



# IMPACT REPORT

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**FISCAL YEAR  
2020**

**July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020**

# CONTENTS

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- Executive Director's Statement
- Mission and Objectives
- Board Chairperson's Annual Outlook
- State of the Library Report
- Program Highlights
- Financial Report
- Donor Recognition



# FROM THE FOUNDATION'S DIRECTOR

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Focusing on the achievements of Fiscal Year 2020 is difficult. The Houston Public Library Foundation did not anticipate a world-changing pandemic. Who could have foreseen such a challenge?

We had to adapt, just like everyone else. The pandemic impacted everything and everyone in some way. Our hearts are with you and your families as we all determine our future one day at a time.

During this stressful year, basic civil rights were tested leading to an outcry for social justice. HPLF believes in the potential of every life and stands with you.

Although these pages contain achievements of our year, they are tainted by the sorrow of our times. How can we celebrate during such loss?

As my staff and I continue to work remotely and socially distant, we remain united toward achieving our mission and hopeful for a brighter future. We are here for you.

## **Sally Swanson**

HPLF Executive Director



The distribution of books to young learners contributes to school readiness.

# OUR MISSION

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The Houston Public Library Foundation unites partners who value lifelong learning.

Your local tax dollars support the Houston Public Library system; however, their essential programs require philanthropy to exist. The generosity of our local community brings library programs to Houston.



## OUR OBJECTIVES

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Your Houston Public Library system has worked tirelessly to continue their commitment to you, our neighbors and families across the greater Houston area.

Our objectives have not waivered, actually they are more essential than ever. The Houston Public Library Foundation raises revenue and resources because:

- Library programs are critical to those who require new job skills.
- Library programs increase literacy for children and adults.
- Library programs bridge the digital divide to help access technology and online resources.
- Library programs give kids and parents alternative learning tools.

# FISCAL 2020 HPL FOUNDATION ANNUAL OUTLOOK

The Houston Public Library Foundation's mission supports everyone in the City of Houston who values the ongoing and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge, and during the pandemic, our mission of supporting library programs has only increased in need and immediacy.

The Houston Public Library reflected on the needs of Houstonians and quickly transitioned program services to electronic platforms and focused on improving access to technology. True to our mission, the Houston Public Library Foundation stood alongside HPL with a commitment to support these service priorities.

Earlier in the fiscal year, the HPL Foundation's Board of Directors examined the twenty endowments and four quasi-endowments. Many of these funds were established in the early 20th century and focused on specific areas of traditional library programming. While retaining the original intent of the funds, the Board embraced the 21st century programmatic delivery methods that are needed to keep our library system relevant to current needs.

The endowed funds remain the cornerstone of library program support, and stewarding those funds is of paramount importance. Our relationship with Monroe Vos continued to provide the guidance and insight into preserving the endowment. The conservatively balanced portfolio gives more stability to the investments, which weathered the market fluctuations of the spring and rebounded toward the end of the fiscal year.

The independent audit firm, Carr, Riggs & Ingram, presented a clean financial opinion once again, and at our request added a Schedule of Functional Expenses section at the end of the financial statements that are publicly available on the Foundation's website.

Although Fiscal Year 2020 concluded during a difficult time, we achieved several accomplishments during the year.

The Houston Public Library Foundation formed a Young Professionals Group. The YPG connects the mission of the Foundation to young philanthropists and volunteers who care about Houston and the importance of libraries.

The inaugural Houston Literary Awards honored local authors in the historic Julia Ideson Building.



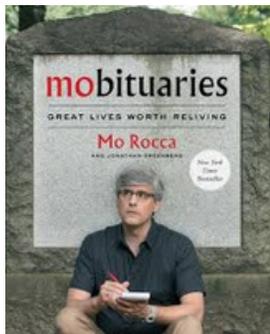
The City of Houston's Groundbreaking Ceremony kicked off the reconstruction of the Houston Public Library's Amanda Dixon Neighborhood Library in the Trinity Gardens community. This \$1.6 million Tech Link Center was made possible through a prior year donation from Aramco Americas.





In December, the Foundation proudly presented the keys to the new Mobile Express, a technology center that can serve areas of Houston that have limited access to technology and digital instruction. With a classroom that expands into the outdoors, the plans were to put it on the road in February. This magnificent mobile classroom will be ready and available once COVID health guidelines permit its return to service.

The exceptionally talented Mo Rocca visited Houston for a HPLF Author Talk. Laughter rolled through the Reading Room from anecdotes and stories from his book, *Mobituaries*.



