



Houston Public Library

FY2026 Proposed Budget Workshop Presentation May 20, 2025

Sandy Gaw-Director

Executive Leadership Team



Sandy Gaw, Director



John Middleton
Deputy Director



Edgar Fuentes
Assistant Director



Patrick Atkins
Deputy Assistant
Director



LaDonna Weems
Deputy Assistant
Director



Stephen Chamberlain
Deputy Assistant
Director



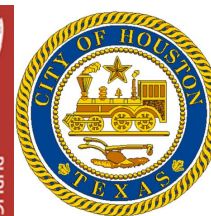
Laurie Covington
Executive Staff
Analyst

Table of Contents



Houston Public Library Core Services	4
Strategic Alignment	5
Plans to Eliminate the Gap (PEG)	6
Voluntary Municipal Employee Retirement Payout Option	7
Restructuring our Department	8
Proposed FY26 Department Expenditures	9
Outcome Based Budget Programs	12
Proposed FY26 Department Revenues	19
Appendix	23

Houston Public Library Core Services



TECHLink

- Makerspaces that allow customers to create using cutting edge technology
- Technology includes laser cutters, embroidery machines, podcasting, video and music production, and more

Customer Experience

- Central Library
- 28 Neighborhood and Express Libraries
- 5 Regional Libraries
- 3 History Research Centers

Library Collections

- Books, e-books, and e-audiobooks available for checkout
- Library of Things (bakeware, musical instruments, etc)
- Databases
- Online learning platforms

