

Houston Public Library Foundation

Named Giving Policy

September 2025

1.0 Named Giving Policy

The Houston Public Library Foundation (HPLF) and the Houston Public Library (HPL) are formalizing the practice of recognizing gifts and pledge commitments that may be connected to or have the potential to include formal naming recognition on facilities, programs, positions or endowed Foundations.

Naming opportunities can recognize donors or those they wish to honor or memorialize. All naming opportunities are to be reviewed and approved by the President of the HPLF who will make recommendations to the Director of the HPL for approval and, subsequently, submission to the HPLF Board of Directors for approval. Naming opportunities are typically offered only for outright gifts, pledges of no more than five years in duration, or for planned or deferred gifts when the gift amount is accessible, (defined as ‘cash in hand’ or realized, etc.); or irrevocable.

Nothing in this policy prevents or abrogates the existing authority of the Board of Directors to accept gifts or to name buildings or spaces for reasons other than those related to philanthropy. Further, community interest, avoidance of corporatization, maintenance of public trust, support for the unfettered pursuit of knowledge and personal improvement, preservation of the understood neutrality and objectivity of libraries and the avoidance of conflicts of interest, are acknowledged to be of paramount concern in the evaluation of any public naming opportunities, but especially those for key spaces or leadership positions.

The following list provides general guidelines for various named giving opportunities:

1.1 Entire Building (New).

Newly constructed buildings and facilities may be named for donor contributions that equal or exceed 50% of the Fundraising goal associated with the project (with

the recommendation that a facility should not be named for less than 25% of the estimated project cost). Foundation arrangements that best serve the interests of the HPLF/HPL can be negotiated by the Director and President, subject to approval by the HPLF Board.

1.2 Building Addition or Renovation.

The amount must be at least 50% of the project cost.

1.3 Portions of Buildings.

The amount required to name individual rooms or wings in new or existing buildings such as auditoriums, lecture halls, reading rooms, lobbies, etc. shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. The amounts will depend in part upon type of usage, visibility and traffic flow.

1.4 Unnamed Existing Building.

Unnamed buildings may be named by the establishment of an endowment equivalent to 25% of the replacement cost of the building.

1.5 Relocation or Replacement.

Naming is generally granted for the useful life of the entity unless otherwise specified in the gift agreement (and subject to the terms of revocation as set forth in this Policy). The name on a facility, wing, or room to be demolished will not be transferred to a new facility except in such cases as when a useful facility is relocated to serve the greater interests of the HPL.

1.6 Program.

Associating a name with a program acknowledges great commitment on the part of the donor. Funding arrangements that best serve the interests of HPLF/HPL can be negotiated by the Director and President, subject to approval by the HPLF Board, where required.

1.7 Named Endowed Fund.

An Endowed Fund is a donation of money or property which the HPLF invests and uses the resulting investment income for a specific purpose designated by the donor. An endowment is a permanent gift, “a gift that keeps growing.” Distribution from an endowment supports the area for which it was established. The principal remains intact and only a percentage of the earned income is used annually. Donors may make a single gift or build an endowed Fund over time.

Donors can establish endowments to support a collection in a specific subject or service area, or to support HPLF funding priorities. Endowments can be named for the donors themselves or the ones they wish to honor. To aid in the appropriate funding level for naming, the following suggested levels should be considered guidelines to minimum funding:

Minimum Endowment Amount: \$50,000+

Restricted Named Endowment Opportunities:

Houston Public Library Director: \$5,000,000

Archivists, Curators: \$1,500,000+

Senior Librarians: \$1,000,000+

Fellows: \$500,000+

Lecture Series: \$250,000-\$500,000+

For further information on endowed Foundation opportunities, contact the HPLF.

1.8 Current Fund Gifts.

Current Fund gifts/pledge commitments can also name lectures, and other institutional priorities for a specified period of time. Current Fund gifts/pledge commitments must cover a minimum period of five years and for naming purposes will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Minimum Gift Amount: \$100,000 payable over a maximum of five years

1.9 Expendable Gifts in support of Departments, Centers or Programs.

Upon the recommendation of the Director, the HPLF Board will have final approval in any decision to name a department, center or program. In considering the naming of one of these important, socially valuable areas, it is critical that HPLF/HPL proceeds with extreme sensitivity considering a number of factors in addition to the level of gift. Therefore, in consideration of such naming, the following conditions must be satisfied:

If naming is in recognition of a gift, the scale, nature, and designated use of the gift must enable transformational change to occur at the HPL. This criterion implies that the gift will allow HPL to undertake a well-defined series of strategic program improvements that will significantly materially strengthen its community standing. Ideally, these improvements will elevate the HPL within a distinguished group of peers, consisting of the top public libraries, museums or service organizations.

