

SUBJECT: SMALL MEETING ROOMS (LIMITED PUBLIC FORUM)

EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 27, 2011

REVIEW: 2 YEARS

1. PURPOSE:

- A. The Library's Small Meeting Rooms are intended to be used for Library related functions. The Library allows 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 facilitate library programming and other public library related services, literacy tutoring, group and independent study, small group meetings with links to the library or other similar activities.
- D. Use of a small meeting room shall have the following priority:
 - (1) Library sponsored or co-sponsored programs, including Library 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.
 - (2) Individuals, groups, and governmental agencies on a first-come, first serve basis.

2. POLICY:

- A. Small meeting rooms may be reserved by individuals or nonprofit 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 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](#).
- B. The Library, Board of County Commissioners, the Library Board, Friends of the Library of Hillsborough County, Inc., neither endorse, approve nor disapprove the aims, policies or viewpoints of individuals, groups or organizations using small meeting rooms.
- C. In order that all have a fair opportunity to use a small meeting room, the Library reserves the right to limit the number, time length and frequency of use by individuals, groups or organizations. Small meeting rooms reserved in advance are held no longer than 15 minutes after the official start time and may be reserved no more than twice a month.
- D. All persons attending must conform to guidelines set forth in [LS 502 Code of](#)

Conduct.

E. Liability:

- (1) A small meeting room must be left in the same condition and arrangement in which it was found prior to usage. Responsibility for any damage to property 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 by or injury to themselves or others.

F. Library staff may attend or observe any meeting or any program at any time. Materials taken into a small meeting room by the public may be subject to examination by library staff.

G. The name, address, phone number of any library may not be used as the address or headquarters of any individual, group or organization. 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.

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

I. 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) Small meeting rooms are generally used on a first-come, first-serve basis—small study groups, independent study. However, where the group or organization is more formal or may want to meet on a more regular basis, a meeting room application must be submitted in advance.
- (2) Small meeting rooms are generally used for two (2) hours, but extended if no other customers are waiting to use the room.
- (3) Each application is generally kept on file for six months. The individual, group or organization is responsible for keeping its application current.

- (4) Late applications will be considered on an individual basis.
 - (5) 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 small meeting 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 small meeting 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 small 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 small meeting 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 a small

meeting room 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 a Small Meeting Room for other groups.
- (4) Individuals, groups or organizations failing to give notice of cancellation twice in succession may be denied future use of the space.

D. Use Limitations:

- (1) A small meeting room occupancy capacity as 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) Dry snacks and capped beverages are permissible in meeting rooms. Library customers are responsible for their own cleanup of wrappers, packaging, bottles, etc.
- (4) Serving of alcoholic beverages is strictly prohibited.
- (5) Small meeting rooms are not available for private social gatherings or commercial ventures.
- (6) Storage space for equipment, supplies, materials, etc. belonging to individuals groups or organizations cannot be provided by the library.
- (7) Library staff are not responsible for holding a room or notifying customers when a room becomes available.
- (8) Small meeting rooms are not held for someone while they leave the area for meal breaks, errands or other purposes. Additionally, library staff are not responsible for personal materials/items left in rooms at any time.
- (9) Sound amplification in a small meeting room must not impede regular operations of the library.
- (10) Copyrighted or commercially produced films, videos, and DVDs must have public performance rights in order to be viewed in a small meeting room.
- (11) Small meeting 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.

- (12) Use of small meeting rooms must take place during regular Library hours of operation and end at closing time.
- (13) County, city, state, federal or educational groups may reserve a small meeting room for multiple dates in accordance with this policy.
- (14) The same small meeting 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.
- (15) Small meeting rooms are designed primarily for library related uses as outlined in Section 1. A. of this policy.
- (14) 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