

Bucks County Free Library

Management

MEETING ROOM POLICY

DRAFT 03072025

Policy Statement

Bucks County Free Library (BCFL) branch meeting rooms are used primarily for library- sponsored programs and events. The needs of the library take precedence over those of other organizations. First priority for scheduling is for library activities and events.

When not in use by the library, rooms designated by BCFL as available for public booking may be rented by non-profit community groups or individuals for cultural, civic, informational, and educational presentations and activities. Use must not interfere with operations of the library or require care or service beyond what is normal and routine for library operations.

All meetings must be open to the general public. No group will be permitted to use meeting rooms if membership in the group is not open to the general public. Meeting rooms may not be used for private functions, social events, or to conduct business, including group or one-on-one client meetings.

No organization, group, or individual sponsoring or participating in a meeting or event may charge for admission, registration, or tuition; solicit donations or conduct fundraising; sell or advertise any services or products; distribute any material that promotes future paid instruction, services, or products; or collect any information from attendees to be used for commercial purposes or fundraising.

Applicants are required to provide the library with one or more of the following documents to demonstrate non-profit status or non-commercial purpose:

- A letter from the IRS recognizing the organization as tax exempt; or
- Articles of Incorporation as a non-profit corporation and evidence of an ongoing operation in support of its mission such as, but not limited to, bylaws, meeting minutes, and financial statements from an independent auditor or annual reports.

- Information or documents that will allow the library to verify the nature and subject of the proposed use, such as meeting agendas, sample publicity, or news articles about past events of the same type.

Library meeting rooms may not be used for religious services or political campaign events on behalf of a specific candidate. Religious or political groups may use meeting rooms for broader cultural, civic, informational, and educational presentations and activities other than religious services or political campaign events.

Meeting rooms available to the public for booking are considered “limited designated public forums” subject to constitutional requirements that the library screen applications only on the basis of time, place, and manner. The library does not discriminate against speech on the basis of viewpoint. Meeting rooms are made available regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of groups or individuals requesting their use.

BCFL does not endorse or advocate the views of any group using its meeting rooms. Any advertisement or announcement implying library endorsement is prohibited. Complaints about the content of any program presented in a library meeting room should be made directly to the sponsor.

Meeting rooms may not be scheduled or used for any activity that is illegal, unsafe, or interferes with the functioning of the library.

No solicitation or petitioning will be permitted on library premises by community groups or individuals except as part of scheduled meeting room use.

The following areas may not be reserved by the public:

- a. Common areas such as entry-ways, seating areas, and study tables;
- b. Rooms designated as quiet or study areas;
- c. Staff meeting rooms, offices, and lunch rooms; and
- d. Sidewalks, parking lots, and grounds.

Any individual or group holding a meeting in the library must fully release and indemnify the Bucks County Free Library and its officers, agents, and employees from any and all claims from injuries, including death, damages, or loss, which may arise or which may be alleged to have arisen out of, or in connection with the meeting or program.

The library reserves the right to deny applications or withdraw meeting room use privileges from applicants and groups that fail to comply with library policies and

regulations, including misrepresentation or falsification of any item related to application for meeting room use.

Regulations

General

- Applicants must be 18 years old or older.
- Applicants must have a Bucks County library card in good standing, with less than \$20 of fines or fees attached to the card. Applicants or groups with fees for outstanding meeting room use or damages will not be permitted to reserve rooms.
- Applications must be made online using the library's booking system. The library does not accept applications by phone.
- The individual applying for the meeting room must agree to the terms and conditions for use of the room and accept legal and financial responsibility for the room. The applicant will:
 - Complete the Meeting Room Application and sign the Meeting Room Use Agreement
 - Pay all deposits and rental fees
 - Provide accurate and complete contact information to the library and serve as the sole point of contact for the library and attendees about meeting room concerns
 - Attend the meeting and stay in the meeting room from the beginning to the end of the meeting to monitor use and ensure that library policies are followed
 - Check in with staff prior to the meeting and check out with staff at the end of the meeting to provide the library with a count of the number of attendees and verify that the room has been returned to its original condition
- Children accompanying adult users of a meeting room may not be left unattended in the library except in accordance with BCFL's Unattended Child Policy. For events in a meeting room involving children, the library will require applicants to adhere to the same adult-child ratio used in licensing Pennsylvania daycare centers (55 Pa. Code § 3270.51):
 - Infant: 1:4
 - Young Toddler: 1:5
 - Older Toddler: 1:6

