

Warren County Library Meeting Room Policy

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AMENDMENT 2022-10*

WARREN COUNTY LIBRARY MEETING ROOM POLICY

Introduction

The Warren County Library (“Library”) is a community resource providing access to information and facilities where ideas are exchanged to enrich people’s lives. Library meeting rooms are primarily reserved for Library purposes, activities, sponsored events and other related functions. When not scheduled or needed for Library events, meeting rooms may be made available for public use by governmental entities and to organizations engaged in educational, intellectual, informational, civic, charitable, cultural or non-partisan political purposes.

The Library subscribes to the equitable use of its facilities regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of the organizations requesting use. Permission to use the meeting rooms does not constitute or imply endorsement on the part of the Library, Library Commission, Library staff or County of Warren of any particular organization’s beliefs, viewpoints, policies, programs, objectives, opinions or the accuracy of any information presented. No organization shall in any of its publicity suggest that the County, Library Commission, Library, or Library staff sponsors or endorses the meeting, the group, or any particular set of ideas.

Rules & Regulations

The use of Library meeting rooms is subject to the following rules and conditions:

1. Any organization requesting use of the Library meeting rooms must fully complete, sign and submit a Meeting Room Application and Use Agreement (“Application”) and obtain approval from the Library Director or an authorized member of the Library staff.
2. The use of meeting rooms is subject to compliance with this Meeting Room Policy and all other policies, rules and regulations of the Warren County Library.
3. Groups are responsible for ensuring all attendees comply with the Warren County Library Code of Conduct, other Library policies, and the posted occupancy limits for meeting space.
4. Meetings must be open to the public, free of charge, and are not held with the intention of generating revenue.
5. No selling of goods or services is to be conducted. Only fundraising events sponsored by the Library or organizations affiliated with the Library are permitted.
6. Meeting rooms are not available for social gatherings, for the benefit of private individuals, for commercial enterprises, or any closed meetings.
7. Content of the program may not differ from the original proposal as provided in the approved Meeting Room Application and Use Agreement.
8. Meeting room programs must not interfere with Library operations or the use of the Library by others.

9. All publicity related to meeting room use must clearly indicate the name of the sponsoring organization or group. All publicity shall not imply or suggest that the Library, Library Commission, Library staff, or County of Warren sponsors or endorses the meeting or any ideas, beliefs, viewpoints, opinions, or the accuracy of information presented. Groups may identify the Library and provide its address in their publicity for the meeting; however, they may not give out the Library's telephone number or invite the attendees to contact the Library for information about their meeting.
10. Literature may be distributed if it's available without charge and contains no solicitation of fees.
11. Any person making application for use of the meeting room must be at least 18 years or older. For all meetings in which minors are in attendance, the same adult that made application and obtained approval for the use of the meeting room shall, at all times, be present and directly responsible for the conduct and supervision of any minors attending the meeting both in and outside of the meeting room.
12. Group members are responsible for making themselves aware of emergency exits and safety equipment such as fire extinguishers. Open flames are not permitted.
13. Groups may not store their personal effects, supplies, or equipment at the Library.
14. Beverages and light refreshments are permitted, but the room must be left clean. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted. Any trash generated by the group should be removed by them.
15. Nothing may be affixed or mounted in any way to the walls, floors, or fixtures.
16. The organization is responsible for set-up, break-down, and clean-up of the meeting room. Rooms must be left in the same condition as they were found and the furnishings must be in the original arrangement. Charges for clean-up will be billed to the organization and the individual responsible for submitting the Application.
17. Audiovisual equipment is available at the library, but arrangements for such equipment must be made when booking the room. Library staff cannot provide assistance with equipment not belonging to the Library.
18. Meetings must be booked for times when the Library is open.
19. Groups must clean-up and vacate meeting rooms by the end of their reserved time, which must be 15 minutes prior to the Library closing.
20. The booking organization must notify the Library if the meeting or program is cancelled a minimum of 24 hours in advance.
21. Organizations may not assign or transfer their reservations to other organization without the express written approval of the Library.
22. In the event any film, movie and/or other work presented during the meeting is subject to copyright, trademark or other intellectual property rights, protections or interests, the Organization is solely responsible for obtaining and compliance with any and all approvals and permissions that may be required.
23. Meetings must comply with all Federal, State, County, and local laws.

Eligibility to Reserve a Meeting Room

Governmental, non-profit and not-for-profit organizations and community groups based in the Warren County Library service area or comprised of members from our service area may be eligible for use of the Library's meeting rooms.

