

TITLE: Meeting & Study Room Policy
POLICY NUMBER: 430
EFFECTIVE DATE: June 21, 2023
REVIEW DATE: June 2025
SUPERSEDES: None



Article 1: Philosophy

Article VI of the Library Bill of Rights states, “Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliation of individuals or groups requesting their use.”

Waukegan Public Library chooses to make its Meeting Rooms and Study Rooms available for use by individuals, groups, and organizations engaged in informational, educational, cultural, charitable, and civic activities. Preference is given to local and non-profit organizations in support of the library’s strategic plan, programmatic and service needs. While allowing use of meeting and study rooms by individuals or groups provides broad access that may not be available at other agencies, builds community by providing an opportunity for an exchange of ideas that can lead to positive social change, such use does not imply endorsement, support, or co-sponsorship by Waukegan Public Library or of the group’s policies, beliefs, or activities.

Article 2: Meeting & Study Room Policy

Section 2.01 – Priorities

Although they are made available for public meetings and use, the primary purpose of the Meeting Rooms and Study Rooms is to meet the operational needs of the Library. Meeting Room and Study Room availability is contingent on there being no conflict with library programs or meetings, which have first priority at all times.

Section 2.02 – Access

All meetings and functions in the Meeting Rooms and Study Rooms are free of charge and open to the general public regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, order of protection status, disability (physical and mental), marital status, sexual orientation (including gender-related identity), unfavorable military discharge, arrest record, citizenship status, language, and pregnancy, except for closed sessions convened by governmental bodies in compliance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act. The library will not charge for the use of Meeting Rooms or Study Rooms.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Meeting Rooms and Study Rooms are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Accommodation requests, such as auxiliary aids, qualified interpreters, or specific space needs should be provided 2 weeks prior to the event. The library, partner organizations, and outside groups using the rooms must be able to provide such accommodations given 48 hours notice.

Section 2.03 - Usage

Meeting Rooms **can be** reserved for the following types of groups/meetings:

- Local government bodies;
- Community organizations or groups engaged in educational, civic, cultural, charitable, religious, and public information activities and events
- Educational programs by for-profit firms and organizations, provided the program is free and open to the general public, held in partnership with the Library, and follows the Library's no solicitation policy;
- Town meetings and open office hours of elected representatives of local, state, and national government that are non-partisan and do not endorse a specific representative.

Meeting Rooms **cannot be** reserved for the following types of groups/meetings:

- To promote or advertise, directly or indirectly, a commercial product or service;
- To hold activities or disseminate materials urging support of or opposition to candidates for office in a particular election, or issues on the ballot;
- To hold activities or disseminate materials that endorse would deem to be an endorsement of religion or religious belief by the Library;
- To hold activities that would disrupt the normal operations of the library or involve a threat to public safety;
- Private social gatherings.

Section 2.04 - Capacity

The maximum capacity of each room is posted according to safety codes and room setup needs and ranges from 2 to 100 people. Attendance will be limited accordingly.

Section 2.05 - Meeting Room Eligibility & Registration

The authorized representative requesting a room and completing the form must be a Waukegan resident with a valid Waukegan library card in good standing or be a Waukegan organization/business owner/manager and be present during the reserved time.

To reserve a Meeting Room, an application must be completed and submitted to the library. Rooms may be reserved at least 4 days but no more than 60 days in advance. Rooms are available from 15 minutes after the library opens to 15 minutes before the library closes. Any group seeking to use Meeting Rooms must agree in writing to observe all policies and regulations. All reservations must be confirmed in writing by the library; an application for use does not ensure approval and is subject to availability.

Section 2.06 - Study Room Eligibility & Registration

Study rooms are available for 1-8 people, depending on the room. Residents and Non-residents may use Study Rooms on a first-come first-served basis, based on availability, for a 2-hour block of time. Study rooms on the Main Floor are available to patrons in 9th grade and up and their guests. Study rooms in the Children's Department are available for children and families.

Study Rooms can be reserved in advance by a Waukegan resident with a valid ID or library card. The reserving cardholder must be present during the reserved time. Study Rooms can be reserved by residents up to 1 week in advance and can be booked up to one 2-hour block of time per day. Residents can make up to 4 reservations per week. Room reservations may be released 15 minutes after the scheduled time if someone does not arrive for their reservation.

