

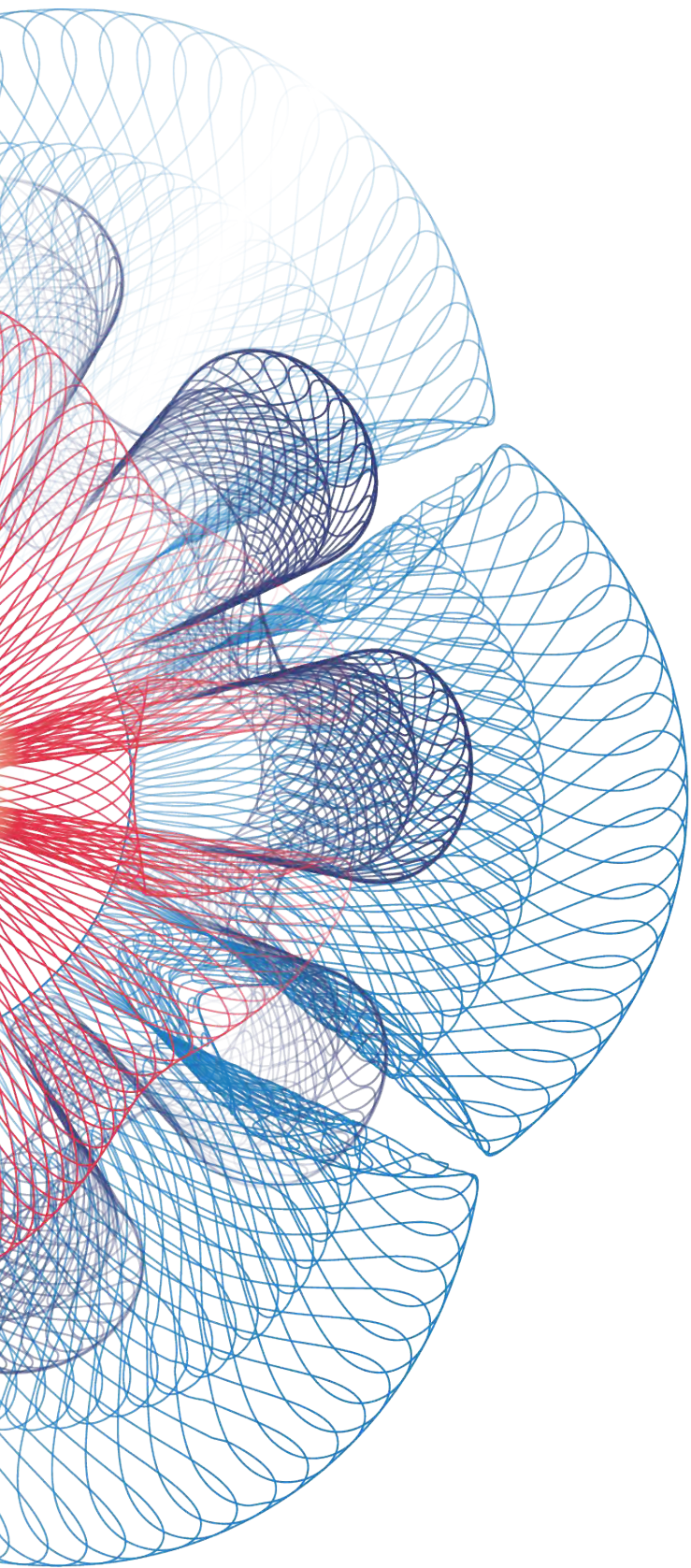


**INSPIRING THE
AMERICAN SPIRIT**

AMERICA

REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT

Submitted by
The U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission
December 31, 2019



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PREAMBLE OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

In Congress, July 4, 1776

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.



UNITED STATES SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL
COMMISSION



December 31, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

This letter transmits, as provided for in section 5(c) of the United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016, a report presenting the Commission's overall program for observances marking the 250th anniversary of the United States of America.

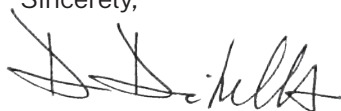
The Commission envisions America 250 (the brand name and commonly accepted alternative to the formal Semiquincentennial) as a monumental initiative—engaging all Americans in the largest and most inclusive celebration and commemoration in our nation's history—with the potential to:

- Inspire the American spirit to deepen understanding of our history and the democratic process through *education*; increase *engagement* in our communities and governing affairs; and foster *unity* that includes the “many” Americans in our “one” nation;
- Engage nearly 350,000,000 Americans and millions of friends worldwide by 2026;
- Produce more than 100,000 programs engaging participants at the local, territorial, state, tribal, regional, national, and international levels;
- Attract billions of dollars in resources that will ripple through our national, state, and local economies to positive effect, and
- Extend over a multiyear crescendo reaching its peak on the Fourth of July 2026.

The nation is just beginning to explore the possibilities and tackle the challenges presented by America 250 on our journey to form “a more perfect Union.” The Commission submits this report for your review and transmission to Congress as an important first step in the ongoing collaboration necessary to advance the overall program for America 250.

Along with my fellow commissioners, I stand ready to provide any clarification or support required to assist you and your staff as you review this plan. We look forward to working with the Administration and Congress to coordinate America 250.

Sincerely,



Daniel M. DiLella, Chairman
U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission

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**PREAMBLE OF THE
UNITED STATES
CONSTITUTION**

September 17, 1787

**We the People of the United States,
in Order to form a more perfect Union,
establish Justice, insure domestic
Tranquility, provide for the common defence,
promote the general Welfare, and secure
the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and
our Posterity, do ordain and establish
this Constitution for the
United States of America.**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



THE PREAMBLES to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States convey the ideas that shape our American identity and inspire our Semiquincentennial. Our founding principles and shared inheritance of equality, liberty, and government by consent of the governed are the cornerstone of our rights and responsibilities as Americans and the touchstone for America 250.¹ The United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016 (the Act) established the Commission and required it to submit this report presenting the overall program and related recommendations to guide the nation in marking the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.²

Since first convening in November 2018, the Commission has developed a bold vision for an anniversary that inspires a renewed dedication to the idea of America and promotes a spirit of unity among its people. Major anniversaries mark milestones to prompt remembrance and fuel hope. As the United States approaches the milestone of a quarter of a millennium, it now represents the best system yet devised for a diverse people to live together in freedom. America 250 is an occasion for all Americans to strengthen our common bonds and rededicate ourselves to the ongoing pursuit of our founding promise.

The Commission envisions America 250 as a monumental initiative—engaging all Americans in what is expected to be the largest and most inclusive celebration and commemoration in our nation’s history—with the potential to: (See Section V, pp. 60-66)

- **Inspire** the American spirit to deepen understanding of our history and the democratic process through *education*; *engagement* in our communities and governing affairs; and *unity* that includes the “many” Americans in our “one” nation;
- **Engage** nearly 350,000,000 Americans and millions of friends worldwide by 2026;
- **Spark** the imagination and promise of our youth;
- **Honor and thank** active duty military and veterans for their service and sacrifice in defense of liberty and our country;

¹The Commission selected America 250 as the brand name and commonly accepted alternative to the formal Semiquincentennial.

²Public Law 114-196, 130 Statutes at Large 685-692, July 22, 2016. (For the complete statute, see Appendix A). For the report requirement, see P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 687, Sec. 5(c). For a brief description of the Commission and its activities to date, see Section II, pp. 24-28.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONT.

- **Produce** more than 100,000 programs engaging participants at the local, territorial, state, tribal, regional, national, and international levels;
- **Attract** billions of dollars in resources that will ripple through our local, state, and national economies to positive effect, and
- **Extend** over a multiyear crescendo reaching its peak on the Fourth of July 2026.

The nation is just beginning to explore the possibilities and tackle the challenges presented by America 250 for our continuing journey to form “a more perfect Union.” The Commission offers this report as a starting point providing initial direction and inviting further collaboration.

The Commission and its nonprofit affiliate, the America 250 Foundation (the Foundation), have used limited public and private start-up resources to prepare this overall program. Attaining this vision for America 250 requires substantial public and private investment. Based largely on extrapolations from the Bicentennial experience—the best available analog for the Semiquincentennial—America 250 may involve: (See Section V, pp. 64-66 for further explanation of these projections.)

- A total economic investment over the period of commemoration from all public and private sources (with infrastructure being a significant variable) of 3 to 5 billion dollars.

The portion of that total investment flowing to and through the Commission may include:

- Commission/Foundation operating expenses of ~100 million dollars,
- Private funds flowing to and through the America 250 Foundation of more than 250 million dollars, and
- Federal appropriations flowing to and through the Commission of as much as 225 million dollars primarily for:
 - › the Commission’s government functions,
 - › grants to states, territories, and Native American tribes,
 - › ongoing planning,
 - › government to government operational coordination, and
 - › appropriate program expenses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONT.

The Commission will validate and likely adjust these projections by working from the bottom up with its staff, consultants, affiliates, and partners to develop detailed operational plans to implement this overall program. The recent passage of a \$3.3 million FY2020 federal appropriation will fund much of the Commission's ongoing planning efforts throughout FY2020, freeing up expected private contributions to fuel the Foundation's expanding fundraising activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS (See Section VIII, pp. 90-94)

In the bi-partisan spirit of the Act and in line with the Commission's thematic call for all Americans and each American to unite, the Commission respectfully encourages the public and all three branches of government to participate in and support America 250 on a non-partisan basis.

Among the Commission's recommendations are immediate opportunities for our leaders in Congress and the Executive Branch to participate in and support Semiquincentennial planning by:

- Participating in a compelling and exciting national launch of America 250 activities in 2020.
- Promoting the vision of America 250 focusing on the call to *educate, engage, and unite*.
- Encouraging the formation of the America 250 Congressional Caucus.
- Exhorting active participation of all federal agencies in Semiquincentennial programs aligned with their respective missions.
- Encouraging all states and territories to establish and actively engage their own commissions in America 250.
- Contributing to the development and execution of a series of national signature programs.
- Providing the necessary federal funding, which combined with private funding, will deliver the significant resources necessary to execute a fitting and inspirational America 250 celebration.

The Commission offers the following initial proposals for congressional and presidential actions needed to carry out the America 250 program.

Legislative Proposals

Prompt consideration of technical amendments to the Act to improve the Commission's efficiency and effectiveness.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONT.

Favorable consideration of the Commission's subsequent appropriation requests through FY2027.

Favorable consideration of ex officio and other federal agency appropriation requests and infrastructure recommendations related to America 250 and supported by the Commission.

Additional amendments to the Act. The Commission proposes the following described amendments to the Act as necessary to support recommended approaches presented in this report:

- Authorize the Treasury Department to strike commemorative national medals in collaboration with the Commission and provided to the Commission at cost.
- Authorize the Commission to carry out a grants-in-aid program for each state, territory, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to apply for funds to establish or implement an America 250 commission.
- Provide for the mutually agreeable transfer of Semiquincentennial commemoration funds available by and between any federal department or agency including the Commission.
- Facilitate coordination with the America 250 state commissions, by providing for the Commission to authorize and fund travel for the representatives and staff of these crucial entities.
- Authorize the Commission to make matching grants for a percentage of total program costs to nonprofit entities (including state and local governments) from non-appropriated and appropriated funds.

Proposals for Presidential Actions

Expeditious review, comment, and transmittal of this complete report to Congress in accordance with the Act.

Designate a point of contact in the White House to appropriately engage the Commission in evaluating and supporting America 250-related appropriation requests and infrastructure recommendations submitted by federal agencies.

Regularly assign a small cadre of White House Fellows to assume significant roles in the design and execution of America 250 initiatives over the next seven years.

Infrastructure Improvement Recommendations

The Act requires the Commission to evaluate existing infrastructure, recommend infrastructure improvements necessary for a successful America 250, and coordinate with state and local

bodies to make these necessary infrastructure improvements. As explained in Section VII, pp. 82-84, the nation's limited awareness of America 250 planning at this moment makes it generally premature for the Commission to recommend infrastructure initiatives in this report. Nevertheless, the Commission recognizes that its affiliates, partners, and stakeholders must launch infrastructure projects (a sampling of which are described in Section VII, pp. 84-89) early in the planning cycle to ensure timely implementation of America 250 programming. The Commission will address the Act's infrastructure requirements within the context of its participatory frameworks and prepare subsequent recommendations for the President and Congress as appropriate.

THE VISION FOR AMERICA 250 (See Section III, pp. 30-35)

The Commission—through an intensive strategic planning process including significant stakeholder engagement and public input—developed this visionary framework to invite creative programming to shape America 250 and the future of the United States.

Purpose

The Commission's vision communicates a clear purpose for America 250.

Inspiring the American spirit within all Americans and each American, grounded in our nation's founding principles, for our continuing journey toward a more perfect Union

Themes

The themes prompt participation focused on strengthening the vitality of the American experiment.

- **Educate**

*Sparking deeper awareness of our founding principles, our history, and our democratic process builds broader appreciation of one another—our unique stories and our common humanity. Together, these contribute to a better understanding of who we are, where we came from, and where we are headed. **How will Americans learn about our nation, our institutions, and each other?***

- **Engage**

*Government of, by, and for the people enables Americans to invigorate the civil dialogue that perpetually reshapes our nation. We have the right—and responsibility—to take part in the ongoing American experiment. Civic engagement takes many forms. **How will Americans get involved in their communities and continue to shape our nation?***

- **Unite**

*Coming together as a nation recognizes the power of our diverse stories while never losing sight of our common bonds as Americans. This unity is reflected in our democratic institutions, voluntary associations, and collaborative enterprises. Ideally, we act in concert to promote the common good even as we exercise our individual rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness while honoring the freedom of others to do the same. **How will Americans join in expressions of unity that respect individual liberty?***

Guidelines

The guidelines define the scope of America 250 in time and space to provide direction to those planning and participating in Semiquincentennial observances.

- **All American History**

To encourage the broadest possible participation, America 250 must consider our entire history. Because the Semiquincentennial marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States it will draw inspiration from and attention to the history of the Revolutionary Era. But America's story did not begin or end with the Revolution. It is a rich tapestry, woven with unifying threads first expressed by our nation's founders—including the ideas of individual liberty, representative government, and the attainment of equal and unalienable rights. Refined through expanding self-government and passed on to us by great sacrifice, these remain the shared inheritance entrusted to us and future generations.

- **Nationwide and Worldwide**

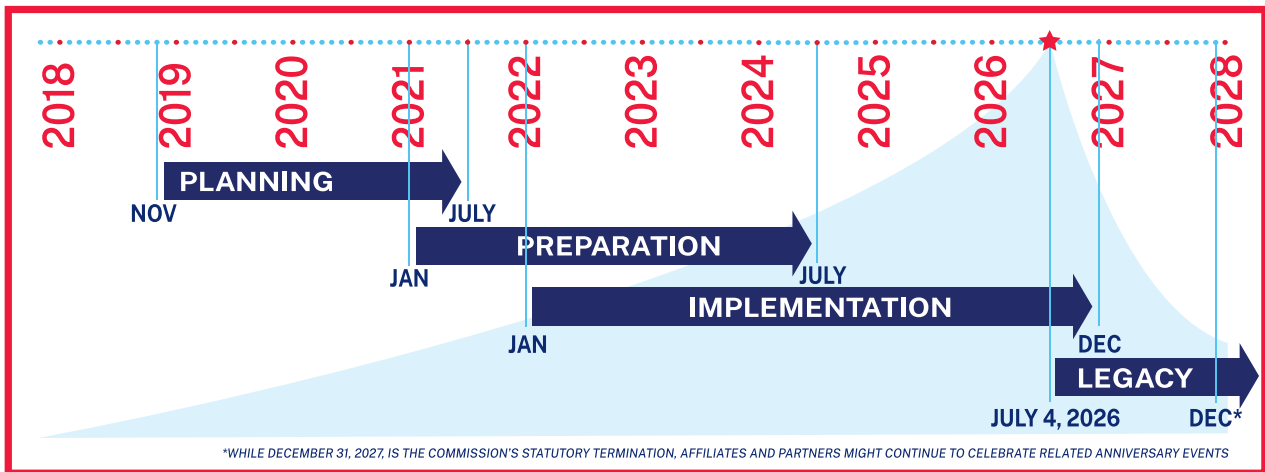
The geographical scope of America 250 encompasses the entire United States, its territories, the Native American nations within its borders, and nations around the globe. Given the Revolutionary events that forged our nation took place in the 13 original states, there will naturally be unique opportunities for participation and activities within those states. However, the Commission's vision of engaging each American is an invitation for all states, territories, and tribes to be actively involved. The idea of America binds us together across space as well as time.

- **Commemorative Period**

The Commission's official commemorative period will run from 2020 to 2027. It will begin with a multiyear crescendo of America 250 activity that will peak in 2026—especially on the Fourth of July—followed by a natural decline in activity, although some programming will continue through and beyond 2027. (See Figure ES-1 and pp. 66-69 for more on the America 250 schedule.)

- **Many Ways to Observe America 250**

The Semiquincentennial invites reflection on the past, present, and future of the United States. People will mark America 250 in many ways, some of which are reflected in words like commemorate, celebrate, and aspire.

Figure ES-1**AMERICA 250 SCHEDULE****HOW AMERICA WILL PARTICIPATE** (See Section IV, pp. 36-58)

To realize this vision, the Commission intends to facilitate a largely decentralized America 250 that is of, by, and for the people. The Commission cannot directly manage the execution of what it expects will be more than 100,000 unique programs³ of varying scope and scale across the country and around the world. Instead, our goal is to create an architecture of participatory frameworks through which interested parties can shape their programs, ensuring that America 250 reverberates with many voices speaking with one another about the meaning and promise of the United States. Through these frameworks the Commission will connect directly with key affiliates⁴ and together they will provide clear guidelines for community, organizational, and individual stakeholders⁵ who wish to produce official programs⁶ to engage their neighbors and the nation. Key to America 250's success will be the Commission's partners⁷, who will provide a range of resources. This broadly inclusive approach aims to create a climate of trust encouraging creativity and innovation. The Commission extends this open invitation and will pursue the outreach necessary to bring America 250 to life.

³The Commission uses the term programs broadly to encompass such terms as *observances, activities, events, ceremonies, celebrations, exhibits, works, expressions, collections, and publications* as included in P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 685-692, *passim*.

⁴*Affiliates* are those entities or individuals having a direct, mutually supportive relationship with the Commission/America 250 Foundation in developing, implementing, and administering the participatory frameworks. The Commission uses this term in the context of the participatory frameworks to describe this relationship as a formal connection between independent entities and its use does not assume that affiliates necessarily have a subordinate relationship to the Commission.

⁵*Stakeholders* are those entities or individuals participating in or otherwise contributing to America 250 that have an indirect relationship with the Commission/America 250 Foundation typically through affiliates or partners in the context of the participatory frameworks.

⁶*Official programs* are explicitly recognized by the Commission in the context of the participatory frameworks and collectively embody the cohesive expression of America 250.

⁷*Partners* (often identified in the private for-profit sector by the tiered designations of partner, sponsor, supporter, and supplier) are those who contribute resources in the form of funds, talent, or tools directly through formal arrangements with the Commission or the America 250 Foundation to attain the America 250 vision.

To carry out this intent, the Commission introduces six participatory frameworks. Four frameworks engage key affiliates in developing, implementing, and administering the frameworks. These constructs are organized to facilitate programming along jurisdictional lines. Two frameworks require a higher degree of direct Commission involvement and focus on programs of a national or regional scale characterized by significant private (for-profit and/or not-for-profit) engagement, as well as possible public/private partnership. Table ES-1 below identifies the frameworks, the corresponding affiliates and partners, and the estimated number of programs associated with each framework.

Table ES-1

PARTICIPATORY FRAMEWORK SUMMARY WITH PROJECTED NUMBER OF PROGRAMS⁸

FRAMEWORKS	AFFILIATES AND PARTNERS	PROJECTED NUMBER OF PROGRAMS
JURISDICTIONAL		
State, Territory, Local programs	56 State and Territory Commissions	~78,000 to 121,500
Federal Agency programs	~200+ Federal Agencies	~1,000
Native American programs	Designated Native American affiliate	~400 to 1,750
International programs	State Department (lead)/ foreign nation America 250 entities	~5,000 to 10,000
COMMISSION		
Commission National Signature programs	-production affiliates -funding partners -contractors	~<10 owned and controlled with possible production/ operation ~50 to 100 just owned and controlled
Commission National/Regional Partnership programs	-program leads -funding partners	~250 to 500

⁸These estimates are projections extrapolated largely from Bicentennial experience. The Commission will validate and as necessary adjust these estimates as it refines its operational plans. See Section V, p.63 for a more detailed explanation of these projections.

For a detailed description of each framework and a sampling of 20 exemplar program ideas already put forward by various stakeholders see Section IV, pp. 41-58.

LEADING AMERICA 250—OPERATIONAL APPROACH (See Section VI, pp. 70-80)

Unlike most congressional commissions, the Semiquincentennial Commission's charge includes not only reporting, but also doing. In that respect, this report represents the beginning—not the end—of the Commission's work. Among the Commission's next steps will be developing detailed operational plans addressing organization and staffing, development, marketing and communications, and information clearinghouse functions.

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

In May 2018, the American Battlefield Trust (the Trust) was selected as the nonprofit Administrative Secretariat for the Commission. With the support of the Commission and the National Park Service, and based on research into the best practices of federal commemorative commissions, the Trust created the America 250 Foundation (the Foundation) to serve as the official nonprofit affiliate of the Commission. Although created by the Trust, the Commission will have ultimate control over the responsibilities delegated to the Foundation. The Foundation brings multiple benefits to the Commission's work, but its principle advantage is a simplified fundraising and public outreach approach based on a brand identity and mission that is completely aligned with the Commission.

Going forward, the Commission will continue to provide vision and direction for and to promote America 250 while setting policy and providing oversight for its unique public/private partnership with the Foundation. This partnership will carry out the operations necessary to accomplish the Commission's mission in line with its vision. The current Commission/Foundation organization is functionally aligned to support externally focused fundraising and operations (see Figure 4, p. 72). As the partnership's organizational structure evolves, several considerations will guide the Commission and the America 250 Foundation including:

- To lead an inclusive America 250, the partnership shall be inclusive.
- Take advantage of both the public and private aspects of the partnership.
- Nurture a culture inspired by the America 250 vision, marked by trust and transparency, and sown with dedication.

DEVELOPMENT

Although the Commission has received and requested federal appropriations, it believes that private funding will support considerable Commission and America 250 Foundation activities and likely sustain the greatest proportion of all Semiquincentennial programming. To date, commissioners have provided and solicited contributions to support the planning efforts culminating in this report (See Appendix H). The Foundation is poised to pursue a variety of private funding

channels including nonprofit and corporate philanthropy, corporate sponsorship, brand and other licensing, grassroots fundraising, and commercial sales (i.e., medals, coins, etc.).

