



Room Rental Policy

The Library Board welcomes individuals, community groups, and charitable and commercial organizations to apply for the use of selected Library rooms on a rental basis as set out hereafter.

This policy governs the use of meeting space within the Mahwah Public Library (hereafter “Library”) by outside groups and does not apply to Library programs; Library sponsored programs, or approved Mahwah Public Library-affiliated groups.

Use of a Library room does not constitute a Library endorsement of any policies or beliefs of any individual, group or organization which rents or uses rooms in the Library.

1. General Principles

- 1.1. The Library and its public areas are maintained to serve residents who visit to read and borrow Library materials, attend Library cultural and educational programs, conduct research with support from Library staff and utilize Library resources and technologies.
- 1.2. The Board of Trustees believes that as a cultural, educational, and informational center, the Library assumes an obligation to make its meeting rooms available to eligible individual(s), non-partisan, secular community organizations, and tax-supported government bodies for public meetings on an equal basis, provided that such use of the meeting room does not interfere with the effective use of the Library by the general public or the regular operation of the Library.
- 1.3. Under New Jersey law (N.J.S.A. 40:54-17), the Library Board of Trustees manages the Library and is responsible for all policies and rules and regulations governing the use of the Library and its meeting rooms. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to limit, control and determine the conditions of any and all uses of the Library meeting rooms by non-library organizations. These policies may be changed at any time, subject to legal limitations. The Board of Trustees assigns the responsibility of interpreting and executing these Policies to the Library Director and his/her designee.
- 1.4. The Library does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity, political ideology, creed, ancestry or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, in choosing to make its rooms available to interested parties.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. “Applicant” is used throughout this policy to represent individuals over the age of 21, groups sponsored by an adult over the age of 21, businesses, organizations, or governmental bodies requesting use of space in the Library.
- 2.2. “Space” is used throughout this policy to represent the Octagon, Small Meeting Room, Large Meeting Room, or Winter Room available for use.
- 2.3. “Rental” is used throughout this policy to represent the gathering, meeting, program, or other event for which the space is being requested.

3. Room Use Guidelines

- 3.1. The Library's peaceful environment and cultural and educational activities remain of primary importance. No rental of any Library space is permitted that will interfere with effective use of the Library by the general public or the regular operation of the Library. Failure to comply with this policy, or the Library's code of conduct, will disqualify the applicant from future use of the Library's rooms.
- 3.2. Library space may be rented for gatherings, meetings, programs, or events with an educational, cultural, intellectual, or charitable purpose ("permissible activities"). The following shall not be considered permissible activities under this policy: any fundraising; charging for admission; sales of goods or services; promotion of a political doctrine and/or campaigning by or for a candidate for elected office; promotion of a religious belief, or conducting religious worship; the presentation or promotion of obscene or sexually explicit content; and, any illegal activity. This does not prohibit educational, civic, cultural, or informational programs that discuss religious and political viewpoints provided they comply with this policy.
- 3.3. Applicants must comply strictly with all town ordinances and rules and regulations of the Health, Police, and Fire Departments regarding public assembly. Use of Library space will be limited to the capacity approved by the Fire Department. If it is necessary to have a uniformed firefighter or police officer present to enforce safety provisions, the expense will be borne by the applicant. Proof of any such arrangements must be provided prior to the beginning of the rental period.
- 3.4. Library related programs, i.e. programs sponsored or hosted directly by the Library shall take precedence over all other uses. Priority for use of the room is in the following order: Library programs and events; events sponsored by the Friends of Mahwah Library; meetings of Township agencies, boards and committees; room rentals by Mahwah residents or organizations; and room rentals by non-Mahwah residents or organizations.
- 3.5. Rentals must be supervised by a responsible adult. If the program/event will include participants/members eighteen (18) years of age or younger, one (1) supervising adult for every ten (10) youth must be in attendance.
- 3.6. No applicant may rent any Library space more than four (4) times in one month and twenty-six (26) times in any calendar year. Multiple applications submitted by different applicants shall be considered as a single applicant where, in the judgment of the staff, the applications are for the same individual, group, organization, recurring activity, or similar purpose. Such reservations shall be subject to the restrictions contained in this policy.
- 3.7. No applicant shall refer to the Library as their permanent meeting place.
- 3.8. Press releases, posters, invitations, and other promotional materials are the responsibility of the applicant. Applicants shall not imply that an event or meeting is sponsored, co-sponsored, or endorsed by the Library in any advertising or publicity. Promotional materials for events must include the phrase "*[name of the program or event] is presented by [name of the applicant] and is not sponsored or endorsed by the Mahwah Public Library*" and must include contact information for the applicant. Except as a designation of location, the name and address of the Library shall not be used in any promotional materials related to the use of Library space. The Library's telephone number, logo, and/or images of the Library shall not be used on any promotional materials. Promotional materials for the event or applicant shall not be left at the Library.
- 3.9. Library staff will not distribute information, conduct registration, or collect money for any rental.

