

## Omaha Public Library Meeting Room Policy

The Omaha Public Library welcomes the public use of its meeting facilities in keeping with the Library's mission that recognizes our role as a community meeting place. Meeting rooms are primarily for use by the library to present library-sponsored programs. **The library reserves the right to cancel reservations for meeting rooms if the space is needed for library activities.**

When not in use for library-sponsored events, meeting rooms are available for use by community groups.

First preference will be given to groups that are using or sponsoring the use of library materials or programs. Examples of this category are: Friends of Omaha Public Library, genealogical groups or clubs, and book discussion groups.

Second preference will be given to organizations engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual or charitable activities.

Generally speaking, Omaha Public Library's meeting rooms are not available for private social gatherings, for money-raising, commercial purposes, or for the benefit of private individuals or commercial concerns. However, program presenters at library-sponsored events may request to sell related products at the events. These requests must be approved by the Library Director or Assistant Library Director, the products must be related to the program or event held, and may be presented only within the program space or meeting room. Aggressive selling will not be allowed. Items may be displayed and made available before or after the program, and participants may be informed that items are available for purchase if interested. A minimum of 10% of all proceeds must be donated to the Friends of Omaha Public Library.

Except as required by State Statute for social service agencies or related entities or as otherwise prescribed by governmental rule or regulation, meeting rooms may not be used by groups whose meetings are closed to the general public. Meetings for which tuition or fees are charged or may be recouped through sales or commissions at a later date are not allowed. They are not available to non-profit organizations or trade associations formed for the benefit of commercial concerns. However, a commercial entity or professional practitioner may use a library meeting room to provide an educational program open to the general public related to his or her field of expertise. In such a case, an educational opportunity offered by an expert provides benefit to the public. The fact that a group is permitted to meet in the library does not in any way constitute library endorsement of the group's policies or beliefs. Purposes, objectives or views of groups using the meeting rooms shall not be advertised in any way to suggest that they are endorsed by the Omaha Public Library.

### REGULATIONS

1. Advance reservation of meeting rooms is required for all non-library groups. To encourage use of library materials as well as library facilities, a valid Omaha Public Library card in good standing (fines or fees that are less than \$25.) is required of the individual signing the meeting room application.
  - a.) Reservations for use of meeting rooms shall be made with the library staff member in charge of the meeting room schedule in each building.
  - b.) A Meeting Room Application must be completed and signed by the group requesting use of a meeting room at least forty-eight hours in advance of the meeting room use. Tentative reservations made by phone will be honored for twenty-four hours prior to an application form being submitted. All meeting room applications must be approved by the Library Director or his or her designated representative before a meeting room may be used. It is understood that inquiries concerning a meeting room reservation will be referred to the person signing the application.
  - c.) Reservations may be made no more than twelve months in advance of the meeting, although beginning on November 1<sup>st</sup> reservations will be taken for the next calendar year. The library shall have the right to limit the number of meetings held by any organization in order to make space available to as many groups as possible and to ensure that the use of the meeting rooms does not become unreasonably ongoing and exclusive. A group may not book more than one meeting room in the same facility during the same time period (for example, reserving all meeting rooms in one location on the same day). Meeting room reservations are limited to a four (4) hour maximum. Exceptions may be granted by the Library Director, Assistant Director, or Branch Manager.