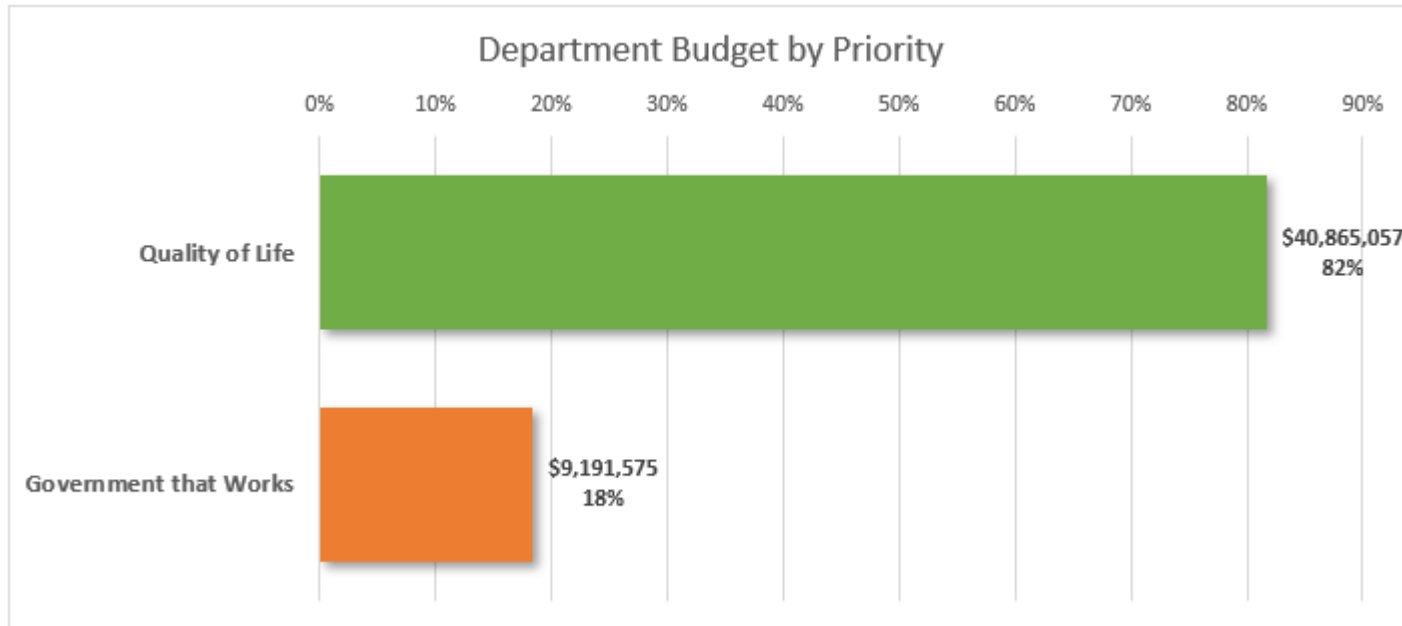
Library Spaces

- Historic properties for special events
- Places for community meetings
- Ensure safe and welcoming environment for the public

Literacy and Education

- Lifelong learning programs for all ages
- Youth focused programs
- Workforce development programs

Strategic Alignment



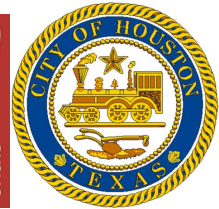
Quality of Life	Government that Works
Digital Strategies	Debt Service & Interfund Transfer
Library Collections	Administrative Services
Library Operations	
Library Spaces	
Literacy and Education	

Plans to Eliminate the Gap (PEG)



Name of Program	FTEs Filled	FTEs Vacant	Personnel Cost	Other Cost	Total Approved Reduction
Library Materials Services	0.0	0.5	\$ 25,450	\$ 0	\$ 25,450
Administrative Services	3.0	0.0	\$ 465,544	\$ 734,754	\$ 1,200,298
Digital Strategies	0.0	3.0	\$ 307,766	\$ 320,000	\$ 627,776
Total	3.0	3.5	\$ 798,769	\$ 1,054,754	\$ 1,853,523

Voluntary Municipal Employee Retirement Payout Option (VMERPO)



Number Eligible for VMERPO		Number Accepting Option	% Accepting
Fund 1000	90	26	29%
Fund 2500	1	1	100%
Fund 5309	1	0	0%
Total	92	27	29%

Reductions Included in Proposed Budget

	Number of Employees	Value of Reduction
Non-Critical Positions Accepting Offer before April 20 th	27	\$2,863,278

Proposed Department Restructure



	Current State	Proposed State
Average Span of Control	3	7
% Managers/Supervisors with Less Than 4 Direct Reports	36%	0%
Layers of Management	8	6

Streamline Operations

- Consolidate staff under fewer managers
- Reclassify some staff with new classifications

Recommended New Job Classifications

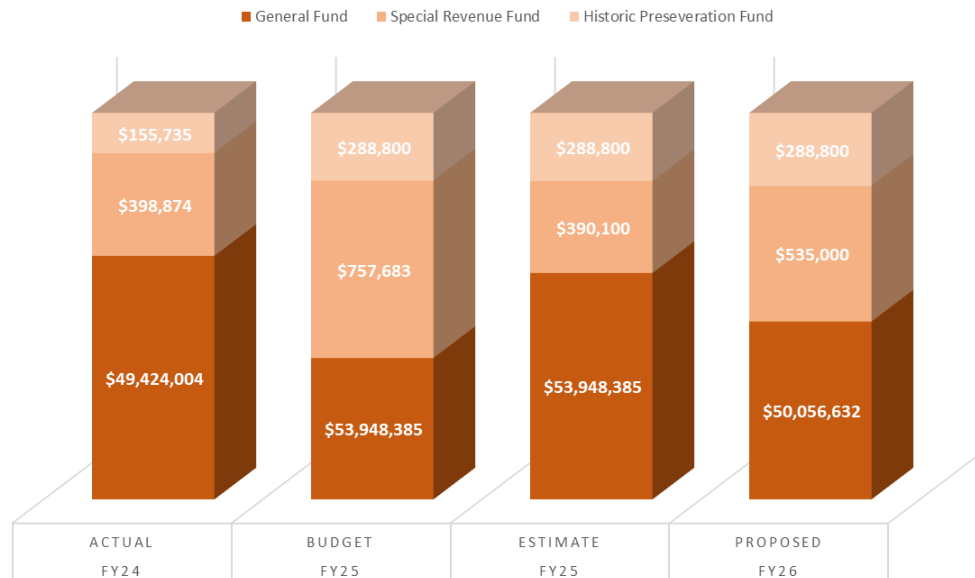
Library Service Manager
Library Associate
Senior Library Associate