4. Appropriate Use of Library Facilities & Equipment

- 4.1. Gambling, the use of tobacco products, including vaping, illegal substances, and the consumption of alcoholic beverages are prohibited in all areas of the Library and premises.
- 4.2. Porter services and storage are not available. The Library is not responsible for equipment, supplies, materials, or other items left in the Library.

- 4.3. Refreshments may be served, provided that the Library is notified and items to be served are stated in the application. Food shall not be prepared on-site. The Library does not provide serving utensils, dishes or drinking vessels. The applicant must provide their own cleanup.
- 4.4. The Library can set up tables and seating arrangements based on standard configurations prior to the event, if requested at the time of application. Changes to the basic configuration are the responsibility of the individual/group using the room. The room must be left clean and as the individual/group found it. No material shall be attached to the walls for display purposes.
- 4.5. The applicant is responsible for any personal injuries incurred and agrees to provide a "Hold Harmless" agreement indemnifying the Township of Mahwah, the Mahwah Public Library, and any of their officers, agents and employees, against any injury arising from use of the Library facility and/or its equipment.
- 4.6. The applicant is responsible for any damage done to the space and/or its contents, the buildings and grounds, and agrees to pay costs for any extra cleaning or repairs necessary after their rental. Payment for cleaning and/or repairs shall be deducted from the security deposit. If payment is not made, the applicant shall be barred from further use of the facility until such payment is made.

5. Hours of Operation & Emergency Closing

- 5.1. Space may be rented during normal hours of operation, Monday through Saturday. After-hours rental is available upon request. Rentals will not be approved for dates on which the Library is closed, or on Sundays.
- 5.2. The rental will be cancelled if the Library closes due to weather or other emergencies. Reasonable efforts will be made to announce the cancellation on the Library's website, and to contact the applicant; however, the applicant should verify that the Library is open prior to their reservation. If the Library closes, the applicant will be given the choice of rescheduling their meeting, or receiving a refund.

6. Security Deposit

- 6.1. Each room reservation will be considered an individual event. A \$100 security deposit will be required for each event. The security deposit will be returned upon satisfactory inspection of the room subsequent to use.

7. Room Use Fees

- 7.1. No fee will be charged for programs sponsored by the Library, the Friends of the Mahwah Public Library, or official Township of Mahwah agencies, boards and committees, including organizations that are covered under the Township's insurance as "quasi" I, II, III, or IV.
- 7.2. The following fee will be charged to individuals that reside in Mahwah and businesses and organizations that are based in Mahwah as a means to offset the cost of room use:
 - 7.2.1. Octagon (Girl Scout/Boy Scout Troops based in Mahwah): No charge.
 - 7.2.2. Octagon: \$20 for the first two hour; \$10 for each additional hour or part of an hour
 - 7.2.3. Small Meeting Room: \$20 first two hours; \$10 each additional hour or part of an hour.
 - 7.2.4. Large Meeting Room: \$40 first two hours; \$20 each additional hour or part of an hour.
 - 7.2.5. Winter Room: \$80 first two hours; \$40 each additional hour or part of an hour.
- 7.3. The following fees will be charged to individuals that reside outside Mahwah and organizations that businesses are based outside Mahwah:
 - 7.3.1. Octagon: \$60 for the first two hour; \$30 for each additional hour or part of an hour
 - 7.3.2. Small Meeting Room: \$60 first two hours; \$30 each additional hour or part of an hour.
 - 7.3.3. Large Meeting Room: \$120 first two hours; \$60 each additional hour or part of an hour.

