

Meeting Room Use Policy for Non-Library Sponsored Events

POLICY: It is the policy of the Norfolk Public Library (NPL) to provide meeting rooms for the use of nonprofit and community groups to help meet the diverse cultural, educational, recreational, and informational needs of our community as well as for-profit and business organizations that pay a fee for such use. In accordance with the American Library Association (ALA) Library Bill of Rights, the NPL meeting rooms are available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

DEFINITIONS:

CORI: Criminal Offender Record Information which is name-based court arraignment records, created and maintained by the Massachusetts courts.

Meeting room: a room at the NPL designated for use by the Library Director for meetings of nonprofit, community groups, and for-profit and business organizations. The Library meeting rooms are identified as the Community Room (capacity 125), Lounge (12), and School House (15).

Responsible Person: A person who requests to use a meeting room on behalf of an organization. They must be a resident of Norfolk (unless this requirement is waived by the Library Director) and over 21 years of age. They are accountable for conduct of the group, payment of any bills or expenses incurred during the event, for any fees incurred as a result of failure to comply with meeting room user regulations, and for protection of Library property in connection with the event. The Responsible Person is accountable to read the Meeting Room Use Rules and shall promptly reimburse the Library for any expense or damage resulting from their use of Library facilities.

PROCEDURE:

Reserving a Meeting Room

1. Meeting room space may be requested under the "Services" tab on Library webpage (<https://norfolkpl.org/services/meeting-rooms/>). Meeting rooms may also be requested by sending an email to the Library Director norfolkpl@sailsinc.org. Email requests must include the following information:

- Name of Responsible Person
- Name of Organization (Organizations in town that have more than one unit, such as a den or troop, should include the number)
- Date, time and name of room requested (responsible person must include set up and clean up time as part of the request)

- Responsible person phone number and e-mail address
 - Estimated number of participants
 - Special circumstances or requests
 - Certain activities may require a Certificate of Insurance with the Town listed as the certificate holder.
2. Patrons without access to email are invited to contact the Library Director at 508-528-3380 x3. Requests are confirmed or denied by email or phone call.
 3. Meeting room reservations are accepted on a priority basis:
 - Library programs and activities (including Friends of the Library),
 - Meetings of Town boards, committees and commissions,
 - General non-profit and community groups, and
 - Businesses and for-profit enterprises.
 4. Groups may reserve a maximum of 12 meeting room events per year. To help defray the cost of maintaining the meeting room spaces, groups are asked to consider donating to the NPL Gift Fund.
 5. Businesses and for-profit enterprises may reserve a meeting room at a rate of \$35/hour depending on room availability. Fees must be paid in full one week prior to room use. Failure to pay required fees will result in cancellation of reservation.
 6. Meeting rooms must be reserved more than three business days in advance, but no more than 6 months ahead of desired date.
 7. In order to accommodate the greatest number of users, the Library Director or designee reserves the right to assign meeting rooms based on room availability and group size. The maximum number of attendees in any meeting room is limited to the number determined by the Norfolk Fire Chief.
 8. Library meeting rooms are available to the public provided that meetings/programs do not conflict with or interrupt regular Library service and programs.
 9. The Library reserves the right to cancel any reservation for a meeting room if a higher priority meeting or program needs the space. In this event, all efforts will be made to make alternate arrangements.
 10. Any group or organization that is denied access by the Library Director to use of a meeting room may appeal this decision to the Board of Library Trustees. The decision of the Trustees is final.

Access to Meeting Rooms

1. All meetings and programs must be open to the public, except as otherwise noted below.
2. All meeting and programs shall be accessed via the Library main entrance which faces Liberty Lane.
3. The NPL recognizes that certain social, community, and civic organizations may limit membership and active participation in its meetings and programs. Limitations on membership established by a group using a meeting room shall be consistent with applicable Massachusetts and federal civil rights laws including but not limited to prohibitions against discrimination based upon race, gender, national origin, religion, and disability. The meetings and programs of these

organizations using a meeting room shall not be by invitation only. Individuals who participate or attempt to participate in an organization's meetings and programs and who are not authorized to do so may be determined to be a disruptive person by the organization's Responsible Person. Such behavior shall be reported to a library staff member by the Responsible Person. The library staff person shall manage the incident in compliance with the NPL's Safety and Security Policy.

