



Public Room Policy F.A.Q.

The following information relates to the new Public Room Policy, effective October 1, 2025.

At the Bastrop Public Library, 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.

1. What are the fees for using the library's public rooms?

Library Partners, Community Groups, or Nonprofit Organization meetings that are open to the public may use the rooms at no charge. Commercial entities, political organizations, and private meetings are subject to the following fees.

Pressley Meeting Room: \$50.00 for two hours, \$20.00 for each additional hour

Maynard Conference Room: \$25.00 for two hours, \$10.00 for each additional hour

2. Why did we lower the fees?

The library serves as a limited public forum designed to meet the general informational, educational, cultural, and civic needs of the community. The updated policy introduces new guidelines about which groups must pay fees. We want our public rooms to be affordable so lowering the fees ensures all groups can still access the rooms.

3. Why did we eliminate the deposit?

Requiring room deposits created extra stress and paperwork for both the library and community groups. The library is not equipped to take deposits electronically, therefore staff had to accept cash or checks, record and secure them, and hold the funds until they were returned. Managing these funds was determined to be an unnecessary burden, especially since groups consistently take excellent care of the rooms. In the end, deposits were not beneficial to anyone, so the requirement was removed.

4. Why is there a fee for political organizations?

The Bastrop Public Library is a government owned facility and as such is responsible for complying with Section 255.003 of the Texas Election Code, which prohibits the use of public funds (including the use of a government owned facility), for the distribution of written political advertising materials, or for radio or television broadcasts of political advertising. Charging a fee ensures we remain compliant with the Texas election code and gives political groups access to the room.

5. What is a “private meeting” and why is there a fee?

The library’s role as a limited public forum means our public rooms are intended to support public engagement and community building. Meetings held at the library that are not open to the public are considered private. All groups and organizations, including non-profits, holding a meeting that is closed to the public will be subject to a fee. Private meetings do not align with the library’s role as a limited public forum.

6. Can a meeting still be considered public if there are limits on who can attend?

Limiting attendance in the case of children and youth is acceptable as long as everyone in the target age group is welcome. Allowing only youth that are members of a specific group or organization would be considered a private meeting.

In general, if you would not turn someone away from your meeting, it will be considered public. An Exception Form can be submitted to receive additional guidance in determining the classification of your meeting.

7. What is a community group and how do I know if it applies to my group?

The “community group” category was added to the policy to recognize small groups of people who gather around a shared interest and a desire to build community, but do not have nonprofit status or formal organizational recognition. In the past, these groups were able to reserve rooms but were not specifically mentioned in the policy. The new designation more accurately represents who is using the library’s public rooms.

8. What is a “Library Partner”, and how do I know if it applies to my group?

A Library Partner is a group that has formed a mutually beneficial relationship with the library by providing services, programs, events, or promotion that support the library’s mission. These activities are endorsed and approved by either written or verbal agreement from the library director (or the director’s designee). If your group is interested in becoming a Library Partner, please contact the director at info@bastroplibrary.org.

9. Can my religious group use the public rooms?

As a limited public forum, the library has the power to determine what activities, programs, or events can be held in its public rooms. Groups with religious affiliations are welcome to hold meetings, discussions, or educational programs. We do not allow any religious services in the library.

10. Why does the library need five days to process my reservation?

The previous process created an expectation that reservation requests would be reviewed and approved within 24 to 48 hours, which was not sustainable. Responsive customer service remains a priority, but a reasonable timeline for processing applications ensures consistent communication and equitable service for all groups.

11. Why is there a two-hour minimum for a reservation?

Most organizations and groups regularly use the public rooms for two hours. By creating a minimum time frame, we ensure set-up and tear down are factored into the reservation.

12. Why did you create a “maximum time allowed” for public room use?

Setting a maximum time for public room use ensures the library’s public rooms are open and welcoming for as many groups as possible. Most reservations typically run for two to three hours, so this time frame meets the needs of many users. Limiting reservations also helps prevent bookings of extra time, large blocks of unused time, or a single group monopolizing the rooms. Groups may submit an exception form to request extended or additional time, though approval is not guaranteed. This policy helps create more equitable access and better use of the library’s public spaces.

13. Why am I limited to using the public rooms once a month?

Limiting reservations to once a month helps keep the library’s public rooms open and welcoming for as many groups as possible. Limiting reservations helps prevent booking extra time or a single group monopolizing the rooms. Groups may submit an exception form to request additional meetings, though approval is not guaranteed. This policy helps create more equitable access and better use of the library’s public spaces.

14. Why can I only make reservations for three months at a time?

Limiting reservations to three months helps keep the library’s public rooms open and welcoming for as many groups as possible. This shorter timeframe makes it easier for new groups to find space, allows the library to respond to program opportunities, and helps ensure rooms don’t go unused when plans change. Groups may submit an exception form to request additional meetings, though approval is not guaranteed. This policy helps create more equitable access and better use of the library’s public spaces.

15. Why do I need permission to use the library’s logo?

The library’s logo is more than just an image; it identifies programs that are truly library sponsored. The logo may only be used for programs sponsored by or hosted in partnership with the library. Groups using the public rooms as a location can only list the library as the venue. Requiring permission to use the logo ensures everyone can clearly distinguish between programs sponsored by the library and those simply being held at the library. This promotes clear communication and builds community trust.

16. Why is there an Exception Form? Shouldn't people just follow the policy?

Library policies are designed to guide fair and consistent use of public spaces, but no policy can anticipate every situation. The Exception Form provides a way for groups to request flexibility when their needs fall outside the standard guidelines. Each request is carefully reviewed to ensure it does not negatively impact other users, benefits the community, and is handled fairly and equitably. Documenting exceptions allows the library to evaluate patterns and make informed updates to future policies.

The information in the Public Room Policy F.A.Q. serves as general guidance to support consistent and informed use of the Library's Public Rooms. The information may be updated or revised as needed. The F.A.Q. does not serve as a guarantee about the time, place, and manner in which groups may use the room. Final decisions about room use will be made by the Library Director or the Director's designee.