

Policy Name: Meeting Room Policy

Adoption Date: 08/17/2022

Supersedes: Meeting Room Policy #10.18 (revised 07/18/18)

BACKGROUND

Tacoma Public Library (TPL) offers free use of meeting rooms as a public service. Individuals, organizations, and community groups may reserve a room when those rooms are not in use by the Library.

The Library is fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice, and to intellectual freedom. Our vision is to be a radically welcoming and to be a trusted community hub, to foster an environment that not only supports but promotes diversity and inclusion.

Many libraries provide meeting rooms for individuals and groups as part of a program of service. Article VI of the Library Bill of Rights states that such facilities should be made available to the public served by the given library "on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use." The provision of a meeting room for public use does not constitute Library endorsement of the beliefs or ideas expressed by organizations or individuals using the space.

TPL acknowledges the potential for friction between our values around racial equity, social justice, diversity, and inclusion and the rights of all groups that fall within room reservation eligibility. TPL also upholds rights such as the first amendment of the US constitution and the right of all to intellectual freedom.

POLICY INTENT

Groups wishing to reserve meeting rooms may go to www.tacomalibrary.org to make an online reservation or contact the library whose room they wish to use (in person or by phone).

Use of a meeting room implies consent to this policy and all other Library rules, regulations and policies. We expect Library visitors to treat each other, staff, and property with respect. Serious or repeated misconduct may lead to restrictions including loss of library privileges for a period determined by library staff, and/or appropriate legal action.

TPL reserves the right to deny or cancel reservations.

Room Reservation Eligibility

All room reservations must be made by someone aged 12 or above. Purposes for the meeting must include one of the following:

- Nonpartisan Civic Engagement – without endorsing, opposing, or supporting a particular political measure, candidate, incumbent or campaign
- Community or Cultural Related Activities or Clubs
- Educational Related Activities and Study Groups
- Private business (under certain conditions, see limitations)
- Non-profit agencies (under certain conditions, see limitations)

Meeting rooms may be used for general political purposes, such as information sharing, organizational meetings or non-partisan community forums. The laws of the State of Washington RCW 42.17A.555 prohibit the use of public facilities for the purpose of assisting the campaign for the election of any person to any office, or for the promotion or opposition of any ballot issue. No dues or donations may be solicited or collected except for events benefiting Tacoma Public Library or the Tacoma Public Library Foundation. No products or services may be advertised, solicited, or sold. An exception to this policy is made for library-sponsored events.

Reservations

Reservation applications are accepted no further than 90 days in advance and are tentative until confirmed. For example, on September 1, rooms may be reserved through November 30. Please notify the library as soon as possible if you no longer need the room. A room reservation may be canceled either online or by contacting the location of your reservation.

When reserving a room, please be sure to account for time to set up and clean up. Based on room availability and library operating hours, meeting rooms can be reserved for a maximum of 4-hours. Meeting rooms must be vacated 15 minutes before closing time.

Meeting room reservations can be made online or by contacting the preferred library location for the meeting. Meeting room reservations are accepted on a first-come, first serve basis. Parties, receptions or other social events may not be held in the meeting rooms. System-wide meeting room use is limited to once a week by any one group.

Damages to Library Meeting Rooms or Property

The Library does not charge rental fees for the use of meeting rooms, though the Library may attempt to collect payment if users cause damage to rooms or property.

Availability

Library meeting rooms are available during library operating hours. Exceptions are made for Library-sponsored or Main library non-profit tenant-partner programs and events.

Equipment

The Library provides tables and chairs for use in meeting rooms. Tables and chairs may be arranged to meet the needs of the group as long as emergency exits are kept clear. The room should be restored to its original configuration.

