

Meeting Room Use Policy

In keeping with the Library's mission, and the philosophy of the Library's founder, George Peabody, to create welcoming spaces that serve as public commons and encourage civic engagement, the Peabody Institute Library offers its community opportunities to connect and interact through its meeting rooms. Meeting rooms are available at no charge for use by community groups for informational, educational or cultural meetings and programs.

The Peabody Institute Library subscribes to the American Library Association's Bill of Rights (see appendix), including their interpretation on the use of meeting rooms. The Library makes its facilities available on an "equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use." **The use of Library meeting rooms does not imply the Library's, Board of Trustees', or City of Peabody's sponsorship or endorsement of any ideas expressed in the meeting, nor of the goals, objectives, or ideals of the person or organization using Library facilities.** No advertisements or announcements implying such endorsement will be permitted.

Information about the rooms available for reservation, including their maximum occupancy, are available on the Library's website: www.peabodylibrary.org.

Meeting Room Use Agreement

All groups interested in making a reservation to use one of the Library's meeting spaces MUST complete and submit a **Meeting Room Use Agreement Form** at least fourteen (14) days in advance, to be updated annually, every January.

- This form may be accessed through the Library's website via Google Form.
 - A printed copy is available upon request, but the requester should expect a delay in receiving approval. Requesters must pick up blank forms and return the completed ones to the Library location where they are requesting to use a meeting room.
- Reservations may not be requested until the Meeting Room Use Agreement Form is approved by and on file with the Library.
- Requesters can expect a response from Library staff within four (4) days of submitting the Meeting Room Use Agreement Form.

Room Reservations

- A **Room Reservation Form** must be completed for each requested use of a room.

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- Reservation requests must be submitted at least seven (7) days in advance, but no more than three (3) months in advance.
- All room requests without a current (approved within 1 year), complete Meeting Room Use Agreement Form on file will be denied.
- The Room Reservation Form may be completed through the Library's website, in person or over the phone with Library staff.
- Library staff may follow up with questions via email before approving a reservation.
 - If the individual does not reply within 48 hours, the reservation will be canceled.
- When making a request, the individual/group/organization must provide a **distinguishing name** and a **descriptive summary** of the meeting's topic and purpose.
 - Reservations without both of these items will not be approved.
- A **contact person** for each group is required including a phone number and email address.
 - The contact person is responsible for ensuring that each person attending is aware of and abides by this policy and the Library's Patron Rights and Responsibilities.
 - The contact person must check in at the Public Services desk upon arrival for their reserved time.
 - If the individual making the reservation cannot make the meeting, they must notify the Library in advance and assign an alternative individual, who must meet all policy requirements and will assume all responsibilities assigned in this policy to the individual making the reservation.
 - If the individual making the reservation is not present and previous arrangements have not been made, the reservation will be canceled.
 - The individual making the reservation as well as the membership of the group/organization as a whole, will be held responsible for any and all damages that occur as a result of the use of the facilities.
 - The contact person must be 18 years or older.
- Notice of cancellation should be made a minimum of 24 hours in advance. After 30 minutes, a reservation may be forfeited if the attendees fail to appear as scheduled.

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- If the same group/organization fails to show for 2 meetings in a row and does not call to cancel, all future reservations are forfeited for three (3) months after the second no-show.
- Reservations are considered tentative until all completed forms are returned to the library, examined by an authorized staff member and a confirmation has been sent to the person/group requesting use of the room.
- Room use may be denied to anyone falsifying a Room Reservation Form and/or Meeting Room Use Agreement Form or failing to comply with this policy or any other Library policy. Library Administration and the Board of Library Trustees reserve the right to refuse the use of meeting rooms to any organization, group or individual who has previously abused or violated this policy and guidelines. If a Room Reservation Form and/or Meeting Room Use Agreement Form is denied, the applicant may submit a written appeal within 5 days of the denial to the Library Director.

Availability and Scheduling

- Meeting rooms are only available during limited hours, in order to accommodate Library-originated programming and in keeping with the Library's mission. Interested patrons should check the Library's meeting room calendar <https://peabodylibrary.org/meetingrooms/> for availability.
- No access is allowed into the building prior to or after the Library's scheduled hours of operation.
- All meetings must begin at least 15 minutes after the Library's opening, and must end at least 15 minutes prior to the Library's closing.
- Time for setup and cleanup after the meeting has ended should be included in the requested meeting time frame.
- No meetings shall be scheduled on days that the Library is closed.
 - All events are canceled if the Library is closed due to emergency or inclement weather. It is the group's responsibility to determine if the Library is closed and to notify possible attendees of the event. The Library/City is not liable for any losses resulting therefrom.
 - Every reasonable effort will be made to the organizer to notify them of the Library's unexpected closing.
 - The group is permitted to reschedule their event based on meeting room availability.

