

NEWTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM USE POLICY

The mission of the Newton County Public Library is to provide free and accessible information pathways to strengthen our communities by enriching the lives of the residents of our service area, of Beaver, Colfax, Jackson, Lake, Lincoln and McClellan Townships in Newton County, Indiana. To that end, each Library provides a community room, each with a capacity of 55 people, for use by both the Library and its patrons.

Library-sponsored activities will take precedence in scheduling community room use. Non-Library groups shall be treated as equitably as possible for scheduling purposes within the constraints of popular demand and availability. The community rooms will be available on an equitable basis regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

All groups and individuals using the community rooms and all attendants are subject to all Library policies.

TYPES OF USE:

Each community room is available at no cost to all civic, community, cultural or educational organizations whose purpose is non-commercial, non-partisan and/or non-profit. These groups and individuals are guests of the Library and their use of this space should reflect that understanding.

Religious organizations may use the community room facilities for events that are open to everyone, and where no monies are solicited or collected.

These facilities are available for rental for social and private gatherings. The approved events are baby showers, bridal showers, anniversary, birthday, graduation or wedding parties, or small family or class gatherings. Any other private use must be approved by the Director, or, in that individual's absence, the Assistant Director.

Library premises may not be used for meetings or public announcements sponsored by individual candidates for local, state or federal office. The community rooms may be used for events such as candidates' nights, which involve the invitation of all candidates for an office or offices, and which are sponsored by outside independent organizations.

Elected officials may use the Library's community rooms for meetings, such as Town or Township Board meetings, "Town Hall" type meetings, or to meet with constituents.

CIVIC, COMMUNITY, CULTURAL OR EDUCATIONAL USE

Each community room may be used free of charge for non-commercial purposes by locally organized and recognized non-profit civic, community, cultural or educational organizations on a first-come, first-served basis.

Each community room must be reserved at the Library's Circulation desk. The individual reserving the facility for civic, community, cultural or educational use must be a resident of the Newton County Public Library taxing district, 18 years of age or older, and a Library card holder in good standing. This means that this individual has no overdue materials or outstanding fines.

Exceptions to this requirement will be made for representatives of United States, Indiana, or local governmental agencies, political subdivisions or educational organizations that choose to use the Library's facilities. All remaining policies shall apply to this type of use.

Groups may schedule up to five (5) meetings per month.

Groups may schedule the use of the community room 6 months in advance.

While Library premises may not be used for meetings of religious or sectarian groups for the purpose of regular worship services for more than 3 months, faith-based events which are open to the general public, or involve the invitation of any and all religious or sectarian groups are permitted.

RENTAL USE

These facilities are available for a fee of \$50 for gatherings that are social and private. The capacity is 55 people. The individual wishing to schedule the community room for a private function must present a photo ID to do so, but need not be a Newton County Public Library cardholder or a resident of the Library's taxing district.

Only approved events may be scheduled without prior approval. The approved events are:

- baby showers
- bridal showers
- anniversary parties
- birthday parties
- graduation parties
- wedding parties
- small family reunions
- small class reunions or gatherings

Any other private use must be approved by the Director, or, in that individual's absence, the Assistant Director. A refundable damage deposit of \$25 is required when scheduling the community room for a private function.

Newton County Public Library employees & Board members will be charged \$25, with no damage deposit, to use any Library's community room for gatherings that are social and private.

Questions regarding usage will be determined by the Library Director, who will be the sole arbiter, but if absent, the Assistant Director.

FACILITIES:

- Each community room seats 55 people. Users are responsible for setting up chairs and tables before use and for restoring the community room to its original condition and configuration after use.
- A pantry is available to use with each community room. Each pantry is equipped with a refrigerator, stove, microwave, dishwasher, coffee maker, some service ware and cleaning supplies. Groups and individuals must provide coffee, disposable service ware, and accompanying items, including dish towels and dish cloths.
- While the full preparation of meals at the Library is not recommended, meals and light refreshments may be served. The signer of the Community Room use agreement is responsible for any food or beverage damage to the facility.
- The pantry must be cleaned and trash taken after using the community room. Each community room has a list of tasks displayed that are to be completed to properly clean the room.
- A fee of \$25 will be assessed against any group that does not restore the facility to its original clean, orderly condition.