- Preschool: 1:10
- Young School Age: 1:12
- Older School Age/Teen: 1:15

Applications, Fees, and Cancellations

- Meeting rooms are available when the library is open, except that Quakertown Borough officials and residents may book the Quakertown meeting room when the library is closed. Saturday bookings are available only for library events.
- The first booking, including set-up, will begin 30 minutes after the library opens and the last booking, including cleaning, will end 15 minutes before the library closes.
- Meeting rooms may be reserved no earlier than 3 months before the desired meeting date.
- A group or individual may reserve space for a maximum of one meeting per month up to six meetings per year at each of the library's branches. A group booking meetings at multiple locations must apply separately at each location.
- A group or individual that has been granted the maximum number of allowed bookings may apply for and be granted additional bookings by submitting an application no earlier than 14 days before the proposed additional meeting date/s.
- Applications will be taken up to 7 days before a proposed meeting date.
- In order to hold a meeting time slot, applicants must complete the application in full and provide a credit card number or check as a deposit for full rental fees. A meeting room is not considered reserved until after the application is received, approved, paid for, and confirmed by the library.
- Once a meeting room booking has been approved, payment must be made within 7 days. If payment is not received within 7 days the booking will be cancelled and the time slot will be made available for other bookings.
- If the library denies an application, the deposit fee will not be charged to the applicant. Deposit checks will be voided and returned to the applicant.
- Applicants that fail to notify the library of a cancellation waive the right to any return of fees and may be denied future reservations.
- If a meeting is cancelled less than 14 days prior to scheduled use, fees will not be refunded but may be applied to another booking arranged at the time of cancellation.
- If a meeting is cancelled more than 14 days prior to scheduled use, fees will be refunded in full or may be applied to another booking arranged at the time of

cancellation.

- If the library cancels a meeting because of an emergency, fees will be refunded in full or may be applied to another booking to take place within six months after the cancellation date. The library will not cancel another group's meeting for a rescheduled time.
- Meetings that run beyond scheduled times will be billed at the regular hourly rate in 15-minute increments except when another group is waiting to use the room or at the end of the day when the library is closing, in which case the hourly rate will be doubled.

Use of Facilities

- The maximum capacity for each room as determined by the Bucks County Free Library must be observed at all times. Maximum occupancy rates are listed in the Rental Fee Schedule and posted in each meeting room. Library staff may halt any meeting and will immediately call law enforcement if any problems result from any meeting that exceeds capacity in a library meeting room, parking lot, or building.
- Meeting rooms are equipped with tables and chairs. Meeting room attendees may not borrow equipment or furniture from other parts of the library for use in meeting rooms.
- Use of audio-visual equipment supplied by the group renting the room is permitted. Generally, any other outside equipment will not be permitted. If there is some other equipment a group wants to bring in, a specific request must be made at the time of application. BCFL will respond in writing whether the equipment is acceptable. Delivery and pick-up must occur during an event's booked time. Library employees do not assist with delivery, set-up, or operation of any furniture or equipment. The library is not responsible for theft or damage to any equipment brought on to library property.
- Equipment and supplies may not be stored in the library. If left unclaimed for five days after an event, items will be sold or discarded without notice to the group or liability to the library.
- Food and nonalcoholic beverages are permitted. Food preparation and use of cooking equipment are prohibited. Open flames and small appliances are not allowed in library meeting rooms, except for coffee makers. Hazardous materials, such as paints, solvents, and explosives are prohibited.
- Meeting rooms must be empty and returned to original condition by the end of a group's booked time. No items may be attached to walls, windows, doors, or furnishings. Any spills, stains, or breakage must be immediately reported to a designated staff member.

- Meeting room applicants conduct walkthroughs of meeting rooms with library staff before and after meetings to inspect the meeting room conditions. Library staff will periodically enter meeting rooms during meetings to ensure that library policy is being followed.

