

Branch Meeting Area Policy

The policies and procedures for the use of meeting areas in the Branch Library of the Brazoria County Library System are established herein. The responsibility for implementing this policy and for scheduling the use of the meeting areas rests with the individual librarian in charge of the building where the meeting areas are located. The Library Director retains final authority for implementing these policies.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the meeting areas is for programs presented by the library or library-related organizations. The general public may use the meeting areas in the library when those areas are not required for the library or library-related organizations' use. Meeting areas may be used by groups for educational, informational, civic, or cultural programs.

1. Unless indicated otherwise, meeting areas are available for use during normal library hours of operation. Procedures for accessing meeting areas after hours vary by library.
2. All activities in the library's meeting areas must be free and open to any member of the public who wants to attend.

a. Prohibited Activities:

Library meeting areas may not be used for any activity that is incompatible with the library environment or interferes with its operations. **Charging admission or registration fees, and/or soliciting donations other than in conjunction with a program or event sponsored or hosted by the Friends of the Library organization are prohibited.** Examples of other prohibited activities include but are not limited to:

- Programs involving the solicitation, sale, advertising, marketing, or promotion of commercial products or services whether benefiting an individual or a for-profit or not-for profit organization at the time of the meeting or in the future
 - Personal events such as birthday parties, baby showers, or other private parties, etc.
- b. Library staff retains the right to attend any meetings or events scheduled at the library to ensure compliance with this policy.

Space Priority

- a. Library-related functions will be given first priority.
- b. Other requests will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis. Any previous approvals may be canceled at any time if the area is needed for official governmental business or the reservation conflicts with library programming. The reservation shall be canceled and may be rescheduled at the group's request.
- c. A calendar of each branch's area availability can be accessed online.

Reservations

- a. There is no charge for the use of the library meeting areas.
- b. A key may be required for after-hours access to the building. Failure to return the key will result in a fee.

- c. A representative of the group or an individual reserving an area must hold a Brazoria County Library System card in good standing.
- d. Area requests can be submitted no more than 90 days (3 months) and no less than 24 hours in advance.
- e. To ensure equitable use of library facilities, the library reserves the right to limit usage.
- f. Reservations are not automatically renewable.
- g. Reservation requests are moderated. Requests are not confirmed until receipt of confirmation email.
- h. The length of time requested for the meeting should include time for setting up the meeting areas and putting it back in order at the end of the meeting. If the meeting extends beyond the scheduled time, the staff member in charge may request that the meeting be adjourned.
- i. The room requestor or designee must be present throughout the length of the meeting.
- j. The individual making the reservation, as well as the membership of the group as a whole, will be held financially responsible for any and all damage that may occur as a result of the use of the facilities. Permission to use the library meeting areas may be withheld from groups whose members or invitees cause damage, or fail to comply with these rules and regulations. Individuals causing disturbances during meetings will be asked to leave.
- k. Cancellations by either the group or the library must be made 24 hours in advance of the meeting date in order to free the room for other groups. Repeated cancellations or failure to show could result in the withdrawal of meeting area privileges.

Usage of Meeting Area

- a. Area set-up and take down are the group's responsibility. No additional furniture or equipment other than that already available in the meeting areas will be provided unless prior arrangements have been made. Staff can offer limited assistance with equipment. It is the group's responsibility to determine equipment compatibility.
- b. If the representative of the group who has reserved an area fails to check in with the library staff within fifteen (15) minutes of the start of the reservation, the library may, at its discretion, cancel the reservation.
- c. The group shall leave the area in the same condition as it was found at the beginning of the meeting. The authorized representative of the group must report to library staff at the end of the meeting. Library staff may conduct a walk-through after each meeting to verify that the areas, fixtures, and equipment are left in proper order. If an after-hours meeting, the walk-through may be conducted the next business day.
- d. Groups must vacate the meeting area 15 minutes before library closing time unless using an after-hours area.

- e. Attendance at meetings must be limited to the seating capacity specified by the Fire Marshal. Meeting area applications will state area capacities. Open aisles must be maintained within the seating arrangement to provide clear access to exits in case of emergency. For statistical purposes the number of people attending must be reported to the library.
- f. Groups must obtain permission from the branch librarian before affixing articles to the walls in the meeting areas.
- g. Library staff will not handle reservations or incoming phone calls for any non-library-related group. Outgoing calls may not be made for any non-library-related organization.
- h. Light refreshments may be served, but groups may not prepare food on library property. Groups are responsible for cleanup and removal of trash from the building. Food debris may not be left in the building.
- i. Smoking or vaping is not allowed in the library. Alcoholic beverages may not be dispensed or consumed in any part of the library or library property.
- j. The library will not be responsible for lost or damaged materials.
- k. The individual making the reservation, as well as the membership of the group as a whole, agree to indemnify and hold the City and County harmless from and against any and all losses, expenses, demands, and claims made against the City and County arising in any manner from such group's use of the library facilities.
- l. The individual making the reservation, as well as the membership of the group as a whole, agree to comply with all applicable federal, state, county, and city ordinances, rules and regulations now in force or which may hereafter be enacted or promulgated.

Failure to comply with any of these rules may result in refusal by the library to allow future meetings by the offending group or individual. Use of the library's meeting areas and spaces does not constitute endorsement, by the City, County or the Library, of points of view expressed by the group. No advertisement or announcement implying such endorsement will be permitted. The library's address, logo or phone number may not be used in any context that implies affiliation with or endorsement by the library.