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Use of the Library Meeting Rooms

Library meeting areas are used primarily for Library-sponsored activities. Priority for the meeting room use is as follows:

1. Library Use
Group sponsored or co-sponsored by the Board of Trustees, the Peabody Institute Library, the Peabody Institute Library Foundation, or the City of Peabody
 2. Civic Group
Non-profit, public service group. A locally-based, educational or cultural group. A local, state, or federal government agency is a “Civic Group”
 3. Non-Profit or Charitable Organization
Group has 501(c)3 status, but is not a “Civic Group”
 4. Unincorporated Group
Group not legally incorporated meeting for a cultural, artistic or educational purpose
- The Library has the right to cancel, reschedule, or transfer meeting room locations or dates that conflict with Library sponsored programs and/or special events. In such cases, the Library will make its best effort to give advance notice.
 - Library Administration may end a meeting early if the meeting (1) results in a disruption of Library patrons’ ability to use the Library facilities, (2) impedes the Library staff in the performance of their duties, (3) endangers the Library building or collection, or (4) violates any of the Library’s policies.
 - The applicant and the group/organization that the person represents shall pay for any special maintenance, security, and/or damages to the meeting room or to Library property, as determined by the Library, incurred during or resulting from meeting room use.

Fair and Free Use of Rooms

- Under no circumstances may the use of the meeting room interfere with the use of the Library by other patrons, the work of the Library staff, or any other aspect of normal Library operations.
- All meetings held in the Library's facilities shall be, in accordance with the spirit of the open meeting laws of the Commonwealth and **must be open to the public**, including Library staff.

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- Persons or organizations using a meeting room may not charge admission or an entrance fee in order to maintain fair and free access in compliance with open meeting laws.
- No person shall be excluded from attendance except in order to comply with occupancy limits, or because their presence negatively impacts the health and/or safety of others.
- Doors must remain open and unlocked at all times throughout the meeting, and all exits must remain unobstructed at all times.
- Based on the room preferences stated in the “Use of Library Meeting Rooms” section above, only the PIL is permitted to use meeting rooms or other Library spaces for fundraising purposes.
- Requests for an exception from the Meeting Room Policy should be made by the user in writing and submitted to the Library Director who will refer to the Board of Library Trustees for consideration.

Equipment and Personal Items

- Library audio-visual equipment, such as computers and projectors, are not available to users; it is the responsibility of the users to supply their own equipment.
- Equipment, supplies, or personal belongings cannot be stored or left in the Library before or after the use of the meeting room.
- The Library assumes no responsibility for private property brought into the building.

Room Conditions

- No material or signs may be attached or affixed to the windows or wall surfaces.
- While the Library makes every effort to set up a room in advance, please be prepared to set up or rearrange the meeting room if necessary.
- Seating and/or supplementary furniture may not be moved from other areas of the Library.
- Maximum occupancy of the meeting room (found on the Library’s reservation website) must not be exceeded.
- No furniture is allowed in corridors outside the meeting rooms or doorways.
- The room must be left in the same condition as found.
- The Library assumes no responsibility for guaranteeing parking facilities for attendees, nor for ensuring that parking spaces are plowed during the winter months.
- Smoking, vaping, and consumption of alcoholic beverages are prohibited in all meeting room facilities and on Library premises.

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- Permission to bring any non-alcoholic beverages, food and paper goods on-site must obtain prior Trustees' approval a minimum of one month prior to the scheduled meeting.

Frequency of Use

- In the interest of fair access to all, Library meeting rooms are intended for occasional use.
- Rooms are not to be used as regular meeting locations for any particular group/organization and may not be advertised as such.
- Groups/organizations can book a meeting room no more than 3 months in advance.
- Groups/organizations may only have one reserved booking per month. Groups/organizations may have 12 reserved bookings in one calendar year.
- Scheduled meetings in which a group/organization does not show and does not call to cancel will be counted towards the limit 12 bookings in a calendar year.
- Any meetings canceled due to non-compliance with this policy will also be counted towards the calendar year booking limit.
- Information about rooms available for reservations are available on the Library's website: www.peabodylibrary.org

Publicity

- **The use of a meeting room does not in any way constitute an endorsement or sponsorship of the group's policies or beliefs by the Peabody Institute Library, its Board of Library Trustees or Library staff, or the City of Peabody.**
- Groups may identify the Library and provide its address in their publicity for the meeting, but the Library is unable to invite, book, or monitor any attendee list for the meeting or provide any administrative tasks related to the meeting room's use.
- The Library will not receive or pass along any correspondence resulting from a group using any of the Peabody Institute Library locations as headquarters because the group has used or plans to use the Library's meeting rooms. This includes the use of the name, address, general email, and/or telephone number of any of the Library's locations.
- The Library does not prepare or issue press releases, promotional materials or otherwise promote in any way non-Library sponsored meetings and programs. Only Library-sponsored events are posted on the Library's online calendar.

As approved by the Board of Library Trustees the 3rd day of April, 2023.