Patrons can stay longer than 2 hours in Study Rooms if there is no demand for the room.

Section 2.07 – Set Up and Clean Up

Groups and individuals are responsible for leaving Meeting Rooms and Study Rooms in order after use and for reimbursing the Library for damage to library facility, furniture, fixtures, equipment, etc. Groups must transport their own supplies and equipment; no storage is provided. The application form includes room set up and technology needs. Any moving or rearranging of library equipment in Meeting Rooms and Study Rooms must be done by library staff and they may not be available for day-of assistance.

Covered nonalcoholic drinks and snack food may be consumed in the Meeting Rooms and Study Rooms as long as they are individually packaged and do not have to be maintained at certain temperatures. Library patrons are responsible for returning the room to the state they found it: neat, trash in appropriate containers, whiteboard erased, technology turned off, and furniture back in its original location.

Section 2.08 – Library Equipment

Available equipment varies by room and may include chairs, tables, whiteboards, projectors and screens, computers, monitors, podiums, kitchenette with coffee maker, and public address systems. Groups and individuals are responsible for requesting the use of equipment at the time of reservation. Any additional equipment or furniture that may be brought in by an outside group must be approved by Library staff in advance of reservation approval. Materials or equipment that, in the judgment of the Executive Director or designee, may be potentially dangerous to library users, staff, or property may not be brought into any area of the building. Groups and individuals are responsible for leaving equipment and property in order after use and are responsible for reimbursing the Library for any damage.

Section 2.09 – Behavior and Use

Groups and individuals that meet in the Library, as well as the individuals who attend group meetings, must comply with the Library Use Policy and all other applicable policies. Excessive noise or use of hazardous materials are prohibited in Meeting Rooms and Study Rooms.

No admission fees may be charged for functions held in Meeting Rooms or Study Rooms, nor may any person/business sell their wares.

If the room is left unattended for a period longer than 30 minutes then the use of the room is considered over and will become available for use by others.

Section 2.10 – Responsibility

The Library is not responsible for security or storage of property owned by groups or individuals using Meeting Rooms or Study Rooms, nor is it responsible for damage or loss of property of others. All

organizations or groups using any of the rooms shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Library, its officers, agents, and employees from and against any and all claims, suits, actions of any kind, arising and resulting, and accruing from any negligent act, omission, or error of the organization or group resulting in or relating to personal injuries or property damage arising from the organization/group's use of the Library's rooms.

Section 2.11 – Sponsorship or Endorsement

Use of Meeting Rooms and Study Rooms by an organization is not in any way an endorsement of the group's policies and beliefs. Publicity for meetings held in the Library may not be displayed in such a manner as to suggest library sponsorship. The following disclaimer must be included in all published materials about the event: "Waukegan Public Library provides meeting space as a community service. The Library neither sponsors nor endorses this event, the speaker(s) or the organization." The Library will not publicize such events. Groups may not use the name or address of the Library as an official address or headquarters of an organization.

Section 2.12 – Non-Compliance

The Executive Director or their designee reserves the right to determine use of the rooms, assess fees for use of the rooms, and cancel or reschedule all arrangements, with or without cause or reason, and without liability. The Executive Director or designee reserves the right to rescind an organization or individual's future room use if privileges are abused or if policies are not followed.

Section 2.13 – Appeals

Decisions by Library staff to deny a patron's request to use a room may be appealed. Patrons may submit a formal written request to the appropriate staff designee. The staff designee will prepare a written recommendation for the Executive Director. The Executive Director will evaluate the request and the recommendation. The Executive Director will respond to the patron with an explanation setting forth the reasons that an appeal is either approved or denied. If the request is approved, the room will be scheduled for use. If the request is denied, an appeal of the decision may be brought by the patron to the Board of Trustees in writing. The Board will evaluate the appeal and notify the patron of the result. The Board's decision will be final.

Section 2.14 – Situations Not Covered

Any situation not specifically covered in this statement of policy will be resolved by the Executive Director and may be reviewed by the Library Board.