

Meeting and Study Room Policy

Meeting Rooms

The meeting rooms of the West Florida Public Libraries (WFPL) are primarily designated for library programs Escambia County sponsored events, or for official government elections. When not in use for these purposes, the rooms are available on a first come, first served basis, subject to the terms outlined in this policy. WFPL doesn't discriminate based on any race, color, national origin, age, religion, political views, social views, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, or genetic / health conditions.

Study Rooms

Study rooms are available on a first come, first served basis. Each session is limited to one hour, though extensions may be granted if no other patrons are waiting. Study rooms cannot be reserved in advance, and there is no limit on the number of times they can be used as long as they are available. All use must comply with the rules of this policy.

PRIORITY FOR ROOM USE

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.

WFPL reserves the right to cancel or reschedule public reservations. Library or government events will take precedence. Library staff will make every effort to give as much notice as possible in the event that a meeting needs to be cancelled, rescheduled, or moved to another location.

ELIGIBILITY FOR OF USE

Meeting rooms are available for use by nonprofit educational or community organizations or groups for educational, cultural, intellectual, governmental, or charitable purposes. Meeting rooms are free to the public but cannot be used for:

- Commercial uses (see Section 6 for details).
- Private social events such as, but not limited to, birthdays, anniversaries, wedding receptions, showers, religious service, and/or parties.
- Any program, meeting, or event that threatens or undermines the primary purpose of the public library or materially 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 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. Reservations must be made by an adult WFPL cardholder in good standing.
2. Rooms can be reserved up to six months in advance.
3. Public applicants are limited to six reservations per six-month period.
4. Cancellations must be made at least 24 hours in advance; repeated cancellations may result in the denial of future requests.
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 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 which varies by location.
2. Rooms are available only during library-hours and must be vacated 15 minutes before the library closes.
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 their original arrangement and condition and 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 submitting an application and making a reservation.
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, products, or services 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.

COMMERCIAL USE

Commercial use is limited to staff training or peer-to-peer networking events, with prior approval.

Meeting rooms are not available for commercial activities such as:

- 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.

MARKETING OF ROOM RESERVATIONS

Permission to use the WFPL meeting room facilities does not constitute endorsement, agreement with, or approval by the WFPL, Town of Century, City of Pensacola, Escambia County, and/or the Escambia County BCC, their officers, agents, and employees of any viewpoints, statements, ideas or opinions expressed in such use.

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's facility.
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 16, 2024, by the West Florida Public Libraries
Board of Governance.