Expenditures by Fund

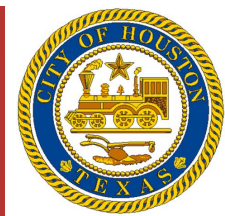


Category	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY25 Estimate	FY26 Proposed	Variance FY26 Proposed/ FY25 Budget	% Change
General Fund	\$49,424,004	\$53,948,385	\$53,948,385	\$50,056,632	\$(3,891,753)	-7%
Special Revenue Fund	\$ 398,874	\$ 757,683	\$ 390,100	\$ 535,000	\$ (222,683)	-29%
Historic Preservation Fund	\$ 155,735	\$ 288,800	\$ 288,800	\$ 288,800	\$ 0	0%
Total	\$49,978,613	\$54,994,868	\$54,627,285	\$50,880,432	\$(4,114,436)	-7%

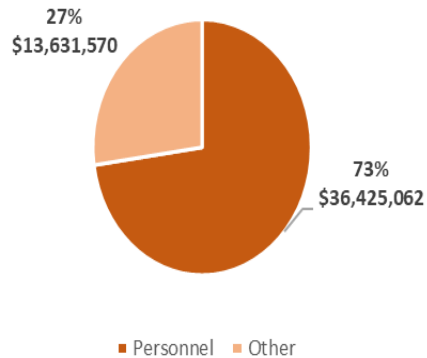
EXPENDITURES BY FUND



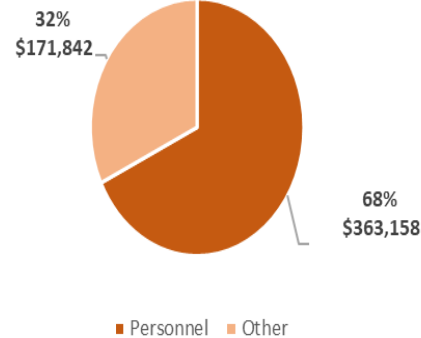
Personnel vs. Non-Personnel



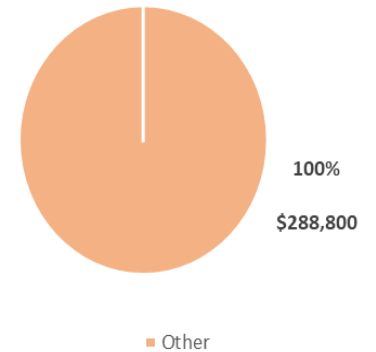
General Fund
\$50,056,632



Special Revenue Fund
\$535,000



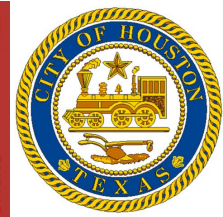
Historic Preservation Fund
\$288,800



Other Category Breakdown

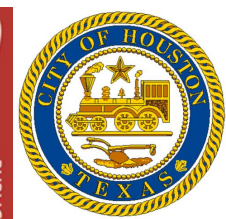
General Fund				Special Revenue Fund				Historic Preservation Fund			
Supplies	\$	6,337,969	13%	Supplies	\$	-	0%	Supplies	\$	-	0%
Services	\$	1,199,833	2%	Services	\$	171,842	32%	Services	\$	288,800	100%
Restricted Account	\$	6,093,768	12%	Restricted Account	\$	-	0%	Restricted Account	\$	-	0%
Total	\$	13,631,570	27%	Total	\$	171,842	32%	Total	\$	288,800	100%

