

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY ROOMS (DESIGNATED LIMITED PUBLIC FORUM SPACE)

EFFECTIVE: DECEMBER 16, 2009

EXPIRATION: 2 YEARS

SUPERSEDES:

1. PURPOSE:

- A. The Library's Community Room spaces are intended to be used for Library related functions. The Library may allow other individuals and groups limited access to those rooms as part of a program of service in furtherance of the Library's objectives as described below.
- B. Spaces are made available to the public "on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use." [ALA Library Bill of Rights](#)
- C. The Library's objectives are to promote lifelong learning, enhance quality of life, encourage individual intellectual freedom and broaden horizons of all Hillsborough County residents. The library has recently added outdoor venues (plazas, gazebos, etc) for use in a similar manner.
- D. Use of community rooms shall have the following priority:
 - (1) Early voting or voting precinct locations as outlined in 2 (I) below
 - (2) Library sponsored or co-sponsored programs, including partnerships with groups that qualify as a 501(c)3 organization such as the Hillsborough County Literacy Council and Friends of the Library of Tampa Hillsborough County, Inc.
 - (3) Individuals, groups, organizations and governmental agencies on a first come first serve basis

2. POLICY:

- A. The time, place and manner of access to community rooms are governed in accordance with this policy.
- B. The [Library Meeting Space Chart](#) lists rooms and outdoor venues that have been designated as community rooms.
- C. Community rooms may be booked by individuals or nonprofit groups and organizations that do not unlawfully discriminate in their membership practices. Library staff may request proof of non-profit status. Use of facilities is also governed by [Board of County Commissioners \(BOCC\) Policy Section Number 08.01.00.01, Policy for Use of County-Owned Real Estate; Administrative Directive #AD-08 Political Activity](#); and Department of Human Resources [HR6-18 Use of County Facilities](#).
- D. The Library, the Board of County Commissioners, the Library Board, Friends of the Library of Hillsborough County, Inc., neither endorse, approve nor disapprove the aims, policies, viewpoints, activities of groups holding

meetings in community rooms.

- E. All meetings must be free and open to the public.
- F. In order that all have a fair opportunity to use community rooms, the Library reserves the right to limit the number and time length of reservations made by individuals, groups or organizations.
- G. All persons attending must conform to guidelines set forth in the Library Customer [LS 502 Code of Conduct](#).
- H. Individuals must be eighteen (18) years of age or older or of legal age to reserve community rooms.
- I. Election rules and regulations will be overseen and enforced by Supervisor of Election staff in accordance with [Florida Statutes, Chapter 101.657](#) and [Administrative Directive #AD-08 Political Activity](#). When elections are scheduled, they will pre-empt all library and non-library scheduled meetings.
- J. Individuals, groups and organizations may not schedule to use community rooms more than twice a month. Use of County property for periods of thirty (30) days or more is governed by [Board Policy Section Number 08.01.00.01, Policy for Use of County-Owned Real Estate](#) and Department of Human Resources [HR6-18 Use of County Facilities](#).
 - (1) Meetings generally are scheduled to take place during regular agency hours of operation and end at closing time.
 - (2) Reservations can be accepted for a period of up to three (3) months in advance of the current date.
 - (3) County, city, state, federal or educational groups may reserve community rooms for multiple dates for important meetings of community interest as determined by library administration.
 - (4) The same community room may not be available to the same individual, group or organization for every meeting. Every effort will be made to provide an adequate substitute location.
- K. After Hours Bookings
 - (1) At libraries with community rooms that can be secured separately from the library proper, meetings may be scheduled to take place outside of the regular hours of operation. These bookings must have two (2) weeks prior approval of library administration.
 - (2) Use shall be at the sole risk and expense of the individual, group or organization booking the community room and the Library is expressly relieved of any responsibility for any damage or loss to the individual, group, organization or any other party resulting from such use.
 - (3) The individual, group or organization shall, at its sole cost and expense, indemnify, defend and hold the Library, its agents and employees, harmless from and against any and all claims, suits,

demands, losses, costs and expenses, including attorneys' fees, with respect to bodily injury (including death), property damage, nuisance, caused or alleged to be caused by the individual, group or organization (including its employees, agents, representatives, subcontractors, contractors and invitees) or otherwise arising out of its activities as contemplated herein.

- (4) The group organization or individual will be given a key and alarm code to the building and will be responsible for accessing and securing the building.

L. Liability:

- (1) Community rooms must be left in the same condition and arrangement in which it was found prior to usage. Responsibility for any damage to property or loss of library equipment must be assumed by the individual, group, or organization using the room.
- (2) Accidents are to be reported immediately to a member of library staff.
- (3) Individuals, groups or organizations and all attendees must save, defend, and hold Hillsborough County harmless from any claim or injury to themselves or others.

M. Library staff may attend or observe any meeting or any program at any time. Materials being taken into community rooms by the public may be subject to examination by Library staff.

N. The name, address, phone number of any library may not be used as the address or headquarters of any group. No individual, group or organization may imply library sponsorship agreement without prior approval and such approval shall be in writing and in accordance with library policy.

O. The individual, group or organization is responsible for its own publicity unless the Library has a formal sponsored or co-sponsored agreement and it is outlined therein.

P. No sale of items or fund raising activities may take place in community rooms unless the individual, group or organization is acting as a co-sponsor or partner for a library program, event or activity.