The Friends of the Houston Public Library held the public book sales at the Friends Warehouse. The last sale of the year occurred in February, which marked the largest onsite sale with over 10,000 books sold.

COVID-19 has impacted our lives in ways that no one could have anticipated. The ways we live, work, and connect challenge the fundamental building blocks of our society. During this time of personal unrest, we also face the growing awareness for social justice. The Houston Public Library's mission of "Linking you to the world" unites the community and provides access to resources to build a stronger and more vibrant society. Library services are available and accessible for all Houstonians.

Your belief and support focus on improving lives in Houston through the work of the Houston Public Library. At the Houston Public Library Foundation, we are fortunate to have so many dedicated supporters, partners who extend and magnify our coordinated resources, and such a diverse library network of locations and services that connect our amazing community with so many opportunities to link to lifelong learning.

Thank you for your continued involvement with our mission.

**Licia A. Green-Ellis**  
Chairperson



# STATE OF THE LIBRARY

Dr. Rhea Brown Lawson, Ph.D.

## Race and Social Injustice.

Outrage.

Pain.

Exhaustion.

Disbelief.

Anger.

Fear.

Death.

Protests.

Riots.

Black Lives Matter.

This year's state of the library message is uniquely presented because 2020 has been like no other year. We have all endured a roller coaster ride of emotional and situational twists and turns and have had to acquiesce to executive orders and health official warnings that we adjust our lives and normal routines and structures. Like most people, the library staff and I are very concerned about the indiscriminate and invisible deadly disease that has invaded our lives. Each day we are confronted with daily news reports of the number of positive COVID tests and the number of lives we have lost in our city, the nation, and globally. We live, move around, shop, socialize, celebrate, and work differently. We use more caution, intentionality and have increased safety conscientiousness. HPL is following Center for Disease Control (CDC) and City of Houston safety protocols to keep staff and customers as safe as possible.

Providing leadership for the Houston Public Library (HPL) amid a health epidemic, ongoing economic uncertainty, and racial tensions and social unrest, is, to say the least, a daunting task. Fortunately, I work for a Mayor who puts safety first and makes wise decisions to help keep Houston moving forward. I also work with a stellar team of talented professionals who have compassionate hearts and dedicated purpose, who remain committed to forging forward even through uncharted terrains. This kind of tenacity is buoyed by the support we have for each other and the collective hope we share.

The HPL team is a microcosm of the diversity in the City, and, like everyone else, feels to varying degrees all the emotions listed above. So, supporting each other through rough days is very important as we strive to provide responsive, dynamic library services and programs for the residents of Houston. With increased authenticity, we share our feelings and provide opportunities to hear from staff at all levels of the organization. It is important that we understand and listen to each other in ways we never have before. As their leader, I have allowed the team to know me in a way I had not done before.

I am taking this point of privilege to also allow you to know me more authentically as well. So, as an African American woman with African American people – especially men and boys- in my life whom I love and care about, I fear every day for their safety and I am angry that I must embody this fear and that I must live my life this way. If you're in the Black community, you have, or you know someone who has suffered discrimination, abuse, racism, in everyday living and/or death or violence at the hands of police. No matter your social or educational strata, you can envision yourself, your siblings, your nephews, your kids, your parents or grandparents in any of those spaces – because you know what has happened to others. And, unfortunately, this year has been filled with terrible reminders. In May for example, when the world witnessed George Floyd's death under a Minneapolis police officer's knee, - for African American men, the scenario felt chillingly familiar.

In my role as the leader of the 7th largest library system in the United States, employing close to 500 employees and serving more than 2.2M residents in the most diverse city in the nation - equity, diversity, and inclusion have perennially been core tenants for our library system. In response to current events, as a library team, we have elevated organizational priorities to also embrace racial and social justice. We are focused on staying the course to help build a more equitable Houston, starting internally within our system. To that end, we released and posted a statement on race and social justice and formed the HPL Race and Social Justice Taskforce. The taskforce's charge is to identify ways HPL can be a more equitable organization focusing both inwardly on staff and organizational policies and procedures and outwardly on customer services and programs.

This inward/outward focus is also evident in our collaboration with citywide COVID efforts. We partnered with the Houston Health Department to repurpose library parking lots as COVID-19 testing sites in some of the city's most vulnerable neighborhoods. The partnership with the Health Department also included library staff supporting the COVID-19 hotline helping to schedule 20,000 COVID-19 tests and reducing wait times from nearly 12 minutes to just over 3 minutes. In addition, more than 8,000 voicemails were returned with staff calling individuals once and sometimes twice to respond to their questions and get them tested.