But it takes money to raise money. So far, with most of the early private contributions going to support critical start-up planning efforts, not enough has been available to launch fundraising efforts on the scale necessary to stabilize and grow the partnership. The Commission anticipates that release of this report, the launch of the Commission's website, and other public engagement planned for 2020 will support the messaging and outreach necessary to enable the Foundation to advance its fundraising goals.

Contributors will include a range of large and small businesses and philanthropies funding programs from the global to the local through the Foundation, other affiliates, and stakeholders. Beyond businesses and philanthropies, private donations may also come from individual Americans offering grassroots support that may have substantial impact on the scale and reach of America 250. By practicing ethical stewardship and demonstrating the vital link between private funding and public programming, the Commission and the Foundation expect to earn the public's trust for this public/private approach to America 250.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Commission's ability to communicate its vision, engage various audiences, and encourage inclusive and cohesive participation is key to a successful America 250. The visionary framework—especially the themes *educate*, *engage* and *unite*—contains the essential messaging to bring the Semiquincentennial to life.

The Commission's initial communications priorities will focus on the following three audiences and corresponding objectives:

- **Affiliates** to establish working relationships and build out the participatory frameworks.
- **Resource Partners** to convey the value proposition(s) associated with various partnership arrangements.
- **All Americans** to raise awareness of the opportunity to participate in America 250 and invite their input and feedback to shape America 250 programming.

The Commission sees education, the arts, entertainment, and the media as likely providing the most powerful channels to involve people in the Semiquincentennial.

Earlier this year, the Commission enthusiastically accepted the creative design for the America 250 brand identity produced by Landor, a global leader in brand consulting and design. Some of the brand identity elements are found in the look, feel, and tone of this report. The brand consultant and the Commission's pro bono legal counsel are establishing legal protections for this

valuable intellectual property, as well as developing the brand guidelines and related licensing arrangements. The Commission's brand identity will produce revenue through licensing arrangements, but perhaps its greatest value will be as a cohesive imprimatur linking the vast array of decentralized official programs in a unified expression of America 250.

INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE

The Act repeatedly emphasizes the Commission's role in coordinating the Semiquincentennial. The essential element supporting this coordination role is information. Throughout the strategic planning process, the concept of a "portal" or "clearinghouse" emerged as an interactive system needed to both convey information to and receive information from America 250 participants, as well as to support Commission and Foundation operations. Various elements of the Commission's strategic plan and this report point to functions that may be integrated into the information clearinghouse.

Development of the information clearinghouse will likely involve some variation of a robust system development process. The Commission believes that the America 250 information clearinghouse is vital infrastructure necessary for the success of America 250, and intends to make it an organizational priority in 2020.

The Commission submits this report to the President, Congress, and the American people as an important step in the ongoing collaboration necessary to advance the overall program for America 250.★





SECTION I
INTRODUCTION



THE PREAMBLES to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States convey the ideas that shape our American identity and inspire our Semiquincentennial. Our founding principles and shared inheritance of equality, liberty, and government by consent of the governed are the cornerstone of our rights and responsibilities as Americans and the touchstone for America 250.⁹

Since first convening in November 2018, the Commission has developed a bold vision for an anniversary that inspires renewed dedication to the idea of America and promotes a spirit of unity among its people. Major anniversaries mark milestones to prompt remembrance and fuel hope. They are most productive when acknowledging both past achievements and those times when we as a nation have fallen short of our founding principles. They may also serve as a catalyst for growth and a resolution to aim higher. As the United States approaches the milestone of a quarter of a millennium, it now represents the best system yet devised for a diverse people to live together in freedom. America 250 is an occasion for all Americans to strengthen our common bonds and rededicate ourselves to the ongoing pursuit of our founding promise.

The United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016 established the Commission and required it to submit this report presenting the overall program and related recommendations to guide the nation in marking the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.¹⁰ The report begins with a brief description of the Commission's *establishment, activities and organization*. The Commission undertook a rigorous strategic planning process to arrive at the engaging two-part America 250 architecture introduced here, consisting of:

What's in a Name?

★★★ Before you can plan how to observe a 250th anniversary, you need to decide what to call it. Congress chose a formal, somewhat bulky term “Semiquincentennial.” This is a modern expression using Latin roots that together convey the equation: 1/2 (semi) X 5 (quin) X 100 (centennial) = 250. The Commission landed on the more commonly accepted alternative “America 250” as a less confusing and easier to say brand name.

⁹The Commission selected America 250 as the brand name and commonly accepted alternative to the formal Semiquincentennial.

¹⁰Public Law 114-196, 130 Statutes at Large 685-692, July 22, 2016. For the full text of the statute, see Appendix A). For the report requirement, see P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 687, Sec. 5(c).

SECTION I, CONT.

- **The Visionary Framework** for a Semiquincentennial that inspires the American spirit in all Americans and each American, grounded in our founding principles, for our continuing journey to a more perfect Union. Our themes — *educate*, *engage*, and *unite* — give expression to this purpose.
- **The Participatory Frameworks** establishing the relationships and structures necessary to invite partners and stakeholders from across the country and around the globe to bring America 250 to life through a multitude of creative programs—preliminary examples of which illustrate each participatory framework.

Taken together, these frameworks provide clear vision and direction on a conceptual level to a nation that is just beginning to explore the possibilities and ambitious scope of America 250.

The Commission foresees a monumental initiative—likely surpassing any previous commemoration in our history. In describing America 250’s anticipated *big opportunity*, the Commission begins to share in more concrete terms the commemoration’s potential to:

- Engage nearly 350,000,000 Americans and millions of friends worldwide by 2026,
- Recognize and include the “many” Americans in our “one” nation,
- Spark the imagination and promise of our youth,
- Honor and thank active duty military and veterans for their service and sacrifice in defense of liberty and our country,
- Produce more than 100,000 programs engaging participants at the local, territorial, state, tribal, regional, national, and international levels,
- Attract billions of dollars in resources that will ripple through our local, state, and national economies to positive effect, and
- Extend over a multiyear crescendo reaching its peak on the Fourth of July 2026.

“...even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up, and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.’”

**Martin Luther King, Jr.
I Have a Dream, 1963**

.....

SECTION I, CONT.

The Commission understands that its charge includes leading the nation in realizing the vision and potential of America 250. To fulfill this role, the Commission summarizes its high-level *operational approach* that will guide the next planning and execution steps. In addition to the work necessary to erect and maintain the participatory frameworks, the Commission's plans also involve building organizational capacity, undertaking large-scale fundraising efforts, pursuing multichannel marketing and communications initiatives, and deploying a complex information clearinghouse system.

The report also introduces the Commission's approach to evaluate, recommend, and coordinate *infrastructure improvements* for a successful America 250 in the context of the participatory frameworks.

The Commission's plans require significant resources to further refine and implement. The report concludes with the Commission's *initial recommendations* to Congress and the President focused on actions necessary to secure those resources.

The Commission submits this report to the President, Congress, and the American people as an important step in the ongoing collaboration necessary to advance the overall program for America 250.★





SECTION II
WHO WE ARE



E

STABLISHMENT. On July 22, 2016, after enactment by the House of Representatives and the Senate, President Barack Obama signed Public Law 114-196 (the Act—Appendix A), creating the United States Semiquincentennial Commission (the Commission). Congress established the Commission “to provide for the observance and commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and related events through local, State, national, and international activities planned, encouraged, developed, and coordinated by a national commission representative of appropriate public and private authorities and organizations.”¹¹

The Act instituted a congressional commemorative commission composed of 33 members with 24 members appointed by the House and Senate leaders on a bi-partisan basis and nine heads of federal agencies designated as nonvoting *ex officio* members. The 24 appointed members include:



November 2018 Independence Hall. Those pictured were all commissioners at that time, except as indicated. Back Row: David Cohen, Thomas Walker, Daniel DiLella, David Ferriero, Andrew Hohns, Val Crofts, James Swanson, Congressman Joseph Crowley; Front Row: Cynthia MacLeod (National Park Service representative to the Commission), Senator Pat Toomey, Frank Giordano (Commission Executive Director), Cathy Gillespie, David Skorton, Rosie Rios, Noah Griffin, Wilfred McClay, Lucas Morel, and Lynn Forney Young.

¹¹P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 685, Sec. 2(b).

SECTION II, CONT.

- Eight members of Congress—four from the House and four from the Senate, and
- Sixteen private citizens appointed as commissioners with one designated by the President as the Chairperson.

The *ex officio* members include:

- The Secretary of the Interior
- The Secretary of State
- The Attorney General
- The Secretary of Defense
- The Secretary of Education
- The Librarian of Congress
- The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution
- The Archivist of the United States
- The presiding officer of the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities

Congressional leaders appointed the last of the original commissioners on July 3, 2017, and President Donald J. Trump designated Commissioner Daniel DiLella as Chairperson on February 28, 2018. See Appendix B for the current list of Commission members as of December 15, 2019.

On May 4, 2018, following a competitive process, the Secretary of the Interior selected the American Battlefield Trust as the nonprofit Administrative Secretariat for the Commission.¹²

ACTIVITIES

The Commission held its first meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on November 14–15, 2018. At that time, the Commission confirmed appointment of Frank Giordano of New Jersey as Interim Executive Director and approved Commissioners David Cohen (Development Committee Chair), Rosie Rios (Treasurer), Thomas Walker (Vice Chair), and Lynn Forney Young (Secretary) to serve with Chairman DiLella on the Executive Committee. On March 24–25, 2019, the Commission held a strategic planning retreat in Washington, D.C. In June and September 2019, the

¹²For a description of the Administrative Secretariat's roles and responsibilities, see P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 691, Sec. 9(b).

Strategic Planning by the Numbers

THE COMMISSION'S STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS INVOLVED:

- ★ 75 Blue-Sky essays in which commissioners, young people, educators, and leaders reflected on their vision for the Semiquincentennial.
- ★ More than 35 working group sessions during which commissioners considered all aspects of the America 250 strategic plan.
- ★ 125+ representatives of organizations, states, and federal agencies ultimately connected to tens of millions of Americans participated in focus group discussions regarding America 250.
- ★ 5,551 respondents from all 50 states to a custom-designed survey of American's opinions about marking the 250th anniversary and the Commission's emerging vision.

THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING. The Commission understands that executing the plan requires increasingly inclusive engagement to build out the frameworks and implement the approaches presented in this report.

Commission met in Philadelphia and Washington, respectively, for work sessions to engage stakeholders, advance committee work, and pursue its strategic planning process. On November 15, 2019, the Commission convened a teleconference meeting to approve its bylaws and related policies and procedures, as well as to confirm Mr. Giordano as Executive Director. Later that day, commissioners participated in a web briefing session to receive planning, reporting, and development updates. In addition to these gatherings, various commissioners and Administrative Secretariat staff and consultants met with many federal and state officials, nonprofit organizations, museums, libraries, institutions, and other stakeholders eager to participate in the planning and implementation of America 250.

ORGANIZATION

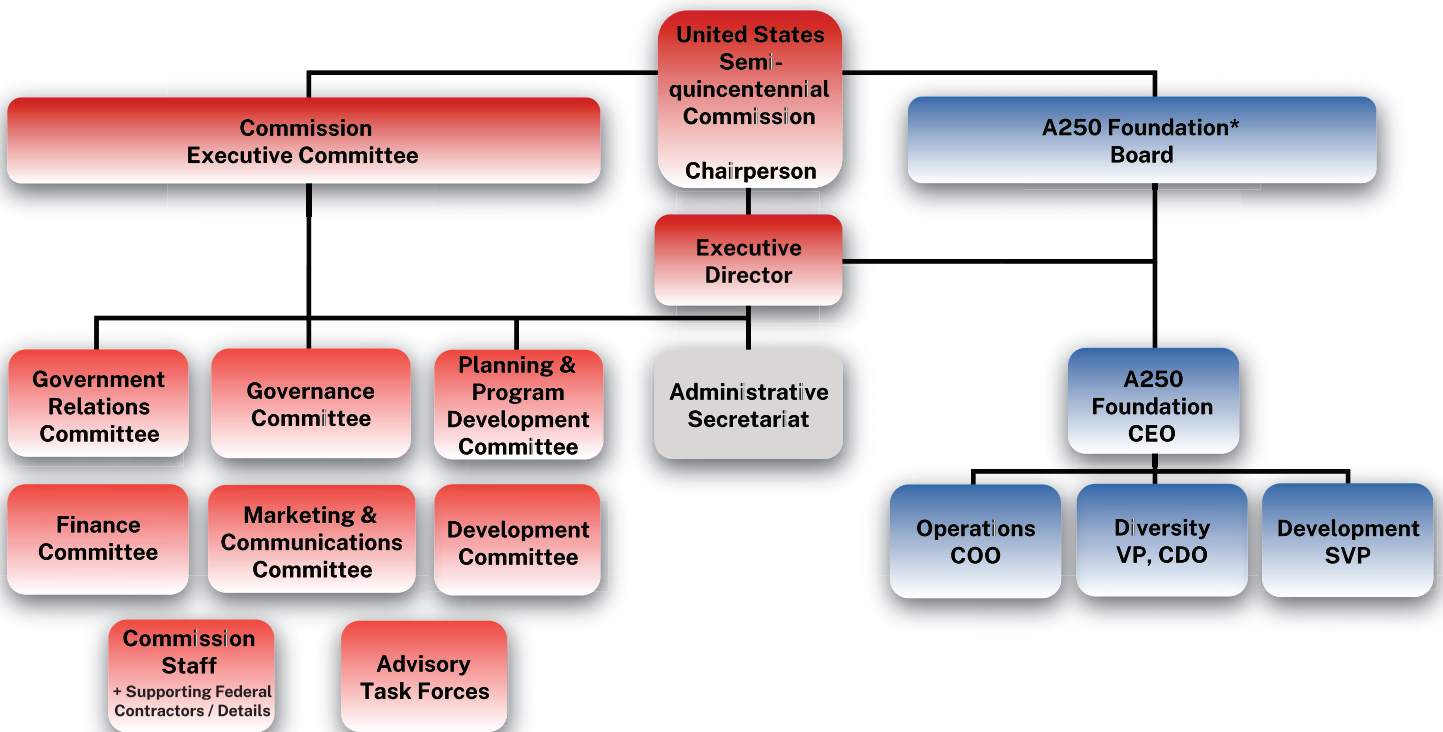
In accordance with the Act, the Commission enjoys broad discretion to organize itself to carry out its charge. In addition to its Executive Committee, the Commission established standing committees including Development, Finance, Government Relations, Governance, Marketing and Communications, and Planning and Program Development.

With the support of the Commission and the National Park Service, and based on research into the best practices of federal commemorative commissions, the American Battlefield Trust (the Trust) created the America 250 Foundation (the Foundation). Although created by the Trust, the Commission will have ultimate control over the responsibilities delegated to the Foundation.

As the official nonprofit affiliate of the Commission, the Foundation will support attainment of the Commission’s strategic vision, including performing important operational, administrative and fundraising functions. The Foundation brings multiple benefits to the Commission’s work, but its principle advantage is a simplified fundraising and public outreach approach based on a brand identity and mission that is completely aligned with the Commission.

Figure 1

U.S. SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMISSION + AMERICA 250 FOUNDATION ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



*The American Battlefield Trust, with authorization by the National Park Service, established the American 250 Foundation in consultation with the Commission, to provide non-profit support to the Commission. The organizational framework provided above reflects due diligence including guidance provided by other comparable national commemorative commissions.

Figure 1 depicts the current organizational structure of the Commission and the America 250 Foundation and illustrates the emerging public/private partnership that will lead the Semiquincentennial.★





SECTION III
WHAT AMERICA 250 MEANS —
EDUCATE, ENGAGE, UNITE



THE COMMISSION—through an intensive strategic planning process including significant stakeholder engagement and public input—developed this visionary framework to encourage creative programming that will shape America 250 and the future of the United States.

Purpose

The Commission’s vision communicates a clear purpose for America 250.

Inspiring the American spirit within all Americans and each American, grounded in our nation’s founding principles, for our continuing journey toward a more perfect Union

Themes

The themes prompt participation focused on strengthening the vitality of the American experiment.

• Educate

*Sparking deeper awareness of our founding principles, our history, and our democratic process builds broader appreciation of one another—our unique stories and our common humanity. Together, these contribute to a better understanding of who we are, where we came from, and where we are headed. **How will Americans learn about our nation, our institutions, and each other?***

• Engage

*Government of, by, and for the people enables Americans to invigorate the civil dialogue that perpetually reshapes our nation. We have the right—and responsibility—to take part in the ongoing American experiment. Civic engagement takes many forms. **How will Americans get involved in their communities and continue to shape our nation?***

• Unite

*Coming together as a nation recognizes the power of our diverse stories while never losing sight of our common bonds as Americans. This unity is reflected in our democratic institutions, voluntary associations, and collaborative enterprises. Ideally, we act in concert to promote the common good even as we exercise our individual rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness while honoring the freedom of others to do the same. **How will Americans join in expressions of unity that respect individual liberty?***

Guidelines

The guidelines define the scope of America 250 in time and space to provide direction to those planning and participating in Semiquincentennial observances.

- **All American History**

To encourage the broadest possible participation, America 250 must consider our entire history.

Because the Semiquincentennial marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States it will draw inspiration from and attention to the history of the Revolutionary Era.

But America's story did not begin or end with the Revolution. It is a rich tapestry, woven with unifying threads first expressed by our nation's founders—including the ideas of individual liberty, representative government, and the attainment of equal and unalienable rights. Refined through expanding self-government and passed on to us by great sacrifice, these remain the shared inheritance entrusted to us and future generations.

- **Nationwide and Worldwide**

The geographical scope of America 250 encompasses the entire United States, its territories, the Native American nations within its borders, and nations around the globe. Given the Revolutionary events that forged our nation took place in the 13 original states, there will naturally

“Our Journey(s) to a More Perfect Union”

★★★ No two Americans begin their journey in the same place. Except for Native Americans, we or our ancestors came to these shores from elsewhere. Even today, we come from different perspectives in our understanding of the meaning and promise of America. Our many journeys reflect the freedom to make our own way in America. The men and women who founded our nation understood that only by coming together could we protect our individual freedoms and build a just, peaceful, and prosperous society. This prompted them to adopt the motto “E pluribus unum”—out of many, one—and humbly seek to form “a more perfect Union.” Our journey toward that elusive goal includes failures which we acknowledge and learn from as we strive to fulfill the promise of our nation's founding. The Commission believes America is on an extraordinary journey well-worth celebrating and commemorating — and invites your ideas and active participation.

.....

be unique opportunities for participation and activities within those states. However, the Commission’s vision of engaging each American is an invitation for all states, territories, and tribes to be actively involved. The idea of America binds us together across space as well as time.

- **Commemorative Period**

The Commission’s official commemorative period will run from 2020 to 2027. It will begin with a multiyear crescendo of America 250 activity that will peak in 2026—especially on the Fourth of July—followed by a natural decline in activity, although some programming will continue through and beyond 2027. (See Section V, pp. 66-69 for more on the America 250 schedule.)

- **Many Ways to Observe America 250**

The Semiquincentennial invites reflection on the past, present, and future of the United States. People will mark America 250 in many ways as indicated in the variety of words used to describe such observances—including but by no means limited to the following:

Commemoration:

Expresses the solemn remembrance of the nation’s past that will honor its triumphs and remember its struggles and sacrifice.

Celebration:

Includes festive activities undertaken in the present that revel in the blessings of liberty, exalt our common bonds as well as our cultural diversity, and proclaim dreams for tomorrow.

Aspiration:

Points us—especially younger Americans—toward a future of opportunity, innovation, and hope.

A successful observance will simultaneously and creatively engage Americans in remembering our past, celebrating the moment, and pursuing our promise.

“Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.”

**Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Message for American
Education Week, 1938**

Core Values

To encourage constructive and rewarding involvement in America 250, the Commission calls on all participants to:

- **Respect** one another with all our differences through courtesy and civility acknowledging the dignity of our common humanity.
- **Commit** to making the most of this opportunity to pass on our inheritance and shape the future.
- **Assume and demonstrate positive intent** to build trust based on constructive dialogue, candor, and transparency.

Taken together the four elements of this visionary framework offer America 250 participants a strong yet open structure to connect their own incredibly diverse experiences and programs. The strategic planning process undertaken by the Commission to develop this framework and inform all the other sections of this report included: (See Appendix C for a summary of the Commission's Strategic Plan)

- Input gained from more than 35 meetings among commissioners' work teams devoted exclusively to the strategic planning process,
- Insight shared in focus group discussions by representatives of more than 125 organizations from across the country, including in-depth conversations with federal officials from a dozen agencies, and officials from states that expressed early interest in partnering in the success of the Semiquincentennial¹³, and
- Feedback from a survey of more than 5,500 people representing a broad cross-section of the American people.¹⁴

This communication revealed a remarkable level of consensus among commissioners, focus group participants, and survey

“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it on to our children in the bloodstream. The only way they can inherit the freedom we have known is if we fight for it, protect it, defend it, and then hand it to them with the well fought lessons of how they in their lifetime must do the same.”

**Ronald Reagan,
Address to Phoenix
Chamber of Commerce, 1961**

¹³For the list of organizations and entities providing insight see, pp. 14-17 of the Strategic Plan Summary found at Appendix C.

¹⁴See Appendix D for a summary report of the survey conducted by Shugoll Research.

SECTION III, CONT.

respondents endorsing the essential elements of this visionary framework. No doubt each American will discover and express the meaning of this framework from their own perspective. In fact, we encourage this. In the coming months, the Commission will expand its increasingly inclusive and systematic outreach to more Americans, listening for their nuanced interpretation of this vision and encouraging their participation in America 250.★



The background features a complex, abstract wireframe graphic. It consists of numerous overlapping, semi-transparent wireframe spheres and cylindrical shapes, creating a sense of depth and movement. The primary color of the wireframe is a light, vibrant blue, while a central, more prominent structure is rendered in a bright red. The overall effect is that of a digital or data-driven visualization. The text is centered over this graphic.

SECTION IV
HOW AMERICA
WILL PARTICIPATE



TO REALIZE THIS VISION to engage all Americans, each American, and friends of America, the Commission intends to facilitate a largely decentralized America 250 that is of, by, and for the people. The Commission cannot manage the execution of what it expects will be tens of thousands of unique programs¹⁵ of varying scope and scale across the country and around the world. Instead, our goal is to create an architecture of participatory frameworks, or constructs, through which interested parties can shape their programs, ensuring that America 250 reverberates with many voices speaking with one another about the meaning and promise of the United States. Through these frameworks the Commission will connect directly with key affiliates¹⁶ and together they will provide clear guidelines for all communities, organizations, and individuals who wish to produce programs to engage their neighbors and the nation. This broadly inclusive approach aims to create a climate of trust encouraging creativity and innovation. The Commission extends this open invitation and will pursue the outreach necessary to bring America 250 to life.

To carry out this intent, the Commission introduces six participatory frameworks. Four frameworks engage key affiliates in framework development, implementation, and administration. These constructs are organized to facilitate programming along jurisdictional lines.

