

## **Talbot County Free Library Meeting Room Policy and Procedures**

The Talbot County Free Library (TCFL) welcomes the use of its meeting rooms for public gatherings by groups who agree to observe the library rules and whose activities do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, sexual orientation, age or disability. The Library Director or representative reserves the right to revoke permission to use the meeting rooms.

The primary function of the meeting rooms is to provide space for library sponsored and co-sponsored programs. When not in use by the library, meeting rooms are open and available for public use. Public gatherings must observe library rules. The library reserves the right to attend any events and meetings held in its facilities (except lawful executive sessions of government bodies) to verify that no illegal activities are taking place on the library's premises and to ensure that library policies are being followed.

### **Meeting Room use during the COVID-19 Pandemic:**

Meeting room limits have changed:

- Easton Meeting Room: maximum 75
- St. Michaels Meeting Room: maximum 50
- Frederick Douglass Room: maximum of 15
- Mask are no longer required, but are strongly recommended, regardless of vaccination status.
- All meeting room users must maintain a 6 foot social distance from one another when seated or moving around the meeting room.
- Groups are responsible for cleaning the room including tables and chairs using available cleaners after use.
- All groups must sign a COVID compliance form before using the meeting room.
- Meeting room use is subject to change per the health emergency policy, and additional procedures may be required as the situation evolves.
- All other criteria of the meeting room policy remain.

Limitations: Meeting rooms are not available for social gatherings (such as parties or entertainment), fund-raising efforts, or when, in the judgment of the Library Director, the use poses a threat to the life, safety or property of any individual.

Priority for use of the meeting rooms will be given in the following order:

- Talbot County Free Library (TCFL).
- Friends of the Talbot County Free Library and Talbot County Free Library Foundation
- Government departments and officials (local, state, and federal).
- Non-profit organizations and community groups for meetings or programs of a civic, cultural, or educational nature. All meetings must be free and open to the public.

The Talbot County Free Library, its Board of Trustees and employees assume no responsibility for the actions, opinions, or expressed points of view of the organizations that sponsor or host meetings, or the individuals who attend meetings and events on library premises.

The library is not liable for damages or theft of any equipment or personal belongings.

## **COST**

Use of the meeting rooms is free of charge. Groups are responsible for set up, break down, bringing own supplies, including any audiovisual equipment, and clean-up of the meeting rooms.

Reasonable charges will be assessed for any damage to rooms and their contents beyond normal wear and tear, for failure to break down meeting rooms, or for any required clean up, in which case groups will be denied subsequent use of meeting rooms until payment is received.

## **RESERVATIONS**

Reservations for meeting rooms at the two TCFL branches are handled individually. For reserving meeting rooms at the Main Library in Easton, please call: 410-822-1626. For reserving the meeting room at the St. Michaels Branch, please call: 410-745-5877.

1. Individual groups may only schedule a meeting room no more than three (3) months in advance.
2. Individual groups may not use library meeting rooms more than 5 times per calendar year. If demand is heavy, reservation requests may be denied to allow other groups use of the room.
3. The rooms are not available for purposes where, in the judgment of the Library Director, disorder and substantial disruption of the functioning of the library are likely to occur.

## **CONFIRMATION**

Rooms are not reserved until groups receive a confirmation from TCFL. Confirmation will be given upon:

1. Verification of information on the application, and
2. TCFL's determination of availability.

**CAPACITY**-These capacity limits are suspended while the revised COVID-19 pandemic capacities are in place.

Easton:

Main Meeting Room-capacity is 150 (lecture), 125 (banquet). Equipment: Chairs, Tables, Screen, Lectern, Kitchen

Frederick Douglass Room-capacity is 30 (lecture), 15 (banquet). Equipment: Chairs, Tables

St. Michaels:

Meeting Room-capacity is 100 (lecture), 45 (banquet). Equipment: Chairs, Tables, Screen, Lectern, Kitchen:

All TCFL Meeting Rooms are wheelchair accessible.

