Public Room Policy

Bring awareness of services, expand the library's reach, develop relationships to provide personal connections, create a welcoming destination

Purpose of the Public Room Policy

The Public Room Policy defines the time, place, and manner of use of the public rooms, including restrictions This policy does not pertain to the content of a meeting or to the beliefs or affiliations of the meeting sponsors.

Public Room Policy Goals

- Convey the priorities of the use of the public rooms.
- Ensure organizations understand the rules and expectations surrounding the use of the public rooms.
- Provide the manner in which public rooms may be reserved.

Principles and Objectives

- The public rooms at the Gonzales Public Library are designed to meet general informational, educational, cultural, and civic needs.
- The Gonzales Public Library supports "equal and equitable access to all library resources and services by users of all ages," as outlined by the American Library Association's Bill of Rights.
- The library serves as a public forum as outlined by the American Library Association in "Meeting Rooms: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights."

Contact Us

- In person at the check-out or information desk
- Via telephone at 830-672-6315
- Via email at chelms@gonzales.texas.gov

Service will not be denied or abridged because of religious, racial, social, economic, or political status; or because of mental, emotional, or physical condition, age, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

General Information:

The library has 2 public rooms which may be reserved. The rooms are available when not in use by the library, City of Gonzales, government entities, library partners, or previously reserved.

Use of the library's meeting rooms by participants does not constitute library or City of Gonzales endorsement of materials (written, audio, etc.), opinions, or viewpoints of the organizer or the attendees.

The Library Director or their appointee is responsible for implementing this policy and maintaining reservations.

Public Room Fees

	Regular Meeting Room	Conference Room
Nonprofit meetings open to the public	No charge	No charge
Community groups or library partners (See Appendix)	No charge	No charge
Commercial, political organizations, or private meetings	$40.00	$20.00

Nonprofit organizations may be asked to present their 501(c)(3) documentation to verify their status.

Government entities are not subject to the fees listed above.

Public Meeting Room Guidelines:

Meeting rooms are provided as a service to the public. The following guidelines are established in order to ensure the continuation of this service:

- The City of Gonzales and the Gonzales Public Library retain the right to preempt any other scheduled event.
- Sales of any kind are not permitted.
- Fees may not be charged for activities held in the rooms.
- Rooms are only available for organizational meetings and community gatherings and may not be used for social purposes including but not limited to birthday parties, reunions, showers, religious services, etc.
- Library staff retain the right to attend or observe any meeting/event to ensure compliance with library policies.

- Permission to use the meeting rooms can be denied to organizations for the following:
    - Previous damage to the building or its furnishings
    - Prior failure to leave the rooms in clean, orderly, and/or secure conditions
    - Creating a disturbance that hinders access or use of the library
    - Failure to comply with library policies
- The signee of the Room Reservation Application is ultimately responsible for ensuring the rooms are used appropriately and will be responsible for reimbursing the library for all damage, outside of normal wear and tear.

Use of the Room

During the meeting

- All organizations/users are expected to follow all library policies and city ordinances when using the rooms.
- Exits must remain unlocked and a clear path for egress provided.
- Groups must maintain a respectable noise level.

Clean-up expectations

- Wipe down tables and chairs, and vacuum, if needed
- Restore room to its original configuration
- Return tables and chairs to racks and storage, if applicable
- Remove any waste generated from the meeting and dispose of it in the outside dumpster

Promotional Materials

Promotional material for meetings occurring in the library's public rooms may list the library as a location.

- **Promotional materials may not imply the library's participation or endorsement of an event without written permission from the Library Director or their appointee.**
- The library logo may not be used by any organization without written permission from the Library Director or their appointee.

Reservations

Organizations may reserve the meeting rooms in advance by completing the reservation form (see appendix or view on the library's website) and submitting it.

