

Jefferson Public Library
Jefferson, IA

GIFT POLICY

Purpose

Jefferson Public Library values the generosity of individuals, organizations, and community partners. Gifts, donations, and bequests help enhance library services, programs, and collections. This policy outlines how such contributions are accepted and used to support the library's mission.

1. General Guidelines

- All gifts are subject to the approval of the Library Director and/or the Jefferson Public Library Board of Trustees.
 - Gifts must align with the mission, vision, and policies of Jefferson Public Library.
 - The library reserves the right to accept or decline any gift and to determine the appropriate use or disposition of accepted items.
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2. Acceptable Gifts

a. Books and Other Library Materials

- Donations of books, DVDs, and other media are welcome if they are clean, in good condition, and relevant to the collection.
- Acceptance of materials does not guarantee inclusion in the library's collection.
- Items not added may be sold, donated, or discarded at the library's discretion.

b. Monetary Contributions

- Financial gifts may be designated for specific purposes (such as youth programs, technology, or capital improvements) or left unrestricted for general library use.
- All designated donations must support library goals and are subject to approval by the Director or Board.

c. Sponsorships and In-Kind Donations

- Gifts of equipment, furniture, services, or other non-cash items will be considered based on current needs, value, and condition.

- In-kind gifts may be accepted with or without restrictions, depending on the nature and intended use.

d. Memorial and Tribute Gifts

- Donors may make contributions in honor or memory of individuals.
 - Recognition, including plaques or named items, may be offered at the discretion of the Library Director and Board.
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3. Recognition and Tax Information

- Donors may request a written acknowledgment for tax purposes; however, Jefferson Public Library cannot assign monetary value to donated physical items.
 - Public recognition may be provided unless the donor wishes to remain anonymous.
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4. Conditions and Restrictions

- The library reserves the right to decline gifts with conditions that are inconsistent with its mission or that create an undue burden (e.g., maintenance, storage, insurance).
 - Gifts intended for public display (e.g., artwork or plaques) are subject to space, relevance, and aesthetic considerations.
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5. Final Authority

The Library Director, in consultation with the Jefferson Public Library Board of Trustees, has final authority over the acceptance, use, display, and disposal of all gifts.

Legal Considerations:

The acceptance of gifts by a public library—particularly one funded or governed by local, state, or federal entities—is often subject to specific legal and ethical restrictions. Here's a general breakdown of what typically applies in the U.S., though specific rules vary by state or municipality:

Legal & Ethical Restrictions on Gift Acceptance by Public Libraries

1. Government Ethics Laws

- **Public employees and officials** (including library staff) are often **prohibited or restricted from accepting gifts** that could be perceived as influencing official actions.
- These restrictions may include:
 - Monetary value limits (e.g., no gifts over \$25).
 - Prohibitions on gifts from vendors or contractors.
 - Disclosure or reporting requirements.

2. Library Policies

- Many public libraries have their own **gift acceptance policies**, typically adopted by their board of trustees. These policies often:
 - Define acceptable types of gifts (e.g., books, materials, donations, real property, endowments).
 - Require that all gifts become the property of the library and are subject to use/disposal at the library's discretion.
 - Set procedures for acknowledging donations.
 - Prohibit personal gifts to staff or volunteers.

3. State & Local Law

- Some states have specific statutes regulating gifts to public institutions.
 - For example, some may require gifts above a certain value to be reported to a state agency.
 - Others may restrict tax-deductible donations without proper 501(c)(3) status (i.e., through a “Friends of the Library” group).

4. Conflict of Interest & Transparency

- Gift acceptance must avoid **conflict of interest** or the **appearance of impropriety**.

Many libraries are required to maintain **public records** of gifts, especially monetary or high-value ones.

Adopted: May 12, 2025
Revised: