored groups, programs or events.

Meeting rooms cannot be used for purely social purposes which include but are not limited to parties or events (e.g. weddings).

Policy

Prior to the initial use of the meeting room, the organization must complete an application to verify eligibility and to identify contact information. The application is available on the library website www.WorcesterLibrary.org and at the branch libraries. Please return the application to the library branch where the meeting will take place or to the Administrative Headquarters in Snow Hill. The application must be renewed whenever the contact person for the group changes or every two years. The Branch Manager or Library Director will approve the application if it is determined that the organization is qualified according to this policy.

- Library events have first priority for the use of the rooms, to accommodate meetings of the Library Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library groups, or for library programs and trainings for library staff. With proper notice, the library may cancel or re-schedule a meeting room reservation.
- In the event of severe weather or an emergency which prevents safe access to the facility or library parking, access to the meeting room will be cancelled. The library will contact the group's representative. A message will be added to the library website. When possible, a sign will be posted on the door of the library.
- Any meeting or event in a library meeting room is open to anyone who may choose to attend.
- Reservations for meeting rooms will be made on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations can be made up to 12 months in advance. When the group contact changes the application must be renewed to include new contact information.
- Any group that reserves a meeting room agrees to inform the library as soon as possible if it becomes necessary to cancel or re-schedule an event. A pattern of cancellations or several cancellations with little or no notice may lead to the imposition of fees, the loss of meeting privileges, or both.
- Use of the meeting room before or after normal operating hours of the library may be permitted at the discretion of the Branch Manager, Library Director, or his/her designee. Such before- or after-hours use may require payment of fees to assure proper building security.
- The Worcester County Library, its Board of Trustees and employees assume no responsibility for the actions, opinions, or expressed points of view of the organizations that sponsor or host meetings or the individuals who attend meetings and events on library premises.

Liability

The library assumes no responsibility for loss, theft, or damage to personal items, equipment, or vehicles in the parking lot. Signing of the application by an individual or any representative of the group and/or organization releases the library of any responsibility for damage or loss suffered during the period of agreement. The individual and/or organization shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless Worcester County, Worcester County Library and its officers, agents, and employees from and against any and all claims, suits, actions of any kind, arising and resulting and accruing from any negligent act, omission or error of the individual and/or organization resulting in or relating to personal injuries or property damage arising from the use of the library's meeting room to the extent permissible by Maryland State Law.

Non-Endorsement

Permission to reserve and use a space does not constitute an endorsement by the Library of the group, program or point of view expressed. The name of the Library may not be used in any publicity for non-library sponsored or co-sponsored meeting except to designate the meeting location. The Library may not be identified as a co-sponsor of a meeting without prior written approval.

Charges

- A group or organization may reserve a particular branch library's meeting room with no charge up to six times in a 12-month period. Meetings beyond the sixth may be permitted on a space-available basis, scheduled no more than

2 months in advance and will require payment of a \$10.00 fee. This rule is to ensure that all community organizations have the opportunity to use the library's meeting room space.

Meeting Room Policy Addendum

Meetings of homeowners organizations fall outside the permitted uses of library meeting rooms as specified in the Meeting Room Policy. Because homeowners groups have been meeting in libraries for years, the Worcester County Library Board of Trustees has voted to continue to permit such meetings but to add a small fee, in recognition of the special use that such meetings constitute.

Meetings of homeowners' organizations will require payment of a \$25.00 fee each time up to six meetings per year. For the seventh and any following meetings in a 12-month period, the fee is \$35.00.

Approved by the Worcester County Library Board of Trustees, October 16, 2012

General Rules and Regulations

- A meeting room reservation is not confirmed until an email, electronic document, or fax is sent by the Worcester County Library to the requesting contact.
- All printed material advertising the meeting, including newspaper advertisement must include the following disclaimer: "Use of library meeting space does not constitute endorsement of this organization, this program or its content by the Worcester County Library." Any publicity, including brochures, flyers, radio and TV announcements, newspaper ads, social media posts, etc., must carry the name and telephone number of the individual or organization sponsoring the meeting. The library may not be identified or implied as a sponsor. The library telephone number may not appear on the publicity.)
- Any group that uses a library meeting room agrees to be responsible for setting up the room as it wishes and returning the room to its original condition.
- Any group that uses a library meeting room agrees to be responsible for any damage to the room, furnishings, furniture or equipment during the time of the group's use.
- Users must abide by all local, state, and federal laws and fire codes. While on Library property, users must abide by the Library's Rules of Conduct. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted. No furniture or objects may be placed within 3 feet of fire extinguishers or fire exits.
- Individuals may use cameras, tape recorders or other devices to create sound and/or visual records of all or portions of a meeting if such recording is acceptable to the person conducting the meeting and with authorization from the Branch Manager or Library Director. If such activity is not acceptable to the person conducting the meeting and if it is not protected by relevant local, state, or federal law, then such recording will not be permitted. Library staff and trustees may exercise discretion about the placement of cameras and recording equipment to ensure safety and comfort of those attending the meeting.

I have read the above policy for use of meeting rooms, and in the name of my organization, agree to abide by it.

Signature _____

Date _____

Organization Name _____

Telephone Number _____

Email _____