**Pandemic.**

Unprecedented.

Fear.

Death.

Crisis.

Health Inequities.

Disparity.

Masks.

Homebound.

Economic Distress.

Businesses closed.

Job Loss.

Uncertainty.

Sadness.

Quarantine.

## New Normal

Pivot.

Virtual.

Digital Divide.

Navigate.

Adapt.

Working  
Remotely.

Home School.

Online  
Communication.

We also partnered with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), to help package and prepare boxes of food as part of the MOPD pandemic food access initiative, benefitting over 3,200 families. The pandemic caused several City departments to close or alter operations. To support our colleagues in other departments who needed to quickly adjust to work remotely to ensure that City operations continued, HPL team members upgraded and loaned them over 100 laptops. Library buildings closed in March, however, by April, we had quickly pivoted to develop and provide programs and services.

Being especially cognizant of residents of Houston who have no access to technology, we focused on ways to provide programs to reach this population. Recognizing that most households in Houston have televisions, we partnered in a first of its kind collaboration with KHOU 11 to provide library information and programs via a televised series. These popular 5-minute Liftoff to Learning library segments were aired on the Great Day Houston morning TV show reaching 24M TV viewers and 89M viewers across all KHOU platforms between June 15 and September 3, 2020.

We are grateful for the Federal CARES ACT dollars, provided through the Mayor's Office, as well as for support from the Houston Public Library Foundation, that will allow us to attach strong Wi-Fi antennas on selected library buildings in vulnerable communities, to further expand the hotspot program to help with community access and connectivity, and to support a more robust provision of online resources and services to our customers. For the fiscal year 2020 (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020) our numbers reveal the continued use and reliance by Houstonians of our varied programs and services.

In September, we celebrated the one year celebration of the Mayor's Office for Adult Literacy (MOAL) for which HPL provides oversight. MOAL's first year accomplishments include the establishment of its stellar Advisory Board, Drive Up 4 Literacy book distribution of 34,000 books donated by Disney through the Molina Foundation, Houston's national acknowledgement for being the only City with an adult literacy office and Mayor Turner's award from the Coalition of Adult Basic Education (COABE).

# Houston Public Library

**Hope. Help. Equity. Information. Reach. Anchor.  
Bridge. Democracy. Longstanding. Resource.**

With our steadfast focus on continuous improvement, we are using this critical time to reassess our organizational structure, our mission and vision, our path forward, and our place in the world. We are proud that the Houston Public Library, like libraries across the globe, remains respected and revered as a place of equity and hope, here in Houston and across the country. Even in the midst of a pandemic, social unrest, and operating in the virtual space, HPL still continues to provide a sense of normalcy. Customer comments reveal how appreciative they are for the services and programs we are currently providing. Because of our longstanding position as a trusted community resource, libraries are uniquely positioned to lead at this crucial moment in history. Through relevant and engaging services and programs, hosting critical community conversations, sharing timely, useful information, HPL joins with libraries across the globe doing all we can to help change the world. After the pandemic is better controlled, HPL, like the rest of the world, will embrace a new normal.

**Today, the state of the Houston Public Library remains strong – because we must.**

## SERVICE STATISTICS

- **3.6 million materials (which includes hot spots, laptops and tablets)**
- **2,100,000 million website visits**
- **1.44 million library cards**
- **17,500 in person program attendees (before the pandemic)**
- **49.5M free Wi-Fi Sessions**

## PROGRAM STATISTICS

- **540 engaging intergenerational virtual library programs through our social media platforms that have been attended by 162,000 customers**
- **13,180 services provided by telephone**
- **44 podcasts**
- **8,000 people borrowed 188,000 library materials through (HPL TO GO) our curbside service available at 15 libraries**

Dr. Rhea Brown Lawson  
HPL Director



# 2020 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## Houston Public Library Foundation Governmental Funds Balance Sheet and Statement of Net Position