CONDITIONS FOR USE:

Permission to use the community room is permission to use the Library's indoor facilities, but does not permit the use of the Library grounds. Outdoor activities, such as games, gathering outdoors, playing on the lawn or in the parking area, or other such events are prohibited.

No activity shall be permitted that will, in any manner, be potentially or directly destructive to Library property, or potentially or directly disruptive to the function of the Library. Entertainment for private gatherings must be family-appropriate and suitable for all ages. The Library does not permit adult entertainment at any private gatherings.

Groups and individuals will bring no animals, insects or other living organisms, with the exception of guide animals, in the community room for any reason.

Community room use must not interfere with the normal, daily operation of the Library. Individuals and groups using the Library's facility must not block entrances, use the lobby as a part of the Community room, or permit attendants or their children to congregate in the lobby area or in the Library.

No general admission fees may be charged for any meeting or program held in the Library's community rooms. Supply fees, intended to cover only the cost of materials used by program attendants, may be charged. Organized and recognized clubs or groups may, however, restrict their meetings to their own members, and make normal collections of dues from its members. No buying or selling of products or services is permitted on Library property, except in support

of the Library. Products may be sold when rental use of the Library's community room has been scheduled.

Meetings held in the Library community room must be held between the hours of 8 AM and 11 PM. A key will be provided to the individual reserving the community room should the scheduled purpose start and/or end after the Library's normal hours of operation.

A responsible adult must be in attendance at all times when meetings are attended by minors. This includes children who, though not a part of the meeting or gathering, attend with their parents or guardians. Adults are responsible for any damages.

The individual reserving the community room will be responsible for any damage that might occur.

Furnishings are not to be removed from the community room without permission from Library staff. Under no circumstances will furnishing be taken outside the building.

Room temperatures are pre-set and may not be adjusted. Groups and individuals may request that Library staff adjust thermostats.

No items may be placed, tacked or otherwise attached to the walls or doors of the community room.

The Library asks to be notified as soon as possible if a scheduled meeting or gathering is cancelled.

LIBRARY POLICIES:

- The use of tobacco products is not permitted in any part of the Library buildings, in accordance with the corresponding State and Federal laws.
- Use of alcoholic beverages is prohibited on all Library property.
- All open flames, including the use of open candles, are prohibited by state fire regulations.
- No paper or fabric decorations are to be placed in or near lighting.
- No red or purple beverages may be served at any event, public or private.
- Use of the community room does not constitute Library endorsement of the group's policies, beliefs, or activities.
- Community rooms are not available if the Library is closed due to an emergency or inclement weather.

- Library staff have free access to enter any community room at any time. The Library Board of Trustees has vested in Library staff the authority to supervise community room use and to interpret policy; however, final authority rests with the Library Director.
- The Newton County Public Library is not responsible for items that are lost or stolen in conjunction with the use of the Library's community rooms. The Library does not assume any responsibility or liability for the damage or injury to any person or property occurring as a result of activities of a group or individual using the Library.
- Groups may not store their belongings in the community room in their absence. All belongings are to leave with the group and not be stored in the cabinets, refrigerator or closet until the group returns for their next meeting.

FEES:

There is no charge for meetings held by civic, community, cultural, educational or religious organizations whose purpose is non-commercial, non-partisan and/or non-profit.

A fee of \$50 will be charged for gatherings that are social and private, and must be paid at the time the community room is scheduled. Also, a refundable damage deposit of \$25 is required when scheduling the community room for a private function.

Please note that donations to the Library's gift fund are accepted with pleasure.

A fee of \$25 will be assessed against any group that does not restore the facility to its original clean, orderly condition.

REVOKING OF COMMUNITY ROOM PRIVILEGES:

The Library reserves the right to revoke community room use privileges if the facility is not used for its stated purpose, if Library policies are violated, if the room is damaged, or is left in an unclean condition. The Library Director will be the sole arbiter in such matters. If absent, the Assistant Director, with input from Branch Managers, will decide such matters.

Approved 4/2006

Updated 3/2009

Reviewed 3/2009

Updated 5/2010

Updated 4/2014

Updated 11/2015

Updated 11/2017

Updated 11/2019

Updated 11/2021

Updated 4/2022

Revised 1/2025