General Guidelines

- Light refreshments may be served, such as water, coffee, tea, and fruit. Set up and clean up must be done within the time reserved. Users assume responsibility for cleaning up after themselves.
- Use of personal, audio, visual, laptop or other equipment is permitted
- Noise should be kept to a minimum to preserve all patrons' enjoyment of the Library
- Any publicity and advertising for meetings and events must contain the words: "This event is not sponsored by the Tacoma Public Library."
- Guidelines for meeting room bookings are subject to local health and safety orders

Limitations on Use

- All meetings must be free and open to the public except for certain Library, City, County, State or Federal government meetings; Library staff may enter the meeting room during any meeting.
- Not eligible are events hosted by companies or individuals selling the goods or services they plan to present to the public. For example, businesses may use the rooms for meetings for their staff but may

not use the library to promote or educate the public about products or services related to their for-profit business.

- Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in Library facilities or on Library property; exceptions may be made for permitted Library-sponsored or Main library non-profit partner programs and events.
- The use of tobacco products, including but not limited to vaping devices, is limited to designated smoking areas only and not permitted in meeting rooms or inside the Library
- No animals/pets are allowed in the meeting rooms except for service animals.
- Hazardous materials are prohibited.
- No promotions of meetings/events inside the Library or Library grounds, that are not endorsed Library Events (events put on by the Library itself)
- No overcrowding rooms – when booking a room please consider the capacity of the room and the size of your group

Reservations May be Terminated, Cancelled, or Denied If:

- The applicant provides false or misleading information.
- An individual or group, willfully or through gross negligence, mistreats the equipment or facilities or violates any Library policies.
- Library's need for the meeting space.
- The activity is illegal under federal, state or local law.
- When the activity is likely to incite illegal, or violent behavior.
- Use of meeting rooms by the group will disrupt normal Library operations or becomes a financial burden to the Library.
- Repeated cancellations or failure to notify the branch of a cancelled meeting.
- To accommodate a library program or due to closure or emergency. Effort will be made to move the reservation to another location if possible.

Liability

The library does not assume liability for injuries or damage to personal property that occurs because of the actions of the sponsors or participants, or because of their use of library facilities

Appealing a Room Reservation Denial

Any person whose request for a room reservation is denied or revoked may appeal the denial or revocation to the Library Director or Assistant Library Director within 14 business days of the denial. The appellant must demonstrate that the denial or revocation is contrary to the guidelines set forth above. Final decisions regarding appeals are made by the Library Director or Assistant Director and delivered in writing to the appellant within 30-business days. Appeals may be mailed via the US postal service to **1102 Tacoma Avenue S. Tacoma, WA 98402** or emailed and must include contact information of the appellant. The Director or Assistant Director's decision is the final decision for the request.

Contact information for the Library Directors can be found on tacomalibrary.org.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

This policy supports the following library strategic priorities:

Cultivate and Engage Community: By offering free spaces for the community to meet, TPL is meeting a unique need in the Tacoma-Pierce County community. Stakeholders in the Tacoma-Pierce County community have consistently named meeting space as an issue in the Hilltop & East Side areas of Tacoma. Ensuring that meeting room spaces remain free and available for use, helps current patrons but also enforces the perspective that these areas shall remain free of charge for public use.

Responsible and Resilient: Meeting room space allows for users with similar objectives to meet and discuss their topic freely, without interruptions from other Library users, and allows other patrons to complete their individual activities without the noise of larger groups.

	<p>Equity and Access We are committed to racial equity and social justice. It guides our work in serving Tacoma's diverse communities, especially the most vulnerable and underserved.</p>	X	<p>Cultivate and Engage Community We will be the center for connecting people, ideas, and places.</p>
	<p>Learning, Creativity, and Innovation We will be the place for learning, discovery, and innovation.</p>	X	<p>Responsible and Resilient We will be an integral partner in a sustainable network that supports a thriving Tacoma.</p>
	<p>Investment in Youth We believe that youth are the future and will prioritize services, programs, and partnerships that nurture and develop young minds.</p>		

RELATED DOCUMENTS & LINKS

<p>RCW 42.177A.555 – Washington Law prohibiting the use of public facilities to assist in the election or promotion of political campaigns, agendas, or incumbents</p> <p>American Library Association: Meeting Rooms</p> <p>Tacoma Public Library's Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Priorities</p>
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POLICY HISTORY

Action	Date	Notes
Revision Adopted	08/17/2022	N/A