<i>June 30, 2020</i>	General Fund	Permanent Fund	Total	Adjustments	Statement of Net Position
<b>Assets</b>					
Cash	\$ 690,938	\$ 859,394	\$ 1,550,332	\$ -	\$ 1,550,332
Investments	3,162	18,481,096	18,484,258	-	18,484,258
Beneficial interest in charitable trust	-	-	-	1,032,716	1,032,716
Pledges receivable	8,235	490,000	498,235	-	498,235
Other assets	-	-	-	9,434	9,434
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$ 702,335</b>	<b>\$ 19,830,490</b>	<b>\$ 20,532,825</b>	<b>\$ 1,042,150</b>	<b>\$ 21,574,975</b>
<b>Liabilities and fund balances</b>					
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Accrued expenses and grant payable	\$ 6,544	\$ -	\$ 6,544	\$ -	\$ 6,544
Funds held for others	581,303	-	581,303	-	581,303
Refundable advance - PPP	55,030	-	55,030	-	55,030
Unearned revenue	8,235	490,000	498,235	(498,235)	-
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>651,112</b>	<b>490,000</b>	<b>1,141,112</b>	<b>(498,235)</b>	<b>642,877</b>
<b>Nonspendable</b>					
Library programs	-	2,121,039	2,121,039	(2,121,039)	
Library staff benefits	-	45,000	45,000	(45,000)	
<b>Restricted for</b>					
Library programs	-	13,690,034	13,690,034	(13,690,034)	
Library staff benefits	-	240,477	240,477	(240,477)	
Committed for library programs	-	2,026,738	2,026,738	(2,026,738)	
Assigned for long-term investment	-	1,217,202	1,217,202	(1,217,202)	
Unassigned	51,223	-	51,223	(51,223)	
<b>Total fund balances</b>	<b>51,223</b>	<b>19,340,490</b>	<b>19,391,713</b>	<b>(19,391,713)</b>	
<b>Total liabilities and fund balances</b>	<b>\$ 702,335</b>	<b>\$ 19,830,490</b>	<b>\$ 20,532,825</b>		
<b>Restricted for</b>					
Library programs and staff benefits				\$ 15,470,896	\$ 15,470,896
Endowment for library programs and staff benefits				2,166,039	2,166,039
Unrestricted				3,295,163	3,295,163
<b>Total net position</b>				<b>\$ 20,932,098</b>	<b>\$ 20,932,098</b>
<b>Total fund balances of governmental funds</b>					<b>\$ 19,391,713</b>
Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of net position are different because:					
Other assets used in governmental activities are not financial resources and therefore are not reported in the funds					
					9,434
Pledges receivable and beneficial interest in charitable trust are not available for current period expenditures and therefore pledges are deferred in the funds					
					1,530,951
<b>Net position of governmental activities</b>					<b>\$ 20,932,098</b>

## Houston Public Library Foundation Governmental Funds Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances and Statement of Activities

<i>For the year ended June 30, 2020</i>	General Fund	Permanent Fund	Total	Adjustments	Statement of Activities
<b>Expenditures/Expenses</b>					
Programmatic	\$ 3,690,807	\$ -	\$ 3,690,807	\$ 5,410	\$ 3,696,217
Fundraising	299,501	-	299,501	-	299,501
Management and general	184,830	-	184,830	-	184,830
<b>Total expenditures/expenses</b>	<b>4,175,138</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,175,138</b>	<b>5,410</b>	<b>4,180,548</b>
<b>Revenues</b>					
Investment return	15,305	659,001	674,306	-	674,306
Contributions	294,355	586,988	881,343	1,012,664	1,894,007
Book sales	88,902	-	88,902	-	88,902
Transfers in/(out)	4,175,100	(4,175,100)	-	-	-
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>4,573,662</b>	<b>(2,929,111)</b>	<b>1,644,551</b>	<b>1,012,664</b>	<b>2,657,215</b>
Changes in fund balances/net position	398,524	(2,929,111)	(2,530,587)	1,007,254	(1,523,333)
Fund balances/net position, beginning of year	(347,301)	22,269,601	21,922,300	533,131	22,455,431
Fund balances/net position, end of year	\$ 51,223	\$ 19,340,490	\$ 19,391,713	\$ 1,540,385	\$ 20,932,098
Net change in fund balances of governmental funds					\$ (2,530,587)
Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of activities are different because:					
Change of other assets reported as expenditures in the governmental activities, however not reported as expenses in the current year on the Statement of Activities					(5,410)
Revenues report in the Statement of Activities are not available as current financial resources as revenue in the government funds - beneficial interest in charitable trust					1,032,716
Revenues report in the Statement of Activities in the prior years that are providing current financial resources as revenue in the government funds					(20,052)
Change in net position of governmental activities					\$ (1,523,333)



# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS

You make library programs and services possible

**John P. McGovern Foundation**  
**Andrew Delaney Foundation**  
**The Powell Foundation**



PROVIDING ENERGY. IMPROVING LIVES.



Special thanks to our individual donors whose continuing support reinforces our mission. For added privacy, we no longer list individual donors.



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Financial reports available online  
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