Expenditures by Program



Program	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY25 Estimate	FY26 Proposed	Variance FY26 Proposed/ FY25 Budget	% Change
Debt Service & Interfund Transfer	\$ 750,000	\$ 750,000	\$ 750,000	\$ 750,000	\$ -	0%
Digital Strategies	\$ 5,029,401	\$ 5,333,239	\$ 5,333,239	\$ 4,712,225	\$ (621,014)	-12%
Administrative Services Program	\$ 8,004,788	\$ 9,667,119	\$ 9,667,119	\$ 8,441,575	\$ (1,225,544)	-13%
Library Collections	\$ 9,173,526	\$ 9,793,518	\$ 9,793,518	\$ 9,323,734	\$ (469,784)	-5%
Library Operations	\$ 22,968,084	\$ 25,244,204	\$ 25,244,204	\$ 23,381,978	\$ (1,862,226)	-7%
Library Spaces	\$ 2,180,571	\$ 1,673,073	\$ 1,673,073	\$ 1,152,994	\$ (520,079)	-31%
Literacy and Education	\$ 1,317,634	\$ 1,487,232	\$ 1,487,232	\$ 2,294,126	\$ 806,894	54%
Total	\$ 49,424,004	\$ 53,948,385	\$ 53,948,385	\$ 50,056,632	\$ (3,891,753)	-7%

Administrative Services



Priority:	Government that Works
FY2026 FTE Count:	20.1

<u>Program Description</u>	<u>Significant Budget Items</u>	<u>FY26 Prop Budget by Fund</u>	
<p>This program provides executive support, strategy, program implementation, partnerships, and supports the HPL Foundation to increase library donations. Oversees communications, branding, public relations, and digital tools (website, chat, online reference / customer helpdesk, reservations, searchable knowledge base, etc.). Manages budget, contracts, restricted accounts, accounts receivables, and procurement. In addition, supports HPL Foundation to increase donations for Library programs and projects.</p>	<p>Ensure efficient utilization of all funds, receive donations/grants from private funds to support programs and projects. Timely receive & book revenue.</p>	General Fund	\$8,441,575
		Total	\$8,441,575

<u>Performance</u>					
Measure Name	FY24 Actual	FY25 Progress (Q3)	FY25 Target	FY26 Target	Target Context
Annual foundation donation/grants	\$1,881,607	\$1,260,954	\$1,533,586	\$1,000,000	Funding from Foundation.
Average turnaround time for customer responses	N/A	N/A	3.2 days	3 days	Responding to reference, customer issues, website issues in a timely manner.
Customer Satisfaction	80%	85%	85%	85%	Maintain the quality and effectiveness of customer service at a satisfactory rate of at least 80%.
Texas Library Accreditation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ensure the annual report to the Texas State Library is submitted by the deadline to remain accredited.

Digital Strategies



Priority:	Quality of Life
FY2026 FTE Count:	45.0

Program Description

This program ensures technology acquisition, access, and support for all library public services including desktop computers, laptops, tablets, network, Wi-Fi, scanners, printers, hotspots, website, mobile app, online catalog, book and materials check-out system, customer accounts and records, TECHLink, multi-media, audio and video recording studios, 3D scanning and printing technologies.

Significant Budget Items

Provide equitable access to technology.

