



Fall/Winter 2025

Investing for Firefighters and Their Families®

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Fund Members,

As Houston firefighters, you dedicated your lives to the safety and well-being of our community. It is our fundamental mission and greatest honor at HFRRF to ensure your financial security and peace of mind in retirement.

It has truly been a good year at the Fund, and I am thrilled to share some milestone achievements with you. Thanks to diligent management and favorable market conditions, your Fund is about to cross **\$6 billion in total assets**. This is a major landmark for us, and it is coupled with an excellent **annual investment return of 11.9 percent**.

These accomplishments are more than just numbers, they represent the stability you have earned and the secure future you deserve.

This positive momentum carries us forward as we close out the year. I am very much looking forward to seeing many of you and celebrating together at the upcoming Christmas lunch.

As we look ahead to 2026, we remain focused on our core mission: driving returns while minimizing exposure to risk. We are incredibly optimistic about the future of the Fund and are honored to be on this journey with you.

Thank you for your trust, your service, and your membership.

Sincerely,

Brett Besselman
Chairman
Houston Firefighters' Relief and Retirement Fund



*Brett Besselman
Chairman of the Board*



News from the Board

HFRRF BOARD OF TRUSTEES ELECTION

In accordance with the HFRRF Policies and Procedures, candidates for the current HFRRF Board of Trustee election were announced as follows:

David Riegor

Position II



Gerard Daniels

Position V

Both candidates will be sworn in at the January 2026 board meeting. The new 3-year term will begin on January 1, 2026, and will end December 31, 2028.

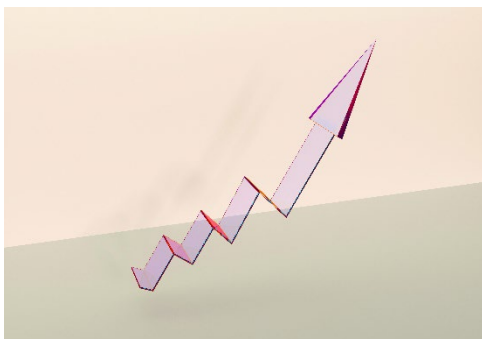
Memorial Benches – SOLD OUT!

Memorial Pavers - \$100

If you would like to purchase a paver in the Memorial Garden, the order form is available on www.hfrrf.org under HFRRF Memorial on the home page.

Investments Update

The geographically diversified portfolio has successfully navigated renewed geopolitical tensions and the pressures surrounding the US Dollar's status as a reserve currency. The portfolio achieved a return of 11.9 percent, significantly outperforming the Policy Benchmark for Fiscal Year 2025 and over the long term. Additionally, the portfolio ranked in the first quartile among peers in the universe of public pension plans managing over \$5 billion in assets. Looking ahead to FY 2026, the portfolio will continue to adapt to the new economic realities shaped by artificial intelligence, geopolitical realignments, and the rising influence of Asia.



Save
the
Date

Annual Retiree Holiday Luncheon



December 4, 2025
11am – 1pm

HFRRF Greer & Lowdermilk Conference Center

Retirees - There is an Invitation that will be mailed to everyone's address that we have on file. The invitation will have a QR code for you to RSVP. We will also send out an email invitation (through Constant Contact) that will have an RSVP link at the bottom.

Retiree BBQ

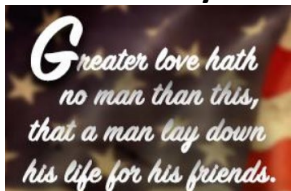


May 7, 2026
11am – 1pm

HFRRF Greer & Lowdermilk Conference Center

HFD Annual Memorial Ceremony

For Line of Duty Deaths



October 17, 2026
11am – 1pm
HFRRF Memorial Garden

Key Dates



HFRRF Board & Committee Meetings

3rd Tuesday of every month
except December

Office Closings

November 11	Veterans' Day
November 27 - 28	Thanksgiving
December 24 - 25	Christmas
January 1	New Year's Day
January 19	MLK Day
February 16	Presidents' Day

