



Hancock County Library System

Operational Policies

4.1 MEETING & STUDY ROOMS

Meeting rooms are intended to further the Library's mission, including but not limited to 1) facilitating the exchange of diverse information and ideas; 2) providing wholesome and entertaining educational activities for adults, teens, and children; and, 3) bringing high-quality cultural programming to residents of the community. The Executive Director is responsible for establishing and administering procedures to carry out this policy.

Library meeting rooms may be reserved by local non-profit groups and organizations for meetings, programs, seminars, and exhibits. Library programs and co-sponsored programs and events from groups or organizations affiliated with the Library are given priority. Library meeting rooms may not be used by individuals, businesses, or corporations for commercial or for-profit ventures. Individuals or small study groups may be permitted to use the meeting room for quiet study or private meetings, but community groups presenting programs and meetings open to the public will be given priority.

Library facilities are available on a non-discriminatory, equal access basis in compliance with state law. Use of Library facilities and meeting rooms by any group or organization signifies acceptance of the terms of this policy and the guidelines for room use. Permission to use Hancock County Library System facilities will be denied for purposes that would interfere with the proper functioning of the Library, disrupt the use of the Library by others, or violate state law. Permission to use the library's meeting rooms does not constitute library endorsement of any program presented or any viewpoints expressed by the Hancock County Library System. Advertisements or announcements implying such endorsement are not permitted.

The following non-library-sponsored activities are prohibited in HCLS meeting room spaces:

- Social gatherings such as showers, birthday parties, dances, etc.
- Political rallies or campaigns for specific partisan political issues or candidates.
- Direct healthcare services, including examinations, hands-on demonstrations, or treatments.
- Religious/church/worship services or ceremonies (though religious study groups are permitted).
- Other events considered by the Executive Director or Board of Trustees to be contrary to the purpose of this policy or mission of the Hancock County Library System.

HCLS does not assume liability for injuries to individuals or damages to personal property that occur because of actions of the sponsors or participants in activities in its meeting rooms.

Person(s) reserving meeting rooms will be held responsible for any expense the Library incurs due to the actions of a group or individual's use of meeting room space.

Parties reserving meeting room space must adhere to the following:

- Persons who attend events in the meeting rooms must abide by the HCLS Rules of Conduct and all Library policies.
- No admission may be charged.
- No products, services, merchandise, or memberships may be promoted, advertised, solicited, or sold in a meeting room, except those that benefit the Library and are sponsored by the Library Foundation of Hancock County.
- Attendance must not exceed the posted capacity of the meeting room.
- Use of meeting rooms shall conform to all local, state, and federal laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Programs and meetings published on the Library's event calendar must be open to the public

4.1.1 APPROVAL OF RESERVATIONS

Library managers or their designees will approve the use of the meeting rooms, based solely on the Library's meeting room policy. Any application that is denied may be referred by the applicant to the Executive Director, and, if necessary, it can be referred by the Executive Director to the Board of Trustees for a final decision. The Library reserves the right to deny further use of the meeting rooms to individuals, groups, or organizations who do not comply with this policy.

4.1.2 SCHEDULING RESERVATIONS

Reservations are on a first-come, first-served basis and may be made at least 72 hours and no more than six months in advance. The Executive Director and designated staff may grant discretionary approval for reservations outside of these time frames. Requests for the use of library meeting rooms may be made in person or online. If available, meeting rooms may also be reserved for walk-in requests. The Library reserves the right to re-schedule a meeting room reservation to accommodate Library programming or ensure equitable access for public use. Notice of cancellation should be made as soon as possible and at least 24 hours in advance of the reservation. If parties reserving and using Library facilities fail to follow the guidelines the Library may deny future requests to reserve meeting and study rooms.

4.1.3 CARE AND USE OF FACILITIES

- Permission to use the rooms includes ordinary use of the furniture and fixtures.

- Equipment, supplies, or personal effects cannot be stored or left in Library meeting rooms before or after use.
- Groups or organizations are responsible for the set-up and cleanup of the meeting room.
- Groups must leave rooms as they are found.
- All trash resulting from the serving of refreshments must be removed from the premises by the organization.
- Light refreshments may be served. Meal preparation is not allowed.
- The Library recommends technical instruction at least 2-3 days before the event if presenters do not have experience with our technology and equipment.

*Adopted by the Board of Trustees May 24, 2005,
Last Revised February 20, 2024*