They include the:

1. State, territory, and local programs framework,
2. Federal agency programs framework,
3. Native American programs framework, and
4. International programs framework.

¹⁵The Commission uses the term programs broadly to encompass such terms as *observances, activities, events, ceremonies, celebrations, exhibits, works, expressions, collections, and publications* as included in P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 685-692, passim.

¹⁶*Affiliates* are those entities or individuals having a direct, mutually supportive relationship with the Commission/ America 250 Foundation in developing, implementing, and administering the participatory frameworks. The Commission uses this term in the context of the participatory frameworks to describe this relationship as a formal connection between independent entities and its use does not assume that affiliates necessarily have a subordinate relationship to the Commission.

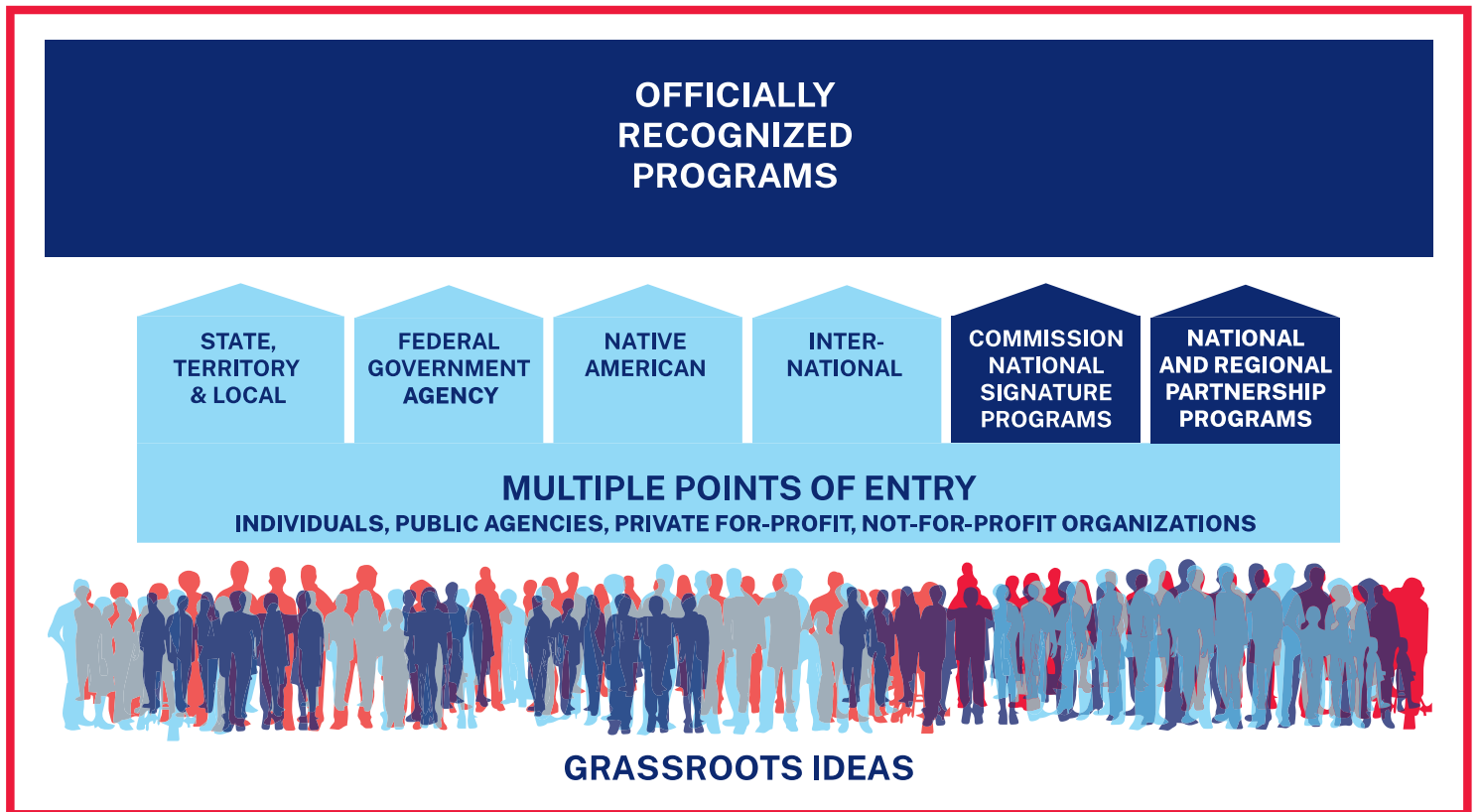
Two frameworks require a higher degree of direct Commission involvement and focus on programs of a national or regional scale characterized by significant private (for-profit and/or not-for-profit) engagement, as well as possible public/private partnership. These include the:

1. Commission national signature programs framework, and
2. Commission national and regional partnership programs framework.

When fully developed these six constructs will provide individual, organizational, and community stakeholders¹⁷ clear and achievable steps for how to produce officially recognized and (in some cases) supported programming that when taken together will engage the broadest possible number of participants in America 250. (See Figure 2)

Figure 2

PARTICIPATORY FRAMEWORK PATHWAYS



¹⁷Stakeholders are those entities or individuals participating in or otherwise contributing to America 250 that have an indirect relationship with the Commission/America 250 Foundation typically through affiliates or partners in the context of the participatory frameworks.

SECTION IV, CONT.

As currently conceived, all six frameworks are likely to have common elements. These common elements will take on varied expression in the context of the different constructs and may include:

- A straightforward mechanism establishing a formal collaborative relationship between the Commission and its affiliates. For some affiliates this may begin as simply designating a point of contact with the Commission. Other affiliations will be defined by thoroughly negotiated and well-documented contracts. The Commission's direct engagement with its other affiliates and partners¹⁸ will most often occur through its close affiliation with the America 250 Foundation, acting as the Commission's agent.
- Provision for official program recognition by the Commission based on straightforward criteria geared to the various stakeholders and participants associated with each construct. These criteria will require official programs¹⁹ to reflect or express aspects of the America 250 visionary framework including one or more of the themes. These criteria will represent a low barrier to entry for the tens of thousands of small-scale local programs but involve greater complexity to guide the designation of signature and other programs. Official programs may then have tiered access to several related benefits including:

› **Commission provision or coordination of resources**—especially funding from both private and public sources—but may also include some sharing of talent and tools to support the infrastructure or programs necessary for a successful America 250. The Commission's ability to provide any resources depends on the availability of federal appropriations and/or private donations, fees, or revenue for such purposes and will be governed by appropriate laws and regulations.

› **Commission provision of the cohesive America 250 brand identity and related marketing support.** The Commission will issue comprehensive brand policies and guidelines that will license use by affiliates, partners, and stakeholders within each construct under appropriately varied terms. The Commission may also share other forms of marketing support to assist affiliates, partners, and stakeholders in program promotion.

› **Commission-provided access to its interactive information clearinghouse** to obtain consistent guidance, share program ideas, and engage other potential affiliates, partners, or stakeholders, manage official program recognition status, gain access to virtual or request physical toolkits, promote programs on the master America 250 calendar, and other potential information resources.

¹⁸Partners (often identified in the private for-profit sector by the tiered designations of partner, sponsor, supporter, and supplier) are those who contribute resources in the form of funds, talent, or tools directly through formal arrangements with the Commission or the America 250 Foundation to attain the America 250 vision.

¹⁹Official programs are explicitly recognized by the Commission in the context of the participatory frameworks and collectively embody the cohesive expression of America 250.

- Processes, likely coordinated with official program recognition and/or funding applications, that support the Commission’s statutory role to evaluate, recommend, and coordinate infrastructure improvements necessary for a successful America 250.

Over the next six months the Commission anticipates actively engaging potential affiliates, partners, and stakeholders to build out these participatory framework elements and develop comprehensive “playbooks” to guide affiliates, partners, and stakeholders in producing America 250 programming. Some stakeholders may find that they can participate through more than one

Table 1

PARTICIPATORY FRAMEWORK SUMMARY WITH PROJECTED NUMBER OF PROGRAMS²⁰

FRAMEWORKS	AFFILIATES AND PARTNERS	PROJECTED NUMBER OF PROGRAMS
JURISDICTIONAL		
State, Territory, Local programs	56 State and Territory Commissions	~78,000 to 121,500
Federal Agency programs	~200+ Federal Agencies	~1,000
Native American programs	Designated Native American affiliate	~400 to 1,750
International programs	State Department (lead)/ foreign nation America 250 entities	~5,000 to 10,000
COMMISSION		
Commission National Signature programs	-production affiliates -funding partners -contractors	~<10 owned and controlled with possible production/ operation ~50 to 100 just owned and controlled
Commission National/Regional Partnership programs	-program leads -funding partners	~250 to 500

²⁰These estimates are projections extrapolated largely from Bicentennial experience. The Commission will validate and as necessary adjust these estimates as it refines its operational plans. See Section V, p 63 for a more detailed explanation of these projections.

framework. The Commission and its affiliates will define these various pathways to participation with greater precision in the forthcoming playbooks.

The following pages provide a brief conceptual description of each construct along with related examples of program ideas already under consideration by affiliates and stakeholders. We first describe the state, territory, and local programs framework which is likely to encompass the greatest number of programs, most of which will be less complex in design. We end with the Commission's signature and partnership programs frameworks which will support fewer, more complex programs. Since the nation is just beginning to consider the opportunities and challenges presented by America 250, this introduction to the participatory frameworks represents a starting point providing initial direction and inviting further collaboration.

Because the history and cultural communities currently have the greatest awareness of America 250, the program idea examples below tend to skew toward reflecting on the past. These examples only hint at the expected variety of America 250 programs. Local programs could include neighborhood service projects, historical society exhibits, community concerts, or town hall meetings reflecting on the meaning and future of community life in America. National programs could engage millions of people in person or online. The ingenuity and collaboration of a cross-section of Americans will soon transform these frameworks into programming engines. The Commission expects as its vision for America 250 gains wider circulation that many programs will engage the present and future of the United States as well as draw in stakeholders from across the country and around the world. *The Commission is grateful to those affiliates and stakeholders whose ideas are presented here, in the hope that they will inform and inspire the imaginations of those who want to participate in America 250.*

JURISDICTIONAL PARTICIPATORY FRAMEWORKS

STATE, TERRITORY AND LOCAL PROGRAMS FRAMEWORK—

AUTHORITY AND SCOPE

The Act requires the Commission's overall program "to give due consideration to any related plans and programs developed by State, local, and private groups."²¹ Based on the Bicentennial experience, the Commission understands that this state and local participatory framework has the greatest potential to make America 250 truly national in scope and local in impact.²² Although the Act does not specifically reference the Territories, to be inclusive in the design and

²¹P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 687, Sec. 5(b)(1)(A).

²²The Bicentennial Communities initiative developed and implemented by federal bicentennial planners reportedly reached over 90 percent of the nation's population, through over 14,000 officially recognized communities, campuses, and military installations or commands, producing the majority of the estimated 100,000 bicentennial programs. American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume I](#), June 30, 1977, and American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II](#), June 30, 1977, 2:74, 90, 93, and 257.

implementation of America 250, the Commission intends to apply this construct to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

AFFILIATES

To make this framework function effectively for all Americans and each American, the Commission invites each state, territory, and the District of Columbia to establish an America 250 commission or designate an existing entity to serve as the official affiliate through which the Commission will provide support and receive assistance in connection with America 250. Five states have already done so, and the Commission continues to reach out formally and informally to engage all the other states, territories, and the District of Columbia.²³ These affiliates, ideally supported by capacity building resources and the Commission’s information clearinghouse tools, will administer this construct and extend its official program recognition process to the local level.

PROGRAMMING EXTENT AND STAKEHOLDERS

The Commission anticipates that this framework will support by far the greatest number of programs and the widest participation in America 250. Individuals, organizations, and communities representing both private and public stakeholders will engage through this construct characterized by few barriers to entry and streamlined administrative processes.

Exemplar Program Ideas

Program planning for America 250 is just beginning. Even those states that have already established commissions or designated existing state offices to coordinate as affiliates with the Commission are still at the drawing board. Not surprisingly given the flow of history, some of the 13 original states are a bit farther along. The Commission anticipates that the other states and territories, as well as many communities will join in as they catch the vision and direction provided by this report.

Massachusetts Revolution 250: “Art and Illuminations”

Increasingly, public art and nighttime illuminations are being recognized as effective strategies for raising awareness of significant historic events or sites. Site-specific art installations (work designed specifically for display at a specific site) or performances will be used to mark significant dates. A range of approaches—a public open call, artist residencies hosted by organizations in the consortium, or collaboration with local art organizations—will be used by Revolution 250 to generate public art projects. A number of cities are illuminating buildings or commissioning large-scale video projections to increase nighttime visitor traffic in historic districts. Revolution 250 will consider approaches that use these expressive tools. The critically acclaimed play “Blood

²³The five states are New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

in the Snow” produced by the Bostonian Society is a model for work that can be created at sites across the state. Artists in residence can compose new musical works that are inspired by the events of the period.

North Carolina Office of Archives and History: “When Are We ‘Us’?”

This proposed central exhibition of the North Carolina Museum of History would look at moments from the state’s history across 250 years when we struggled to come together, including some seemingly straightforward picks (Halifax Resolves), others more complex (civil rights movement), and some lighter ones, too (the Hurricanes win the Stanley Cup). Along the way, it would tell stories about the challenge of coming together and note who was not part of each “us”—African Americans and women denied the right to vote despite “all men are created equal,” for example.

**Orange County, New York, Semiquincentennial Commission:
“Mini-Grant Program for Teachers”**

A supporting partnership with a local historian to design a lesson plan related to teaching the local events of the Revolutionary War in the classroom. This will be centered on the theme of promoting April 19 as an annual “Revolutionary War History Day” throughout New York State and, hopefully, the nation. It is hoped this project will begin in 2020 so that, as the years go on, it builds a collection of lesson plans that cover the significant events that took place in and around the Hudson Valley. Note that April 19, 1775, is the date when the first shots were fired in Lexington, Massachusetts, and April 19, 1783, is the date when General George Washington issued the cease-fire in his general orders from the Newburgh, New York, headquarters.

**The Rendell Center for Civics and Civic Engagement, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:
“Expanded Deployment of Its Literacy Based Programs and Experiential Learning Exercises”**

The Center works with K-8 schools to increase youth’s civic literacy and civic engagement with the goal of cultivating the next generation of active citizens. Their approach builds civic curriculum, so students learn and practice the knowledge and skills of effective active citizenship. America 250 is an opportunity to expand delivery of the Rendell Center’s literacy programs and experiential learning exercises. The literacy programs (*The We the Civics Kids*) is a rich interactive program for K-8 students that marries literacy and civic literacy. The goal for the program is to create a culture of active citizenship in a school through materials which build basic civic knowledge, promote engagement, and provide on-going opportunities for developing the art of democratic deliberation. At the same time, *We the Civics Kids* materials strengthen each student’s reading, writing, speaking, thinking, and problem-solving skills. *We the Civic Kids* includes a project through which staff and students learn about America’s judicial system by writing and arguing a Literature-Based Mock Trial. The Experiential Learning Exercises include the *Citizenship Challenge* for 4th and 5th graders. The *Citizenship Challenge* is an essay contest providing students with the opportunity to express themselves regarding a current issue facing our democracy or a constitutional

question. The Challenge calls for classroom teams to submit the essays and then the top 10 finalists are asked to participate in a finals program where they creatively present the essay (skit, song) to a live audience and interact with judges. Such a program could be easily duplicated across the country.

FEDERAL AGENCY²⁴ PROGRAMS FRAMEWORK—

AUTHORITY AND SCOPE

The Act requires that “Federal agencies shall cooperate with the Commission in planning, encouraging, developing, and coordinating appropriate commemorative activities.”²⁵ In preparing the overall America 250 program and its report to the President, the Commission may encourage “Federal agencies to integrate the celebration of the Semiquincentennial into the regular activities and execution of the purpose of the agencies...”²⁶ Beyond those agencies whose heads serve as *ex officio*, non-voting members of the Commission,²⁷ and those agencies assigned specific roles and requirements,²⁸ this program framework also applies to any other federal agencies interested in participating in America 250.

AFFILIATES

The Commission already has effective relationships with some of its federal affiliates beginning with its *ex officio* members and particularly the six agencies required by statute to submit reports presenting their Semiquincentennial plans which are found in Appendix E.²⁹ Federal agencies will participate in America 250 in a variety of ways consistent with their missions. Some have cultural stewardship, cultural support, or other core responsibilities that directly align with the America 250 vision; others will bring expertise and resources for essential logistical support; and all have stories that tie into the tapestry of America’s story. The Commission values the exceptional experience of its federal affiliates and will work through this framework to ask for advice and assistance to meet the opportunities and challenges presented by America 250.

PROGRAMMING EXTENT AND STAKEHOLDERS

More than two hundred federal agencies may partner with the Commission through this framework, perhaps producing nearly 1,000 official programs reaching several hundred million Americans. While some of these programs will be national in scope, others will engage specific regions or localities through federal offices located across the country or through the wide public and private stakeholder networks associated with some federal agencies. The Commission may coordinate some resource support for its federal affiliates but recommends that these affiliates receive

²⁴For purposes of this framework, federal agencies encompass the full range of federal government organizations from all three branches, independent agencies, and other unique federal entities such as the Smithsonian Institution.

²⁵P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 688, Sec. 6(b)(1).

²⁶P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 668, Sec. 5(c)(2)(F).

²⁷P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 686, Sec. 4(b)(4).

²⁸P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 688, Sec. 6.

²⁹The agencies submitting reports include the Department of the Interior-National Park Service, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, Library of Congress, Smithsonian Institution, and National Archives and Records Administration.

most of their America 250 resources directly through the appropriations process.

Exemplar Program Ideas

The Commission’s *ex officio* members are a deep source of expertise and experience when it comes to public programs. Some of these agencies have already implemented foundational programs such as the National Endowment for the Humanities and Department of Education cooperative agreement for the history and civics education initiative described below. They are all eager to collaborate and coordinate to serve the public well through America 250 programming. As noted, beginning on p. 51, the Commission is exploring the possibility that several federal agency program ideas warrant production under the Commission’s national signature program framework. The few program ideas highlighted here are just a sampling of the rich potential reflected in the federal agency reports found in Appendix E. Commissioners and staff have also engaged other federal agencies such as the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Institute for Museum and Library Services, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation each with missions that align well with the Commission’s America 250 vision.

National Endowment for the Humanities and Department of Education Partnership: “Educating for American Democracy: A Roadmap for Excellence in History and Civics Education for All Learners”

Through a \$650,000 cooperative agreement award to the civics education group iCivics,



this initiative will engage more than 100 leading academics and practitioners in education, civics, history, and political science for convenings at Louisiana State University and Arizona State University to evaluate the current state of history and civics curricula across the country. Informed by these discussions, the group will issue a “roadmap for excellence” that would outline for teachers, schools, and district and state policymakers high-priority civic content areas, and recommend instructional strategies and best practices for integrating the teaching of civics and history at every grade level. This roadmap and accompanying report on the findings of the convenings will be released prior to a national forum in September 2020 in Washington, D.C., co-hosted by the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History and the National Archives and Records Administration Foundation. The Commission anticipates this work will provide baseline understanding and a path forward to guide America 250 history and civics education programming throughout the nation.

Smithsonian Institution: “Many Americas, Many 1776s”

A coordinated major exhibition from the National Museum of the American Indian, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and the Smithsonian’s Latino Center that will explore 1776 not just in the 13 original colonies, but in all the geography that makes up our present United States, from Alaska to Florida, Hawaii to Puerto Rico. “The Many 1776s” will examine the people, places, and cultures, many traditionally overlooked in Revolutionary histories, and at the time of Independence. The exhibitions will also allow visitors to consider the ideals of the Revolution through the lenses of the Native American, African American, and Latino experiences. One of the exhibition’s goals is to ensure that all Americans, no matter where they live, will see themselves in the telling of the American story. The Smithsonian will also reach out to every state and territory to invite them to “create their own 1776s” and reflect those efforts in its exhibitions and digital content.

National Park Service:

Programming for the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 2026 and the events leading to and from that auspicious date provide unparalleled opportunities to commemorate, celebrate, remember, and recommit ourselves to the best ideals of our founding documents as “we the people” have redefined them to create a more perfect Union. In honor of these important milestones, capped by unifying events on July 4, 2026, the NPS will engage Americans in various ways about the concepts that have shaped our national identity: pursuit of individual liberty; government for, of, and by the people; and unalienable human rights. There are no better places for civic engagement than the cherished lands and historic sites that embody our national stories. A modern approach that honors the legacy of the Declaration of Independence and envisions a future inspired by it and by the current United States Constitution will engage Americans and friends of America from all backgrounds and experiences; activities will open hearts, mind, eyes, and voices to look forward to the next 250 years grounded in the best ideals of our founding documents.

Library of Congress: “The Two Georges: Parallel Lives in an Age of Revolution”

The Two Georges: Parallel Lives in an Age of Revolution is scheduled to open at the Library of Congress either in late 2021 or early 2022 and will feature correspondence, essays, and documents recently made available to scholars and the public for the first time. It will also include

**“Four score and seven years ago
our fathers brought forth,
upon this continent, a new nation,
conceived in liberty, and dedicated
to the proposition that ‘all men are
created equal.’ ... It is rather for us
to be here dedicated to the great
task remaining before us—
that from these honored dead we
take increased devotion to that
cause for which they gave the last
full measure of devotion—
that we here highly resolve that
these dead shall not have died in
vain—that this nation, under God,
shall have a new birth of freedom—
and that government of the people,
by the people, for the people, shall
not perish from the earth.”**

**Abraham Lincoln,
Gettysburg Address, 1863**

portraits and other artwork from the holdings of the Royal Collection, Royal Archives, and George Washington's home, Mount Vernon. The exhibit will highlight American treasures from Library collections, such as the broadside of the Declaration of Independence, a draft of the U.S. Constitution, historic maps of the colonies, and political cartoons of the period. This early program builds on strong international ties with the United Kingdom and may pave the way for many other America 250 collaborations with the mother country.



National Archives and Records Administration: “Youth Summit”

The National Archives is considering the convening of a youth summit focusing on the role of a citizen in a republic and how students can live out the principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence. To make the summit a national event, it may be live streamed, inviting the participation of students throughout the country and around the world.

National Endowment for the Arts: “Creative Forces”

Creative Forces is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs and the state and local arts agencies that serves the special needs of military patients and veterans with traumatic brain injury and psychological health conditions, as well as their families and caregivers. Presently, the program places creative arts therapies at the core of patient-centered care at 11 clinical sites throughout the country, plus a telehealth program, and increased access to community arts activities to promote health, wellness, and quality of life for military service members, veterans, and their families and caregivers. Subject to the availability of funding, NEA recommends leveraging America 250 to expand the reach of *Creative Forces* through new partnerships with additional, qualified nonprofit organizations so that the program would be available to combat veterans and their families from every state and territory.





NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAMS FRAMEWORK—

AUTHORITY AND SCOPE

The Act does not specifically and distinctly address Semiquincentennial participation by Native Americans.³⁰ The Commission introduces this framework to honor and respect the sovereignty of Native American tribal entities and live out its commitment to an inclusive America 250. Because the Commission is a federal entity, this construct will apply to those federally recognized tribes and Alaska Native entities (currently numbering 573) identified as eligible to receive services from the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Commission invites tribal entities or organizations only recognized by state governments or not officially recognized by any government entity to participate in America 250 through the state, territory, and local programs framework.

AFFILIATES

To coordinate with these sovereign nations, the Commission intends to designate a Native American organization or coalition of organizations as its affiliate to administer this framework. In addition to the capacity and authority to serve the Commission and the tribes in this role, this affiliate must have longstanding, trusted relationships with Native American tribes throughout the United States.

³⁰This is likely a consequence of using the Bicentennial Commission legislation of 1966 as a template for the Semiquincentennial Commission Act. During the Bicentennial Native Americans were included somewhat belatedly, participating through the Bicentennial Communities initiative and receiving Bicentennial-related economic development funding. American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume I*](#), June 30, 1977, 1:130-31, 99, 193, and 259.

PROGRAMMING EXTENT AND STAKEHOLDERS

This construct will likely mirror functional aspects of the state, territory, and local programs framework, but the Commission expects the resulting programming to reflect the exceptional place Native Americans occupy in the nation’s past, present, and future. The Commission has taken small steps to reach out to Native Americans regarding America 250 with the understanding that Native Americans’ perspective on the founding and growth of the United States is, at a minimum, complicated. Further development of this framework and the related programming requires thoughtful dialogue between the Commission and Native Americans in the coming months.

Exemplar Program Ideas

The Commission’s outreach to Native Americans to date suggests that at least some see America 250 as an opportunity to make Native Americans more visible in the nation’s past, present, and future. But others are understandably cautious about America 250 and wish to carefully consider next steps. The Commission does not have any specific program ideas related to this construct to share in this report but looks forward to Native American involvement in America 250.

International Programs Framework—

AUTHORITY AND SCOPE

The Act recognizes the significance of America’s founding ideas and history for world affairs and humanity’s quest for freedom around the globe and anticipates international participation in America 250.³¹ To mark this international significance and “the shared heritage of the United States with the many peoples and nations of the world,” the Act requires the Secretary of State to coordinate the participation of foreign nations in America 250.³² This framework, to be fully developed in collaboration with State Department officials, will facilitate the participation of foreign nations and friends of America around the world in America 250.

AFFILIATES

In this partnership the Commission will play a supportive role to the State Department. Through its affiliation with the State Department, the Commission will likely incorporate some form of the common elements described above to support America 250 participation by foreign nations through this framework. The Commission may, in accordance with procedures coordinated with and approved by the State Department, designate affiliate organizations established by or within foreign nations to observe and participate in America 250.

PROGRAMMING EXTENT AND STAKEHOLDERS

Several of the State Department’s existing educational and cultural affairs programs readily align

³¹P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 687, Sec. 5(b)(2)(B)(ii), 130 Stat. 685, Sec. 2 (b).

³²P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 689, Sec. 6(b)(4).

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with the America 250 vision and there are opportunities to encourage perhaps more than 100 other nations to develop their own programs. Such programs may take place in the United States, on United States and foreign embassy grounds, or on foreign soil. Some nations are already interested, and the Commission expects at least a few nations to establish their own organizations dedicated to observing America 250. Because of the many non-diplomatic ties between the American people and American institutions with their counterparts around the globe, the Commission and the State Department recognize that friends of America may also engage in America 250 through the other participatory frameworks.

Exemplar Program Ideas

The State Department envisions opportunities to align existing programs with America 250 observances. **The federally funded people-to-people exchange programs of the Department of State** provide a vehicle for meaningful engagement with foreign visitors on themes from the America 250 visionary framework. The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), for example, is the Department of State's premier professional exchange program. Through short-term visits to the United States, current and emerging foreign leaders in a variety of fields experience this country firsthand and cultivate lasting relationships with their American counterparts. Professional meetings reflect the participants' professional interests and support the foreign policy goals of the United States. As the participants visit communities large and small across the United States, it will be natural for them to discuss such themes as unity, diversity, and civic engagement with Americans in the America 250 celebration context and observe how it is commemorated.

Overseas, public diplomacy programming will highlight America 250 as the occasion draws closer. One way is for the Semiquincentennial celebration to be marked at **the annual Fourth of July events hosted by Chiefs of Mission** for the broadest cross-section of embassy contacts in the host country. These occasions and others sponsored by the embassies can focus on the American past and future, along with America 250 themes that resonate with foreign policy goals, and the benefits of studying in and visiting the United States.

The Commission also looks forward to working with the State Department and officials of foreign nations who will develop new programs especially for America 250 within this participatory framework.

COMMISSION PARTICIPATORY FRAMEWORKS

COMMISSION NATIONAL SIGNATURE PROGRAMS FRAMEWORK—

AUTHORITY AND SCOPE

The Act requires that the Commission shall “plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate observances and activities commemorating the historic events that preceded, and are associated with, the United States Semiquincentennial.”³³ This framework governs the identification, assessment, and

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pursuit of those America 250 programs in which the Commission through its ownership and control will take an active and substantial role in directly planning, developing, and perhaps in some instances operating.³⁴

AFFILIATES AND PARTNERS

The Commission expects to retain a significant and direct role in signature program development, coordination, and oversight, while engaging the America 250 Foundation as a key affiliate in this process. To best undertake these initiatives, the Commission expects to delegate or coordinate significant technical aspects of the program planning, development, and operation to other highly qualified private or public production affiliates and contractors. For example, a federal agency may play the role of production affiliate to lead the planning, development, and implementation of a signature program. Signature programs will attract private partners whose contributions will not only support the specific programs, but also help sustain the overall operations of the Commission and the America 250 Foundation.

PROGRAMMING EXTENT AND STAKEHOLDERS

America 250 national signature programs will be among the most broad-based and nationally visible observances aimed at inclusively engaging the largest number of participants possible in uncommon alignment with the Commission's visionary framework. Although distinguished by the Commission's special role, national signature programs may be conceived by its members, staff, affiliates, partners, or stakeholders. The anticipated scale and scope of these programs, combined with the Commission's need to balance active program development with oversight of other frameworks, suggests that the Commission will undertake a relatively limited number of signature programs.

Exemplar Programs Ideas

Program development for national signature programs will follow an engaging process that brings forward the very best concepts whose scope and breadth fulfill, among other criteria, the themes *educate, engage, and unite*. Concept generation, vetting, and participatory framework development for national signature programs is now under way. This process reflects the initial due diligence of other commemorations worldwide, early idea generation coordinated among commissioners, federal agencies, and plans to solicit ideas and proposals from a nation of future leaders and participants. Early brainstorming and ideation among commissioners and those with proven signature program experience, confirmed as well by national surveys the Commission has undertaken on the topic, support initiating program development in the following areas with the cooperation of current and future affiliates and partners.

³³P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 686, Sec. 5(a)(1) and (2).

³⁴In preparing the overall program for America 250, selecting which programs it will play an active and substantial role in directly planning, developing, implementing and operating is perhaps the Commission's most consequential act beyond providing vision and direction for America 250.

National Touring Showcases or Journeys:

With the goal that commemorative programs and celebrations be accessible to all Americans, there is broad support to plan touring showcases traveling during the timeline of the commemorative period. These programs, already well-tested through existing federal agency initiatives, like the Smithsonian's Folklife Festival, will be coordinated and expanded in scale to travel across the national landscape, and to convene in cities, towns, and rural areas, celebrating and making maximal use of community venues such as parks, battlefields, historical buildings, and other public places. While concepts and collaborations are in their infancy, we envision that tours may include:

- Awards programs designating convening communities for national touring programs, for communities whose proposals demonstrate excellence in the core themes of *educate, engage, and unite*, in commemorating the past, celebrating the present, and ambitiously envisioning our American future.
- Multimodal touring exhibitions whose travel itineraries include communities nationwide. The mode, design, and themes of each tour will be tailored to express the America 250 visionary framework.
- In coordination with federal agencies and private collections, tours may showcase authentic and facsimile historic and contemporary artifacts and documents important to our past, present, and future.
- Tours may be integrated to travel to or to otherwise encourage visitation to historic sites and battlefields.
- Competitions to populate exhibitions are expected to resonate across a wide range of possible constituencies, including those targeting primary and secondary school entries, those aiming at undergraduate and graduate students, and those inviting ideas from professional and learned societies, faith-based organizations, and community groups, all in the exploration of American ingenuity, invention, and the arts and sciences while voicing America 250 themes.
- In the march toward 2026, these showcases will tour the entire country, with various routes overlapping one another in a tapestry reflecting, commemorating, and celebrating America



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250 themes. We envision they will collectively visit all our nation's states and territories, ensuring access and avenues to participate in the celebration for those who live in cities, in suburban areas, and in more rural locales.

These touring exhibitions hold great potential to facilitate, in physical form, the programing, education, and community involvement that embodies and facilitates our journey toward a “more perfect Union.”

Place-Based National/State & Territory Convening Sites:

The collection of national touring programs and traveling exhibitions will convene across every state and territory throughout the commemorative period, culminating in national observances in 2026. In partnership with state-level semiquincentennial commissions and affiliates, the Commission anticipates encouraging every state and territory to develop their respective place-based observances. The national touring showcases will arrive at the state-convening sites, supported by destination-oriented programs highlighting national themes, and themes important to each community. Broad and diverse educational initiatives, experiences, and civic engagement opportunities will arise within each state in the years and months ahead of each convening. Some of this state-wide and territory-wide programming will likely be developed and administered through the state, territory, and local programs framework.

While each participating state and territory may plan its desired events and programs leading up to and during 2026, early concept generation considers the potential for one or more national convening sites as the final destination for the national touring exhibitions. In support of the Commission's authorizing legislation, preference for national convening sites may be afforded to localities important to our nation's founding and seat of government, including but not limited to Boston, Charleston, New York, Philadelphia,³⁵ and Washington, D.C.

Envisioned concepts and collaborations are still in their infancy. Components of place-based national/state & territory convening programs may include:

- Commission-led programs supporting each participating state's and territory's establishment of a state- or territory-led convening site.
- Competitive proposals through which communities may vie for designation as national convening sites, serving as key destinations or moments of touring showcase routes in 2026.
- Programs promoting the arts in each locality, exploring and expressing themes of *educate*, *engage*, and *unite*.

³⁵PL. 114-196, 130 Stat. 686, Sec. 5(b)(1) and (2). The Commission may also consider a more geographically dispersed siting of some national convening locations to offer a greater percentage of all Americans opportunities to participate in these signature programs.

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- Support for broad-reaching and inventive educational programs reaching every American in preparation for, during, and following place-based events.
- Coordination with federal agencies to identify place-based programs at both the state and territory level, and national convening sites.
- Convening of symposia and opportunities for dialogue at each convening site on topics important to our history, present, and future.
- Co-branding of existing cultural, entertainment, and sports celebrations and programs, such as California's Rose Bowl Parade.
- Marketing programs that encourage place-based education and tourism through visitation to historic sites, memorials, and historic battlefields.
- Enlisting the engagement of federal and state elected officials to participate in school and town-hall programs in their states.

The Commission's vision to support a decentralized, nationwide program offering for America 250 will be built upon strong partnerships at the state and territory level, and through the active participation of its partners and affiliates.

National Parks and Historic Sites:

The support, appreciation, and visitation of our nation's vast natural and cultural resources, particularly those associated with the American Revolution and our nation's founding, are central to the national commemorative program for America 250. While still in development, and in close collaboration with the National Park Service and stewards of other nationally significant historic sites, both public and private, signature programs for the 250th are envisioned to feature:



- Preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic sites within the park system (including buildings and their contributing landscapes) important to our nation's founding.

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- Bonds supporting investment in stewardship, interpretation, and visitor services for our national parks.
- Volunteer and civic engagement programs to support resource and staffing needs necessary to facilitate increased visitation to parks and historic sites across the arc of the commemorative period.
- Programs supporting continued conservation of nationally significant natural landscapes important to our ecosystem, cultural identity, and history.
- Conservation of existing and envisioning future commemorative features attributed to and interpreting the Revolutionary Era.
- Integrating visitation of national park units, historic sites, and battlefields into the network of convening sites and touring exhibitions.

Through coordination with federal agencies and affiliates, we intend to make the visitation and experience of our nation's historic sites, battlefields, and parks a signature experience of America 250.

Virtual/Digital Programs and Venues:

Technological contributions are key to planning, experiencing, and accessing America 250 programs and venues. The Commission seeks to enlist the ingenuity of emerging technologies, and with the support of federal agencies and affiliates, make accessible the people, places, and artifacts important to each American. Never before has digital access afforded participation at this scale, and technology will be an important tool and channel through which to share ideas, knowledge, and relationships associated with America 250. We envision these emerging platforms will strengthen and accompany the other signature programs, providing unparalleled digital access to the touring showcases and other events and exhibits of America 250. While still in development, and in anticipation of an ever-evolving medium, early considerations for virtual and digital programs and venues include:

- Programs that make digital access equitable and accessible, so that each American may engage and participate in America 250.
- Educational programs making primary historical sources and many other educational resources available, including classroom curricula.
- Interactive social media platforms and display of crowdsourced user-generated content.
- Applications that allow mobile users to identify, explore, and venture to historic and cultural sites of the Revolutionary Era in their area and across the nation.

- Media and technology platforms that provide virtual access to America 250 venues.
- Competitions supporting national student essays, videos, and artistic expressions made available on state or federal 250 platforms.
- Competitions for the use of artificial intelligence, virtual technology, and digital gaming that allow every American to engage with historic figures, documents, artifacts, places, and events.



In cooperation with program partners and affiliates at all scales, and enlisting support from present and emerging leaders in technology, we envision virtual participation to be one of the most prolific modes of engagement for America 250 activities and programs.

COMMISSION NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS FRAMEWORK—

AUTHORITY AND SCOPE

The Act requires the Commission’s overall program “to give due consideration to any related plans and programs developed by State, local, and *private groups*.”³⁶ The Act also anticipates the development of “private sector initiatives regarding the Semiquincentennial,”³⁷ as well as requires the Commission to “consult and cooperate with, and seek advice and assistance from “learned societies, and historical, patriotic, philanthropic, civic, professional, and related organizations.”³⁸ This construct facilitates national and regional America 250 program development and implementation by private (for-profit and nonprofit) as well as public/private partnerships for programs that are not owned and controlled by the Commission and do not fall within the scope of the other participatory frameworks.

AFFILIATES AND PARTNERS

To facilitate these programs the Commission will affiliate with the America 250 Foundation to administer this construct. The framework will primarily support official program recognition and likely incorporate some form of the other common elements described above. Federal agencies,

³⁶P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 687, Sec. 5(b)(1)(A) emphasis added.

³⁷P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 688, Sec. 5(e).

³⁸P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 688, Sec. 6(a).

private institutions, or corporations may play the role of program leads to plan, develop, and implement programs within this construct. Because of the Foundation's involvement and the role of private organizations in program initiation and development, this framework will also attract private partners whose contributions will not only support the specific programs, but also help sustain the overall operations of the Commission and the America 250 Foundation.

PROGRAMMING EXTENT AND STAKEHOLDERS

Commission partnership programs may vary significantly in scope and scale. Some, like the Freedom Train 2026 exemplar described below, may rival the size and impact of the Commission's national signature programs without the Commission taking direct responsibility or a substantial ownership, control, or operating role. Others will be more modest requiring fewer resources and less administration. This framework invites organizations and individuals to pursue innovative and creative expressions of America 250 outside the jurisdictional bounds that define the other constructs. Based on the successful Bicentennial experience with a similar construct and greater support of private resource partners for these types of programs than 50 years ago, their number could range from 250 to 500.

Exemplar Programs Ideas

National Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and Maker City: Initiative "2026.US"

Launched even before the Act that created the Commission, this is a 10-year challenge to mobilize young people, cities, entrepreneurs, innovators, leaders of businesses and nonprofits, and policy makers committed to setting tangible goals for America in 2026, as the nation sets a planning horizon toward its 250th birthday. This initiative will lend a distinctly bottom-up character to America's 250th celebration, with civic leaders and teams of citizens taking the lead in conducting a decade's worth of projects, contests, and entrepreneurial experiments — remaking America for the 21st century. In 2016, 2026.US partnered with others in the Bay Area to pilot GEN2026, a youth census of possibilities/listening campaign aimed at inclusion across communities and levels of opportunity that may serve as a model for similar initiatives across the nation. America leads the world in innovation and entrepreneurship, and there is no greater innovation project than America herself.

PDI Rail Solutions/Freedom Train 2026 Foundation: "Freedom Train 2026"

PDI envisions the 2026 Freedom Train conducting a 22-month "whistle stop tour of America," playing a role serving as a visible, national unity ambassador. Intended to embark near Lexington, Massachusetts (the home of the Minutemen and the start of the American Revolution), the Freedom Train will travel over 22,000 miles during its 22-month, 48-state sojourn concluding in Trenton, New Jersey (where General Washington crossed the Delaware River). Using the 1976 Bicentennial Freedom Train as a model, the 2026 version will be evolved to not only include an additional 50 years of American history, but also capitalize on the best technology, including

interactive exhibits, befitting a modern museum and exhibition “on steel wheels.” PDI’s goal is to best the attendance of the 1976 Freedom Train, which boasted more than 40 million trackside visitors (watching and waving as the Freedom Train traveled its 22,000-mile journey through America) and 7 million paid attendees (through ticket sales). Depending on the Commission’s role and partner arrangements, this program may develop either within this framework or the national signature programs framework.

American Historical Association (AHA) in collaboration with the National Council on the Social Studies: “The Declaration at 250: History and Commemoration”

An initiative to coordinate the creation and dissemination of educational resources centered on the Declaration of Independence and oriented towards student research grounded in the relationship between civic culture, community history, and national identity. As a foundational statement of American politics and values, the Declaration of Independence articulates principles that hold meaning for all Americans. This allows the AHA and its partners to invite participation from all states and territories, and to explore ways in which the Declaration has opened conversation about American history across time and space. Students will begin by wrestling with the text itself, and then move on to research how their communities have used the words and ideas in the Declaration to frame and articulate community values. Given the richness of the Declaration’s text relating to nearly all aspects of “the course of human events,” students provided with guiding frameworks and questions will find a cornucopia of research topics, especially when we add options relating to how the document has been remembered, invoked, and commemorated in communities across the United States. Student work using these resources and methods will promote historical thinking and learning, serve history teachers and students in high school and college classrooms, and promote connections between secondary and higher education.

American Association of State and Local History’s America 250 Relevance Working Group: “Sites of Revolution”

This concept imagines identifying 250 sites of revolution across the nation (four to five sites per state, territory, and the District of Columbia) to tell America’s complex story from different perspectives. Using a broad definition to expand our understanding of revolution in the American context, this initiative crosses time and space to focus on the people, places, and ideas at the heart of revolutionary changes in our society, economy, and politics. Selection through state-level contests may attract broad institutional engagement from historic sites and its unifying forward-looking theme may draw interest from national and/or state funding partners. There are also opportunities for educational and virtual connections to extend and expand the program’s impact.★

“The principle of self-government cannot be violated with impunity. The individual’s right to it is sacred—regardless of class, caste, race, color, sex or any other other accident or incident of birth.”

Susan B. Anthony, Women Want Bread, Not The Ballot! repeatedly delivered 1870–1880

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SECTION V
A BIG OPPORTUNITY



TO SET AMERICA'S EXPECTATIONS and inform ongoing planning, the Commission shall establish a baseline understanding of what it foresees will be a monumental initiative — to engage all Americans in the largest and most inclusive celebration and commemoration in our nation's history. Such grand designs are at once inspiring and daunting, but effective planning requires deeper insight. In this section we sketch out some preliminary details regard-

ing America 250's potential scope, scale, and schedule. These descriptions, along with the guidelines included in the visionary framework (see Section III above), are starting points to advance the conversation leading to more precise operational plans and budgets, fundraising targets, and appropriation requests.

The Bicentennial experience is the best available analog for the Semiquincentennial—in particular regarding the anticipated scale of America 250 discussed below. The two commemorations also share similar legislative foundations, and are reasonably identical in scope and schedule dimensions. The Commission also conducted due diligence analysis of more than 15 other commemorative commissions and other national-scale commemorations worldwide. In a few instances below, we reference the more recent Canada 150 commemoration which, while worthy of deeper analysis, reflects a smaller nation with a more communitarian approach to civil affairs. We have also investigated mega-events such as the recent Milan Expo and the venerable Rose Parade, which may help refine our perspective on select aspects of America 250, but do not align as well as the Bicentennial on these parameters. Understanding that all analogies are limited, the Commission, working with its staff and consultants, intends to validate and refine the sketches presented here during its next phase of planning.

SCOPE

The scope of America 250 is broad and deep. Demographically, by July 1, 2026, the Census Bureau projects the United States population will number ~346,500,000.³⁹ These are the undifferentiated participants included in the Commission's "all Americans" target. The United States population is commonly differentiated along many dimensions including sex, age, race, nationality, ethnicity, language, gender, religion, political affiliation, and health. The list continues to grow in part because of our capacity in this social media age to engage "each American" based on his or her individual characteristics and preferences. Beyond our shores and borders, there are "friends of America" who want to participate in our Semiquincentennial, but whose connections to America vary widely.

³⁹The actual projection is 346,481,000 or a 37.1 percent increase over 1976, see U.S. Census Bureau, [2017 National Population Projections Tables](#), Table 1. Projected Population Size and Births, Deaths, and Migration, Revised Release Date: September 2018.

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Recognizing that some Americans will exercise their freedom not to participate, the Commission will work with its staff, consultants, affiliates, and resource partners to develop projections and plans to engage all Americans, each American, and friends of America.

Within this demographic scope, the Commission believes two segments warrant special focus. First, the promise of America has always rested with its youth. As a democratic republic founded on the principle of government by consent of the governed, the future of America lies with the next generation. How much they know about our past and participate in our civil society will determine what America will be 50 years from now—and beyond. Crucial to this understanding is the intergenerational transfer of our shared inheritance. America 250 presents a unique opportunity to strengthen our ability to pass along the American spirit from generation to generation, reenergizing the American experiment. Second, active duty military service members, veterans, and their families offer the greatest sacrifices on behalf of their fellow Americans. The Semiquincentennial is a special occasion to express our gratitude to the current generation representing a long line of service and sacrifice in defense of liberty and our country.

The geographic scope of America 250 spans the globe and focuses on local communities across the nation. The jurisdictional alignment of the participatory frameworks will engage people along this geographic breadth and depth requiring thoughtful approaches to communication and coordination. The Commission will work within these constructs to address these challenges and likely explore additional dimensions defining the scope of America 250.