An organization must consist of at least three (3) members.

Non-profit organizations and not-for-profit entities may be required to provide documentation confirming the currency of the entities registration and the authorization of the individual to act on its behalf as part of the application process to reserve meeting rooms.

Community groups are defined as organizations recognized as a service organization and established for a specific not-for-profit purpose. Part of their purpose is to provide support and services, which benefit the immediate and future community; they work for the benefit of the public. These groups may have to provide their governing documents, such as their constitution, mission statement, and by-laws, as part of the application process to reserve meeting rooms.

Reservations

A Warren County Library Meeting Room Application and Use Agreement ("Application and Agreement") must be filled out and submitted to the Library for review. A Warren County Library member over 18 years of age and in good standing must sign as the responsible party on the group's application. In accepting applications, the Library will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, age, or sex.

All applications to use the room must be approved by the Library Director or their designee; an application for use does not assure approval.

Groups may apply for meeting space no more than 6 months in advance.

Groups can reserve meeting space up to 12 times within a calendar year.

Groups may reserve only one meeting room for use at the same time.

The Library cannot guarantee the availability of rooms for ongoing, regular meetings.

The Library reserves the right to alter meeting room reservations according to the Library's needs.

The Library allows groups and organizations to reserve the meeting room in order of the receipt of applications. In the case of conflict, according to the following order of priority.

1. Library: Programs and meetings which involve efforts of Library staff, Warren County Library Commission, Friends of the Library or Catherine Dickson Hofman Library Association, and groups of which the Library is a member.

2. Government: Warren County, municipalities in Warren County and other local, State and Federal governmental entities.
3. Meetings of non-profit organizations, community groups, and not-for-profit entities.

Insurance

Organizations using the meeting room must have insurance. They must provide a Certificate of Liability Insurance and endorsements evidencing the coverage provided by the policy naming the Warren County Library and County of Warren as additional insured under the policy. Those without insurance can submit a written request for a waiver to the Library Director and/or Warren County Library Commission.

Waiver of Rules & Regulations

Exceptions from specific rules and regulations of this policy may be authorized in writing for Friends of the Warren County Library, Catherine Dickson Hofman Trustees Association, municipal governments in our service area, Warren County, the State of New Jersey and other non-profit and not-for-profit organizations and community groups on a case-by-case basis, as approved by the Warren County Library Commission and/or the Library Director.

Additional usage of the meeting rooms by approved organizations and groups may be granted for requests made no further than 1 week in advance. These requests will not count towards the groups' allotment of 12 uses per calendar year.

Any groups or organizations requesting a waiver to any of the rules and regulations must submit a written letter to the Library Director and/or Warren County Library Commission. The letter needs to specify which rules and regulations they are asking to be exempt from and why they are making this request. Requesting a waiver does not guarantee the application will be approved.

The Library staff is not authorized to waive any requirements of this policy. Any such waivers must be authorized and approved the Warren County Library Commission and/or Library Director.

Request for Reconsideration

Applicants who are denied permission to use the Library's facilities may, upon written request, have the decision reviewed by the Library Commission, whose decision shall be final.

Rights Reserved & Disclaimers

1. The Library reserves the right to cancel a meeting room reservation for unforeseen Library needs and emergencies.
2. The Library may refuse the use of a meeting room if it appears that the use may likely provoke or add to a public riot or a breach of the peace or create a clear and present danger to the peace and welfare of the County.
3. Permission to use a Library meeting room does not signify endorsement of the beliefs, policies, programs, or positions of the group or organization.
4. Permission to use a room is revocable and does not constitute a lease.
5. The Library reserves the right to designate an event monitor to observe all aspects of the meeting to assure compliance with the Library's policies.
6. The Library reserves the right to deny meeting room use to any organization that does not comply with the regulations set forth in this policy and the Warren County Library Code of Conduct.
7. The Library reserves the right to deny meeting room use to any group that does not leave a room in a clean and orderly condition or causes damage to Library property.
8. The Library reserves the right to deny meeting rooms to organizations that frequently cancel meetings; do not show up; do not notify the library about canceled meetings; consistently overstay their reserved time; misuse the meeting room; and that misrepresent their sponsors, content, purpose, and/or audience for the meeting.
9. The Library assumes no liability for theft or damage to the property brought onto Library premises or for injuries which occur as a result of actions of participants in activities in meeting rooms.