

Sample Meeting Room Policy

Sample Meeting Room Use Policy (Generic NH Template)

Note: This is a portable template intended for adaptation by any New Hampshire public library. It synthesizes ALA Library Bill of Rights Article VI, the ALA Meeting Rooms Interpretation, and common NH public library practice. **It is not a substitute for legal review by town or library counsel.**

Purpose

The [Library Name] makes meeting rooms available to community organizations, groups, and individuals as a service consistent with its mission to serve as a center for community engagement and the free exchange of information. Meeting room availability does not constitute endorsement by the [Library Name], its Board of Trustees, or the [Town/City of ____].

Authority

This policy is adopted by the Board of Trustees of the [Library Name] under the authority of NH RSA 202-A:11. It conforms to Article VI of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and to the ALA Meeting Rooms Interpretation.

Equitable Access

Meeting rooms shall be made available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of the individuals or groups requesting their use. The Library does not deny access on the basis of viewpoint, content, religion, political affiliation, or membership in any group.

If meeting rooms are made available to one charitable, educational, civic, or cultural group, they must be made available on the same terms to all such groups, including those whose viewpoints may be unpopular or controversial.

Eligibility

Meeting rooms are available to:

- Library-sponsored programs and events (priority)
- [Town/City] municipal departments and committees
- Local non-profit and community organizations
- Educational, cultural, and civic groups
- Individuals and informal groups for non-commercial use

The Library reserves the right to give priority to its own programs and to municipal use.

Permitted and Prohibited Uses

Permitted

- Public meetings, programs, lectures, and educational sessions
- Civic, educational, cultural, and informational gatherings
- Meetings of municipal boards, committees, and commissions

Prohibited

- Activities that materially disrupt normal library operations
- Activities that violate federal, state, or local law
- Activities that pose a clear safety hazard to attendees or staff
- Storage of materials on a continuing basis between meetings
- Direct solicitation, sales, or fundraising for personal commercial gain (separate guidance applies to recognized library partners and Friends groups)

The Library may decline a use that would materially disrupt operations or pose a safety hazard. Such decisions shall be content-neutral and reviewable by the Director, with appeal to the Board of Trustees.

Reservations and Scheduling

- Reservations may be made [number] days in advance and no more than [number] months ahead.
 - Reservations shall be made through [process: online form, in-person, by phone].
 - The Library reserves the right to cancel or relocate a reservation due to library emergencies, weather closures, or unanticipated library needs.
 - Repeat reservations are permitted under the following conditions: [specify].
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Fees

[Choose one structure based on local practice:]

Option A — No fee: No fee is charged for meeting room use.

Option B — Tiered fee: A fee schedule is adopted as Appendix A. Fees apply equitably and are not based on the content or purpose of the meeting. Library-sponsored events, [Town/City] municipal use, and recognized library partners (Friends, etc.) are exempt.

Hours of Use

- Meeting rooms are available during [Library hours / extended hours if applicable].
 - Meetings must end [number] minutes before closing time to allow for cleanup.
 - After-hours use [is/is not] permitted; if permitted, separate provisions in Appendix B apply.
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Attendance and Public Access

- Meetings held in Library meeting rooms are open to all members of the public on the same terms as other library users.
 - A meeting host may not exclude members of the public unless required by an applicable confidentiality, privacy, or licensure law (e.g., a 12-step group, a counseling session, an executive session of a public body under RSA 91-A).
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Behavior and Cleanup

- The user group is responsible for setup, cleanup, and any damage to the room or equipment.
 - Library equipment (AV, chairs, tables) may be used per posted instructions.
 - Food and beverages [are/are not] permitted; if permitted, the user is responsible for cleanup.
 - The user group must comply with the Library's Patron Conduct Policy at all times.
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Publicity

- Promotional materials for a meeting may **not** state or imply that the event is sponsored, endorsed, or co-sponsored by the [Library Name] unless the Library is in fact a co-sponsor.
 - The Library's address may be used as the meeting location.
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Privacy and Confidentiality

Meeting room reservation records that contain personally identifiable information about library users are subject to NH RSA 201-D:11 and the Library's Confidentiality of Library Records Policy. Such records will not be released except as required by law.

Insurance and Liability

[Adapt to local insurance and risk management practice. Many NH libraries do not require liability insurance from individual or small-group users; some require Certificates of Insurance for organized groups.]

The user group assumes full responsibility for the conduct of its meeting and any injury or property damage occurring during its use of the room.

Compliance with Law

All use of Library meeting rooms must comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws, including:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - NH RSA 91-A (when the meeting is itself a public body)
 - NH RSA 201-D:11 (confidentiality of patron records)
 - All applicable fire, occupancy, and safety codes
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Review and Revision

This policy shall be reviewed by the Board of Trustees not less than every [interval, e.g., 3 years]. Amendments are adopted by majority vote of the Trustees in public session.

Adoption

Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the [Library Name] on [date]. Reviewed by [counsel] on [date].