FY26 Prop Budget by Fund

General Fund	\$4,712,225
Total	\$4,712,225

Performance

Measure Name	FY24 Actual	FY25 Progress (Q3)	FY25 Target	FY26 Target	Target Context
Annual Number of Computer Users	284,949	218,742	288,000	290,000	Provide computer availability (laptop/desktop) to Library visitors.
Annual Number of Wi-Fi Sessions	12.1 million	13.5 million	13.5 million	N/A	Provide Wi-Fi access to residents across the City of Houston.
Annual Number of TECHLink Workshop	1,736	2,372	3,000	3,500	Provide training to customers on how to use the technology in TECHLink locations.
Annual Number of people visting TECHLink Workshop	21,132	20,258	25,000	27,000	Provide TECHLink Services to customers.
Annual Number of Virtual Visits	3.4 million	2.6 million	3.5 million	3.7 million	Provide library services to virtual visitors via website and mobile app.
Annual Number of devices connected to HPL Wi-Fi	N/A	N/A	400,000	405,000	Provide Wi-Fi connections at HPL Locations

Library Collections



Priority:	Quality of Life
FY2026 FTE Count:	35.0

Program Description

This program performs the selection, acquisition, cataloging, processing and distribution of all library books, e-books, materials and other equipment throughout the system. Ensures the provision of a wide array of print and electronic library materials and resources for all ages that reflect the cultures and diversity of Houston. Provides inventory control of library materials for all branches. Oversees fleet, supply and mail distribution, and transportation activities. Manages library cards and LEARNINGLink school partnerships.

Significant Budget Items

Provide a comprehensive collection of both print and digital materials for the City.

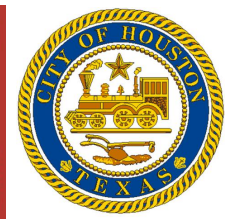
FY26 Prop Budget by Fund

General Fund	\$9,323,734
Total	\$9,323,734

Performance

Measure Name	FY24 Actual	FY25 Progress (Q3)	FY25 Target	FY26 Target	Target Context
Cost of Circulation & Distribution of Library Materials	\$6.5 million	N/A	N/A	N/A	Cost of books, e-materials and DVDs.
Percentage of Material Collection Budget Allocated to E-Materials	50%	50%	50%	N/A	Provide equitable access to electronic materials online.
Number of checkouts for items added to the collection (goal per item =5)	N/A	3	5	5	Ensure that the budget is going towards materials that will be utilized by customers.
Number of electronic checkouts (increase 5%)	3,669,601	3,526,077	3,535,103	5,000,000	Increase the number of electronic materials checkout by 5%.
Number of physical item checkouts (increase 5%)	3,580,444	2,821,488	3,500,000	3,750,000	Increase the number of physical materials checkout by 5%.
Annual Number of Registered Cardholders	1.9 million	2.1 million	2.2 million	2.3 million	Increase the number of registered cardholders by 10%.

Library Operations



Priority:	Quality of Life
FY2026 FTE Count:	306.7

<u>Program Description</u>	<u>Significant Budget Items</u>	<u>FY26 Prop Budget by Fund</u>	
This program provides oversight and execution of all aspects of library operations and services, including passports, and grants. Manages public operations, customer service delivery, technology access, staff engagement initiatives, and compliance training and development for staff in Neighborhood Libraries, Central Library, and History Research Centers. Provides system-wide operations, customer service, technology and compliance training and development for staff.	Provide equitable access and customer service to library resources, services, and programs. Ensure adequately trained and informed staff to support library operations and customer services.	General Fund	\$23,381,978
		Total	\$23,381,978

<u>Performance</u>					
Measure Name	FY24 Actual	FY25 Progress (Q3)	FY25 Target	FY26 Target	Target Context
Number of Community Outreach Events	1,386	1,539	1,400	1,100	Provide library services outside of the physical walls of the library and into the community.
Annual In-house Library Visits	2.1 million	1.6 million	2.2 million	2.3 million	Provide in-house assistance and services to Library visitors.
Annual revenue from Passport Services	N/A	\$740,000	\$900,000	\$900,000	Increase revenue for passport and passport photo services.
Number of hours spent on training (goal increase by 5%)	N/A	12,536	12,536	N/A	Increase professional development
Annual number of Passports & Photos Processed	34,618	N/A	N/A	N/A	Process passport applications.

