

MEETING ROOM USE PROCEDURES

Date Approved: May 26, 2020

- 1. ELIGIBILITY:** Central Library meeting rooms are available free of charge for Massachusetts and City of Boston agencies as well as designated non-profit organizations with a valid 501c tax ID number. For groups without non-profit status, please refer to the Conference Room Rental web page for information regarding private meeting space at the Central Library. Meeting room use for undesignated community groups can be found free of charge at various Boston Public Library branch locations, dependent on availability.

The Trustees of the Library and Library staff shall not discriminate on the basis of the political or religious beliefs of applicant groups, or on any other constitutionally or statutorily-prohibited basis. However, the provision of meeting room space is not the primary mission of the Library and must always be subordinate to the paramount need to provide a safe, peaceful and respectful environment in which to read and study.

All meetings must be free of charge and open to the public. No admission charge, request for donation or items for sale are approved by the Library. Political activity is not permitted. No use of meeting rooms that is likely to disturb Library patrons in their customary use of Library facilities, impede staff in the performance of their duties, or endanger the Library buildings or collection, or otherwise harm the reputation of the Library will be approved or permitted. Use of meeting rooms for Library purposes shall take precedence over all other uses.

- 2. RESERVATIONS:** Reservations for meeting rooms are available on a first come, first served basis. Library and City-sponsored meetings have priority and reserve the right to preempt any scheduled meeting. All groups seeking to use a meeting room shall complete and submit a Meeting Room Use Application at least 3 weeks prior to the preferred meeting date.

The Library has the authority to accept, renew, or reject requests for use of the room under the established policy. To promote the accessibility of the meeting rooms to a wide variety of community groups, the Library may limit meetings for any particular organization. The Trustees of the Boston Public Library and the Library staff reserve the right to reject a reservation request if the anticipated meeting is likely to be unreasonably disruptive to regular library functions, too large for the applicable room capacity, disorderly, dangerous to persons or property, or in any other way inconsistent with or in contravention of any of the terms and conditions of the established Meeting Room Use Policy and Procedures or the mission of the Library. In determining whether such a likelihood exists, the Trustees of the Boston Public Library and/or the Library staff may take into consideration the contents of the application form, the history of the group's meeting room use in the library, the history of the group's use of meeting facilities elsewhere, and other such information as they may deem appropriate.

3. **LIMITATIONS:** Meeting rooms are not available for social gatherings (such as parties or entertainment), fundraising efforts, religious ceremonies or services, or for any form of political activity. No group may consider the library its permanent meeting place or use the library as its mailing address. Recurring meetings (daily, weekly, monthly) will not be permitted.
4. **LIBRARY HOURS:** Daily public hours vary based on individual library location schedules. Meeting room use applications that exceed the standard public hours will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If extended hours are approved, the requesting organization is responsible for advance payment of all necessary fees.
5. **SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:** The applicant and the organization he/she represents agree to pay for any special accommodations or security presence required, as determined by the Library. Applicant and his/her organization agree to pay for damages to the meeting room or to the Library property resulting from meeting room use.

Groups reserving meeting rooms assume full responsibility for providing and paying for special accommodations requested by participants in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Trustees of the Boston Public Library and/or Library staff reserves the right to determine, in its reasonable discretion, whether any proposed use of a meeting room will require a police detail or other extraordinary police protection, and if so the anticipated cost thereof. In making this determination, the Trustees of the Boston Public Library may take into consideration the contents of the application form, the history of the group's meeting room use in the library, the history of the group's use of meeting facilities elsewhere, and such other information as such the Library may deem appropriate, and may consult with members of the Boston Police regarding this inquiry. If the Trustees of the Boston Public Library and/or Library staff determines that such police protection will be reasonably necessary, the group seeking to reserve the use of a meeting room shall be required, as a condition of such reservation, to pay to the Trustees of the Boston Public Library by such date in advance of the meeting as Library staff reasonably sets, the anticipated cost of such police protection, and such sum applied thereto, with any surplus being returned to the group after the meeting. The group shall be liable to the Library for any deficiency.

6. **BUSINESS OPERATIONS & FUNDRAISING:** Meeting rooms shall not be used for entrepreneurial or commercial purposes, for the solicitation of business, for profit or for fundraising other than fundraising that supports the Library, unless specifically permitted by the Library.
7. **POLITICAL ACTIVITY:** All political activity in support of one candidate, groups of candidates or ballot measures is prohibited. Such activities include, but are not limited to, meetings hosted by candidates or their campaigns and any other meeting held in furtherance or in opposition to a political campaign. Political debates in the interest of civic discourse and voter education may be permitted in accordance with the defined meeting room use procedures.
8. **TRANSACTIONS:** The sale or marketing of goods or services is not permitted. No goods or services shall be promoted, sold or exchanged upon the premises or by sample, pictures or descriptions. The selling of books or program-related materials on the premises may occur only with express advance written permission given by the Library.
9. **PROVISION OF FURNITURE & SPACE:** The applicant is responsible for discipline and reasonable care of the room. The applicant will be held responsible for any damage, and the condition

of the room after its use, e.g., chairs stacked, personal items removed. Meeting rooms shall be left in good order and in the original set-up. Failure to do so may result in denial of future use of the room.

- 10. DISPLAYS & SIGNAGE:** No banners, signs or other materials related to the meeting may be displayed inside or outside the Library or meeting space without prior approval from the Library. Said approved material may be displayed within the reserved space and is restricted from public access areas. All signage must be freestanding and nothing may be affixed to any surface (i.e. walls, windows, floors, furniture, or fixtures). As a historic and public building, violations of this policy may result in assessment of damages, conservation fees and revoking of meeting room privileges.
- 11. STORAGE:** The library is unable to provide storage for any group. All items used for the meeting must be removed immediately following the meeting. The Boston Public Library or its agents shall not be liable for any loss, damage or disposal to such property.
- 12. PERSONAL PROPERTY:** It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide necessary equipment if it is not available at the Library. The City of Boston, the Trustees of the Library and Library employees assume no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of any property of any group, individual or organization using library facilities.
- 13. ADVERTISING:** Groups using Library meeting rooms must not use advertising and publicity which imply that their programs are sponsored, co-sponsored, endorsed or approved by the Library, unless written permission to do so has been previously given by the Library. In no case will the library assume responsibility for audience development for a specific meeting room use or program, unless otherwise agreed to.
- 14. FOOD AND BEVERAGE:** Any food and beverage provided at the Central Library must be acquired through the Library's contracted caterer, The Catered Affair. Food and beverage items served at library branch locations must be provided by licensed, insured food providers. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- 15. SMOKING & VAPING:** All Boston Public Library locations are smoke-free buildings, including any enclosed courtyard and balconies. Smoking and/or vaping is not allowed in any part of the Library premises at any time. It is the responsibility of the applicant and his/her organization to inform all attendees of the no smoking and vaping policy.
- 16. EMERGENCY CLOSINGS:** When the Boston Public Library closes because of weather or building emergencies, every effort will be made to notify organizations scheduled to use meeting rooms. During adverse weather conditions, group representatives should call the Library and listen to the recorded message or go to the Boston Public Library website.

Any false, misleading or incomplete statement on the application form shall be grounds to forbid the use of meeting rooms by the applicant group. Failure to comply with the Meeting Room Use Policy will result in withdrawal of meeting room use privileges.

The Boston Public Library Board of Trustees delegates to the Library President or his/her designee the authority to develop and implement procedures which carry out the provisions of these procedures. Exceptions to the procedures may be granted only by the Boston Public Library Board of Trustees or its delegate.

