

# Hood County Library Meeting Room Policy and Procedures

The Hood County Library welcomes limited public use of its meeting rooms. The Meeting Room Policy and Procedures establishes rules and management for the following rooms: Pecan, Cottonwood, and The Jeanell Morris Room [**“Meeting Room(s)”**].

The Meeting Rooms in the Hood County Library (HCL) are designed to meet general, non-commercial, informational, educational, cultural, and civic needs including activities such as discussion groups, panels, lectures, conferences, and seminars.

The Library reserves the right to decline or cancel reservations in lieu of Library or County programs.

Use of a Meeting Room DOES NOT constitute the Library or County endorsement of the viewpoints, beliefs, ideas or policies expressed by organizations or individuals using the space.

There is no charge for Meeting Room use. All meetings held must be open to the general public. Library staff retains the right to attend any meetings or events scheduled at the Library to ensure compliance of policies and procedures.

## Application requirements:

- Applicants must be ALL of the following:
  - Must be 18 years of age or older
  - An active HCL card-holder in good standing (balance due is less than \$10)
- OR**
- Authorized representative of a not for profit organization wishing to provide a free service to Hood County community members.
- An attendee at the requested meeting
- Any organization outside of Hood County wishing to reserve a room, must complete a request and await approval from the Hood County Commissioners' Court.

- Any person reserving a room for an event, presenting an event or sponsoring an event held at the library, which is intended to draw children, or an event substantially likely to draw children, shall be required to pass a background check, which shall at a minimum include a search of the sex offender registry. No person who has been convicted of a sex offense may sponsor or be present at the event.
- A Certificate of Insurance naming Hood County as an additional insured will need to be submitted to the County prior to approval of use of the facility by an **outside** organization. Access to the facility shall not be permitted until the application and insurance have been screened and approved by the Commissioners' Court.

### Eligible groups include:

- Civic, educational, and nonprofit groups/organizations (5 or more people) presenting meetings of public interest;
- Non-partisan events such as a public forum open to all candidates or county interest meetings held by current elected officials.

### Excluded meetings include:

- Personal events or social gatherings such as birthday parties, baby showers, dances, etc...
- Political campaigning or political fundraising;
- Meetings requiring payment for admission, a registration fee (including fees taken off-site), materials fee or required donations;
- Programs involving the sale, advertising, marketing, promotion of commercial products or services, or programs sponsored by a business firm, regardless of purpose;
- The use of the room to provide direct healthcare services.

### Publicity:

- A copy of all publicity must be submitted to the Library Director or designee for approval prior to publication or distribution.
- Publicity must include the following statements:
  - "This program is not sponsored by the Hood County Library."
  - "If you have special physical or communication needs that may impact your participation in this activity, please contact (name) at (phone number), (email) at least 72 hours prior to the event to discuss accommodations. We cannot ensure the availability of accommodations without prior notification.

- If someone needs special accommodations, the group is responsible for providing the accommodation.
- Use of Library facility phone number as a contact phone number for the meeting/event to promote the event is prohibited without prior approval by the Library Director. The Library will not serve as a point of information referral for individuals who may have questions regarding the meeting or who wish to contact the meeting organizer.

## Meeting Room Reservations:

- A group may request the use of a meeting room online, or in person.
- Request must be made at least 48 hours prior to the desired meeting time.
- Meeting Rooms may be reserved up to 90 days in advance with no more than four (4) applications from the same group within a 90-day period.
- Each meeting requires a separate Meeting Room Request Form.
- Applications are considered on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Meeting Rooms are only available when the library is open, and they must be vacated at least 15 minutes prior to closing.
- The library reserves the right to change or cancel reservations if a building or weather-related event occurs, OR a special Library program or need intervenes.
- If there is a need to cancel a reservation, please let the Library know as soon as possible. It is polite and customary to make the library aware no less than 72 hours in advance.
- If a group fails to appear for two consecutive meetings without making a cancellation at least 72 hours in advance, the group or event will be prohibited from using the Meeting Room for one year.
- A group may not assign or transfer its reservation to another group.

## Group Expectations:

- A representative from the group must check in at the circulation desk upon arrival.
- All groups must comply with Library Rules.
- The library may withhold the use of the Meeting Room from any group or organization due to violation of the rules or misuse of the Library's facilities.
- All Fire Regulations must be followed including room capacity and clear aisles, exits, and doors. In addition, candles and other open-flame devices (lighters, matches, torches, etc.) are prohibited.
- Please leave the Meeting Room as it was found.
- Equipment, supplies, or personal effects cannot be stored or left in Library meeting rooms before or after use.

- **Only** water with a lid is allowed in The Pecan and The Cottonwood. If the group desires other beverage accommodations, the group may consider reserving The Jeanell Morris Room.
- The individual making the reservation, as well as the group as a whole, will be held responsible for any and all damages that may occur as a result of the use of the facilities.
- **ANY USER OF ANY MEETING ROOM AGREES TO INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS ALL EMPLOYEES, OFFICIALS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND GOVERNING BODIES OF HOOD COUNTY FROM ANY LOSS OR DAMAGES THEY MAY SUFFER AS A RESULT OF USING ANY LIBRARY MEETING ROOM.**
- Permission to use the Library Meeting Rooms may be withheld from groups that have failed to comply with the Meeting Room Policy and from any group that damages the room, carpet, equipment, or furniture, or causes a disturbance.
- No child shall be permitted to attend a non-library sponsored event held on library property unless the library has received a written parental permission on a form that has been signed by the parent in the presence of a library staff member, or the child is accompanied by his or her parent or legal guardian.

## Study Rooms:

- Hood County Library provides 4 separate spaces for study and conversation.
- In order to use these rooms, you must be 15 years old or older unless accompanied by a parent or responsible caregiver.
- These rooms are not available for reservation and are open on a first-come, first-served basis.
- The Redbud, Live Oak, and Mesquite are set up for study with chairs and a table, and is meant for 1-4 people. The Post Oak room is set up for discussion type groups and is meant for 5-7 people.
- Those who wish to use a study room must check in at the circulation desk upon arrival and must comply with Library Rules.
- The library may withhold the use of the study room from any individual or group due to violation of the rules or misuse of the Library's facilities.

**Addition of Meeting Room Policy and Procedures approved by Commissioners' Court  
February 11, 2020**