Reservation Guidelines

- Applicants must be:
    - 18 years or older
    - Willing to accept financial responsibility for any damage or cleaning fees

- Reservations may be made up to 90 days in advance.
- Applications will be processed in the order in which they are received.
- Organizations may use a room no more than once a month and for no more than three consecutive hours. Library partners may use the room two times per month.
    - Organizations may apply for an exception (see appendix), which will be considered in the order they are received.
- The library has five business days from receipt of the reservation form to contact the group or organization.
    - Once contacted, organizations have five business days to complete the reservation process including payment of fees.
    - Failure to respond will result in the cancellation of the reservation.
- Study groups and other informal groups consisting of three or more people may use the Conference Room without a reservation, depending on availability, on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Groups/organizations may not assign their reservations to other groups.

Reservation Cancellation

- Notice of cancellation should occur as soon as possible.
- Fees are refundable if cancellation occurs 72 hours before reservation time.
- A group/organization is considered a no-show after 30 minutes, and the reservation will be forfeited.

Exceptions and Accommodations

Exceptions/Accommodations to the public Room Policy will be at the discretion of the Library Director or a Library Supervisor. Exceptions/Accommodations will be designed to increase the accessibility of the library but will not negatively impact other users' library experience.

Reevaluation of Public Room Policy

The Gonzales Public Library Public Room Policy is reviewed every three years so that it adequately reflects changes in the library's goals and community's needs. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the City of Gonzales may amend the policy at any time as appropriate. The staff may bring forward issues and recommendations for the Director's consideration as part of the amendment process for the policy.

Appendix

- American Library Association's *Bill of Rights*
- *Meeting Rooms: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*
- Definitions: page 5
- Public Room Reservation Application: page 6
- Public Room Reservation Reconsideration Application: page 7

Definitions

The following definitions outline the intent of words or phrases used in the Gonzales Public Library's Public Room Policy.

Community Group

Does

- Support the library's mission
- Consist of individuals from Gonzales County
- Consist of three or more individuals
- Gather for education and community building around a shared interest

Does Not

- Profit either directly or indirectly through meeting at the library
- Have a nonprofit status

Library Partner

Groups/organizations who participate in a mutually beneficial collaboration with the library through a written/verbal agreement. Partner contributions provide and/or promote activities, services, events, and/or programs for the public in ways that support the library's mission.

Library Board Approval: 08/05/2026

City Council Approval: 09/17/2026

Room Reservation

Organization Information

Organization name: _____

Email address:_____

Primary contact: _____ Phone number: _____

Secondary contact: _____ Phone number: _____

Meeting Information

Date: _____ Start time: _____ Event start time: _____ End time: _____

Room: __ Conference __ Meeting Room

Purpose of meeting (2-3 sentences): _____

_____

_____

Is this meeting open to the public? __ Yes __No

By signing this application, I confirm the following statements:

- I hereby apply for the use of the Regular Meeting Room or Conference Room of the Gonzales Public Library
- My organization and I agree to follow all of the rules and procedures listed in the Gonzales Public Library's Public Room Policy.
- I understand that I am assuming financial responsibility for any damage, losses, or clean-up expenses that may result from the use of library facilities.

Signature:_____ Name (printed): _____

Title: _____ Date: _____

Staff Information

Approved: __ Yes __ No Received initials: _____

Partner: __ Yes __ No Rental fee: _____

If no, state reason: _____

Library director or acting agent name: _____ Date: _____

Library director or acting agent signature: _____

Organization Information Date/time of meeting _____

Room Reservation Exception Application

Organization name: _____

Primary contact: _____ Phone number: _____

Select the exception to the Public Room Policy that you are applying for:

__ Request to meet multiple times a month

__ Request to meet longer than three hours

__ Request to book more than one room at a time

__ Request re-occurrence: _____

__ Other: _____

Reason: _____

_____

_____

Name (printed): _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

To keep public rooms available, decisions on exceptions may not be made until 2 weeks before the requested meeting date.

Staff Information

Approved: __ Yes __ No

Partner: __ Yes __ No

Previous exceptions:_____

_____

If no, state reason; _____

_____

Library Director or acting agent: _____ Date: _____

Library Director or acting agent signature: _____