Office Noon Closures

November 26	January 16
December 23	February 13
December 31	April 3

News from Member Services

Service	Amount	Start Date
Cost of Living Adjustment	4.00%	October 31, 2025
DROP/PROP Interest	7.36%	September 1, 2025
Annual Supplemental Benefit (ASB)		January 9, 2026
Annual Exclusion Letters	\$3,000	January 23, 2026
PROP/DROP Withdrawal		Deadline for 2025: December 21, 2025
Reminder: 1099s are mailed out by Bank of New York (BNY) Mellon, not HFRRF		

DECEMBER 1, 2025 REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTION (RMD) FORM OR FORCE

If you are 73 or older and have a DROP and/or PROP account, you are required by the IRS to withdraw a RMD or a 50% tax penalty could be assessed. The required amount is based on your age, spouse's age (if applicable), and your 12/31/2024 DROP/PROP account balance: [RMD Calculator](#) - note this calculator is not accurate if you are 10+ years older than your spouse. Remember, previous withdrawals in 2025 count toward RMD. If member services has not received your DROP or PROP Disbursement Form by December 1, 2025, HFRRF will **force** out your RMD at 10% tax withholding and deposit it to your account on file.

January 2026 Annual Supplemental Benefit (ASB)

You can expect your annual supplemental benefit payment to be disbursed on or before January 9, 2026. Your payment will be distributed to you in the same manner as your monthly pension payment unless otherwise noted. If eligible, and you will be completing a rollover form or W-4P, please have those forms submitted to the Fund no later than December 12, 2025.

Online DROP/PROP Withdrawals

Did you know that you can make DROP/PROP withdrawals online? Log into [MemberDirect](#) and go to My Account. Choose Forms. For a lump sum withdrawal up to \$50k, use the Disbursement Form. If you want to set up recurring monthly or quarterly withdrawals, submit the Periodic Disbursement Form.

REMINDERS:

- If you recently got married, make sure you submit a marriage license along with your spouse's social security number and date of birth to the pension office, so we can add it to your record.
- If you are a member and have lost a spouse, please contact our office so that your file can be updated.
- If you are a survivor beneficiary and re-marry, move, or change your phone number please update your information with our office so there is no disruption in your pension benefits.
- Keep your contact information updated to help ensure we can connect with you about important information regarding your benefit or account.

Contact Member Services: 281-372-5100, 800-666-9737, or memberservices@hfrrf.org

Why Recordkeeping Matters: Protecting Your Pension Story

By Daniella Machado Strubinger, Records Management Technician

Every Houston firefighter has a story — a story built on years of dedication, courage, and service. At the Fund, we believe your records tell that story. Each document, date, and contribution helps ensure your pension reflects every bit of the work you've put in.

From the moment you start your first shift, your service history begins to take shape. Over the years, those records — employment forms, pay details, contribution statements — all come together to paint a full picture of your career. Keeping those details accurate is what allows us to make sure you receive the benefits you've earned.

Why It's So Important

Sometimes even small details, like an outdated address, can cause confusion later. That's why our records management team works carefully behind the scenes to keep your information up to date and complete. Accurate records mean fewer delays, fewer questions, and peace of mind when it's time to retire.

A Few Ways You Can Help

We do our best to keep everything in order, but you can help protect your pension story too:

- **Check your information regularly.** You can check most of your information through your Member Direct account. It is important that if you see anything that needs to be adjusted, let us know.
- **Keep copies of important documents.** Employment letters, promotions, and benefit correspondence are worth holding onto.
- **Let us know about updates.** Moved recently? Changed your name? Did you get married or recently divorced? Keeping your file current helps us serve you better.

We're in This Together

Recordkeeping might not sound exciting, but it's one of the most important parts of protecting what you've earned - meaning your pension records aren't just stored, they're protected, verified, and preserved long-term under regulatory guidelines. Every file we maintain represents years of service and sacrifice — and we take that responsibility seriously.

So, this fall, as you take stock of the year and plan, consider giving your records a quick review.



MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

We are here to help! Regular business hours are Monday – Friday 7:30am – 4:00pm. Administrative staff and member services representatives are available by phone, email, in person, and for virtual appointments. Call member services at 281-372-5100 if you'd like to schedule an individual appointment. A wide range of self-service options are also accessible online 24/7 in [MemberDirect](#). If you need to drop off paperwork after hours, please use the gray drop off box on the front porch.

