**Meeting Room Policy**

**East Mississippi Regional Library**

**Meeting Rooms at the East Mississippi Regional Library System:**

The East Mississippi Regional Library System (EMRL) has meeting room space available at its Bay Springs, Heidelberg, and Quitman branches, primarily to support library programs and functions that further the work of the library system. When not being used by the library, the rooms are available for use by established not-for-profit organizations and noncommercial groups based in Clarke or Jasper Counties in Mississippi.

In accordance with the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights, the library does not limit use of the meeting room based on the subject matter or content of the meeting or on the beliefs of affiliations of the meeting’s sponsors. However, all meetings must adhere to the following rules as established by the EMRL Board of Trustees. Failure to comply with established library system rules may result in loss of future use of library system meeting rooms.

**Eligible Organizations:**

The following types of organizations are eligible to use EMRL meeting room spaces:

* Educational
* Civic
* Cultural
* Charitable
* Governmental (a group sponsored by a city, county, state, or federal agency)
* Religious, under the following circumstances:
  + Denominational groups, organizations, or associations will be allowed the use of the meeting rooms when no religious services are to be conducted.  While no group shall be denied access based on the content of their meetings or religious views expressed therein, the meeting rooms are not designed to be used for church services for any one organization or to provide a forum to organize or build membership for one particular church, congregation or equivalent thereof.

Depending on availability and the reason for the request, individuals may be permitted use of the meeting room at the discretion of the librarian(s) or library director. Any established not-for-profit organizations and/or noncommercial groups that are not based in Clarke or Jasper Counties may be considered for use of the meeting room if the organization is providing a service to local residents. Any organization may be required to provide written documentation of non-profit status 72 hours prior to the use of the meeting room.

**Unacceptable use of EMRL Meeting Rooms:**

EMRL meeting rooms are not available for the following non-library sponsored functions:

* Private social purposes such as weddings, family reunions, birthday parties, etc.
* Promotion of commercial products or services
* Political campaign events
* Sales or solicitation of funds of any kind, or events requiring any type of fee including admission charges and payment for products or services. This includes events which are initial introductory or explanatory meetings to be followed by other meetings in other locations where fees will be charged or items will be sold.

**EMRL Meeting Room Reservation and Setup:**

Reservations for meeting rooms will be taken during normal EMRL business hours over the phone or in person at the relevant library branch. The rooms should be booked at least two weeks but not more than 90 days prior to the event. Meeting rooms are only available for use during the library’s regular operating hours, except when previously approved by the library director or board of trustees. Library sponsored programs and events take precedence over meeting room use by outside organizations. If a cancellation of a scheduled program is necessary, notice will be given as soon as reasonably possible.

Use of the meeting room does not imply, nor should an organization claim, any endorsement, support, or co-sponsorship by EMRL of the activities that take place in the meeting room or of the beliefs of the group in the meeting room.

Any organization using a meeting room is responsible for setting up the room according to its own needs. After the conclusion of the meeting, chairs, tables, and other furniture must be returned to their original positions. All trash must be collected and removed from the meeting room. The room must be left clean and returned to the condition it was in before the meeting was held.

**Equipment:**

Though it is recommended that users provide their own audiovisual equipment if possible, the library has limited audiovisual materials available for use in the meeting room. Such equipment must be requested at the time of the room’s reservation. Those who use library equipment are responsible for its setup and operation during the meeting. Library staff will not be available to operate equipment.

Wireless internet access is available at all EMRL meeting room locations. The wireless password will be available at the library circulation desk.

**General Rules for the Use of EMRL Meeting Rooms:**

* Groups must read and agree to the EMRL Meeting Room Policy.
* All meetings must be open to the public.
* No illegal activities are permitted.
* The distribution and/or consumption of alcohol are prohibited.
* Groups using the meeting room will be expected to conform to all library rules.
* Youth organizations using a meeting room must have two adults (18 and over) present at all times.
* The library may require proof that any public audiovisual presentation is not in conflict with copyright laws.
* Groups are responsible for ensuring that attendance at meetings does not exceed room capacity, as established by the library system.
* EMRL assumes no responsibility for personal injuries, thefts, or losses of private property while on or using library facilities.
* The EMRL Board of Trustees and library system director reserve the right to change this policy at any time.