

# Meeting and Study Room Policy

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The meeting room facilities of the West Florida Public Libraries (WFPL) are primarily for the use of library programs that promote library services, Escambia County sponsored events or for official government elections. When a meeting room is not in use by the library, a county department or another city, state or federal government agency, the meeting rooms are available on a first come, first served basis to applicants as described in this policy. The WFPL do not discriminate based on any race, color, national origin, age, religion, political views, social views, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, or genetic / healthy issues.

Study rooms are available on a first come, first served basis. Study rooms can be used for one hour, but the time may be extended if there is no one waiting to use the study room. Study rooms cannot be reserved and do not have a limit on the number of times used if no one is waiting. Study room use must comply with all other rules stated within this policy.

## PRIORITY FOR USE OF ROOMS

Priority for use of the meeting room facilities shall be the following:

- **Library:** Library programs or programs in which the library is a participant.
- **Escambia County:** Meetings, programs, and activities sponsored or conducted by Escambia County or another city, state, or federal government agency.
- **Official Governmental Elections**
- **Public:** Community applicants' eligible uses.

Scheduling of library and governmental events may cause an already approved public reservation to be cancelled or re-scheduled. The WFPL has first priority on all dates and has the right to preempt any event for a library event. Library staff will attempt to give as much notice as possible in the event that a meeting needs to be cancelled, rescheduled, or moved to another location due to one of these events.

## ELIGIBILITY OF USE

The meeting room facilities of the WFPL may be used by nonprofit educational or community organizations for educational, cultural, intellectual, governmental, charitable

meetings, forums, presentations, or similar activities. Meeting rooms are free to the public. The meeting rooms at the WFPL may not be used for:

- Commercial uses (Please see Section 6 for details).
- Private social events such as, but not limited to, birthdays, anniversaries, wedding receptions, showers, and/or parties.
- Any program, meeting, or event that threatens or undermines the primary purpose of the public library or interferes with the public's access to library facilities, the safety of users and staff, or the protection of library resources and facilities.

## **RESERVATIONS**

The Library Director or a designated library staff member of the WFPL shall have overall responsibility for reservations and room use and shall provide an application form to be filled out by applicants desiring to use the meeting rooms.

1. Room reservations may be made on a first come, first served basis via online application, in person, or over the phone. Applicants must be an adult and WFPL card holder with account in good standing.
2. Reservations may not be made more than six months in advance.
3. Public applicants are limited to no more than six reservations in a six-month period.
4. Repeated cancellations of reservations without a 24-hour notice may result in the denial of future applications for use. Cancellations due to inclement weather are not counted against a patron.
5. The applicant is responsible for any damages to the room or its contents.
6. All groups and/or organizations shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the WFPL, Town of Century, City of Pensacola, Escambia County, and Escambia County BCC, its officers, agents, and employees from and against any and all claims, suits, or actions of any kind, arising, resulting, and accruing from any negligent act, omission, or error of the group or organization resulting in or relating to personal injuries or property damage arising from the group or organization's use of a WFPL meeting room.

## **GENERAL RULES OF USE**

The following rules of use apply to any meeting room users:

1. Attendance at functions in the meeting room is limited to the maximum safe occupancy for the room requested and varies per location.

2. Meeting rooms are available only during hours the library location is open. Meetings must conclude and the meeting room facilities vacated 15 minutes prior to closing of the library.
3. Applicants are responsible for setting up tables, chairs, and other equipment provided with the meeting room facilities. Setup and cleanup time must be included in the reservation time. The meeting room facilities must be returned to the original arrangement and condition. All electronics must be returned to the circulation desk, if applicable.
4. All rules stated in the Rights and Responsibilities Policy must be adhered to (i.e., no smoking or consumption of alcoholic beverages).
5. Refreshments served must be free to attendees. Applicants must bring their own supplies and will not have access to a kitchen.
6. If special equipment is needed by the applicant such as a projector, microphone, video player, etc., arrangements must be made at the time of the initial application.
7. All meetings hosted by community applicants must be free and open to the public.
8. Applicants may charge a reasonable fee to recover costs of materials. Applications shall not require attendees to purchase services or personal property.
9. Applicants may not use tape, nails, thumbtacks, etc., to attach anything to the structure or furnishings.
10. Any personal property in the meeting room is not the responsibility of the WFPL.
11. WFPL reserves the right to have a library staff member present at any event held in the library.
12. Distribution of materials that advertise a business, product, or service in any way is prohibited.
13. Abuse of the facilities, violation of the meeting room policy, or failure to comply with the decorum consistent with the Patron Rights and Responsibilities Policy may result in denial of future applications for use.

The Library Director has the ability to make exceptions to this policy when the need arises.

## **RULES FOR COMMERCIAL USE**

Acceptable uses of the library meeting rooms by commercial businesses are limited to staff training and peer-to-peer networking. The library meeting rooms are not to be used by commercial businesses to make a profit, conduct business, or solicit customers in any way. **Therefore, usage of the library meeting rooms is prohibited for the following purposes:**

- Product deliveries or product usage instruction.
- Recruitment or hiring events.
- Meetings with potential or current customers.
- Speaking engagements, classes, or seminars intended to educate attendees about a product or service offered by a commercial business to encourage attendees to become customers.
- Any other type of event or meeting that is solely focused on profiting from or purchasing the products or services of a commercial business whether the reservation was made by the business or the potential or current customer.
- Any other event where library staff, in their sole discretion, deems that a commercial business may be using the meeting rooms to make a profit, conduct business, or solicit customers.

## **RULES FOR MARKETING OF ROOM RESERVATIONS**

Usage of the WFPL's meeting room facilities does not constitute endorsement or approval of viewpoints expressed by the WFPL, Town of Century, City of Pensacola, Escambia County, and Escambia County BCC, its officers, agents, and employees. Advertisements or announcements implying or specifically stating such endorsement are not permitted.

The following rules apply to materials and/or methods used to advertise, promote or encourage attendance at any event, class, or other program held in the WFPL meeting rooms:

1. Applicants are solely responsible for marketing any event held in the library.
2. **Any printed, electronic, or other marketing materials that include the library's name and address must include the disclaimer: "This event is not sponsored or endorsed by the WFPL or Escambia County."** Any material published by an applicant that does not include this disclaimer may disqualify the applicant from any future use of the library's meeting rooms.
3. Usage of any library phone number as a contact phone number on marketing materials of any type, including but not limited to, print, verbal, or digital, is prohibited. The library will not serve as a point of information for patrons who may have questions regarding a reservation or who wish to contact the meeting/event organizers.
4. **By completing a meeting room application, the applicant agrees that the library can refer any patrons to the applicant for more information regarding the reservation using the contact information supplied on the application.**

5. Applicants must not attempt to solicit attendance from library patrons by distributing marketing materials or verbally requesting their attendance within or immediately outside of the library facility.

Revised and Approved December 11, 2023 by the West Florida Public Libraries Board of Governance.