Library Spaces



Priority:	Quality of Life
FY2026 FTE Count:	8.8

Program Description

This program is responsible for all elements of the library's facilities and buildings including exhibit galleries, civic art, furniture, workspace maintenance, library shelving, equipment, development plans, safety, wellness, emergency preparedness, and security necessary to ensure that every library space is optimized for service to Houston's residents.

Significant Budget Items

Provide modern, safe, and accessible library spaces for library services.

FY26 Prop Budget by Fund

General Fund	\$1,152,994
Total	\$1,152,994

Performance

Measure Name	FY24 Actual	FY25 Progress (Q3)	FY25 Target	FY26 Target	Target Context
Annual Cost of Library Furniture Cleaning, Refurbishing, and Repair	\$123,615	N/A	N/A	N/A	Ensure quality and consistent furniture cleaning and maintenance.
Number of Facility renovation and maintenance oversight	68	73	9	N/A	Provide oversight on Library renovations and improvements.
Number of facilities cleaned	N/A	1	8	12	Ensure facilities get deep cleaning annually
Number of Public Exhibitions Displayed	38	45	10	15	Host public exhibits that celebrate the city of Houston, the library, and their diversity.
Annual attendance of meetings by community groups	N/A	N/A	N/A	54,000	Increase attendance for community members who use the library meeting rooms.
Annual number of community meeting rooms reservations	N/A	N/A	N/A	14,000	Provide space for community members to meet in meeting rooms.

Literacy and Education



Priority:	Quality of Life
FY2026 FTE Count:	22.6

Program Description

This program provides oversight and execution of all aspects of public programs development and delivery. Manages program grants, literacy education programs, community outreach, and special events for all ages. Manages public & private partnerships, vendor agreements, and space rental agreements.

Significant Budget Items

Provide a variety of educational programs that celebrate what is uniquely Houston for all ages to provide opportunities for a well-educated and prepared workforce and community.

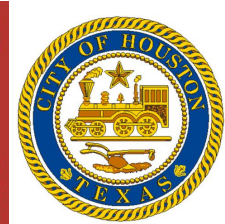
FY26 Prop Budget by Fund

General Fund	\$2,294,126
Total	\$2,294,126

Performance

Measure Name	FY24 Actual	FY25 Progress (Q3)	FY25 Target	FY26 Target	Target Context
Number of Early Literacy Support Program Participants	49,111	39,000	50,000	50,000	Provide story time, playtime, and other activities to promote literacy for the youngest library customers and their caregivers.
Annual Number of Students Served for Programs	59,238	49,000	50,000	60,000	Provide after school and youth programming for students throughout the Houston area.
Annual Number of Program Attendees	142,453	114,000	125,000	160,000	Provide literacy, technology, life skills and cultural programming.
Program survey responses (goal 80% or more are positive)	92%	95%	80%	85%	Ensure programs are meeting the needs of program attendees with a post-program survey.
Annual Number of Workforce Literacy Classes Attendees	14,245	5,400	7,000	8,000	Provide in-depth classes on computer literacy, ESL, small business, job searching, etc.

Debt Service & Interfund Transfer



Priority:	Government that Works
FY2026 FTE Count:	0.0

Program Description

Budget allocations included in this section reflect debt service payments and/or interfund transfers.

Significant Budget Items

Includes funding for debt services payment and interfund transfer.