4. The use of a meeting room for a political activity, such as promoting or opposing a candidate's nomination or election to public office or promoting a vote on a ballot questions, is authorized as the NPL provides equal access to any individual group wishing to use it under the same terms and conditions as all other individuals or groups. All political activity must be in compliance with MA General Law and the Office of Campaign Finance. Political fundraising of any kind is prohibited on NPL property.
5. A Responsible Person may request in writing that public access to a program be limited for safety and security reasons. For example, an organization whose primary participants are children may have a requirement that only CORI-cleared adults be allowed to attend organizational meetings in which children are present. Such a request shall be reviewed by the Library Director who shall approve or deny it. A Responsible Person may appeal the decision of the Director to the Board of Library Trustees. The decision of the Trustees is final.
6. Businesses and for-profit enterprises that pay a fee for use of a meeting room may limit public access to meetings provided that such limitations are consistent with applicable Massachusetts and federal civil rights laws including but not limited to prohibitions against discrimination based upon race, gender, national origin, religion, and disability.

Restrictions

1. Use of the meeting rooms for social gatherings, including but not limited to activities such as birthday parties or family reunions, is prohibited.
2. Meeting rooms may not be used for fundraising, entrepreneurial or commercial purposes, nor for the solicitation of business or profit-making activities, except as otherwise described in this policy. Except as provided in the Exhibition Policy, goods or services may not be promoted, sold, or exchanged upon the NPL premises without the express written consent of the Library Director.
3. As a public service to Norfolk community-based nonprofit organizations, the sale of tickets for fundraising events that do not take place on library premises, may be held in the library lobby, during normal library hours. Sales activity must not interfere with NPL operations or patron access to the library. Sales of tickets for fundraising events is subject to written permission from the Library Director.

Meeting Room Use Rules

1. The NPL endeavors to offer diverse programs reflecting the community we serve. Provision of meeting room space is always subordinate to the need to provide a safe, peaceful, and respectful environment in which to read and study. Meeting rooms may not be used in a manner likely to disturb patrons in their customary use of its facilities, impede NPL staff in the performance of their duties, nor endanger the building or its collection.
2. Individuals and groups must comply with the Meeting Room Use Rules. Failure to comply with these rules may result in restriction or denial of future use of NPL facilities and may result in fees being charged to the Responsible Person.