SCALE

The bicentennial analogy is most directly applicable to envisioning the possible scale of America 250. In making the comparison, several factors suggest that the extrapolations presented in this section, particularly regarding the financial scale, might be considered more of a floor than a ceiling. The Semiquincentennial Commission's planning efforts are more focused and well-thought-out at this stage than its bicentennial counterpart, promising a greater investment in both national signature and local programming. Moreover, the Commission's partnership with the America 250 Foundation is likely to result in much of that increased investment coming from the private sector.⁴⁰

We have already alluded to the potential scale of America 250 in terms of the projected number of programs associated with each participatory framework described in Section IV above. The following Table 2 provides a brief explanation of the rationale behind the projections.

Clearly these projections require substantial validation and likely adjustment as the Commission works from the bottom up with its staff, consultants, affiliates, and resource partners to develop detailed operational plans.

⁴⁰Despite early efforts to develop relationships and build infrastructure with its state partners, the Bicentennial Commission did not make coordination with the states its top priority until after it abandoned the Philadelphia Exposition (May 1972) and the Bicentennial Parks proposals (May 1973). U.S. General Accounting Office, [Planning for America's Bicentennial Celebration—A Progress Report](#), RED-75-373, June 6, 1975, i, 1-2.

Table 2**PROJECTED PROGRAM NUMBERS BY FRAMEWORK WITH EXPLANATIONS**

FRAMEWORKS*	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	EXPLANATION
Total Programs	~53,200 to 137,100	The low end is a population adjusted extrapolation of total Canada 150 programs. The high end is a population adjusted extrapolation of total estimated Bicentennial programs. ¹
State, Territory, Local programs	~78,000 to 121,500	The low end is a population adjusted extrapolation of documented state and local Bicentennial programming (57,033 or ~89% of the total documented programs). The high end is a population adjusted extrapolation of the sum of documented state and local programming plus 89% of the difference between documented and estimated total number of Bicentennial programs. ²
Federal Agency programs	~1,000	Based on the low end of an uncertain estimate of the total number of federal agencies ranging somewhere between 200 and 400 and a rough projection of five programs per agency on average. ³
Native American programs	~400 to 1,750	Although the Commission invites all to participate, each tribe will consider its level of engagement. The low end conservatively projects roughly half of the federally recognized tribes will develop an America 250 program. The high end is a population adjusted extrapolation of the documented number of Bicentennial programs directed toward Native Americans. ⁴
International programs	~5,000 to 10,000	This relatively loose estimate generally reflects the broad range of reported international involvement in the Bicentennial. The Bicentennial Administration could not document a complete list of international programs, but noted various figures ranging from a documented 1,937 programs that were expected to draw the greatest international interest, audience, or participation to more than 4,000 Bicentennial-related programs in West Germany during 1976 alone. ⁵
COMMISSION		
Commission National Signature programs	~<10 owned and controlled with possible production/operation ~50 to 100 just owned and controlled	The Semiquincentennial Commission anticipates strong support by affiliates and resource partners who will offset most of the challenges associated with owning and controlling these programs.
Commission National/Regional Partnership programs	~250 to 500	During the Bicentennial federal planners recognized 284 similar programs while playing a relatively minor role in private funding. ⁶ Resource partners will play a more significant role in America 250.
*Appendix F presents the notes corresponding to the citations in this table.		

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Similarly, the Commission's early projections regarding the potential financial scale of America 250 derive primarily from extrapolation of the Bicentennial experience. The historical data regarding the combined federal Bicentennial Commission and Administration revenue and expenditures are reliable, but the readily available historical numbers for broader federal and private expenditures are inconsistent at best. The Commission and its nonprofit affiliate, the America 250 Foundation (the Foundation), have used limited public and private start-up resources to prepare this overall program. Attaining this vision for America 250 requires substantial public and private investment which based on the extrapolations detailed in Appendix G may involve:

- A total economic investment over the period of commemoration from all public and private sources (with infrastructure being a significant variable) of 3 to 5 billion dollars.⁴¹

The portion of that total investment flowing to or through the Commission may include:

- Commission/Foundation operating expenses of ~100 million dollars,⁴²
- Private funds flowing to and through the America 250 Foundation of more than 250 million dollars,⁴³ and
- Federal appropriations flowing to and through the Commission of as much as 225 million dollars⁴⁴ primarily for:
 - › the Commission's government functions,
 - › grants to states, territories, and Native American tribes,
 - › ongoing planning,
 - › government to government operational coordination, and
 - › appropriate program expenses.

⁴¹The low end of this range is an extrapolation of an unreliable and likely grossly underestimated figure from the Bicentennial (see Appendix G, p. 1.). Even the high end of the range could be conservative if America 250 requires significant infrastructure improvements like those associated with mega events such as the Milan Expo.

⁴²The Bicentennial Commission/Administration recorded cumulative operating expenditures which in 2018 dollars round to \$139 million (see Appendix G, p. 1.). But projected staffing for the Commission/Foundation partnership may be as much as 35 percent less than the Bicentennial Administration at its peak, suggesting potential for significant downward adjustment (see Appendix G, p. 1.) to the figure presented. Many other variables could adjust this projection up or down, but it is a reasonable starting point for scale.

⁴³Extrapolations of reliable Bicentennial figures for private and other non-federal funds expended to match federal project grants and private funds expended to support national programs officially recognized by the Bicentennial Commission/Administration total over \$500 million in 2018 dollars (see Appendix G, p. 2). It is reasonable to assume that more than half of that amount may flow to and through the America 250 Foundation.

⁴⁴This figure represents a slight rounding of the non-population adjusted cumulative federal Bicentennial Commission/Administration appropriations in 2018 dollars. If America 250 Foundation's fundraising efforts prove successful, this projection could be reduced. But a simple extrapolation of federal funds granted to states and territories through the Bicentennial Commission/Administration is ~\$126 million in 2018 dollars (see Appendix G, p. 2.)

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The Commission will validate and likely adjust these projections by working from the bottom up with its staff, consultants, affiliates, and partners to develop detailed operational plans to implement this overall program.

In addition to the caveats about data reliability, recognize that while simple historical extrapolations like those in Appendix G may provide some indication of scale, they cannot account for many other variables that may ultimately determine the financial extent of America 250. With those limitations in mind, the following additional insights regarding the Bicentennial experience may help America 250 attain or exceed the financial scale projected above.

- ***The opportunity to obtain private funding.*** Like the current Commission, the Bicentennial Commission was initially required to rely on donated funds only. But without a nonprofit partner, the Bicentennial secured very limited donations valued at \$50,000 of which \$37,000 came in the form of in-kind goods and services.⁴⁵ The nonprofit America 250 Foundation is poised to engage a variety of private funding channels including: nonprofit and corporate philanthropy, corporate sponsorship, brand and other licensing, and commercial sales (i.e., coins, etc.). To date the Commission has secured receipts and pledges (including both one-time and multiyear) totaling \$2.7 million in private funds (Appendix H). While this is an encouraging start, much of this money has gone to support Commission operations and planning, limiting the resources available to expand fundraising efforts.
- ***The need for sufficient appropriations to support further planning, the Commission's government functions, and essential support to states, territories, and Native American tribes.*** Recognize that the largest appropriations made to the Bicentennial Commission and Administration came in the later years as program implementation ramped up.⁴⁶ The Commission anticipates a similar acceleration of funding requirements in the 2024–2026 timeframe. However, the Commission would also like to avoid the significant underfunding that starved the Bicentennial Commission's early planning efforts and contributed to that Commission's failures and ultimate replacement. Moreover, the Commission's recommended approach anticipates that it will perform certain government functions and provide capacity building support to some of its affiliates. The \$500K appropriation for FY2019 received by the Commission is slightly less in 2018 dollars than the appropriated funds received by Bicentennial Commission through FY1969.
- ***The Commission will not be the most significant source or conduit of federal investment in America 250.*** By example, all other federal agencies combined received roughly five times the funds appropriated to the Bicentennial Commission and Administration. At least ~\$230 million (~\$1.009 billion in 2018 dollars) was appropriated to other federal entities through April

⁴⁵American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume I*](#), June 30, 1977, 1:264.

⁴⁶American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume I*](#), June 30, 1977, 1:264.

1975.⁴⁷ Most of this—with the exception of ~100 million in “new” money appropriated to the National Park Service’s Bicentennial Development Program—essentially amounted to the “reapportionment” of existing appropriations to cover Bicentennial expenditures.

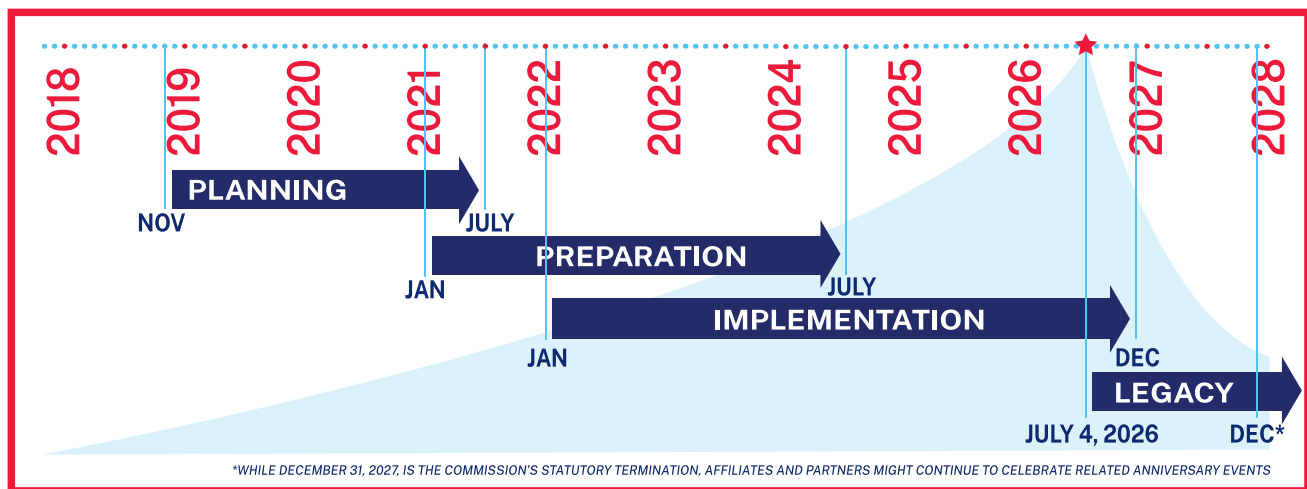
In addition to validating and adjusting these economic scale projections, the Commission, working through the Foundation and its consultants, will determine the potential economic impact of America 250. This economic impact analysis will serve as an essential tool to support private fundraising and public appropriations requests, and provide valuable insight to affiliates, resource partners, and stakeholders.

SCHEDULE

The Commission’s official commemorative period established in the visionary framework guidelines (Section III) runs from 2020 to 2027. It begins with the submission of this report and ends with the Commission’s statutory termination on December 31, 2027. The Commission began developing its overall program at its first meeting in November 2018. The four-phase conceptual schedule presented in Figure 3 encompasses the operational plans to implement this overall program as well as the complete calendar tracking for the tens of thousands of America 250 programs likely to take place throughout the commemorative period.

Figure 3

AMERICA 250 SCHEDULE



Planning Phase (November 2018—July 2021)

For the Commission and the America 250 Foundation this phase focuses on the development and implementation of operational plans to:

⁴⁷U.S. General Accounting Office, [Planning for America’s Bicentennial Celebration—A Progress Report](#), RED-75-373, June 6, 1975, ii and 4-5.

SECTION V, CONT.

- Evolve from a start-up to a stable, growing public/private partnership,
- Secure the private and public resources to support the partnership's growth,
- Stand up the participatory frameworks through effective coordination with affiliates and resource partners,
- Refine America 250's messaging and develop the communications channels necessary to get the word out to the right audiences at the right time, and
- Complete the systems development process necessary to incrementally launch the America 250 information clearinghouse sequenced to support the operational needs of the Commission, the Foundation, other affiliates, resource partners, and stakeholders.

“The second day of July 1776 will be the most memorable epocha in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival.”

**John Adams,
Letter to Abigail Adams, 1776
(Although the colonial representatives voted approval on July 2, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was officially adopted two days later.)**

.....

As the nation becomes more aware of America 250, affiliates, partners, and stakeholders will undertake their own planning processes.

Preparation Phase (January 2021—July 2024)

Within a year, some programs, especially those requiring infrastructure improvements or involving complex and lengthy development cycles, will transition from planning to development. The Commission's national signature and national and regional partnership programs are likely to require significant lead time during the preparation phase.

Implementation Phase (January 2022—December 2026)

This phase encompasses the greatest concentration of program implementation which the Commission expects will rise in a gradual crescendo to a peak of activity on July 4, 2026, and rapidly diminish thereafter with a long tail of America 250 programming continuing well beyond the Commission's termination.

Legacy Phase (July 2026—December 2027)

During this phase the Commission will focus on securing the legacy of America 250 as it moves toward termination.

There are two overriding dynamic features of this schedule:

1. significant overlap between the phases reflecting extensive concurrent activity, and

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2. a definitive rise of America 250 activity to the July 4, 2026, peak, followed by a natural decline of activity, with some programming continuing through and beyond 2027.

For example, some planning will extend beyond or even begin after July 2021, while certain programs have already taken place, and many will be implemented before January 2022. Through the decentralized participatory frameworks, the Commission will have limited opportunities to manage the crescendo of programming. Nevertheless, the Commission aims to plan and implement this overall program to minimize commemoration fatigue and maximize participation in and the legacy of America 250.

At this stage the date ranges remain flexible and are likely to be adjusted based on at least the following factors:

- Revision and validation in coordination with the partnership's operational plan schedules.
- The effectiveness of the Commission's messaging and communication.
- The practical expectations of the American people revealed by when they choose to engage and participate.
- The important layer of other historical anniversaries (Revolutionary Era events, state and local community anniversaries, anniversaries connected to American diplomatic relations, important social or scientific milestones, etc.) all of which may be wrapped up in and amplified by America 250.
- The potential to coordinate both the timing and location of some America 250 programming so that the scheduling of activity in different places across the nation reinforces the crescendo over time to the greatest extent practical.

The third bullet touches on an important question of predicting the tipping point of public engagement. During the Bicentennial, public engagement mounted beginning in 1974. It is unclear precisely what factors influenced this timing, including an increase in federal planning activities.⁴⁸ Of those who are just learning about plans for America 250 through the Commission's recent survey, 68% expressed an interest in participating in some way.⁴⁹

The Commission is keenly aware that some affiliates, including many of the 13 original states, plan to extend their America 250 activities concurrent with the 250th anniversary of Revolutionary War events through 2033. While it is not yet prepared to make specific recommendations to

⁴⁸U.S. General Accounting Office, *Planning for America's Bicentennial Celebration—A Progress Report*, RED-75-373, June 6, 1975, 4.

⁴⁹See the summary report in Appendix D, Schugoll Research, America 250 Survey Quantitative Research Findings, December 2019, p. 3.

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Congress and the President, as part of its ongoing planning, the Commission will consider possible approaches to assist these efforts including but not limited to the following:

- front-loading support for such programming prior to its termination in 2027,
- providing for some Commission functions to transfer to a successor federal agency upon termination, and/or
- arranging for the America 250 Foundation to live on beyond its partnership with the Commission.

The Commission looks forward to working with its staff, consultants, affiliates, and partners to refine and populate this schedule.★

An abstract graphic composed of overlapping wireframe spheres and cylinders. The spheres are rendered in a light blue color, while the cylinders are in a vibrant red. The lines are thin and create a complex, three-dimensional effect. The background is a solid, dark blue.

SECTION VI

LEADING AMERICA 250 — OPERATIONS APPROACH



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NLIKE MOST congressional commissions, the Semiquincentennial Commission's charge includes not only reporting, but also doing. In that respect, this report represents the beginning—not the end—of the Commission's work. Going forward, building on their active engagement in setting vision and direction, the commissioners will promote America 250, set policy, and provide

oversight for the Commission's unique public/private partnership with the America 250 Foundation. This cooperative partnership, using both the nonprofit and federal staff and consultants, will carry out the operations necessary to accomplish the Commission's mission in line with its vision.

Through its strategic planning process, the Commission identified the following strategic priorities to achieve its purpose and guide the partnership's work:

Create an engaging, educational, and inspiring vision: *Not only are we commemorating the first 250 years of our democratic republic, we must also inspire and educate Americans to work together in the future to preserve those founding, inspirational freedoms we cherish. We will strive to create legacy initiatives that survive well beyond 2026.*

Build relationships and secure valued partners: *In designing the America 250 observance, we want to encourage creativity and innovation to inspire the American spirit across the United States in the design and execution of programs. This can only happen through building trusted private and public partnerships.*

Be comprehensive in scope, and both national and local in impact: *The goal to reach all Americans will require broad visibility of national programs. But the goal to reach each American will require a significant focus and customization of programs at the local level, which feature those experiences that are the most meaningful sources of pride in local communities.*

Ensure excellence in our execution: *Our goal is to create meaningful experiences in which all Americans can participate and take pride. The sheer scope and scale of that goal requires the Commission to lead this effort by demonstrating high standards, responsible and transparent stewardship, and exemplary ethics.*

The partnership's core offering is an opportunity for all Americans, each American, and friends of America to participate in America 250. Deployment of the resources necessary to establish and maintain the participatory frameworks (see Section IV) is the heart of its operations.

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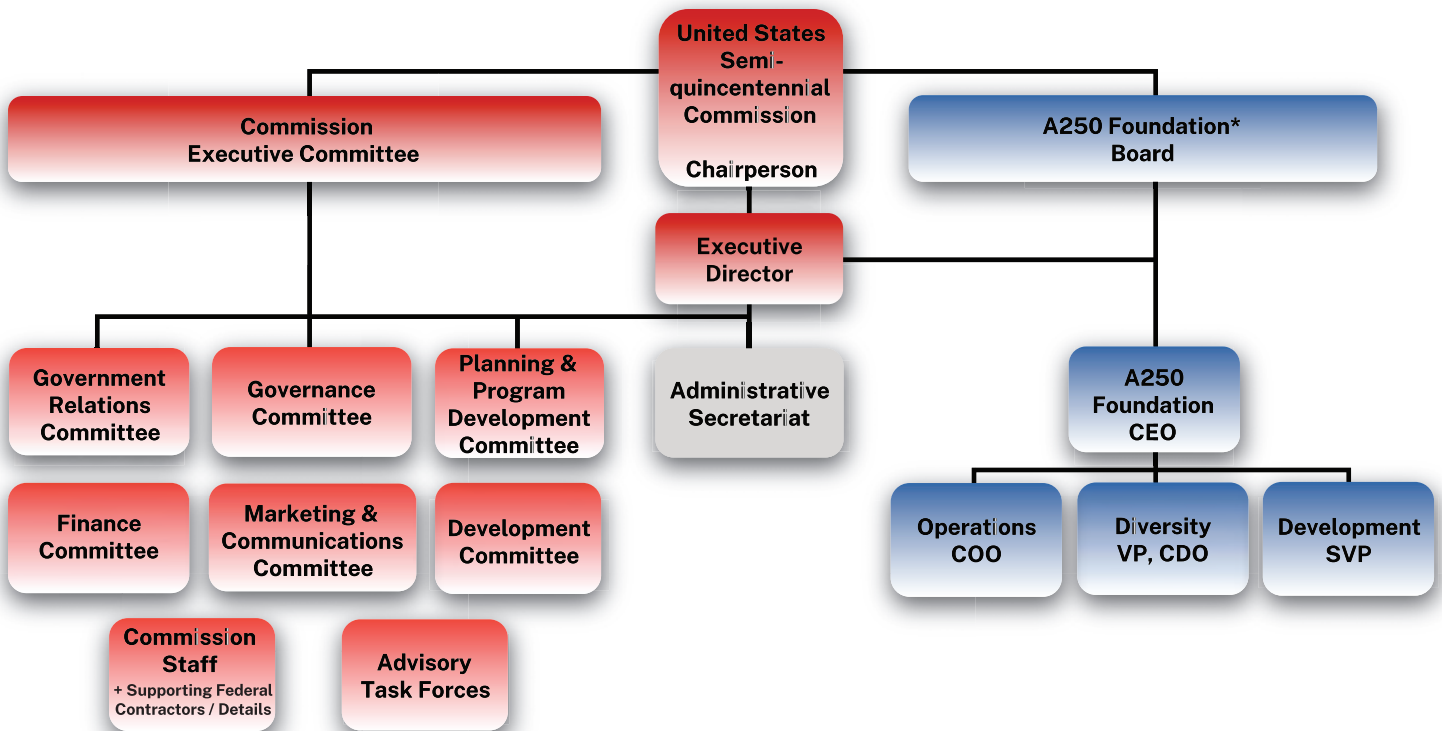
This section briefly describes the Commission’s conceptual approach to four essential elements of the partnership’s operations:

- Organization and Staffing
- Development
- Marketing and Communications
- Information Clearinghouse

Over the next six months, under the Commission’s oversight, the partnership will work with its

Figure 4

U.S. SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMISSION + AMERICA 250 FOUNDATION ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



*The American Battlefield Trust, with authorization by the National Park Service, established the American 250 Foundation in consultation with the Commission, to provide non-profit support to the Commission. The organizational framework provided above reflects due diligence including guidance provided by other comparable national commemorative commissions.

SECTION VI, CONT.

staff, consultants, affiliates and resource partners to develop and begin executing detailed operational plans addressing at least these four elements. Other operational considerations, like safety and security (both physical and cyber), will be integrated into the Commission's operational plans. Unlike the conceptual presentation of the visionary and participatory frameworks (Sections III and IV), which will provide consistent direction through 2027, the Commission expects its operational approach and plans to evolve to address changing circumstances. While keeping the end always in mind, the detailed operational plans will focus on a one-to-three-year time horizon and anticipate significant revision in the context of the Commission's thorough reexamination of its strategic plan in 2022.

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

The current organization of the Commission/America 250 Foundation partnership (See Figure 4) reflects its transitional status from its initial deployment focused internally to support early planning efforts. With the recent establishment of the America 250 Foundation, the partnership is functionally aligned to support externally focused operations. Ultimately, the partnership will grow to address the requirements dictated by the scope, scale, and dynamic schedule introduced in the previous section.