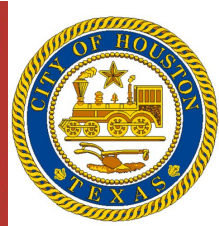
FY26 Prop Budget by Fund

General Fund	\$750,000
Total	\$750,000

Performance

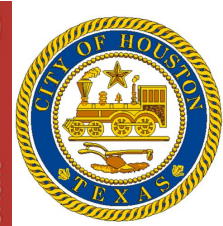
Measure Name	FY24 Actual	FY25 Progress (Q3)	FY25 Target	FY26 Target	Target Context

Revenue Highlights



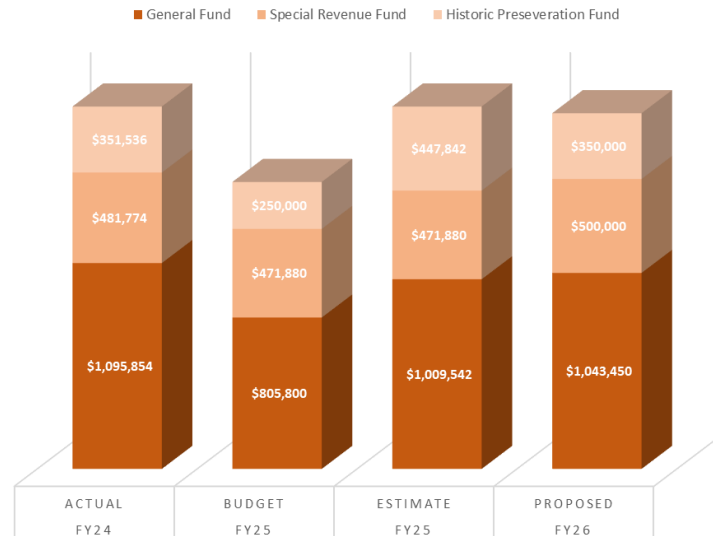
- **Passport Services Fees-** HPL is projecting that passport services will increase its revenue by 10.7% by end of FY25 versus FY24 actuals
- **Historic Preservation-** HPL is projecting special event revenues to increase 27.4% by end of FY25 versus FY24 actuals

Revenue by Fund

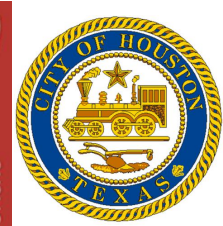


Category	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY25 Estimate	FY26 Proposed	Variance FY26 Proposed/ FY25 Budget	% Change
General Fund	\$ 1,095,854	\$ 805,800	\$ 1,009,542	\$ 1,043,450	\$ 237,650	29%
Special Revenue Fund	\$ 481,774	\$ 471,880	\$ 471,880	\$ 500,000	\$ 28,120	6%
Historic Perseveration Fund	\$ 351,536	\$ 250,000	\$ 447,842	\$ 350,000	\$ 100,000	40%
Total	\$ 1,929,164	\$ 1,527,680	\$ 1,929,264	\$ 1,893,450	\$ 365,770	24%

REVENUE BY FUND



Revenue by Program



Program	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY25 Estimate	FY26 Proposed	Variance FY26 Proposed/ FY25 Budget	% Change
Administrative Services	\$ 958,305	\$ 802,300	\$ 1,009,542	\$ 1,043,450	\$ 241,150	30%
Library Collections	\$ 137,548	\$ 1,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ (1,000)	-100%
Library Operations	\$ 1	\$ 2,500	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ (2,500)	-100%
Total	\$ 1,095,854	\$ 805,800	\$ 1,009,542	\$ 1,043,450	\$ 237,650	29%

Questions

Appendix

Department FY2025 Accomplishments



- **Library Usage**
 - Checkouts
 - Digital material (e-books and e-audiobooks) up 28% (over 4 million)
 - Physical material up 5% (over 3 million)
 - Visitors up 3% compared to visitors last year (YTD)
 - Library of Things expanded to include metal detectors, podcast kits, specialized craft and art kits, and musical instruments. Usage went up 109%
 - Targeted marketing efforts led to 200,000+ new library cards issued this fiscal year
- **New Partnerships**
 - HISD, Parks Board, expanded Learning Link with Spring ISD (adding over 37,000 K-12 students)
- **Library Facilities**
 - Freed-Montrose Neighborhood Library opened in the Montrose Collective in December 2024. Won IIDA Southwest Design Award.
 - Dr. Shannon Walker Neighborhood Library
 - Opened passport office in July 2024
 - Urban Land Institute's Development of Distinction Awards in the Small-Scale Non-Profit category
 - Urban Land Institute's People's Choice Award by public vote
 - *Houston Business Journal's* 2025 Landmark Award
- **Digital Engagement**
 - Compared to last year, website user sessions increased by 19%, Facebook followers increased by 15%, and Instagram grew by 54%