Any particular proposal for naming is clearly and broadly supported as being consonant with the reputation and aspirations of the HPL. The background, character, reputation, and other qualities of the person for whom the department, center, or program is to be named are consistent with the reputation of the HPL.

1.10 Permanence of Naming.

The naming of Physical Space (buildings, facilities and grounds, or portions thereof) is intended to be in place for the life of the specific Physical Space. The naming of endowed funds is intended to be in perpetuity. If, in the determination of the HPLF Board, circumstances change so that the purpose for which the Physical Space was established is significantly altered or if the Physical Space is no longer needed or habitable, the HPLF Board, in consultation with appropriate administrative leadership and the donor(s), if possible, will determine an appropriate way to recognize the donor's named gift for an agreed upon period such as the useful life of the entity named or as specified in the gift agreement, but rarely if ever, in perpetuity.

If the HPLF and the donor(s) previously established a Gift Agreement or contract that provides a practicable course of action, then that action shall be followed. Naming opportunities affiliated with expendable gifts are in place for the time period outlined in the gift agreement.

1.11 Removal of a Name.

HPLF/HPL naming opportunities shall bear only the name of individuals or entities that exemplify the attributes of integrity, character and leadership consistent with the highest values of the HPLF/HPL. If, in the sole determination of the HPLF Board, those attributes are not maintained, the Board reserves the right to remove the donor's/honoree's name from a Physical Space, Branch, Department, Center, Fund or Program at any time. The HPLF additionally may revoke a naming if any of the following conditions occurs: The pledge obligation is unfulfilled and/or written off (if partial funding was received that is sufficient for an alternative naming opportunity, the terms of this Policy shall govern any renegotiation for a suitable naming); or if a change in family or organizational circumstances causes the donor or other affected individual(s)/organization(s) to request a name change or revocation.

1.12 Declining a Naming Opportunity.

If, after consideration of a potential naming gift, the HPLF Board, HPL Director or HPLF President determine that a gift, or a relationship with a particular donor, could be damaging to the HPLF/HPL, or its mission and values, the HPLF/HPL retains the right to decline either the gift or the naming opportunity related to that gift.

1.13 Exceptions.

The HPLF Board and the Library Director or his/her Cabinet-level designee(s) shall have the latitude to approve the establishment of named Funds in amounts less than those stated above, or to determine minimum levels for naming of positions, programs, or facilities not outlined in this document. For instance, if a donor provides a gift for a building that is already funded through other means or already constructed, lower minimum gifts might be appropriate.

2.0 Miscellaneous

2.1 Naming Rights.

In serving the best interests of HPLF/HPL, and following the authority given above, the Board, President and the Director retain the right to approve or disapprove of any naming opportunities.

2.2 Permanent Naming Consideration for a Pledge.

If a naming is the result of a total gift pledged to be paid over a period of years, the timing of the official naming must be clearly articulated in a formal Gift Agreement. Two options are: 1) Subject to approval by the President of the HPLF, naming will go into effect immediately with a clear and documented understanding that the naming will be altered or removed if the full pledge is not paid in a mutually agreed upon timeframe; or 2) naming will go into effect after the pledge is fulfilled and the required total amount has been received by HPLF. If the pledge is not fulfilled, but the naming has been authorized by the Boards, then this change must be reported to the Boards—through the appropriate committee—so that it can be reflected in the official minutes. If only partial funding is received that is less than the required naming threshold, yet sufficient for an alternative naming opportunity, the above procedures will govern any renegotiation.

2.3 Permanent Naming Consideration for a Deferred Gift (e.g. bequest, charitable trust, charitable gift annuity, retirement fund provision).

Notwithstanding the exceptions, deferred gifts qualify for a naming opportunity only when the gift Foundations are realized. Any exceptions to this policy must be reviewed by the President of the HPLF, with all final decisions being made at the discretion of the President, in consultation with the Director.

If a donor provides a fully signed, documented irrevocable bequest or other planned gift to ultimately create an endowed position, the naming can be put into effect at the time of the receipt of the signed document, provided that the donor signs a gift agreement to give annually, in perpetuity until the bequest or planned gift is realized, a gift that is the equivalent of the annual spendable income that would be generated

from the minimum endowment amount based upon the endowment payout rate at the time the current Foundation gifts are made.

2.4 Naming Consideration for Honorary, Memorial, or Recognition Purposes.

If the naming to be considered is in honor or recognition but does not carry with it a gift or a significant enough gift to meet naming policy thresholds, the request should be forwarded to the President of the HPLF, and upon his/her approval, to the Director. Depending on the details of the naming request, the Director will make the final decision or determine whether additional approval is needed through the HPLF Board.

Approved and adopted by the Board of Directors on September 24, 2025 and effective on October 1, 2025.