

Meeting Rooms

The Dothan Houston County Library System (DHCLS) provides meeting rooms to further the Library's mission to meet the informational, cultural, and recreational needs of the community. In addition to library-sponsored events, programs, and services (which shall always take precedent), meeting rooms may also be used by organizations engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual or charitable activities. Meeting rooms are not available for purely social purposes or for the benefit of self-promotion of individuals or commercial concerns. Applications and agreement forms must be turned in and meeting room fees paid to the Library before the meeting rooms can be scheduled.

Pending availability, meeting rooms are available to DHCLS cardholders who are in good standing and who are at least 19 years of age. Library staff may enter the meeting room at any time during any scheduled meeting. The fact that a group is permitted to meet at the Library does not, in any way, constitute an endorsement of the group's activities, beliefs, policies, or views.

Eligible Users

In addition to library programming, the rooms are available to Individuals, Profit, Non-Profit, Government or Educational organizations.

The following types of organizations and individuals are eligible and classified for the purpose of establishing room rental fees:

1. Individuals (No Organization): A civic, educational, or cultural group or individual that does not hold a 501(c)(3) status or other documentation and is not a for-profit sole-proprietorship, partnership, or corporation.
2. For Profit Groups: A sole-proprietorship, partnership, corporation or limited liability corporation.
3. Non-Profit Groups: An IRS recognized non-profit entity that can provide proof of 501(c)(3) status or other written documentation of non-profit status. Organizational bylaws or charters may be submitted as evidence of non-profit status pending an application to the IRS for 501(c)(3) status.
4. Governmental or Educational: A group sponsored by a city, county, state or federal agency. Emails associated with the primary contact must have a .gov, .edu or official email of the educational institution or be accredited by a recognized educational accrediting agency.

Unacceptable Uses

1. Meeting rooms cannot be used for any purpose that violates city, county, state, or federal law or that violates any library policy, including the Code of Conduct.
2. Personal events including, but not limited to, birthday parties, wedding receptions, baby showers, and reunions are not considered appropriate use of Library meeting rooms.
3. Political campaign events for one candidate or candidates of one political party. Any campaign event held at the Library must extend invitations to all the candidates qualifying for an election. The Library must be given proof that all candidates were extended an invitation for the event.

4. The meeting room facilities may not be used for any commercial purposes, including but not limited to, the sale of goods or services, executing fee-for-service agreements or contracts to perform services elsewhere, accepting membership dues, selling raffle tickets, and paid tutoring.
5. Organizations may not conduct fundraising events on Library property. Non-Profit fundraising organizations may reserve a meeting room for planning purposes only, provided the fundraiser itself will take place outside of the Library. (Library-sponsored fundraising activities, including those conducted by the Friends of the Library, are permitted.)

Additional Rules for Meeting Room Use

1. Library staff will not accept calls or relay messages to people attending meetings except in emergencies.
2. The Applicant must be in attendance for the duration of the scheduled meeting.
3. Monetary offerings cannot be collected in Library meeting rooms.
4. Open flames and hazardous materials, including materials that give off fumes or are highly flammable, are prohibited.
5. Signs, decorations, or other objects may not be taped or attached to walls, doors, windows, or columns.
6. Activities in the room must not disrupt regular Library operations including, but not limited to, soliciting or conducting surveys, making loud noises, blocking entries, fire lanes or walkways, etc.
7. No equipment is to be removed from the meeting rooms and furniture from other areas may not be brought into the meeting room. Groups using the rooms are responsible for reimbursing the Library for any damage to library furniture or equipment.
8. Children must be supervised at all times. The Library is not responsible for children left unattended while their parent or guardian is in a meeting at the Library.
9. Groups using Library meeting rooms may not charge admission or request donations, gratuities, or any type of monetary fees or charges for admission or participation.
10. All meetings must adhere to the maximum occupancies listed in this policy.

Reservations

1. Instructions on how to place reservations will be posted on the library website.
2. Groups must not assume that library personnel have made or will make room bookings for any event.
3. The Library assumes no responsibility for personal injuries, thefts, damages, or losses of private property while using Library meeting rooms. Groups using the meeting rooms shall hold harmless, indemnify and defend the Library from any claims involving use of the meeting rooms, including but not limited to claims for personal injuries, thefts, damages, or loss of private property. Such groups assume liability for any such claims, including claims for damages to the Library property.

Deposits and Fees

1. Available rooms and applicable rental rates are outlined further in this document.

2. DHCLS community rooms require the full payment at the time a reservation is made and within three days of approval of the reservation. Reservations will not be confirmed until fee is paid to hold reservation date. The Library accepts cash, checks, and all major credit cards.
3. An additional \$25 non-refundable fee will be required if food or drinks are consumed or served during the meeting.
4. If the facility is found to be in unsatisfactory condition, a damage fee (determined by the library) will be charged. Unsatisfactory conditions include, but are not limited to: stains; damaged walls or ceiling tiles; broken furniture and/or equipment.

Room Availability

1. Library-sponsored activities, events, and programs take precedent over meeting room reservations by non-library applicants.
2. Rooms are available on a first come basis. The Library reserves the right to relocate a group within the library if circumstances warrant.
3. Meeting Rooms may be reserved up to sixty (60) days in advance of the meeting. Applicants are limited to up to three (3) reservations in three (3) months.
4. Due to our annual Summer Reading Program, all DHCLS meeting rooms are closed to reservations from mid-May to August.
5. The meeting rooms are available during the Library's regular operating hours only. Reservations must terminate fifteen (15) minutes before the time of library closing. No early access to meeting rooms will be permitted prior to library opening hours.

