

MADISON COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM MEETING ROOM POLICY

Adopted by the Madison County Library Board of Trustees, April 13, 2004;

Revised February 11, 2014; July 25, 2025

The Madison County Library System welcomes the use of its meeting room facilities for cultural, civic, educational and public information meetings of interest to residents of our county. Under no circumstances will individuals or groups be allowed to use a library meeting room for church services or for social functions (i.e., wedding receptions, birthday parties, showers, reunions, etc.).

Mississippi Law prohibits the use of commercial companies and for-profit groups using public meeting room spaces. Two Attorney General opinions issued in 1992 address meeting room usage in public buildings. The first opinion stated, “Organizations or individuals cannot use public facilities for commercial ventures” with the second opinion reaffirming the first that, “a municipality may not provide use of public buildings to individuals, businesses or corporations for activities for profit.”

Therefore, no group may conduct private business meetings involving staff training, sales meetings, or of any commercial nature.

Policies governing the use of the library meeting spaces are made in accordance with *Article 6 of the Library Bill of Rights*:

Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Library-sponsored programs and library staff meetings or training programs will be given priority in the use of meeting room space. Library meeting room space will then be made available to all nonprofit **Madison County** groups on a first-come, first-serve basis, subject to the requirements that follow. Documentation is required for all nonprofits. Individuals may be permitted to use the meeting room for quiet study, but community groups will be given priority when requests for use are considered by the Branch Manager.

A \$50 refundable deposit is required to rent the meeting room. All deposits must be made with a check. Deposits will be refunded after staff check that the room is in the same condition prior to the meeting.

Meeting Room Use Requirements

1. Meeting room capacity at each branch is determined by the Fire Code and must NEVER be exceeded. Capacity per branch is as follows:

Camden Library: 48 Seated without tables, 16 seated at tables
Canton Library: 100 Seated without tables, 36 seated at tables
Flora Library: 65 Seated without tables, 22 seated at tables
Madison Library: 88 Seated without tables, 29 seated at tables
Ridgeland Library: 90 Seated without tables, 30 seated at tables
2. All meetings must be open to the public and the media.
3. No signs or posters shall be affixed to the meeting room walls or signage inside and outside the library.
4. Applicants must bring their own supplies, i.e., photocopies, pens, paper, etc. The library offers printing services with B&W copies \$.20 and color copies \$.50.
5. Minors and/or children who accompany adults to meetings must stay in the meeting with the adult. (See *MCLS Unattended Children Policy*.)
6. Admission fees may not be charged, collections may not be taken up, nor may products be sold. Groups or individuals may not sell goods or services for profit. Exceptions to this rule may be fees collected as tuition for educational courses taught by established institutions or to recover the costs of breakage or theft of materials used in library-sponsored programs, utility costs, clean-up costs.

Procedures and Regulations:

1. Requests to use meeting room space in any branch of the Madison County Library System must be made through the branch where the meeting is to occur. To reserve the meeting room, an individual must have a valid MCLS library card. Reservations will be made on a first-come, first-serve basis after an adult representative (person 21 years or older) of the requesting group has completed and submitted a meeting room reservation request form and emailed it to the branch manager. Individuals who wish to use the meeting room should submit their request no less than two weeks before their desired booking date. Deposits should be made at least one week before the meeting.

Reservations are not confirmed until a deposit is made. Final approval for meeting room use resides with the library director.

2. Meeting rooms are available for use during normal library hours. Meeting room facilities are available Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. and Friday 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Meeting room guest representatives and attendees should arrive **NO EARLIER than 9:00 a.m.** Access to meeting room facilities prior to the library's opening will not be granted. Reservation times include 30 minutes before and after the scheduled meeting. Saturdays are reserved for library and community partner organizations that provide support and services that benefit the community.
3. No meeting may be scheduled more than one (1) month ahead of the meeting date requested. Groups are limited to one 2-hour meeting per month. Community partners and library-sponsored programs are exempt from hourly restrictions.
4. **No group may reserve the meeting room more than once a month, nor may the group make consecutive reservations.** Groups may schedule their next meeting following their previously scheduled meeting's conclusion.
5. The contact person, as stated on the reservation request form, will be responsible for the conduct of the group. Meetings or classes must be conducted in low tones, being mindful and respectful of others using the library at that same time. The contact person will be assessed the full cost of any damage to the building or library property that occurs during a meeting of the group. Following the meeting's conclusion, the contact person must notify staff at the circulation desk.
6. Groups consisting of persons under 18 years of age must have adult supervision at all times when that group is using the public library meeting room space.
7. The room must be left in the same condition as when entered (i.e., chairs must be stacked or arranged as before; room must be left clean, with all garbage carried outside the building and placed in the appropriate container or trash bin). Failure to clean up the meeting room may result in future reservations to be denied.
8. Groups may serve refreshments in most branch locations, but only with the permission of the Branch Manager. The library staff will not serve or clean up refreshments.

Food and beverages may be served under the following conditions:

- The meeting room kitchen is available for food set up, not food preparation.
- Serving tables must be protected when food/beverages are served.

- No alcoholic beverages may be served.
 - Beverages are limited to coffee, soft drinks, water, juices, and punch. To protect the carpet, no beverages containing food dyes are allowed. (*Examples: red punch, purple grape juice, etc.*)
 - The meeting room guest provides **ALL** serving items such as coffee, cups, filters, flatware, plates, sugar, cream, serving trays or baskets, etc.
 - All trash and food must be disposed of properly in outside rubbish bins or dumpsters. If additional garbage cans are required, contact the branch manager at the library branch immediately.
9. The Libraries/Library System assumes no liability for any loss of personal property or personal injury which occurs in connection with a meeting held on its premises.
 10. No library furniture or equipment may be moved into or out of any designated meeting room space. If additional library equipment is needed, the request must be submitted to the Branch Manager when the meeting is originally scheduled.
 11. Smoking and vaping are not permitted anywhere on Library property.
 12. Publicity for meetings held in the public libraries of the Madison County Library System should specify the name of the sponsoring group along with the date, time, and library address.
 13. Individuals must notify the library immediately if the name or telephone number of the group's contact person changes. Groups who would like to cancel their meeting room reservation must notify the branch manager where they requested the reservation three (3) days before the scheduled meeting is to occur. Failure to notify the branch will result in future reservations to be denied.
 14. The Library Board and/or Director may deny the use of the meeting room facilities to any group that does not fully comply with the aforementioned regulations.
 15. The library reserves the right to relocate a group within the library if circumstances warrant. The library has the right to deny use at any time or to change this policy at any time as circumstances warrant.
 16. In the event a severe weather alert is issued, the library staff will evacuate the meeting room and follow evacuation procedures.
 17. The fact that a group is permitted to meet at the public library in no way constitutes an

endorsement of the group's objectives or beliefs. The Madison County Library System Board of Trustees shall be the final authority in granting or refusing permission for use of the meeting rooms.

Meeting room guest **MUST**:

- Ensure compliance with all fire/safety regulations, including, but not limited to, maintaining open aisles, adhering to occupancy limits, keeping exits clear, and having no open flames.
- Control meeting noise levels. Keep meeting facility doors **CLOSED**.

For more information concerning the use of meeting room space in the various branch libraries, please contact the Branch Managers at the following numbers:

Camden: 662-468-0309
Canton: 601-859-3202
Flora: 601-879-8835
Madison: 601-856-2749
Ridgeland: 601-856-4536