Ongoing Marketing Objectives and Focus Areas



- Sign up for MYLink library cards and the library newsletter
- Promote attendance at library events and programs
- Boost checkouts of books, movies, and other materials
- Increase reservation of meeting rooms and use of community spaces
- Support fundraising efforts by encouraging donations to the HPL Foundation
- Drive digital engagement through the website and social media platforms
- Raise awareness of available library services and resources within the community

FY26 Marketing Campaign Focus



- **All About Your Library Card**

Increase awareness of the benefits of a MYLink library card, including access to thousands of free resources, services, and experiences. Campaigns will highlight how easy it is to sign up and start exploring everything the library offers.

- **24/7 Digital Library Access**

Reinforce messaging around the convenience of the library's digital resources available anytime, anywhere. Marketing will focus books, movies, music, and unique lending items like those in the *Library of Things*. Emphasis will also be placed on mobile access, user-friendly platforms, and the broad range of digital offerings that support learning, entertainment, and daily life.

- **TECHLink**

Drive increased use of TECHLink by promoting access to cutting-edge tools like music and video recording equipment, podcast studios, 3D printers, and more. Campaigns will spotlight how these resources empower creativity and skill-building for all ages.

- **History Research Centers**

Highlight the library's role in preserving local and cultural history by promoting special collections, archives, and research services. Outreach will include partnerships and programs with universities and research institutions to elevate public awareness, programs, and engagement.

- **Passport Services**

Raise visibility of passport services available at select library locations through targeted outreach and community-specific campaigns, emphasizing convenience and accessibility.

Department Organization Chart



Houston Public Library

\$50,056,632

Administration
(340001)

\$9,191,575
FTE: 20.1

Library
Collections
(340003)

\$9,323,734
FTE: 35.0

Library Spaces
(340004)

\$1,152,994
FTE: 8.8

Digital
Strategies
(340005)

\$4,712,225
FTE: 45.0

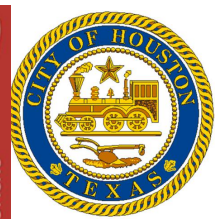
Literacy and
Education
(340006)

\$2,294,126
FTE: 22.6

Library
Operations
(340007)

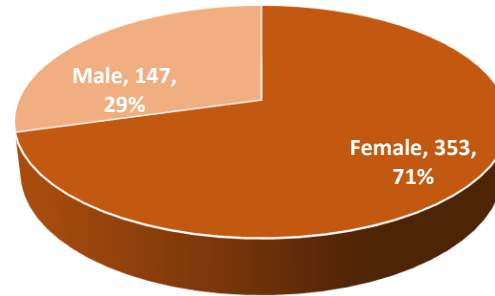
\$23,381,978
FTE: 306.7

HPL in Context



City/County	Budget	Population	Per Capita
Columbus Metropolitan	\$120,000,000	872,000	\$137.61
Austin	\$65,581,513	974,447	\$67.30
King County	\$150,000,000	2.3 M	\$64.10
LA County	\$131,000,000	3.3 M	\$39.70
Chicago	\$106,000,000	2.8 M	\$37.86
Dallas	\$43,500,000	1.3 M	\$33.46
San Antonio	\$49,744,609	1.8 M	\$27.01
Houston	\$54,994,868	2.3 M	\$23.48
Harris County	\$42,464,687	2.2 M	\$18.98

Workplace Analysis Headcount & Percentages



■ Female ■ Male