As the partnership's organizational structure evolves, several considerations will guide the Commission and the America 250 Foundation including:

- ***To lead an inclusive America 250, the partnership shall be inclusive.*** The Commission's composition reflects a broad range of priorities inherent in congressional and White House appointments. Beginning from there, the Commission and the Foundation understand that to reach all Americans and each American, they must intentionally engage staff and contractors who reflect American diversity.
- ***Take advantage of both the public and private aspects of the partnership.*** Where functions are fundamentally government in nature (e.g., general counsel, government to government relations, accounting for public funds, etc.) it may be most effective to carry out those functions under the Commission directly, using federal employees engaged according to the terms of the Act. For all other functions, the Foundation will likely prove to be the most effective staffing vehicle. Extensive due diligence on this point, including many discussions with comparable commemorative commissions, unanimously inform and support this approach. Both the public and private organizations will give careful thought to "buying or building" human resource capacity to meet the dynamic and finite requirements of America 250.
- ***Nurture a culture inspired by the America 250 vision, marked by trust and transparency, and sown with dedication.*** America 250, with its call to enlist the participation and shape the aspirations of the nation, is an exciting prospect that will attract top-notch talent seeking a satisfying experience. A wellspring of that satisfaction is the mutual practice of our core

SECTION VI, CONT.

values: respect, commitment, and assuming and demonstrating positive intent (see Section III, p. 34). The Commission and Foundation seek to grow a partnership rooted in shared commitment to trust, transparency, and excellence. Combining these elements in an ethical enterprise where people like the work and the people they work with will cultivate an environment where everyone can thrive.

The Act provides the Commission another organizational tool to expand its reach and engage a wealth of expertise and experience—advisory task forces.⁵⁰ Centering around domains, disciplines, challenges, or themes, the Commission has broad discretion regarding the composition and objectives of its task forces. Task forces may extend the Commission’s reach and resources by:

- intentionally increasing the Commission’s inclusiveness through the many voices enlisted to serve,
- expanding the Commission’s capacity and connection to potential partners and stakeholders, and
- facilitating program development and implementation.

The Commission anticipates that one or more task force members may provide pro bono staff to support council activities. To date the Commission has taken early steps to launch task forces for

In addition to the three task forces mentioned in the text, the Commission is considering creation of task forces to provide advice and thought leadership in the following areas:

- ★ Arts and Culture
- ★ Civic Engagement
- ★ Education
- ★ Entertainment and Media
- ★ Health and Wellness
- ★ History
- ★ Hospitality and Tourism
- ★ Innovation and Technology
- ★ Unity and Diversity
- ★ Youth

As interest and resources dictate, the Commission will consider forming task forces in other disciplines as well.

⁵⁰PL. 114-196, 130 Stat. 687, Sec. 5(b)(1)(B) and 130 Stat. 691, Sec. 8(f).

SECTION VI, CONT.

Veterans Engagement, International Relations, and Parks, Preservation, and Public Spaces. See the sidebar for an initial list of other possible task forces under consideration.

DEVELOPMENT

This report presents a vision and approach addressing a potential scope and scale that require substantial funding resources. Although the Commission has received and requested federal appropriations, it believes that private funding will support considerable Commission and America 250 Foundation activities and likely sustain the greatest proportion of all Semiquincentennial programming. To date, commissioners have provided and solicited significant contributions to support the planning efforts culminating in this report (See Appendix H).

The America 250 Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and its close affiliation with the Commission gives this public-private partnership a potentially powerful fundraising vehicle. The Foundation is poised to pursue a variety of private funding channels including nonprofit and corporate philanthropy, corporate sponsorship, brand and other licensing, grassroots fundraising, and commercial sales (i.e., coins, etc.). But it takes money to raise money. So far, with most of the early private contributions going to support critical start-up planning efforts, not enough has been available to launch fundraising efforts on the scale necessary to stabilize and grow the partnership—let alone develop long term fundraising targets. See Table 3 for a summary description of expenditures to date made by the Commission and made on its behalf by the America 250 Foundation and the American Battlefield Trust.

The Commission anticipates that release of this report, the launch of the Commission's website, and a public announcement planned for 2020 will support the messaging and outreach necessary to advance the Foundation's fundraising activities. Over the next six months, as the partnership develops the playbooks (including a variety of development elements) and operating plans (including operating budgets to inform and support a detailed development plan), it anticipates an increase in private funding. But timing is critical. Recent passage of the Commission's \$3.3 million FY2020 federal appropriation provides much needed funding for the Commission's ongoing planning efforts, freeing up expected private contributions to fuel the Foundation's expanding fundraising activities.

The Commission understands its leadership of America 250 requires public trust and confidence. The Commission knows that private business will play a significant role in funding America 250 activities—with or without the Foundation being a recipient or conduit for business investment. To encourage private funding, the partnership will be decisive and transparent in its relationships with its resource partners. Early on, it will provide useful information and clear direction for resource partners to understand and weigh the opportunities and risks of investing in the Semiquincentennial. Transparency in this public-private partnership is imperative. The Commission and the Foundation will implement the highest standards for financial reporting, accountability, coordination, and internal controls.

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Some critics will no doubt question the Commission’s development activities as somehow allowing the private sector to exploit this public commemoration for private gain. It is no surprise that funders may benefit through their participation as America 250 resource partners in a variety of appropriate and widely accepted tangible and intangible ways. Contributors will include a range of large and small businesses funding programs from the global to the local through the Foundation, other affiliates, and stakeholders. Beyond businesses, private donations may also come from individual Americans offering grassroots support that may have substantial impact on the scale

TABLE 3
SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES TO DATE*

CATEGORY	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Administrative	\$226,103	14.5%
Development	\$95,550	6.1%
Government Relations	\$147,378	9.5%
IT	\$15,400	1.0%
Marketing and PR	\$148,661	9.6%
Meetings and Events	\$175,575	11.3%
Office Expenses	\$3,232	0.2%
Professional/Legal	\$228,421	14.7%
Research and Planning	\$474,232	30.5%
Travel	\$40,848	2.6%
TOTAL	\$1,555,400	

*Figures include spending by the Commission, as well as spending undertaken on the Commission's behalf by the Foundation and the American Battlefield Trust.

and reach of America 250. By practicing ethical stewardship and demonstrating the vital link between private funding and public programming, the Commission and the Foundation expect to earn the public’s trust for this public/private approach to America 250.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Commission’s ability to communicate its vision, engage various audiences, and encourage inclusive and cohesive participation is key to a successful America 250. The visionary framework—especially the themes of *educate*, *engage*, and *unite*—contains the essential messaging to spark participation by all Americans and each American and bring the Semiquincentennial to life. The Commission must adapt proven tactics to effectively convey its offer of an opportunity to participate in America 250 to all Americans, each American, and friends of America, as well as support their engagement throughout the period of commemoration. Over the next six months, the Commission/Foundation partnership will work with consultants to formulate a robust marketing and communication plan to share the right messages with the right audiences through the right channels at the right time.

We have already alluded to the challenges of reaching the undifferentiated “all Americans,” the individually differentiated “each American,” and the varied “friends of America” in the scope discussion above (see p. 61). The long and dynamic America 250 schedule (see pp. 66-69) adds another layer of complexity to the Commission’s communication challenges. In addition to developing its marketing and communication plan, over the next six months the Commission believes its communication priorities will focus on the following three audiences and corresponding objectives:

- **Affiliates** to establish working relationships and build out the participatory frameworks and develop the playbooks.
- **Resource Partners** to convey the value proposition(s) associated with various partnership arrangements.
- **All Americans** to raise awareness of the opportunity to participate in America 250 and invite their input and feedback to shape America 250 programming.

The Commission sees education, the arts, entertainment and the media as likely providing the most powerful channels to involve people in the Semiquincentennial. Working with its consultants, the Commission may enlist several America 250 Ambassadors from these domains to join commissioners in the initial marketing campaign targeting all Americans. Educators—operating in school and more informal settings—will play an important role in reaching students of all ages.

Early this year the Commission engaged Landor, a global leader in brand consulting and design, as its pro bono partner to develop the brand identity for America 250. The Commission enthusiastically accepted Landor’s initial creative design work and is in the process of establishing legal

protections for the intellectual property. The brand consultant and the Commission's pro bono legal counsel are also developing the brand guidelines and related licensing arrangements. The Commission anticipates officially launching the America 250 brand identity in early 2020, but some of the elements are found in the look, feel, and tone of this report. As noted in the discussion of the participatory frameworks (p. 39), the Commission will issue comprehensive brand policies and guidelines that will license use by affiliates, partners, and stakeholders within each construct under appropriately varied terms. The Commission's brand identity will produce revenue through licensing arrangements primarily with resource partners, but perhaps its greatest value will be as a cohesive imprimatur linking the vast array of decentralized official programs in a unified expression of America 250.

The Commission anticipates conducting market and survey research to validate its marketing and communication strategies and tactics at appropriate intervals throughout the period of commemoration. This research will not only inform the Commission's evolving marketing and communication approach, but also seek to measure America 250's desired impact on improved understanding, civic engagement, and unity across the nation.

INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE

The Act repeatedly emphasizes the Commission's role in coordinating the Semiquincentennial.⁵¹ The essential element supporting this coordination role is information. To accomplish its mission, the Commission must manage and provide authorized access to information related to all aspects of Commission and Foundation operations, participatory framework administration and related programming, resource partner engagement, etc. Some of this information is primarily internal, but much of it supports the Commission's external relations ultimately encompassing all Americans, each American, and friends of America who will look to the Commission to provide the information clearinghouse for America 250.

Throughout the strategic planning process, the concept of a "portal" or "clearinghouse" emerged as an interactive system needed to both convey information to and receive information from America 250 participants, as well as to support Commission and Foundation operations. Various elements of the Commission's strategic plan and this report point to functions that may be integrated into the information clearinghouse. The degree of integration may be constrained by numerous factors including but not limited to cyber security requirements, privacy restrictions, financial controls, etc.

⁵¹P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 685, Sec. 2(b) and Sec. 4(a) for example.

Here is an incomplete and illustrative description of a few possible clearinghouse functions:

- The Commission website may ultimately serve as the public interface to the clearinghouse with secure access controls to various applications or modules serving different users.
- The clearinghouse may serve as the publicly accessible repository for official Commission records.
- The clearinghouse may include customer relationship management tools to support relationships with affiliates, partners, and stakeholders.
- The clearinghouse may serve as the repository for public descriptions of official programs accessible through various search strategies and tools including those employing artificial intelligence.
- Various participatory framework functions and play-book elements may be supported by the clearinghouse to:
 - › Provide consistent guidance to states and territories, affiliates, and stakeholders,
 - › Support program idea and educational content sharing,
 - › Manage the official program recognition process,
 - › Gain access to virtual or request physical toolkits, or
 - › Promote programs through a master America 250 program search/calendar function.

This short, incomplete list is enough to convey the potential complexity and power of an America 250 information clearinghouse.

In this start-up stage the Commission employs a few integrated tools, like Google’s G-Suite, and is preparing to launch its official, standalone website in early 2020. Neither of these solutions is likely to scale to meet the Commission and Foundation’s anticipated requirements as conceptually

“In nine years, the United States will celebrate the 250th anniversary of our founding—250 years since the day we declared our independence. It will be one of the great milestones in the history of the world. But what will America look like as we reach our 250th year? What kind of country will we leave for our children?”

**Donald J. Trump,
Joint Address to Congress, 2017**

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described throughout this report. Development of the information clearinghouse will likely involve some variation of a robust system development process including such steps as:

- Functional requirements definition
- Feasibility analysis
- Design
- Development
- Phased implementation

The Commission believes that the America 250 information clearinghouse is vital infrastructure necessary for the success of America 250, and intends to make it an organizational priority in 2020.

Over the next six months, the Commission and Foundation will work with staff and consultants to prepare and begin implementing a plan to secure the necessary public or private partnerships to design, deploy, and maintain this system. Determining whether this system will be government owned and operated will be a key decision point early in the planning process.★

SECTION VI, CONT.



The background features a complex, abstract wireframe graphic. It consists of numerous overlapping, semi-transparent wireframe spheres and cylindrical shapes. The lines are primarily light blue, but a central, more prominent structure is rendered in a vibrant red. The overall effect is a sense of depth and interconnectedness, resembling a network or a complex architectural structure.

SECTION VII

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK — INFRASTRUCTURE APPROACH



THE ACT requires the Commission to evaluate existing infrastructure, recommend infrastructure improvements necessary for a successful America 250, and coordinate with state and local bodies to make these necessary infrastructure improvements.⁵² The Commission foresees infrastructure improvement recommendations springing from two sources:

- **Program Driven** infrastructure improvements necessary to support the successful implementation of official programs.
- **Commemoration Justified** infrastructure improvements that address multiple long-term needs that include contributing to a successful America 250.

The Commission envisions that these infrastructure improvements may fall into the following categories:

- **Physical**—Preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic landscapes, buildings, and properties associated with America 250. Additionally, maintenance and new construction needed to support visitation and the increased carrying capacity of historic and other sites or structures related to America 250.
- **Organizational**—human resource capacity necessary to plan, develop, and implement America 250.
- **Technological**—systems and applications necessary to support and deliver America 250.
- **Cultural**—improved preservation of and access to a wide range of resources, materials, or practices for America 250 and beyond.
- **Logistical**—enhanced transportation, tourism, safety, security, communication, and perhaps other services for America 250.

⁵²P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 687, Sec. 5(b)(3).

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Limited public awareness of America 250 planning at this moment makes it premature for the Commission to recommend specific infrastructure initiatives in this report. Nevertheless, the Commission recognizes that its affiliates, partners, and stakeholders must launch infrastructure projects early in the planning cycle to ensure timely implementation of America 250 programming.

The Commission intends to address these infrastructure requirements within the context of its participatory frameworks. The extensive scope and scale of America 250 dictates that the Commission address infrastructure as part of its decentralized approach to the Commission's overall program. The factors governing the Commission's evaluation, recommendation, and coordination of infrastructure improvements may include at least the following:

- **Contribution to the realization of the America 250 visionary framework.** Individually and relative to other proposed infrastructure initiatives.
- **Scope, Scale, and Legacy of Impact.** Who will the improvement impact? How many people will it touch? Over what period of time?
- **Cost and Feasibility.** Individually and relative to other proposed infrastructure initiatives.
- **Qualification under one or more of the existing infrastructure programs.** For example, the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services each have existing grant programs that support various types of infrastructure projects that generally align with the America 250 vision.
- **Coordination with other broad-based infrastructure initiatives.** For example, federal, state, and local officials may consider including America 250 within the scope of broader existing or planned infrastructure initiatives.

The specific criteria used to assess infrastructure proposals will vary from framework to framework, likely associated with official program recognition and funding application processes.

The Commission may convene an inclusive and highly qualified advisory work group drawn from both the public and private sectors to inform further development of its infrastructure evaluation, recommendation, and coordination processes. The Commission will also draw on early infrastructure proposals to shape and validate these processes. To illustrate the categories of infrastructure initiatives defined above and spark the imagination of potential partners and stakeholders, some examples of proposed infrastructure improvement ideas follow. Note how some examples highlight the potential for overlap between categories. ***As with the program ideas above, the Commission is grateful to those affiliates and stakeholders whose ideas are presented here, which we are sharing not as an endorsement, but rather to inform others who may have similar infrastructure opportunities and challenges.***



Physical Infrastructure Improvements—

Revitalization and Reopening of the Smithsonian Institution Building (“The Castle”):

Completed by late 2025 or early 2026, the Smithsonian anticipates that the restored Castle, a National Historic Landmark, will serve as a place for civic discussion, and as a national visitors information center for the Smithsonian, Washington, D.C., and the Semiquincentennial. The renovated space will include new, state-of-the-art conference and auditorium spaces to host public activities related to the Semiquincentennial and beyond. *Program driven and commemoration justified.*

National Park Service Physical Infrastructure Improvement Projects:

The National Park Service (NPS) is committed to undertaking infrastructure projects, as authorized and funded, that will greatly improve the condition of key historic resources and visitor amenities at many national parks in advance of 2026. Here are just two examples, one highlighting the importance of accessibility improvements to include all Americans in the Semiquincentennial, and the other underscoring the potential for private investment in our national treasures. For more examples of anticipated infrastructure improvements, see the Department of the Interior-NPS report to the Commission in Appendix E-1.

In Boston, the NPS will rehabilitate Dorchester Heights hard-scapes for accessibility and eliminate existing safety hazards, and then restore the monument at the site. Dorchester Heights is the site of fortifications erected in March 1776, which resulted in British troops evacuating Boston. The site, designated as a National Historic Site in 1951 and added to Boston National Historical Park in 1978, features a Georgian-style Monument dedicated in 1902 at the top of a landscaped park. Among other improvements, the project will replace the existing deteriorated walkways and sidewalks that provide access to and around the park, including all flatwork, stairs, ramps, footers, retaining walls, drainage, and handrails. New ramps will be installed in accordance with national accessibility guidelines. ***Program driven and commemoration justified.***

At Independence National Historical Park, the NPS plans to open the First Bank of the United States Building to the public for the first time since 1985 through a partnership project with Independence Historical Trust that is committed to raising \$25 million for the interior rehabilitation and exhibit design and installation. The First Bank Building is a National Historic Landmark, the oldest existing building constructed for the new federal government; it housed the National Bank of the United States, which was instrumental in the successful economic foundation of the young country, and which was necessary to secure the political freedom from Great Britain recently won through military action. ***Program driven and commemoration justified.***

“Every society needs these kinds of sacred places. They help to instill a sense of social cohesion in the people and remind them of the passage of the generations that have brought them to the present. A society that cannot remember its past and honor it is in peril of losing its soul.”

Vine Deloria, Jr, theologian, historian, and member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, *Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom*, 1991

.....

Organizational Infrastructure Improvements—

Expanding Historic Preservation Engagement by African American and Native American Youth

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the National Park Service, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation are partnering on a program “Touching History: Preservation in Practice.” The program provides African American young professionals from Historically Black Colleges and Universities hands-on exposure to historic preservation and related career paths. The ACHP also has partnered with Salish Kootenai College to support training and advice to the next generation of tribal preservationists. ***Commemoration justified.***

American Association for State and Local History (AASLH): Community Historian Program

This program would provide a curriculum built on proven models and tested in a 2018 pilot stage. The Community Historian Program (CHP) provides a curriculum and model for history organizations—museums, libraries, archives, historic sites, and others—to train interested members of the

public in the methods and approaches historians use to uncover the past. CHP will strengthen the links between history museums and the public and provide new opportunities for lifelong learning.

As a result, members of the public will be more conversant in the standards and practices of historical inquiry, enhancing their ability to productively volunteer for history organizations in a variety of capacities, to contribute to historical and civic discourse, and advocate for the value of history and history institutions within their local communities and beyond. This program addresses two pressing issues facing history museums, especially given the anticipated opportunities and challenges of America 250: the need to strengthen their engagement with local communities and the need to enhance training and professional development for museum volunteers. *Commemoration justified.*

Technological Infrastructure Improvements—

Application Development:

Various commissioners, affiliates, and stakeholders have put forward ideas that may require development of new, or scaling of existing, software or other technology applications. America 250 programs may prove to be attractive vehicles to showcase specific application development incorporating rapidly evolving artificial intelligence, hologram, or other emerging technology. Successful programs like the NEH-funded Clio, a mobile application developed by Marshall University that guides the public to thousands of historical and cultural sites throughout the United States, may benefit from technology improvement to scale its public, educational, and institutional impact.

Program driven.

“From Preservation to Innovation”

★★★ The infrastructure investments in America 250 will likely yield tangible and intangible dividends that will outlive the commemorative period. Preservation of historical sites, historical society formation, and museum establishment and expansion surged in the lead-up to the Bicentennial. According to the American Alliance of Museums and the American Association for State and Local History, many of these investments are still paying off educationally and economically for the American people. America 250 also requires technological and organizational building blocks that have not yet been designed. The return on investment in these innovations to support the Semiquincentennial will be part of America 250’s enduring legacy.

Systems Development:

Various stakeholders are exploring system development programs. For example, the AASLH's America 250 Collections Working Group is considering the conceptual design of an integrated public access catalog system to facilitate cross-institutional connections among artifact, archive, and library collections to facilitate improved public access. Another stakeholder imagines a private-public partnership developing a revenue generating system called My America–

Our America. The system's core offering would be a package of virtual tools providing personal and professional historymakers with a cost-effective means to collaborate and to access, preserve, synthesize, analyze, and present a vast complex of evidence and stories at the intersection of personal and contextual history. *Program driven and commemoration justified.*

Cultural Infrastructure Improvements—**New Jersey Revolutionary War Sites**

A current evaluation of the state's historic resources undertaken by Crossroads of the American Revolution, a nonprofit organization partnered with the New

Jersey Historical Commission, aims to promote New Jersey as a premier Revolutionary heritage tourism destination. The assessment team of historical architects, interpretive specialists, and heritage tourism experts will provide a range of recommendations for preservation and visitor readiness. The report, including budgets for all recommended site improvements, will assist stewardship organizations with undertaking capital projects and developing programs that meet the interests and needs of diverse audiences. *Program driven and commemoration justified.*

American Association for State and Local History America 250 Collections Working Group: “History Is Still Happening” Initiative

Will encourage the public to interact with history and collections, and urges collecting institutions to focus on “collecting modern.” By collecting now, we can ensure a future. Doing so will also provide a means to connect contemporary life and challenges and foster an interest in the past. This initiative encourages museums and historical organizations to build collections that reflect the local communities, past and present, spanning a community's entire history, to the present day, where appropriate. The organizations must connect with local communities in deciding collecting goals. *Program driven and commemoration justified.*





Logistical Infrastructure Improvements—

American Battlefield Trust and the South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust: The Liberty Trail

This heritage tourism and preservation initiative will promote the state's leading role in the founding of the United States. At its core, this initiative involves development of a driving tour linking more than 70 sites to serve as an educational and heritage tourism resource to support the preservation, interpretation, and promotion of key Revolutionary War battlefields. The trail is a joint effort of the American Battlefield Trust and the South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust, with support from the National Park Service, as well as state and local governments. ***Program driven and commemoration justified.***★



SECTION VIII
RECOMMENDATIONS



THE ACT requires this report to include the Commission’s recommendations “for the allocation of financial and administrative responsibility among the public and private authorities and organizations recommended for participation” in America 250, as well as “proposals for such legislative enactments and administrative actions as the Commission considers necessary to carry out the

recommendations.”⁵³ As discussed above, the Act also required the Commission to include infrastructure recommendations. This section presents the required recommendations and proposals based on the Commission’s work to date. The Commission acknowledges that some of these recommendations and proposals may not be specific enough to support the requested action and will require further coordination with Congress and the White House. Moreover, the Commission expects to submit subsequent recommendations and proposals as it continues to plan, develop, and implement the overall program for America 250.

In the bi-partisan spirit of the Act, and in line with the Commission’s thematic call for all Americans and each American to unite, the Commission respectfully encourages the public and all three branches of government to participate in and support America 250 on a non-partisan basis.

Immediate opportunities for our leaders in Congress and the Executive Branch to participate in and support the Semiquincentennial include:

- Participating in a compelling and exciting national launch of America 250 activities in 2020.
- Promoting the vision of America 250, focusing on the call to *educate, engage, and unite*.
- Encouraging the formation of the America 250 Congressional Caucus.
- Exhorting active participation of all federal agencies in Semiquincentennial programs aligned with their missions, including State Department international efforts.
- Encouraging all states and territories to establish and actively engage their own commissions in America 250.
- Contributing to the development and execution of a series of national signature programs.
- Providing the necessary federal funding, which combined with private funding, will deliver the significant resources required to execute a fitting and inspirational America 250 celebration.

⁵³P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 688, Sec. 5(c)(3).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ALLOCATION OF FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR AMERICA 250

Conceptually, the participatory frameworks described in Section IV present the Commission's recommended approach for allocating financial and administrative responsibility for America 250. It is still too early in the Commission's planning process to draw more than a few direct connections between specific recommendations and proposed legislative enactments and administrative actions. Nevertheless, we have identified several proposals below for consideration by Congress and the President.

PROPOSALS FOR LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Legislative Proposals

Commission technical amendments. The Commission's congressional members are working together on a bi-partisan basis to secure passage of technical amendments to address minor, non-controversial amendments to the Act. The Commission respectfully requests prompt consideration of these amendments to improve the Commission's efficiency and effectiveness.

Commission appropriation requests. As discussed in this report, the Commission anticipates requesting additional federal appropriations through FY2027. Initially these requests will likely encompass support for aspects of the Commission's ongoing planning, development, and maintenance of its participatory frameworks, the Commission's government functions, and capacity building grants to states, territories, and Native American tribes. These requests will be forthcoming with justifications based on additional planning in the normal course of the budget cycle.

Commission support of ex officio and other federal agency appropriation requests and infrastructure recommendations. The Commission's authority to prepare and coordinate the overall program for the Semiquincentennial includes specifically working with its *ex officio* members and other federal agencies to encourage America 250 program development. The Commission may coordinate some resource support for federal agencies but recommends that these agencies receive most of their America 250 resources directly through the appropriations process. Therefore, it proposes to coordinate through its congressional members and its liaison contacts at the White House to determine the appropriate role for the Commission in evaluating and supporting America 250-related appropriation requests and infrastructure recommendations submitted by federal agencies.

Additional amendments to the Act. The Commission proposes the following described amendments to the Act as necessary to support recommended approaches presented in this report. Recalling that the Act is largely based on the original Bicentennial Commission legislations, note that these amendments were necessary to support similar approaches by the Bicentennial Commission and Bicentennial Administration as indicated in the citations to the relevant statutes.

SECTION VIII, CONT.

- Authorize the Treasury Department to strike commemorative national medals in collaboration with the Commission and provided to the Commission at cost.⁵⁴
- Authorize the Commission to carry out a grants-in-aid program for each state, territory, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to apply for funds to establish or implement an America 250 commission.⁵⁵
- Provide for the mutually agreeable transfer of Semiquincentennial commemoration funds available by and between any federal department or agency including the Commission.⁵⁶
- Facilitate coordination with the America 250 state commissions by providing for the Commission to authorize and fund travel for the representatives and staff of these crucial entities.⁵⁷
- Authorize the Commission to make matching grants for a percentage of total program costs to nonprofit entities (including state and local governments) from non-appropriated and appropriated funds.⁵⁸

Administrative Actions

Expeditious review, comment, and transmittal of this complete report to Congress. The Commission respectfully requests that the President and his staff expeditiously submit this report to Congress in accordance with the Act.⁵⁹ The Commission's chairperson stands ready to provide any clarification or support required to assist the President and his staff in this review process.

Designate a point of contact in the White House to appropriately engage the Commission in evaluating and supporting America 250-related appropriation requests and infrastructure recommendations submitted by federal agencies.

Regularly assign a small cadre of White House Fellows to assume significant roles in the design and execution of America 250 initiatives over the next seven years.

INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

As explained above in Section VII, the nation's limited readiness to engage in America 250 planning at this moment makes it unrealistic for the Commission to recommend specific infrastruc-

⁵⁴P.L. 92-228, 86 Stat. 37, February 15, 1972.

⁵⁵P.L. 92-236, 86 Stat. 43, March 1, 1972.

⁵⁶P.L. 92-236, 86 Stat. 43, March 1, 1972.

⁵⁷P.L. 93-178, 87 Stat. 701, December 11, 1973, Sec. 5(a)(3).

⁵⁸P.L. 93-178, 87 Stat. 702, December 11, 1973, Sec. 9(a)(2).

⁵⁹P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 688, Sec. 5(d).

SECTION VIII, CONT.

ture initiatives in this report. Nevertheless, the Commission recognizes that its partners and stakeholders must launch infrastructure projects early in the planning cycle to ensure timely implementation of America 250 programming. The Commission will address the Act's infrastructure requirements within the context of its participatory frameworks and prepare subsequent recommendations for the President and Congress as appropriate.

Although unable to make specific infrastructure recommendations at this time, the Commission understands that both Congress and the President may consider broad-based infrastructure proposals in the normal course of business. The Commission will work through its congressional and *ex officio* members to engage the appropriate congressional and administration officials to discuss how anticipated American 250 infrastructure requirements might be included in such proposals.★

The Commission makes these recommendations and submits this report to the President, Congress, and the American people as an important step in the ongoing collaboration necessary to advance the overall program for America 250.



PHOTO CREDITS



IMAGES ORGANIZED BY ORDER OF APPEARANCE IN TEXT

Children Marching in Independence Day Parade

Pg. 2
Source: Getty Images

Statue of Liberty, New York, New York

Pg. 4
Source: iStock / Getty Images

Boy Scouts, Huntington Beach Parade

Pg. 19
Source: ©Edward Pinchiff

Confetti Rains Down at Completion of Concert, Boston Pops

Pg. 23
Source: U.S. Navy, Public Domain

Initial Commission Meeting, Independence Hall,

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Pg. 25
Source: ©Buddy Secor / Ninja Pix

Fourth of July Celebration, Mount Vernon, Virginia

Pg. 29
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Independence Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Pg. 35
Source: @Dan Komoda / Eye Squid Photography

Students in Classroom

Pg. 45
Source: iStock / Getty Images

Georges III / Washington Print

Pg. 47
Source: Images Courtesy Library of Congress

(From the Left) Colonel Michael S. Heimall, Director, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center; Mr. Rusty Noesner, Retired, US Navy SEAL; Jane Chu, Chairman, NEA; Captain Walt Greenhalgh, Director, National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE), and Commander Wendy Pettit, Chief of Clinical Operations, National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) hold up masks made by service men and women in the Creative Forces program.

Pg. 47
Source: Images Courtesy National Endowment for the Arts

Native American Dancer

Pg. 48
Source: iStock / Getty Images

Puerto Rican Day Parade, New York, NY

Pg. 52
Source: iStock / Getty Images

Liberty Bell

Pg. 54
Source: iStock / Getty Images

Class looking at Tablet

Pg. 56
Source: Getty Images

Boy holding small American Flag in Front Yard

Pg. 59
Image Source: iStock / Getty Images

Selfie Siblings

Pg. 69
Source: iStock / Getty Images

Mount Rushmore, South Dakota

Pg. 81
Source: iStock / Getty Images

Smithsonian Institute "The Castle"

Pg. 85
Source: Image Courtesy of Smithsonian Institute

Princeton Battlefield Park, New Jersey

Pg. 88
Source: ©Eric Malave

Camden Battlefield Park, The Liberty Trail, South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust

Pg. 89
Source: ©Ryan Montgomery

American Battlefield Trust Generations Event, held at Anderson House, headquarters of the American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati.

Pg. 94
Source: ©Lindsey Morrison

Washington Monument from Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.

Pg. 96
Source: ©iStock / Getty Images

Putting Out Flags

Pg. 273
Source: iStock / Getty Images

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APPENDICES

Appendix A— The United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016—
Public Law 114-196

Appendix B—List of Current Members of the Commission as of December 15, 2019

Appendix C—United States Semiquincentennial Commission Strategic
Plan Summary

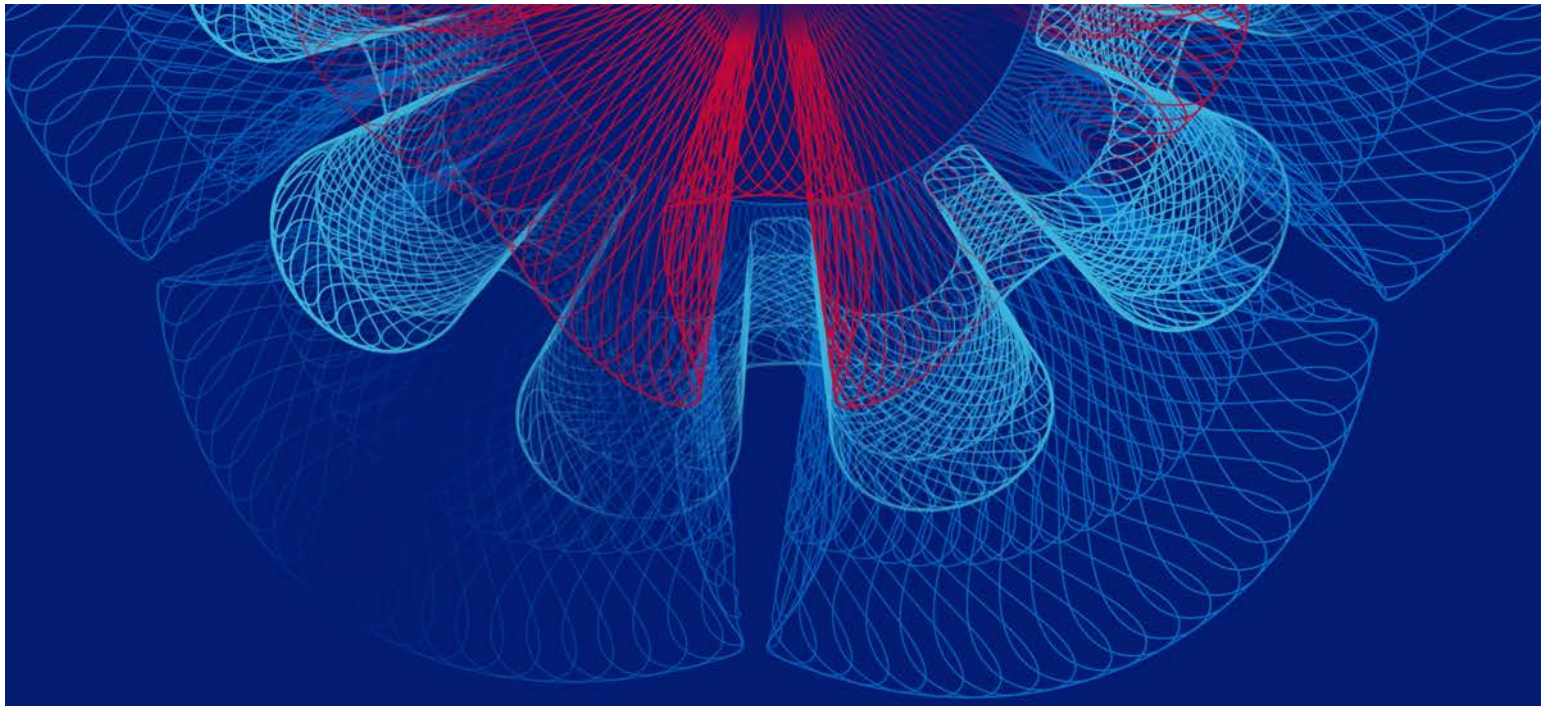
Appendix D—Summary Report of America 250 Survey
conducted by Shugoll Research

Appendix E—Federal Agency Reports to the Commission
E-1—Department of the Interior-National Park Service Report
E-2—National Endowment for the Arts Report
E-3—National Endowment for the Humanities Report
E-4—Library of Congress Report
E-5—Smithsonian Institution Report
E-6—National Archives and Records Administration Report

Appendix F—Notes for Table 2—Projected Program Numbers by Framework
with Explanations

Appendix G—Extrapolation of Various Financial and Related Bicentennial Factors
into America 250 Projections

Appendix H—List of Donors and Other Contributors to America 250



APPENDIX A
THE UNITED STATES
SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL
COMMISSION ACT OF 2016—
PUBLIC LAW 114-196

Public Law 114–196
114th Congress

An Act

To establish the United States Semiquincentennial Commission, and for other purposes.

July 22, 2016
[H.R. 4875]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.

(a) **FINDINGS.**—Congress finds that July 4, 2026, the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, as marked by the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the historic events preceding that anniversary—

(1) are of major significance in the development of the national heritage of the United States of individual liberty, representative government, and the attainment of equal and inalienable rights; and

(2) have had a profound influence throughout the world.

(b) **PURPOSE.**—The purpose of this Act is to establish a Commission to provide for the observance and commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and related events through local, State, national, and international activities planned, encouraged, developed, and coordinated by a national commission representative of appropriate public and private authorities and organizations.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **COMMISSION.**—The term “Commission” means the United States Semiquincentennial Commission established by section 4(a).

(2) **PRIVATE CITIZEN.**—The term “private citizen” means an individual who is not an officer or employee of—

(A) the Federal Government; or

(B) a State or local government.

(3) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—There is established a commission, to be known as the “United States Semiquincentennial Commission”, to plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate the commemoration of the history of the United States leading up to the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

United States
Semiquin-
centennial
Commission Act
of 2016.
36 USC 101
note prec.

(b) COMPOSITION.—The Commission shall be composed of the following members:

(1) Four members of the Senate, of whom—

(A) two shall be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate; and

(B) two shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate.

(2) Four members of the House of Representatives, of whom—

(A) two shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

(B) two shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives.

(3) Sixteen members who are private citizens, of whom—

(A) four shall be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

(B) four shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;

(C) four shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(D) four shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives; and

(E) one of whom shall be designated by the President as the Chairperson.

(4) The following nonvoting ex officio members:

(A) The Secretary.

(B) The Secretary of State.

(C) The Attorney General.

(D) The Secretary of Defense.

(E) The Secretary of Education.

(F) The Librarian of Congress.

(G) The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

(H) The Archivist of the United States.

(I) The presiding officer of the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

(c) TERM; VACANCIES.—

(1) TERM.—A member shall be appointed for the life of the Commission.

(2) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Commission—

(A) shall not affect the powers of the Commission; and

(B) shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

(d) MEETINGS.—All meetings of the Commission shall be convened at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to honor the historical significance of the building as the site of deliberations and adoption of both the United States Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

(e) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number of members may hold hearings.

SEC. 5. DUTIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall—

(1) prepare an overall program for commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and the historic events preceding that anniversary; and

President.

Pennsylvania.

(2) plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate observances and activities commemorating the historic events that preceded, and are associated with, the United States Semiquincentennial.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In preparing plans and an overall program, the Commission—

(A) shall give due consideration to any related plans and programs developed by State, local, and private groups; and

(B) may designate special committees with representatives from groups described in subparagraph (A) to plan, develop, and coordinate specific activities.

(2) EMPHASIS.—The Commission shall—

(A) emphasize the planning of events in locations of historical significance to the United States, especially in those locations that witnessed the assertion of American liberty, such as—

(i) the 13 colonies; and

(ii) leading cities, including Boston, Charleston, New York City, and Philadelphia; and

(B) give special emphasis to—

(i) the role of persons and locations with significant impact on the history of the United States during the 250-year period beginning on the date of execution of the Declaration of Independence; and

(ii) the ideas associated with that history, which have been so important in the development of the United States, in world affairs, and in the quest for freedom of all mankind.

(3) INFRASTRUCTURE.—The Commission shall—

(A) evaluate existing infrastructure;

(B) include in the report required under subsection (c) recommendations for what infrastructure should be in place for the successful undertaking of an appropriate celebration in accordance with this Act; and

(C) coordinate with State and local bodies to make necessary infrastructure improvements.

Evaluation.
Recommendations.

Coordination.

(c) REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE PRESIDENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to the President a comprehensive report that includes the specific recommendations of the Commission for the commemoration of the 250th anniversary and related events.

(2) RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES.—The report may include recommended activities such as—

(A) the production, publication, and distribution of books, pamphlets, films, and other educational materials focusing on the history, culture, and political thought of the period of the American Revolution;

(B) bibliographical and documentary projects and publications;

(C) conferences, convocations, lectures, seminars, and other programs, especially those located in the 13 colonies, including the major cities and buildings of national historical significance of the 13 colonies;

(D) the development of libraries, museums, historic sites, and exhibits, including mobile exhibits;

(E) ceremonies and celebrations commemorating specific events, such as—

(i) the signing of the Declaration of Independence;

(ii) programs and activities focusing on the national and international significance of the United States Semiquincentennial; and

(iii) the implications of the Semiquincentennial for present and future generations; and

(F) encouraging Federal agencies to integrate the celebration of the Semiquincentennial into the regular activities and execution of the purpose of the agencies through such activities as the issuance of coins, medals, certificates of recognition, stamps, and the naming of vessels.

(3) REQUIREMENTS.—The report shall include—

(A) the recommendations of the Commission for the allocation of financial and administrative responsibility among the public and private authorities and organizations recommended for participation by the Commission; and

(B) proposals for such legislative enactments and administrative actions as the Commission considers necessary to carry out the recommendations.

Recommendations.

President.

(d) REPORT SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS.—The President shall submit to Congress a report that contains—

(1) the complete report of the Commission; and

(2) such comments and recommendations for legislation and such a description of administrative actions taken by the President as the President considers appropriate.

Recommendations.

(e) POINT OF CONTACT.—The Commission, acting through the secretariat of the Commission described in section 9(b), shall serve as the point of contact of the Federal Government for all State, local, international, and private sector initiatives regarding the Semiquincentennial of the founding of the United States, with the purpose of coordinating and facilitating all fitting and proper activities honoring the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

SEC. 6. COORDINATION.

Consultation.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out this Act, the Commission shall consult and cooperate with, and seek advice and assistance from, appropriate Federal agencies, State and local public bodies, learned societies, and historical, patriotic, philanthropic, civic, professional, and related organizations.

(b) RESPONSIBILITY OF OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Federal agencies shall cooperate with the Commission in planning, encouraging, developing, and coordinating appropriate commemorative activities.

(2) DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.—

Study.

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall undertake a study of appropriate actions that might be taken to further preserve and develop historic sites and battlefields, at such time and in such manner as will ensure that fitting observances and exhibits may be held at appropriate sites and battlefields during the 250th anniversary celebration.

Recommendations.

(B) REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit to the Commission a report that contains the results of the study

and the recommendations of the Secretary, in time to afford the Commission an opportunity—

- (i) to review the study; and
 - (ii) to incorporate in the report described in section 5(c) such findings and recommendations as the Commission considers appropriate.
- (3) ARTS AND HUMANITIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The presiding officer of the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities, the Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities shall cooperate with the Commission, especially in the encouragement and coordination of scholarly works and artistic expressions focusing on the history, culture, and political thought of the period predating the United States Semiquincentennial.

(B) LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, AND ARCHIVES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Librarian of Congress, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, and the Archivist of the United States shall cooperate with the Commission, especially in the development and display of exhibits and collections and in the development of bibliographies, catalogs, and other materials relevant to the period predating the United States Semiquincentennial.

(ii) LOCATION.—To the maximum extent practicable, displays described in subparagraph (A) shall be located in, or in facilities near to, buildings of historical significance to the American Revolution, so as to promote greater public awareness of the heritage of the United States.

(C) SUBMISSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS.—Each of the officers described in this paragraph shall submit to the Commission a report containing recommendations in time to afford the Commission an opportunity—

Reports.

- (i) to review the reports; and
- (ii) to incorporate in the report described in section 5(c) such findings and recommendations as the Commission considers appropriate.

(4) DEPARTMENT OF STATE.—The Secretary of State shall coordinate the participation of foreign nations in the celebration of the United States Semiquincentennial, including by soliciting the erection of monuments and other cultural cooperations in founding cities of the United States so as—

(A) to celebrate the shared heritage of the United States with the many peoples and nations of the world; and

(B) to provide liaison and encouragement for the erection of international pavilions to showcase the spread of democratic institutions abroad in the period following the American Revolution.

SEC. 7. POWERS.

(a) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold such hearings, meet and act at such times and places, take such testimony, and receive

such evidence as the Commission considers advisable to carry out this Act.

(b) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may secure directly from a Federal agency such information as the Commission considers necessary to carry out this Act.

(2) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—On request of the Chairperson of the Commission, the head of the agency shall provide the information to the Commission.

(c) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other agencies of the Federal Government.

(d) GIFTS.—The Commission may accept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of money, property, or personal services.

(e) ADDITIONAL POWERS.—As determined necessary by the Commission, the Commission may—

(1) procure supplies, services, and property;

(2) make contracts;

(3) expend in furtherance of this Act funds donated or received in pursuance of contracts entered into under this Act; and

(4) take such actions as are necessary to enable the Commission to carry out efficiently and in the public interest the purposes of this Act.

(f) USE OF MATERIALS.—

(1) TIME CAPSULE.—A representative portion of all books, manuscripts, miscellaneous printed matter, memorabilia, relics, and other materials relating to the United States Semiquincentennial shall be deposited in a time capsule—

(A) to be buried in Independence Mall, Philadelphia, on July 4, 2026; and

(B) to be unearthed on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the United States of America on July 4, 2276.

(2) OTHER MATERIALS.—All other books, manuscripts, miscellaneous printed matter, memorabilia, relics, and other materials relating to the United States Semiquincentennial, whether donated to the Commission or collected by the Commission, may be deposited for preservation in national, State, or local libraries or museums or be otherwise disposed of by the Commission, in consultation with the Librarian of Congress, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, the Archivist of the United States, and the Administrator of General Services.

(g) PROPERTY.—Any property acquired by the Commission remaining on termination of the Commission may be—

(1) used by the Secretary for purposes of the National Park Service; or

(2) disposed of as excess or surplus property.

SEC. 8. COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.

(a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—The members of the Commission shall receive no compensation for service on the Commission.

(b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from

the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of the duties of the Commission.

(c) STAFF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson of the Commission may, without regard to the civil service laws (including regulations), appoint and terminate an executive director and such other additional personnel as are necessary to enable the Commission to perform the duties of the Commission.

(2) CONFIRMATION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The employment of an executive director shall be subject to confirmation by the Commission.

(3) COMPENSATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Chairperson of the Commission may fix the compensation of the executive director and other personnel without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, relating to classification of positions and General Schedule pay rates.

(B) MAXIMUM RATE OF PAY.—The rate of pay for the executive director and other personnel shall not exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of title 5, United States Code.

(d) DETAIL OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An employee of the Federal Government may be detailed to the Commission without reimbursement.

(2) CIVIL SERVICE STATUS.—The detail of the employee shall be without interruption or loss of civil service status or privilege.

(e) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—The Chairperson of the Commission may procure temporary and intermittent services in accordance with section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals that do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of that title.

(f) ADVISORY COMMITTEES.—The Commission may appoint such advisory committees as the Commission determines necessary.

SEC. 9. EXPENDITURES OF COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—All expenditures of the Commission shall be made solely from donated funds.