3. **Behavior:** Individuals who use the meeting rooms shall conform their behavior to the requirements of the Safety and Security Policy.
4. **Key:** Should a meeting occur outside published Library hours; the Responsible Person may sign out a key up to 1 day in advance of the meeting. If the key is not picked up by the Responsible Person prior to the close of the Library on the last business day before the scheduled meeting, the Director or designee shall cancel the meeting and inform the Responsible Person of the cancellation. The key **MUST** be placed in the book drop at the conclusion of the meeting. A \$10.00 per day fee is charged for failure to return the key in the book drop. After five days, a key is deemed lost, and an additional \$75.00 fee is charged.
5. **Security of Library Doors:** For meetings occurring outside published Library hours, the Responsible Person must ensure the Library doors are properly secured at the conclusion of the meeting. Failure to secure the doors may result in the group no longer being permitted to use meeting rooms outside of published Library hours.
6. **Meetings in the Schoolhouse Room:** Meetings in the Schoolhouse Room must start and end within published Library hours of operation. Craft materials to include but not be limited to glue, glitter, etc. shall not be used in this room. Food and drink are prohibited in the Schoolhouse Room.
7. **Charges:** No person may charge an admission-type fee for any event or program, except only by prior written approval of the Board of Library Trustees. The Responsible Person or their designee may charge attendees for the cost of meeting materials or other incidental expenses. In all cases, charges must be disclosed to attendees in advance of the meeting.
8. **Endorsement:** In approving a request, neither the Board of Library Trustees, the Library, nor the Town of Norfolk implies endorsement of a groups' beliefs, policies, programs or content.
9. **Publicity:** Communications about meetings should give the Library address for information only. Publicity must not direct or suggest calling the Library about the meeting, except only as may be included in an official announcement prepared and published by the Library. Groups may not state or suggest in their publicity that the Norfolk Public Library, the Board of Library Trustees, the Town of Norfolk, nor the Library staff sponsors or endorses the meeting, the group, or any particular set of ideas, beliefs, concepts or point-of-view to be presented or discussed.
10. **Artwork:** Artwork is not to be touched or moved, except only by authorized library staff or exhibit sponsors.
11. **Refreshments:** Light refreshments may be served in the Community Meeting Room and Lounge, but not in the Schoolhouse Room. Possession and/or consumption of alcohol on Library premises is prohibited except as may be authorized by the Board of Library Trustees & Select Board in compliance with local, state and Federal regulations. The Responsible Person may request to use the kitchenette, which includes a sink and refrigerator.
12. **Furniture Moving, Custodial and Hospitality Services:** Library staff does not provide these services. The Responsible Person must perform these services themselves or may hire others at their expense to do so. The Responsible Person assumes all liability for actions undertaken by themselves and hired persons.
13. **Clean-up:** A list of cleaning and furniture storage requirements for each room is posted in the room and must be reviewed by the Responsible Person prior to use of the space. Users of the Community Room are responsible to stack and move all chairs to the perimeter of the room following conclusion of the meeting. Failure to stack and move all chairs will result in a \$50.00 fee

charged to the responsible person. The Responsible Person must ensure their meeting room is left in a clean condition after use, and that all trash is removed to designated disposal. In cases where the kitchenette is used, this space must be left in a clean and sanitary condition. All food brought in must be removed from the refrigerator, and all trash removed to designated disposal. Failure to remove food and clean the kitchenette will result in a \$50.00 fee charged to the Responsible Person.

14. **No Lighted Candles or Open Flames:** Use of lighted candles or other open flame is prohibited by State Fire Code. Electric or battery-powered candles may be used.
15. **Exits:** All exits must always have a clear 3-foot wide unobstructed path.
16. **Release of Children to Parents/Guardians:** When a meeting involves children, the Responsible Person must assure all children remain in the meeting room until parents or other authorized persons arrive to pick them up. Library staff assumes no responsibility for children attending meetings.
17. **Start time:** Library meeting room space shall not be accessed prior to 7:00 AM daily.
18. **Ending time:** The Library must be vacated by 10:45 PM. Occupancy after this time will trigger an alarm and result in police response. In the event the alarm system is triggered, the Responsible Person must remain in the Library to meet the responding police officers. A \$100 fee is charged if the alarm is triggered, and police and library staff are summoned. There is no access to the Library between 10:45 PM and 7:00 AM daily.
19. **Lights:** Upon exiting a meeting room, the lights must be turned off. Failure to do so will result in a warning for the first incident. A \$50 fee is charged for subsequent incidents.
20. **Parking:** Groups using Library meeting room space must observe all parking signs and restrictions. Groups who ignore signs and restrictions may have meeting room privileges suspended.

Responsibility, Supervision and Liability

1. Individuals and groups using meeting space are responsible for all damage to or misuse of Library property, and shall indemnify the Library, its employees, agents and assigns, the Board of Library Trustees and the Town of Norfolk against damages and/or injuries arising from use of meeting rooms, and must provide proper supervision at all times.

Exceptions

1. Exceptions to this policy may be made at the discretion of the Library Director, in consultation with the Board of Library Trustees, as they deem in the best interest of the Library and the community.

REFERENCE: ALA, *Library Bill of Rights* (retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>); ALA, *Meeting Rooms: An Interpretation of Library Bill of Rights* (retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/meetingrooms>).

CANCELLATION: This policy cancels all previous policies, procedures, memorandums, messages, and directives on this subject.

APPLICABILITY: This policy applies to all NPL trustees, staff members, and patrons.