Library-Initiated Cancellations

1. In the event that DHCLS must close due to unforeseen equipment failure or a weather-related emergency, all efforts will be made to notify organizations scheduled to use the rooms.
2. When a severe or inclement weather warning is issued, the library staff will follow set procedures. All persons in the building must comply with procedures.
3. No refunds will be given. In the event of an emergency library closure, the group will be given an opportunity to reschedule its meeting or a credit will be applied to its next reservation fees.
4. Should there be a scheduling conflict, library-sponsored events will have priority. The Library will attempt to inform any group using the meeting room as early as possible.

Applicant-Initiated Cancellations

In order to cancel, reschedule or transfer a fee-based reservation, users must inform the Library (3) days in advance of the scheduled meeting.

Reservation Policies

1. A current, signed application must be on file before reserving the meeting room. Payment in full is required at the time a reservation is made. No reservation is confirmed until this fee is paid. On the day or the scheduled meeting, applicants must check in at the front desk and sign the checklist prior to gaining access to the meeting room.

2. Groups wishing to apply for a series of meetings may fill out one application form in advance of the first meeting accompanied by a schedule of future meeting dates and times. Fees for each meeting must be paid at the time the application is submitted.
3. Reservations are not transferable from one applicant or organization to another.
4. Alcoholic beverages may not be dispensed or consumed in any part of the library or on library property, except for library-sponsored fundraising activities that take place after hours.
5. Library meeting rooms must be left in a clean and orderly condition. Users must pay the cost for repairs for any damages to facilities or equipment. The person signing the application form is considered the responsible party for any damages caused while their group is using the meeting room.
6. The Library is not responsible for items left in its facilities. Storage space is not available.
7. Meeting room tables, chairs, and podiums are available for use free of charge. Users are responsible for setting up the room according to their own needs. Reservations must allow time for the setup and cleanup of the room during the Library's regular hours and during their reservation time. Cleanup must be completed at least 15 minutes before the Library closes. Users will automatically be billed \$10 for every five minutes past closing.

Library's Right to Deny or Cancel Use

The Library reserves the right to deny or cancel use of a meeting room to qualified groups or individuals for the following reasons:

1. The space requested has already been reserved for a library-sponsored activity, event, or program.
2. The purpose or nature of the meeting is deemed unacceptable, as outlined in this policy.
3. The group has perpetrated previous damage to furniture, equipment, or facilities, violated a rule or has misrepresented the purpose of the organization or meeting held at the Library.
4. An applicant reserved the space but was not present at the time of the event.
5. Applications, agreement forms, or fees were not received.

Audiovisual Equipment Use

The use of a ceiling mounted projector, screen, and microphone is included in the rental fee. It is the responsibility of the user to schedule time needed to test the audiovisual equipment, prior to the scheduled meeting. Technical assistance for audiovisual equipment will not be available during a scheduled meeting. The user is responsible for all audiovisual equipment during the meeting. Setup and takedown of the audiovisual equipment must take place within the time allotted for the reservation.

Internet Access

Wireless Internet access is available in the meeting rooms. Library staff cannot provide unfiltered access to the Internet within a Library meeting room, whether on Library computers or those of Library customers. The Library is not responsible for any failures in the Wi-Fi connection during scheduled meetings. Wireless Internet use inside Library meeting rooms is subject to the Library's Internet Use Policy.

Event Promotion

With the exception of library-sponsored events, the Library will not advertise meeting room reservations.

The name or address of the library is not to be used in handouts or advertising of any kind except as a source of location. When used as a source of location all advertisements from outside organizations must include the Library's proper name ("Dothan Houston County Library System") and the appropriate name of the location ("Main Library" or "Westgate Branch"). No variations of the names are allowed.

No applicant individual or organization may use the library as a mailing address or phone number as a contact for program information, and no applicant individual or organization may state or imply that the library sponsors or endorses their meeting. The library may not be listed as a sponsor of an event without prior approval from the Programming Specialist.

Room Availability and Rates

- **Main Library Board Room**
 - Capacity - 15
 - Rate - Governmental or Educational - Free; All Other Uses - \$25
 - Included - Projector & Screen; Tables; Chairs
 - Posted rate includes up to 2 hours. The room can be rented for additional hours at \$25 each. A/V equipment setup included. Renter is responsible for setting up tables and chairs. \$25 fee assessed if food or drinks are consumed or served during the meeting.
- **Main Library Community Room**
 - Capacity - 100
 - Rate - Governmental or Educational - Free; All Other Uses - \$75
 - Included - Projector & Screen; Tables; Chairs
 - Posted rate includes up to 2 hours. The room can be rented for additional hours at \$75 each. A/V equipment setup included. Renter is responsible for setting up tables and chairs. \$25 fee assessed if food or drinks are consumed or served during the meeting.
- **Westgate Library Community Room**
 - Capacity - 50
 - Rate - Governmental or Educational - Free; All Other Uses - \$50
 - Included - Projector & Screen; Tables; Chairs
 - Posted rate includes up to 2 hours. The room can be rented for additional hours at \$50 each. A/V equipment setup included. Renter is responsible for setting up tables and chairs. \$25 fee assessed if food or drinks are consumed or served during the meeting.

Adopted by the DHCLS Board of Trustees on October 12, 2022.