

Meeting Room Policy

The Meeting rooms of the Eastern Oklahoma District Library System facilities are primarily intended to support the goals of the public libraries of the system; to further the cultural, informational and educational needs of the people of the EODLS region. In providing free meeting space for public use, the Libraries of the System support the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, which states:

"Libraries which maintain meeting rooms, exhibit space, or other facilities open to the public should make them available on equal terms to all persons, regardless of their beliefs or affiliations."

Regulations Regarding Use of the Meeting Rooms

1. All meetings must be open to the public.
2. Organizations of an educational, civic, cultural, professional, religious, or political nature may book meeting rooms. Individuals may *not* book meeting rooms.
3. Any for-profit business having items or services for sale, or promoting items or services for sale may *not* book rooms.
4. Groups may *not* use rooms for social functions such as showers, parties, receptions, birthdays, etc.
5. There will be no charge to groups for the use of the meeting rooms.
6. No admission charge may be made for any function held in the library's meeting rooms.
7. Non-profit organizations may sell items, provided that ALL the money collected goes to the non-profit organization. (Percentage of sale arrangements will *not* qualify under this rule.)
8. Organizations are allowed to book NO MORE THAN TWO meetings in advance. A meeting date may be booked up to one year in advance.
9. Pursuant to Oklahoma Law, smoking is not permitted in libraries.
10. Only animals confined to cages will be allowed in the meeting rooms. Guide animals are exempted from this rule.
11. Library rooms will not be reserved to groups for activities that are likely to disturb regular library functions.
12. All groups are responsible for the repair or replacement of missing or damaged equipment or facilities.
13. The Library reserves the right to refuse use of the meeting rooms to any group that violates any of the above regulations.
14. Programs sponsored or co-sponsored by the individual Library or Library System may be exempt from the rules as outlined above.
15. The Library and/or Library System's programs are given precedence when booking rooms. The Library reserves the right to reschedule other meetings when the rooms are needed for Library purposes.

LIABILITY

The Eastern Oklahoma District Library System and the individual libraries are *not responsible* for accidents, injury or loss of individual property while using library facilities.

Approved 3/15/93
Revised 4/18/2000

Meeting Rooms

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

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."

Libraries maintaining meeting room facilities should develop and publish policy statements governing use. These statements can properly define time, place, or manner of use; such qualifications should not pertain to the content of a meeting or to the beliefs or affiliations of the sponsors. These statements should be made available in any commonly used language within the community served.

If meeting rooms in libraries supported by public funds are made available to the general public for non-library sponsored events, the library may not exclude any group based on the subject matter to be discussed or based on the ideas that the group advocates. For example, if a library allows charities and sports clubs to discuss their activities in library meeting rooms, then the library should not exclude partisan political or religious groups from discussing their activities in the same facilities. If a library opens its meeting rooms to a wide variety of civic organizations, then the library may not deny access to a religious organization. Libraries may wish to post a permanent notice near the meeting room stating that the library does not advocate or endorse the viewpoints of meetings or meeting room users.

Written policies for meeting room use should be stated in inclusive rather than exclusive terms. For example, a policy that the library's facilities are open "to organizations engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, or charitable activities" is an inclusive statement of the limited uses to which the facilities may be put. This defined limitation would permit religious groups to use the facilities because they engage in intellectual activities, but would exclude most commercial uses of the facility.

A publicly supported library may limit use of its meeting rooms to strictly "library-related" activities, provided that the limitation is clearly circumscribed and is viewpoint neutral.

Written policies may include limitations on frequency of use, and whether or not meetings held in library meeting rooms must be open to the public. If state and local laws permit private as well as public sessions of meetings in libraries, libraries may choose to offer both options. The same standard should be applicable to all.

If meetings are open to the public, libraries should include in their meeting room policy statement a section which addresses admission fees. If admission fees are permitted, libraries shall seek to make it possible that these fees do not limit access to individuals who may be unable to pay, but who wish to attend the meeting. Article V of the Library Bill of Rights states that "a person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." It is inconsistent with Article V to restrict indirectly access to library meeting rooms based on an individual's or group's ability to pay for that access.

Adopted July 2, 1991, by the ALA Council

Appeal of Meeting Room Refusal

Date: _____

Branch: _____

Name of Organization: _____

President or Representative making request: _____

Contact Numbers: Telephone _____ Fax _____

Address: _____

City

State

Zip Code

Check a blank to discuss the specific rule that is the basis of your appeal. Form continues to back side. Use blank space at bottom of form if you need more space to present your information.

_____ 1. Open to the public. Explain how your meeting meets this criteria.

_____ 2. Organization is educational, civic, professional, religious, or political in nature. (Attach bylaws to form.) Is *not* a for-profit business.

_____ 3. There is no charge for the event/function.

_____ 4. Activity *is not* a social event.