Advertising and Promotion

- Applicants are responsible for their own publicity and registration, where applicable. The library does not provide any sign-up or messaging services to groups using meeting rooms.
- The library's name and address may not be used as a mailing or contact address for any group or event. The library's telephone number may not be used as the contact number or for registration for the group and its meeting. Advertising may not imply that an event is sponsored, co-sponsored, or approved by the library. The library may not be listed or advertised as the headquarters or standing meeting place of any group.
- Groups must comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and provide reasonable accommodations upon request by attendees. All advertising must include the following statement: "If you need an interpreter, materials in alternative formats, or other accommodations, please contact (name of person/organization) one week in advance of this event to schedule." Meeting sponsors are responsible for scheduling and paying fees for interpreters.
- Group representatives may not approach library users to solicit meeting attendance or post directional and promotional signs about an event on library sidewalks, parking lots, grounds, and common areas. Handouts and other materials may be distributed only inside meeting rooms.

Complaints

- Appeals about this policy, or its implementation, shall be addressed in writing to the Bucks County Free Library Board of Directors, 150 S. Pine Street, Doylestown, PA, 18901.

Meeting Room Fee Schedule

The Library waives meeting room fees only as follows:

- Fees are waived for Friends of the Library groups, Bucks County departments, and open forums hosted by state and federal government departments or officials, such as town hall meetings and public hearings.
- Fees are waived for nationally recognized chapters of veterans' organizations in recognition and appreciation of their sacrifices while serving in the military and defending our country. This is our small way of saying "Thank you for serving."

With no exceptions, quiet study rooms will not be made available to the public for group use.

Regular study rooms are closed and locked when not in use and they are open for public access only when scheduled for use.

Branch	Seating Capacity	Use	Bookable/ Not Bookable	Hourly Rate
Bensalem Quiet Study		Quiet Study	Not Bookable Walk-in	Free
Bensalem Study 1	12	Study	Bookable, 30 days in advance	Free
Bensalem Study 2	12	Study	Bookable, 30 days in advance	Free
Bensalem Large Meeting Room	60	Meetings	Bookable	\$35
Doylestown Study	18	Study	Bookable, 30 days in advance	Free
Doylestown Large Meeting Room (Pearl Buck Room)	60	Meetings	Bookable	\$35
Langhorne Quiet Study		Study	Not Bookable Walk-in	Free
Langhorne Study	12	Study	Bookable, 30 days in advance	Free
Langhorne Large Meeting Room	40	Meetings	Bookable	\$35

Branch	Seating Capacity	Use	Bookable/ Not Bookable	Hourly Rate
Levittown Quiet Study		Quiet Study	Not Bookable Walk-in	Free
Levittown Study 1	12	Study	Bookable, 30 days in advance	Free
Levittown Study 2	12	Study	Bookable, 30 days in advance	Free
Levittown Study 3	12	Study	Bookable, 30 days in advance	Free
Levittown Large Meeting Room	60	Meetings	Bookable	\$35

Quakertown Quiet Study		Quiet Study	Not Bookable, Walk-in	Free
Quakertown Study 1	12	Study	Bookable, 30 days in advance	Free
Quakertown Study 2	12	Study	Bookable, 30 days in advance	Free
Quakertown Study 3	12	Study	Bookable, 30 days in advance	Free
Quakertown Study 4	12	Study	Bookable, 30 days in advance	Free
Quakertown Large Meeting Room	80	Meetings	Bookable	\$35
Quakertown Large Meeting Room Off Hours Use	80	Meetings	Bookable, by borough	\$100 plus hourly custodial rate

Yardley Quiet Study (Disbrow)		Quiet Study	Not Bookable Walk-in	Free
Yardley-Makefield Study 1	12	Study	Bookable, 30 days in advance	Free
Yardley-Makefield Study 2	12	Study	Bookable, 30 days in advance	Free
Yardley-Makefield Study 3	12	Study	Bookable, 30 days in advance	Free
Yardley-Makefield Large Meeting Room	60	Meetings	Bookable	\$35

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