- d.) Reservations will be made only for the dates listed on the application. Additional applications must be made for additional times.
- e.) Meetings rooms are in heavy demand. The signed Meeting Room Application constitutes an agreement that a meeting will take place. If a meeting is canceled, the library must be notified as soon as possible so that this space may be made available to others. Failure to notify the library that a meeting has been canceled will be cause for refusing future requests by that group for meeting room space.
- f.) Study Rooms (available in some locations) are intended for use by students working on a school project, literacy tutors, business people, or individuals seeking a quiet study area. They are not additional meeting rooms and will not be reserved. Study Room use is limited to a 2-hour limit per day. Exceptions may be granted by the Library Director, Assistant Director, or Branch Manager. The South Omaha Library Study Rooms Addendum outlines Terms of Use for study rooms at the combined use facility.
2. Neither the name nor the address of the Omaha Public Library may be used as the official address or headquarters of any organization. No mail or shipments of materials will be accepted for organizations or individuals. Further, the library phone number shall not be used by any groups in meeting announcements.
  3. Each group using meeting rooms shall be responsible for damage to the room and its contents, including any library equipment used by the group. A charge will be assessed for any special cleaning or repairs made necessary by a group. The full cost of repairs, up to full replacement costs of damaged materials and equipment, will be assessed (see attached Schedule of Fees).
  4. Neither the library nor its employees shall assume responsibility for any property of groups or organizations. At the end of each meeting, all of an organization's property must be removed from the library.
  5. Meeting rooms are available during the hours the library is open to the public. The Library Director, Assistant Library Director, or Branch Manager may make exceptions for City departments or other organizations.
  6. Meetings will end soon enough to ensure that rooms are vacated prior to the time that the library closes to the public. A fee will be assessed if the room is not vacated by closing time (see attached Schedule of Fees).
  7. Tacks, nails, glue, or tape shall not be used on walls, furnishings, or equipment, except in meeting rooms with appropriate surfaces such as tackable walls, corkboards, or whiteboards.
  8. Use of library meeting rooms is free-of-charge; donations are always welcomed and appreciated. All Omaha Public Library buildings are smoke-free. Light refreshments are permitted, but with the exception of coffee and tea, they shall not be prepared on library premises.
  9. Any special table or seating arrangements shall be the responsibility of the group using the meeting room. When scheduling, groups should allow extra time for setting up the room before the meeting is to start and for returning it to its original condition when the meeting is over. A fee will be assessed if the meeting room is not returned to its original configuration (see attached Schedule of Fees).
  10. Groups shall not exceed the legal posted capacity of the meeting room. It is the group's responsibility to monitor compliance with these regulations and to deny admittance to the room to people who would cause the group to exceed the posted capacity.
  11. For a nominal charge, groups may arrange to use library audio/visual equipment where it is available. However, no one shall operate library equipment unless they are properly trained. This may require that a member of the group make an appointment with a library staff member prior to the meeting to receive training (see attached Schedule of Fees which describes amounts charged for equipment use).
  12. Meeting room groups must adhere to the Library's Rules of Conduct. Inappropriate behavior will result in consequences outlined in the Library's "Ban and Bar Behaviors and Penalties" and may result in being denied future use of the room. Library "Rules of Conduct" are posted in each library. Copies of the "Rules of Conduct" and "Ban and Bar Behaviors and Penalties" are available from staff on request.

13. Joint facilities such as South, Saddlebrook, AV Sorensen and Florence branches have their meeting room policies attached.

In addition to the above regulations, otherwise eligible groups may from time-to-time be denied use of meeting rooms if granting the request would result in undue interference with regular library operations. Undue interference includes, but is not limited to: insufficient parking places for library customers, noise level of the group, food odors, unsupervised children, etc.

The library reserves the right to revoke permission to use any meeting room to any group or organization which violates or refuses to comply with the rules and regulations established for use of the meeting rooms.

### **Schedule of Fees for Meeting Room Use**

Audio-Visual Equipment use (where available): Television with VCR or DVD player, slide projector, overhead projector, etc.	\$10. (per meeting)
Minimum charge assessed for any special cleaning or repairs to library property or equipment.	\$25. (per meeting)
Amount assessed if tables and seating arrangements are not returned to their original configuration.	\$25. (per meeting)
Amount assessed for each hour or portion of any hour past normal closing time if a meeting extends beyond library hours.	\$50. (per meeting, per hour)

*Approved by the Library Board of Trustees  
June 15, 2011*