

Gift Acceptance + Funding Policy

As a nonprofit news organization, The LA Local is powered by the community: through membership contributions, individual donations, and funding from foundations and institutions. Every contribution helps us amplify community voices, train youth journalists, and deliver trusted local reporting that builds civic power and opportunity across Los Angeles. Our news and information will always be free to the public—no paywalls, no subscription barriers—and our stories are always free to republish and share, thanks to the support of our funders.

Our newsroom retains full control over all editorial decisions. No funder may influence our reporting. We are committed to financial transparency: gifts above \$5,000 will not be accepted unless the donor agrees to be publicly listed by name or the donor is genuinely unknown to us.

We are deeply grateful to the funders who make our work possible, who strengthen our communities, and who share our commitment to editorially independent, trusted, and reliable journalism for Los Angeles.

Guiding principles

- **Mission alignment:** We accept only gifts and funding that support our mission of providing free, high-quality, independent local journalism in Los Angeles County. Funding must align with our purpose and values.
- **Editorial independence:** Editors, journalists and newsroom leadership of The LA Local retain full and exclusive control over editorial content, including choice of topics, sources, reporting, editing, packaging, publication and distribution. No donor or funder will ever have influence over editorial decisions, either directly or indirectly.
- **Transparency:** We are committed to transparency about our funding. We publish the names of all contributors of \$5,000 or more in a year (unless the gift is genuinely anonymous to us, as described below). We disclose our funders, and gifts above \$5,000 will not be accepted unless the donor agrees to be publicly listed by name.
- **Flexibility in support:** Unrestricted operating support is our most valuable form of funding because it gives us the flexibility to allocate resources where the need is greatest at any given moment. That said, donors may also designate their contribution to one of our defined program areas—our neighborhood newsroom hubs, our youth program, our community engagement or our Documenters program—provided such designation does not compromise our editorial independence or operational objectives.

What we accept

We invite contributions from individuals, foundations, institutions, corporations, Donor Advised Funds (DAFs), and other charitable vehicles. Gifts may include:

- Cash (checks, credit card, ACH, online)
- Securities (publicly traded stocks, bonds)

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- DAF grants
- Bequests or legacy gifts (planned giving)
- In-kind gifts (subject to review)

We welcome donor designation of their contribution to one of our operational program areas: the neighborhood newsrooms, the youth program, community engagement or the LA Documenters program. If a donor designates a contribution to a program area, we reserve the right to manage that funding within that program and to reallocate within the program if circumstances change, provided that we retain editorial control and appropriate flexibility.

General (unrestricted) contributions are strongly encouraged because they allow us to meet emerging needs across operations, editorial, technology, hiring, community engagement and other priorities.

What we do not accept

We will not permit donor or sponsor influence over editorial content under any circumstances. Acceptance of a gift or funding does not create a partnership in editorial decisions, nor an endorsement by The LA Local of the donor, their views, their products or services.

We will decline any gift or funding if acceptance would:

- Impose conditions or influence (or appear to influence) our editorial content, our news judgments, our employment of staff, or any operational decisions.
- Require us to provide favorable or preferential coverage of a donor, their organization, their products, services or viewpoints.
- Mandate advance review, editing, approval or veto of editorial content by the donor or funder.
- Tie donor expectations to specific outcomes in our reporting or editorial product.
- Create a real or perceived conflict of interest with our journalistic integrity or the trust of our audience.
- Impose restrictions or deliverables so onerous or vague that we cannot reliably meet them without compromising flexibility or incurring undue risk or cost.

In order to maintain trust and avoid any perception of influence, The LA Local will not accept contributions from sources that:

- Promote discrimination, hate speech, or violence.
- Promote political candidates, political parties, or political action committees (PACs) supporting current or proposed legislation, propositions, or referendums.
- Promote illegal products, services, or activities.
- Promote demonstrably false, misleading, or deceptive claims.

The LA Local reserves the right to reject, cancel, or remove any advertisement or partnership at any time, for any reason, including those that may not violate the guidelines above but are deemed misaligned with our mission and values.

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Recognition, anonymity, and disclosures

- We will publicly list by name all contributors whose cumulative support (gifts, grants, pledges) equals or exceeds \$5,000 in a calendar year under our published donor listing, unless we have no knowledge of their identity (for example, a truly anonymous grant via a Donor Advised Fund or third-party vehicle where the donor's identity is not disclosed to us).
- If a contribution is truly anonymous to us, we may accept it. The contribution will be added to the "anonymous" record in the donor database, and will be listed in our funder lists as "anonymous."
- By default, all donations will be considered public and will be listed among our funders. Donors who give less than \$5,000 have the option to be listed as anonymous.
- The LA Local will publish on our website and in annual reports the list of donors giving \$5,000 or more, together with the amount given (or giving level) and the year.
- In our editorial content, we will disclose the names of any donors with ties to the content of our reporting in the footer of that story.
- Sponsored content and advertisements will always be clearly labeled and separate from our editorial content. Sponsors will be clearly named in bylines e.g. "paid for and written by SPONSOR NAME."

Naming opportunities:

- Any naming opportunities — such as the naming of programs, funds, fellowships, events, or spaces — will be reviewed and approved by executive leadership.
- Naming recognition is intended solely to honor donor generosity and should not imply editorial influence, partnership, or endorsement of the donor or their organization.
- Naming opportunities will not be granted in any manner that could compromise or appear to compromise our editorial independence, mission, or reputation.
- The LA Local reserves the right to decline or revoke a naming opportunity if the donor's actions, affiliations, or reputation conflict with our mission or values.
- Terms and duration of any naming opportunity will be documented in a written agreement and may be time-limited (e.g., reviewed after a set period or upon fulfillment of the pledge).

Review and approval of gifts

- The executive team will review all gifts with specific deliverables that impact the organization, and all gifts above \$50,000 for mission alignment, risk, reputation and administrative burden.
- Should a conflict of interest arise—for example if a donor has business or personal interests which overlap with our coverage—our development staff will evaluate and escalate to senior leadership or the Board for review. We may accept the gift only if adequate safeguards are in place and the donor will have no editorial input or influence.
- The Board, CEO, and Executive Editor retain the right to decline any gift that, in their judgment, does not align with this policy or presents unacceptable risk.

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Documentation and procedures

- All gifts will be acknowledged in writing, including the date, amount (or value, if non-cash), donor name (if known), any restrictions or designations, and any relevant terms.
- The development office will maintain records of all gifts, pledges, restricted designations, donor intent, and any special terms.
- Non-cash gifts requiring valuation or appraisal will follow relevant IRS and accounting guidance, and the donor should be advised to consult their tax advisors.

Amendment of policy

- This policy is the official gift acceptance policy of The LA Local and has been reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors.
- The Board may amend this policy at any time. All amendments shall be documented and posted publicly.

This policy is effective as of January 1, 2026. A summary of the policy will be made publicly available (e.g., on our website) for donors and the public to review.