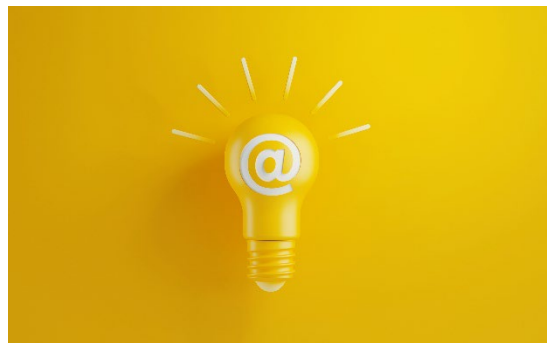
☒ STAY CONNECTED WITH HFRRF

To Log into MemberDirect:

1. Enter your username and password
2. Answer the challenge question
3. A text message with a code will be sent to the cell phone number on file
4. Enter the 4-digit code
5. Select "trust this device" so no code will be required on that device for 3 months
6. Click continue to access your account

From now on, when you log in, you will not need to answer security questions.

In the future, when you need to update contact information, log into MemberDirect, click "Personal Information" on left side, update cell number, address, etc., then click "update" to save.



Questions Regarding Your Deductions?

COH - HR Benefits Services 832-393-6000 benefits@houstontx.gov

Cigna 800-997-1406, 832-393-6191 cityofhoustoninquiries@cigna.com

Cigna Dental 800-997-1406 www.cigna.com

Dearborn National (Life Ins.) 877-442-4207 Claims_Customer_Service@dearbornnational.com

Dennis Holder Scholarship Fund 281-385-8525 hfdscholarship@gmail.com

Standard Life 713-223-9166

HFD Honor Guard 713-376-6640

HFD Pipes and Drums 713-417-8348

HPFFA Medical Supplemental 713-223-9166 ext 1

HPFFA Dental/Vision (Humana) 1-800-833-2223

Houston Fire Museum 713-524-2526

Relative Assistance/Hosp Fund 713-223-9166 ext 5

AI Is Your Friend, Not Your Foe!

I'm sure you've heard people talking about **A.I.** (Artificial Intelligence)? It sounds complicated, but it's actually very simple: **A.I. is just a smart assistant** that lives inside your computer, tablet, or phone.

It's here to help you get things done faster and easier.

You Are Always in Charge

Please don't be afraid of it! Think of A.I. like a very polite, very fast grandchild who loves to help with homework, paperwork, and planning.

- **You Are the Boss:** A.I. only works when you ask it a question or give it a command. It doesn't do anything on its own.
 - **It's Not Real Thinking:** It doesn't "think" like a person. It just quickly reads millions of pages of information to give you the best possible answer or draft.
 - **Privacy is Yours:** You can usually choose to **delete your activity** or pause your conversation history anytime you want. You are always in control of the information.
-

Simple Ways A.I. Helps You

A.I. is a tool to take over the boring, time-consuming parts of your day. Here are three simple things it can do:

1. Get to the Point

Do you have a long news article or a big email that is too much to read?

- **Ask the A.I. to summarize it.** You can say: *"Tell me the main points of this article in three sentences."* It will cut through the clutter and give you the facts.

2. Write a Draft

If you need to send a letter, an email, or a note, A.I. can write the first version for you.

- **Ask the A.I. to draft it.** You can say: *"Write an email to the plumber asking when they can schedule a repair."* It will give you a perfect draft that you can quickly check and send.

3. Learn Anything Easily

A.I. can act as a friendly tutor for any subject you want to learn about.

- **Ask the A.I. to explain it simply.** You can say: *"Explain how a retirement fund works, using simple words."* It will give you an easy-to-read explanation immediately.
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The best way to understand A.I. is to try it out. Start with something simple, like asking it for a good recipe or a fun fact about history! Since most of you are used to using Google, then I believe it would be easy for you to try Google's AI called **Google Gemini**.