7.3.4. Winter Room: \$240 first two hours; \$120 each additional hour or part of an hour.

- 7.4. The minimum room use is two hours, inclusive of any time required for setup and takedown. If the applicant requires additional time, including time for setup and takedown, it will be billed at the hourly rate.

8. Application Procedures:

- 8.1. Applications shall be made online through the Library's website. All required information must be submitted before the application can be considered. Applicants are encouraged to provide any additional information about the event that will assist in the approval process. Applications are not transferable to other applicants.
- 8.2. A Certificate of Insurance for General Liability, in the amount of \$1,000,000.00, naming the Township of Mahwah as the certificate holder and the Mahwah Public Library as additional insured, must be provided with the application. Please refer to the form "Insurance Requirements" and sample Certificate of Insurance included in the application packet.
- 8.3. The applicant must provide the Library with a signed "Hold Harmless" agreement indemnifying the Township of Mahwah and the Mahwah Public Library, and any of their officers, agents and employees, against any damage or injury arising from its occupancy and use of the facility and its equipment or the Library property. The Township of Mahwah and the Mahwah Public Library shall not be held responsible for loss or damage to any property owned by the users of the Library facility.
- 8.4. Applicants must provide copies of all publicity, marketing, and promotional materials to ensure conformity with Section 3.8.
- 8.5. Reservations will be finalized when the completed application form, hold harmless agreement, security deposit, promotional materials (if any), and payment are received. Incomplete applications will be held for 7 days.

9. Bases for denying application.

- 9.1. The Library reserves the right to review details for each proposed event or meeting, including but not limited to such aspects as safety, security and management and may either require an amendment to the proposed use or deny it based on the application.
- 9.2. Use of a space is limited to the purpose described in the use application. Any change of use must be provided, in writing, and approved in advance by the Library Director. Programs may be canceled by the Director for non-compliance. Timely notice of cancellation must be provided and the Director or his/her designee reserves the right to visit and/or observe any program or meeting held on Library property.
- 9.3. The Library reserves the right to cancel or relocate any program, meeting, or event, if circumstances warrant. An application may be denied for the following reasons:
- 9.3.1. Violations of laws. If the event violates any law, or violates any rule, regulation or condition governing the use of the space.
- 9.3.2. Jeopardizing the building or exceeding its capacity. If, in the judgment of the Director, the safety of the building or occupants will be adversely affected.
- 9.3.3. Competing Library function or organization with a preference. If there is a competing Library function.
- 9.3.4. Promoting religious or political doctrine. If the event advocates for or promotes religious or political doctrine or beliefs.
- 9.3.5. Jeopardizing the reputation and good standing of the Library in the community, and other reasons for denial. Such other reasons as may be compelling and in the interests of the Library and its patrons, in the judgment of the Director. Applicant shall, however, be given the opportunity to be present at a meeting of the Library Board of Trustees at which the

application shall be the subject of deliberation and to present any arguments in support of the application as set forth in section 2.15 above.

- 9.4. The applicant shall be notified in writing whether the application has been approved or denied, and a denial shall state the reason therefor.
- 9.5. Applicants that are denied permission may file an appeal to the Library Board of Trustees at least one (1) week prior to the next regular Board meeting. A copy must be sent to the Library Director as well. After review the Trustees will notify the appealing part in writing of its decision. The decision of the Library Board of Trustees is final

Policy last reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees: September 15, 2026.