## **CANCELLATION**

1. TCFL requests that groups provide 24 hours of notice for any meeting cancellation. Failure to provide this notice may jeopardize future bookings.
2. Reservations for meeting rooms will be canceled automatically when TCFL closes for inclement weather or emergency situations.
3. TCFL reserves the right to:
  - a. End meetings and deny future booking requests for groups that damage rooms, leave debris, or cause complaints due to excessive noise or improper behavior.
  - b. Cancel reserved meeting rooms in the event of extenuating circumstances.

## **NON-LIBRARY GROUP RULES**

1. Any publicity must carry the name of a contact person and/or telephone number of the organization running the program. TCFL may not be identified as a sponsor.
2. Groups must have at least two adult representatives present at all meetings.
3. Attendance is limited to the posted room maximum allowed by the Fire Marshall at each location. Meeting rooms may not be reserved for groups of fewer than 6 (six) people. All meetings must conclude 15 minutes prior to the building's closing. All groups must exit the building at closing.

4. No exhibits, maps, charts, posters, etc., may be hung on the walls without advance permission. Check with the specific branch regarding the availability of blackboards, tack boards, or picture display molding.
5. Library meeting room audiovisual equipment is for library use only.
6. Light refreshments may be served if requested in the application, and if the kitchenette is left in an orderly condition. No alcoholic beverages may be served without permission of the Library Director.
7. Applicants (representing the group) must be 18 years of age or older.
8. Any publicity generated by groups for meetings held in TCFL meeting rooms must include a non-library phone number for information.
9. The meeting room will not be available prior to the time booked. Please include time needed for set up
10. Groups must bring their own supplies, including audiovisual equipment, etc.
11. No fund-raising programs, other than TCFL fund raising, can take place in the meeting rooms.
12. Meeting room must be returned to its original condition, with chairs arranged in auditorium seating.
13. The Library Director and the Board of Trustees reserve the right to make exceptions to these rules as needed.

#### **SAFETY:**

At the beginning of each meeting, the person in charge of the meeting must call attention to the number and location of exits from the meeting room. Smoking is not permitted. Open fire is not permitted in the library, including the use of candles. If children under the age of 18 are in attendance, there must be at least two adults (age 18 or older) present in the meeting room at all times.

#### **EMERGENCY CLOSINGS:**

When TCFL closes due to emergency, every effort will be made to notify organizations scheduled to use the meeting room. During adverse weather conditions, group representatives should call the branch or go to the website at [www.tcfl.org](http://www.tcfl.org) for more information.

**Rules approved by the Board of Trustees of the Talbot County Free Library, June 17, 2021.**

Meeting Room Contract

(A contract is required each year)

As a representative of the organization, I have read this policy and regulations governing use of the meeting rooms and agree to abide by it.

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Date & Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact that the library can call or text in the event of a TCFL emergency:

\_\_\_\_\_

Will you be serving refreshments? \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return or email this completed form to:**

Katie Dodds  
Administrative Assistant  
Talbot County Free Library  
100 W. Dover Street  
Easton, MD 21601  
PH: 410-822-1626  
FAX: 410-820-8217  
[kdodds@tcfl.org](mailto:kdodds@tcfl.org)

## Meeting Room COVID Compliance Form

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_, I knowingly and willingly consent to use the facilities and equipment at the Talbot County Free Library during the precautionary period for the COVID-19 pandemic. I understand the COVID-19 virus has a long incubation period in which carriers of the virus may not show symptoms, still be highly contagious, and spread the virus on furniture, keyboards, screens, and other surfaces in the library. Given the current limits on virus testing and the possible refusal of some who are carriers to be tested, it is impossible to tell who might or not might be a carrier, bringing the virus into the library.

I understand that due to the frequency of customer visits and the characteristics of the virus, meeting participants have some risk of contracting the virus by being in the library and using library equipment.

**NAME (printed):** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_, I promise to insure that the organization and all participants in this meeting abide by all guidelines set forth by the State of Maryland, Talbot County, and the Talbot County Free Library for use of the meeting room, including:

- Any library social distancing requirements in place at the time of the meeting;
- Any library capacity limits in place at the time of the meeting;
- Any library guidelines on cleaning and sanitizing the room following the meeting;
- Any library guidelines requiring meeting participants to sign a similar agreement.
- Any library guidelines including wearing a mask at all times during the time of the meeting.

**NAME (printed):** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

4/4/22