Go here: <https://gemini.google/about/>

HFRRF Office News

welcome **WELCOME**

Emily Ponte

Front Desk Coordinator

She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and international history, a Master's in Nonprofit Management from the University of Houston–Downtown, and a Master's in Faith and Culture from the University of St. Thomas. Emily has spent over 30 years working in nonprofit organizations. She served as Executive Director of the Houston Fire Museum and has been with the Dennis W. Holder Scholarship Fund, most recently as Director. We are thrilled to have her on board at HFRRF!

welcome back! **WELCOME BACK!**

Michele Word

Part-Time Conference Center Day Coordinator

After nearly 20 years of dedicated service at HFRRF, Michele retired to spend more time with her family. During her tenure, she made a lasting impact in Member Services, holding roles such as Benefits Supervisor, Benefits Counselor, Benefits Administration Manager, and Benefits Manager. Michele holds a Bachelor of Arts in Business and Communications from St. Thomas University and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Phoenix. We know she will be a fantastic addition to the Conference Center Team!



SAY YES
& save

Members save 35% on venue rental
Call 281-372-5124

*Wishing you a joyous holiday season with
peace & cheer throughout the New Year!*

33rd Annual Retiree Holiday Luncheon

Thursday, December 4, 2025

11am – 1pm

(Buffet Closes at 12:30pm)

HFRRF Greer & Lowdermilk Event Center

4225 Interwood N Pkwy, Houston, TX 77032

RSVP Requested by November 25th

Please use email invitation or scan QR code:

Due to limited space, we ask that attendance be limited to retirees, spouses, and beneficiaries receiving pension benefits

(Map and parking information on back)



HFD Annual Memorial Ceremony

For Line of Duty Deaths

October 18, 2025



IN MEMORY

Our condolences & heartfelt sympathies are extended to families of our members who recently passed away.



Gone, but not forgotten.

DATE	RETIRED MEMBERS	HFD SERVICE
6/14/25	Johnie Reneau	1974-2011
6/14/25	Charles Tatom	1967-1992
6/18/25	James R. Glover	1981-2007
6/25/25	Thomas White	1983-2020
7/16/25	Leonard E. Byrd	1969-1994
7/23/25	David Jahnke	1972-2006
7/29/25	Travis Quinn	1975-2005
8/3/24	David Easley	1971-2002
8/5/25	Randal Cockrell	1982-2017
8/6/25	George Bailey	1964-1987
8/11/25	Harvey E. Hartman	1962-1986
8/14/25	William Frankum	1972-2009
8/18/25	Cliff Harris	1971-2004
8/22/25	John Caveness	1981-2014
9/3/25	Russell Obar	1976-1998
9/13/25	Freddy Cunningham	1966-1990
9/14/25	Lethaniel Hawkins Jr.	1979-2012
9/29/25	Larry Gonzales	1970-2011
10/2/25	Robert J. Hicks, Jr.	1972-1984
10/4/25	Wilbert P. Steward	1961-2002
10/6/25	Steve Klovensky	1973-1996
10/20/25	August Butzke	1963-1983

DATE	ACTIVE MEMBER	HFD SERVICE
9/17/25	Stephen Scott	1997-2025

DATE	BENEFICIARY
8/2/25	Linda Irvin
8/2/25	Sharon Sanders
8/9/25	Billie Jean Alford
8/12/25	Helen M. Gertner
8/13/25	Herminia Hernandez
8/15/25	Ruby Nell Branch
8/16/25	Jerlene Ray
9/2/25	Annie Mae Gest
10/19/25	Ruth Roberts

HOUSTON FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF AND RETIREMENT FUND

HFRRF's mission is to provide a secure retirement benefit plan for our members through professional administration, prudent management of system assets, sound investment practices, & prompt, courteous delivery of accurate benefits & useful information.



HFRRF
Board of
Trustees



Brett Besselman
Chairman



David Lantrip
Vice Chairman



Lisa Slagle
Secretary



David Riegor
Active Member



Ed Llewellyn
Active Member



Pete Ng
Active Member



Gerard Daniels
Active member



Al Mays
Citizen Member



Arif Rasheed
City Treasurer
Designee

Vacant
Mayor's
Representative

4225 Interwood North Parkway, Houston, TX 77032

281-372-5100 800-666-9737

www.hfrrf.org