Q. Procedures to uphold this policy are subject to review by the Library Board and the County Attorney's Office. The Director of Libraries is delegated to interpret and implement this policy.

3. PROCEDURE:

A. Applications:

- (1) Individuals, groups or organizations wishing to have the Library co-sponsor a program should apply to the Library staff three months in advance of the proposed event in order to ensure adequate planning, preparation, and presentation of the program.

- (2) Co-sponsored programs are usually of an educational and/or cultural nature.
 - (3) An [Application for Use of Library Meeting Rooms](#) is not required for co-sponsored programs.
 - (4) Individuals, groups or organizations wishing to reserve community rooms must submit a completed [Application for Use of Library Meeting Rooms](#) at least two (2) weeks in advance to the staff where space is desired. A submitted application does not constitute a guaranteed reservation.
 - (5) Each application is generally kept on file for six months. The individual, group or organization is responsible for keeping its application current.
 - (6) Late applications will be considered on an individual basis.
 - (7) Individuals, groups or organizations will be notified when applications are accepted and confirmed
- B. The Library reserves the right to refuse individuals, groups or organizations utilization of community rooms. Such refusal will be based upon a reasonableness standard and will not be of an arbitrary or capricious nature in accordance with this policy. Individuals, groups or organizations may ask for reconsideration of a denial by taking the following steps:
- (1) The individual, group or organization should first seek resolution from the branch or department supervisor.
 - (2) If unsatisfied with the response of the branch or department supervisor, the individual, group, or organization may complete and send a [Appeal for Use of Library Meeting Space](#) form to the Director of Libraries requesting review of community room denial. The form must be received no later than fifteen days after the initial complaint to the branch or department supervisor.
 - (3) The Director of Libraries or his designee appoints a panel of three Managers or Chief Librarians to review the community meeting room denial and address the party's complaint. The panel reviews the appeal form request and any relevant policies and informs the party in writing of their decision within fifteen days of receipt of the group/organization's complaint.
 - (4) Within seven days of receipt of the review panel's decision, the party may send a letter to the Director of Libraries asking for rescission of the denial and the reasons for the requested rescission. The Director has seven days to review the panel's decision and respond to the group/organization in writing.
 - (5) Within seven days of receipt of the Director of Libraries' decision, the party may send a letter to the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public

Library Board requesting review of the denial. The Library Board reviews the decision at their next regularly scheduled Board meeting and informs the party of their decision in writing. The decision of the Library Board is final.

C. Cancellations:

- (1) The Library retains the right to cancel a reservation for a community room in the event of a scheduling conflict with a library activity or co-sponsored program. If cancellation is necessary, the Library will notify the individual, group or organization that reserved the room for the time in question.
- (2) The Library retains the right to cancel reservations for community rooms should conditions arise that affect the safety, health or operation of the facility. Reasonable efforts will be made to reschedule the reservation.
- (3) Individuals, groups or organizations holding reservations are requested to notify the Library of any cancellation at the earliest possible date in order to free the community room for use by others.
- (4) Individuals, groups or organizations failing to give notice of cancellation twice in succession may be denied future use of community rooms.

D. Use Limitations:

- (1) Occupancy capacity of community rooms is listed in the [Library Meeting Space Chart](#). Fire Marshal's standards cannot be exceeded.
- (2) Individuals, groups or organizations must check in with library staff on first arrival for any meeting and provide them with an attendance count before departure.
- (3) Refreshments are not permitted in community rooms unless prior approval has been obtained from library staff and must be removed from the premises at conclusion of event.
- (4) Serving of alcoholic beverages is strictly prohibited unless approved in advance by the Library Board in accordance with [LS 534 Alcohol Use Policy](#) for special events held when the Library would otherwise be closed. An [Application for Permission to Serve Alcoholic Beverages during a Special Event](#) form must be completed three (3) months prior to the event.
- (5) Requests from non-profit organizations for use of community rooms for special events will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Library Services will consider these requests based primarily on the impact and cost to the library.
- (6) Community rooms are not available for private social gatherings (parties, weddings, bridal, baby showers, family reunions, graduation

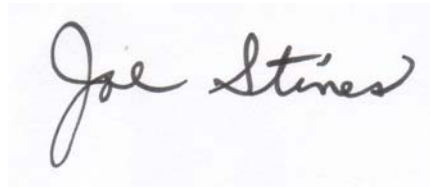
ceremonies, etc.) or commercial ventures.

- (7) Storage space for equipment, supplies, materials, etc. belonging to individuals groups or organizations cannot be provided by the library.
- (8) Sound amplification in a community room must not impede regular operations of the library.
- (9) Copyrighted or commercially produced films, videos, and DVDs must have public performance rights in order to be viewed in a community room.
- (10) Community rooms are not available for the provision of any health care activities that include physical exams or the dispensation of medications including vaccinations. Requests of this nature are referred to the Hillsborough County Health Department.
- (11) Individuals, groups or organizations' activities may not adversely affect the library's operations.

4. AUTHORITY:

Pursuant to Section 5(1) of [Chapter 84-443](#), Laws of Florida, the Library Board has the duty and the responsibility, among others, to serve in a recommending capacity to the Director of Library Services and to the County Administrator in respect to all matters pertaining to the public library.

Approval Signature:



Joe Stines
Director of Libraries