(b) ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARIAT.—The Secretary of the Interior shall, through a competitive process, seek to enter into an arrangement with a nonprofit organization, the mission of which is consistent with the purpose of this Act. Under such arrangement, such nonprofit organization shall—

(1) serve as the secretariat of the Commission, including by serving as the point of contact under section 5(e);

(2) house the administrative offices of the Commission;

(3) assume responsibility for funds of the Commission; and

(4) provide to the Commission financial and administrative services, including services related to budgeting, accounting, financial reporting, personnel, and procurement.

(c) PAYMENT FOR FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), payment for services provided under subsection (b)(4) shall be made in

advance, or by reimbursement, from funds of the Commission in such amounts as may be agreed on by the Chairperson of the Commission and the secretariat of the Commission.

(2) RELATIONSHIP TO REGULATIONS.—

Applicability.

(A) ERRONEOUS PAYMENTS.—The regulations under section 5514 of title 5, United States Code, relating to the collection of indebtedness of personnel resulting from erroneous payments shall apply to the collection of erroneous payments made to, or on behalf of, a Commission employee.

(B) NO PROMULGATION BY COMMISSION.—The Commission shall not be required to prescribe any regulations relating to the matters described in subparagraph (A).

Time period.

(d) ANNUAL REPORT.—Once each year during the period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act and ending on December 31, 2027, the Commission shall submit to Congress a report of the activities of the Commission, including an accounting of funds received and expended during the year covered by the report.

SEC. 10. TERMINATION OF COMMISSION.

The Commission shall terminate on December 31, 2027.

Approved July 22, 2016.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 4875 (S. 2815):

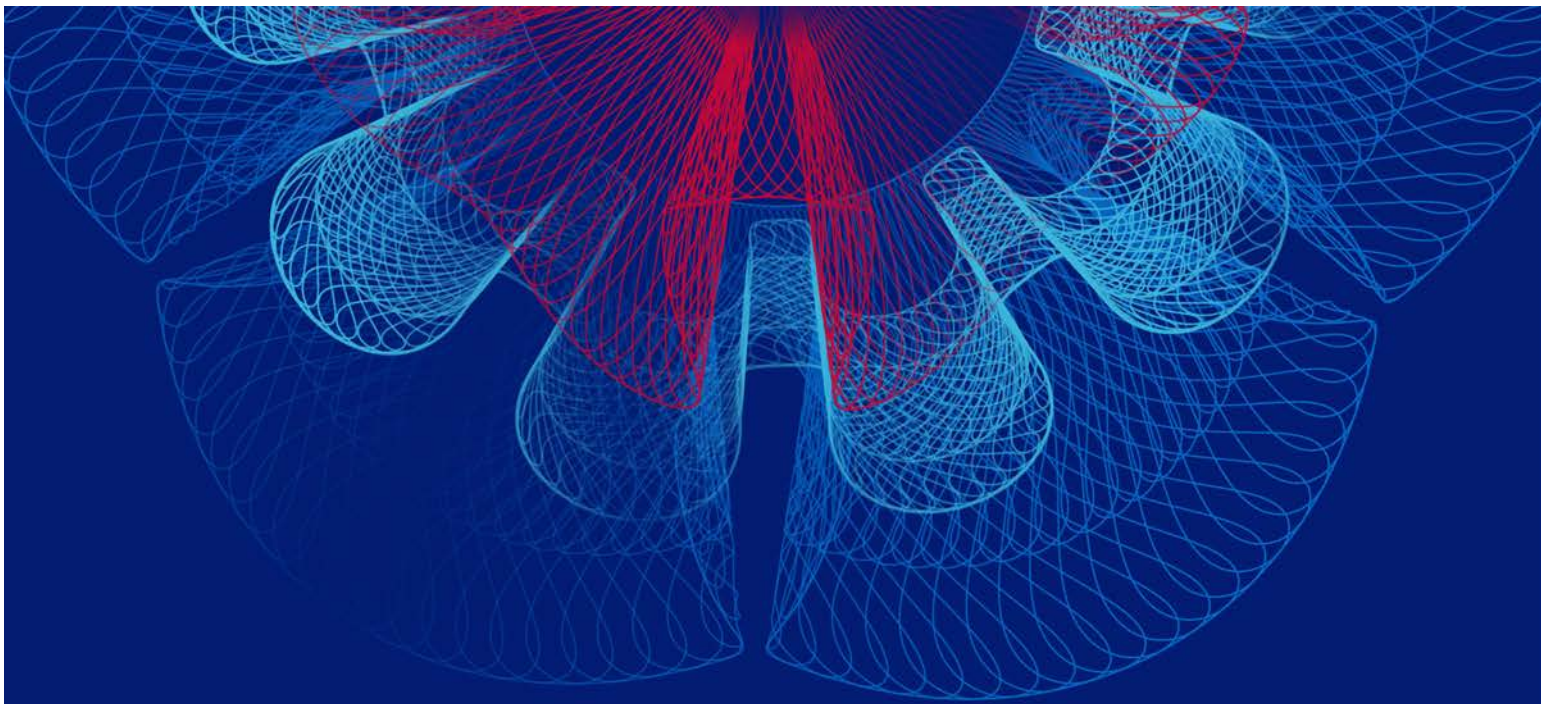
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 162 (2016):

July 5, considered and passed House.

July 12, considered and passed Senate.







APPENDIX B
LIST OF CURRENT MEMBERS
OF THE COMMISSION
AS OF DECEMBER 15, 2019

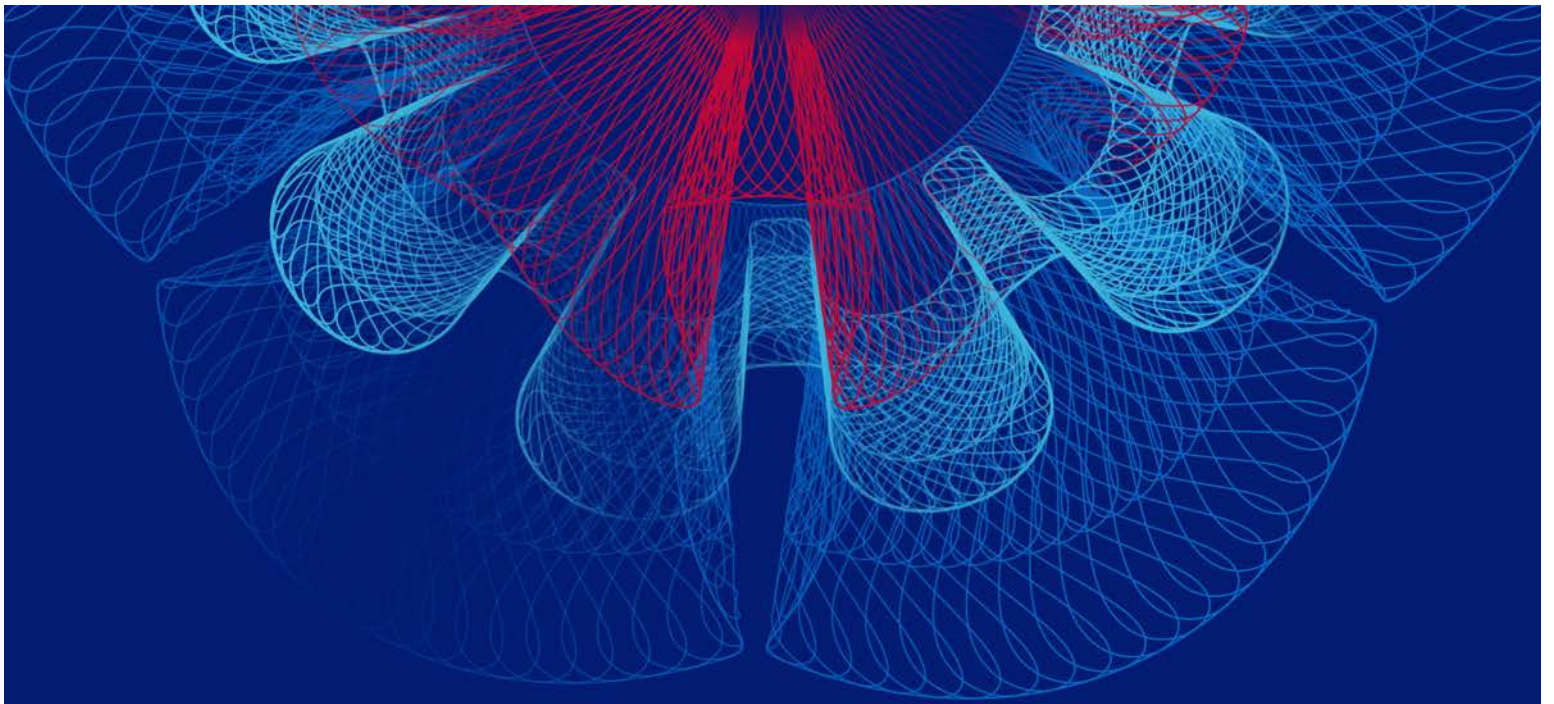
MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMISSION
(as of December 15, 2019)

Commissioners	State	Date of Appointment	By Party and Leadership
Senator Robert Casey, Jr.	Pennsylvania	Nov. 15, 2016	Democrat Senate Minority Leader
Senator Tom Cotton	Arkansas	Feb. 8, 2017	Republican Senate Majority Leader
Senator Jeanne Shaheen	New Hampshire	Nov. 15, 2016	Democrat Senate Minority Leader
Senator Patrick Toomey	Pennsylvania	Feb. 8, 2017	Republican Senate Majority Leader
Representative Robert B. Aderholt	Alabama	Feb. 25, 2017	Republican Speaker of the House
Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman	New Jersey	Feb. 22, 2019	Democrat Speaker of the House
Representative Dwight Evans	Pennsylvania	Jan. 8, 2019	Democrat Speaker of the House
Representative George Holding	North Carolina	May 23, 2018	Republican Speaker of the House
Robert A. Brady	Pennsylvania	Sept. 9, 2019	Democrat Speaker of the House
David L. Cohen	Pennsylvania	Nov. 15, 2016	Democrat Senate Minority Leader
Val Crofts	Wisconsin	Feb. 25, 2017	Republican Speaker of the House
Daniel M. DiLella	Pennsylvania	Feb. 8, 2017	Republican Senate Majority Leader
Cathy Gillepsie	Virginia	Feb. 8, 2017	Republican Senate Majority Leader
Noah Griffin	California	July 3, 2017	Democrat House Minority Leader
Amy Gutman, Ph.D.	Pennsylvania	July 3, 2017	Democrat House Minority Leader
Andrew Hohns, Ph.D.	Pennsylvania	Nov. 15, 2016	Democrat Senate Minority Leader
Jim Koch	Massachusetts	Feb. 25, 2017	Republican Speaker of the House
Wilfred M. McClay, Ph.D.	Oklahoma	Feb. 25, 2017	Republican Speaker of the House
Lucas Morel, Ph.D	Virginia	Feb. 8, 2017	Republican Senate Majority Leader
Rosie Rios	California ¹	Jan. 11, 2018	Democrat Senate Minority Leader
James L. Swanson	Dist. of Columbia	Nov. 15, 2016	Democrat Senate Minority Leader
Richard Trumka	Maryland	May 19, 2017	Democrat House Minority Leader
Thomas Walker, Jr.	Alabama	Feb. 8, 2017	Republican Senate Majority Leader
Lynn Forney Young	Texas	Feb. 25, 2017	Republican Speaker of the House

Ex-Officio Members		
Name	Office	Confirmed by Senate or Assumed Office
Honorable David Bernhardt	The Secretary of the Interior	April 11, 2019
Honorable Mike Pompeo	The Secretary of State	April 26, 2018
Honorable William P. Barr	The Attorney General	Feb. 14, 2019
Honorable Mark T. Esper, Ph.D.	The Secretary of Defense	July 23, 2019
Honorable Betsy DeVos	The Secretary of Education	Feb. 7, 2017
Honorable Carla Hayden, Ph.D.	The Librarian of Congress	Sept. 14, 2016
Honorable Lonnie Bunch, III	The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution	Nov. 1, 2019
Honorable David S. Ferriero	The Archivist of the United States	Nov. 6, 2009
	The Presiding Officer of the Federal Council of the Arts and the Humanities ²	

¹ Originally appointed from Maryland

² This position is currently vacant



APPENDIX C

UNITED STATES SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

U.S. SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMISSION

Strategic Plan Summary

Current as of
September 30, 2019

*With updates to Appendix B as of
December 13, 2019*

I. STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

What Has Been Accomplished Thus Far

While the scope and scale of the America 250 work is complex, that very fact has led to a conscious effort to frame the Commission's strategic priorities in simple, concise language. The detailed discussion of the Commission's four strategic pillars and related objectives beginning on page 8 further describes the four broad strategic priorities introduced by the Commission:

- *Reflect the dynamism of America with an engaging, educational and inspirational vision*
- *Build upon the strength of our nation through fostering inclusive relationships and securing valued partners*
- *Inspire the entire nation to convene and celebrate through national events, as well as encouraging and nurturing state and local community events and legacies*
- *Earn the trust of America through excellence and best practices in our execution*

The Commission has also been mindful in the design of our strategic priorities to remain faithful to the requirements of Public Law 114-196, including the requirements that we:

- Commemorate the period from pre-1776 through to the present day
- Give due consideration to the plans of state, local and private organizations
- Emphasize events in locations of historical significance to the Revolution
- Emphasize persons and places with significant impact on the whole of our history
- Emphasize ideas in our history that have been important to world affairs
- Evaluate and recommend infrastructure needed to support a successful America 250 commemoration at the national, state and local levels

Maintaining alignment on and successfully executing these priorities will be our primary focus over the next seven years. We are committed to keeping a tight focus, insisting upon clear accountability and managing the disciplined execution of our objectives to achieve the America 250 that our nation deserves. The current planning horizon for each of the priorities is the period between 2019 and 2022, at which time we will reassess, adjust and revise our strategic plan and objectives as America 250 grows and further takes shape.

The Commission's work to define strategic priorities has produced the results outlined below. In addition, the Commission has identified certain strengths, opportunities and potential issues to be addressed as we move forward in the design and execution stages.

Strengths

- Our Congressional Mandate lends immediate credibility to our efforts and has greatly facilitated access to stakeholders
- We have encountered a high level of enthusiasm for the promise and possibilities of America 250 from all parties engaged thus far, and federal agencies in particular have readily embraced their own program planning
- We benefit from the active involvement of a core group of highly committed commissioners with significant depth, experience and influence within their respective areas of expertise

Opportunities

- Our work can inspire tremendous pride and deeper understanding that is shared across the nation, promoting national unity and mutual commitment to the commonwealth
- The profile and excitement of America 250 can jump-start the next generation's interest in civics, history and American culture

- America 250's focus on the founding of our nation can lead to greater citizen participation in community, local and state organizations; higher interest in voting; and greater excitement for other means of civic engagement
- America 250's scale can enable every American to tell their story, being broadly inclusive in our design and execution

Potential Issues

- Our nation is wonderfully diverse, and it can sometimes be challenging to ensure that we have engaged partners from every facet of American culture; we must therefore be highly inclusive in the design process, proactively engaging stakeholders from around the nation in the development and execution of America 250
- We may encounter pressure from partisan or special interests in the design and execution of America 250; we must resist such overtures to ensure that the celebration remains exciting and relevant to every American
- The scale and ambition of our vision for the Semiquincentennial may be constrained by insufficient funding and resources; to be successful, we must develop strong support from the White House and Congress, as well as private partners and sponsors

Provided below is a brief status update on the progress of each of the strategic priorities thus far.

Status of Priority I. Create an Engaging, Educational and Inspirational Vision. We are excited by the bold and engaging vision that has already taken shape. The commissioners have reached consensus on the vision and purpose of the America 250 commemoration, and the three key themes of Unity, Civic Engagement and Education are receiving nearly unanimous accord with key stakeholders thus far. In addition, our four broad strategic priorities are already actively guiding the work of the Commission and the Secretariat staff. Significant progress has been made toward this strategic priority:

- The Commission is in the design stages with a professional communications firm to develop and execute a dynamic and inspirational launch for the America 250 national celebration.
- We have retained well-regarded professional services firms to develop a world-class branding, communications and marketing campaign. This includes an America 250 logo to brand all communications and marketing efforts, communications materials and public relations kits and strategies, as well as identifying prominent, highly recognized "brand ambassadors" to begin endorsing the America 250 commemoration well in advance of 2026.
- To advance the educational dimension of this priority, the Commission is well underway in program and partnership discussions with the Smithsonian Institution, the Department of Education, the National Archives and the Library of Congress.
- Focus group discussions and feedback on the vision and themes have already been gained from more than 65 highly diverse key stakeholder groups (See updated list at Appendix B), with invaluable feedback on content and messaging. In addition, we have identified youth and military personnel and veterans as two critical cohorts to include in our design process.
- Commission congressional members have agreed to form an America 250 Caucus to advocate broad support and participation in the observance.
- The Commission has developed an early website and has engaged a professional design firm to enhance the website to be the "go-to" source for all organizations and Americans who want to learn more about how to develop their own local events and programs.

Status of Priority II. Build Relationships and Secure Valued Partners. The Commission recognizes that the scale and scope of America 250 require extensive outreach and an open invitation to all those who wish to contribute, collaborate and celebrate. The Commission does not wish to and cannot undertake to micromanage the execution of what will undoubtedly prove to be tens of thousands of unique local events

hosted by states, communities and private organizations. Instead, our goal is to create an exciting and consistent framework around which interested parties can shape their America 250 programs, ensuring that 2026 reverberates with events that speak to one another, but do so in the local language and customs of the many diverse traditions and places of America. We believe a truly successful America 250 will require that the Commission working with its partners provide clear guidelines for all organizations and communities that wish to participate, while simultaneously creating a climate of trust that encourages creativity and innovation in these customized programs. The Commission's commitment to be inclusive and to broadly invite *all* Americans and organizations to actively participate is a clear focus.

- The Commission has identified three roles for potential partners to adopt:
 - *Design partners:* We have made substantial progress in our first nine months to engage a broad list of diverse organizations to offer input and suggestions on the vision, key themes and priorities of the Commission. Appendix B lists the impressive group of organizations that have already provided input and feedback.
 - *Engagement partners:* We have engaged professional services firms to assist in identifying key organizations to approach regarding licensing and trademark use as they design their own customized programs and events. In addition to the critical group of potential sponsorship partners referenced below, this category will include foundations, universities and colleges, museums, nongovernmental organizations and other members of civil society.
 - *Resource partners:* Private sponsorships and philanthropic support will be a crucial element in the successful execution of America 250. We have engaged a professional services firm and have identified 20 categories of important sponsorship and value-in-kind organizations and companies. These categories currently include more than 100 public and privately held companies in financial services, automotive, air travel, telecommunications, food and beverage, retail, healthcare, consumer goods, insurance, energy, sports and entertainment, apparel and fashion and other areas.
- The Commission, in partnership with the American Battlefield Trust, has incorporated the America 250 Foundation with 501(c)3 status to be the vehicle to generate the considerable private resources that will be needed to sustain the America 250 events and programs. The Foundation is moving ahead aggressively with staffing and becoming operational, and initial outreach to dozens of the potential resource partners will occur before the end of 2019.
- The Commission, along with the Foundation principals, has identified a target list of important organizations in the Arts and Entertainment industries to encourage their engagement in America 250 (e.g., Major League Baseball, major museums, the Kennedy Center, publishers, celebrity ambassadors and spokespersons, authors, telecommunications companies, movie studios, Broadway theatre and music contacts).
- The Commission has already reached out to more than 65 key stakeholders through focus groups, task forces and town hall meetings. Before the end of 2019, we anticipate convening at least five additional, large focus groups to gather design feedback from: Native American tribes, African American associations, Latino associations, youth organizations and military groups.

Status of Priority III. Be Comprehensive in Scope and Both National and Local in Impact. Public Law 114-196 directs the Commission to support and develop national events and programs while also working with other nations, federal agencies, states and territories to nurture and inspire their participation. Of particular note, the legislation requires that the national celebration's exhibits and events take place, to the maximum extent possible, in buildings of historical significance to the Revolution or facilities proximate thereto. Also of interest in the legislation is the explicit reference to the original 13 colonies and their leading cities of Boston, Charleston, Philadelphia and New York. In addition, the early work of the Commission has recognized that our goal to reach all Americans and each American can best be achieved by partnering with organizations that have national reach and local venues, especially the

National Park System, and also partners in the Arts, Education and Entertainment industries. Advances have already been made in a number of these areas:

- The Commission chair has contacted all state governors to invite their states to participate in the America 250 celebration and offered the Commission’s assistance in designing their state events and programs. A state-level director has been retained and has already begun to make follow up contact with the state governors’ offices, as well as congressional offices, and Commission staff are also coordinating with the American Association for State and Local History. Conversations and planning have already begun with thirteen states. In addition, four states have already established their own America 250 state-level Commissions (NY, PA, SC, TN)
- The Commission is already collaborating with national and federal agencies on the development of their own programs and events to reinforce the key themes of Unity, Civic Engagement and Education. A federal-level director has been retained to coordinate these national and federal agencies, as required by the Public Law Act. While federal agency plan reports are not due until later this year, the Commission has recently received early briefings from:
 - The National Endowment for the Humanities
 - The National Endowment for the Arts
 - The Smithsonian Institute
 - The Department of the Interior/National Parks Service
 - The Department of Education
 - The Department of Defense
 - The National Archives
 - The Library of Congress

These agencies have already done significant thinking and design work to develop a menu of engaging and entertaining series of programs and events occurring well before and leading up to 2026. In fact, the National Endowment for the Humanities issued a press release on September 17, 2019, announcing its America 250 commitment. That press release closely reinforced the Commission’s key themes of “a more perfect union,” and “all Americans,” and a focus on “education and civic engagement.” The Commission’s visionary framework has been readily adopted by many of these agencies, based on their preliminary briefings. While too numerous to list here, these national and federal agencies have already framed national events that include: national contests for songs, books, art, poetry and food; collecting and curating “American Stories” from millions of Americans; folklife festivals across the country; traveling exhibits of historically significant documents and artifacts; special events at national parks and monuments; educational documentaries; historical symposia; museum open houses; and commemorating the “top 250” in American music, art, food, theatre, movies, books, sports. The Commission is greatly encouraged by the genuine enthusiasm with which these agencies have approached the America 250 possibilities.

- A Special Committee of the Commission has been formed and charged with researching, evaluating and recommending a menu of potential “National Signature” programs and events, as required by Public Law Act 114-196. This committee has met on multiple occasions and been briefed on other national events (e.g., the recent Apollo 13; the Rose Bowl Parade), as well as representatives from other similar commissions (e.g., the 2017 Canada 150 Commission and the City of Milan 2015 Exposition Team).
- A task force has been formed on parks, preservation and public spaces to evaluate and recommend to the Secretary of the Interior how to fully leverage the preservation and development of historic sites and battlefields as showcase venues for the America 250 commemoration, as required by Public Law Act 114-196.
- The Commission has developed guidelines and participatory frameworks for all those organizations that will elect to be an active partner in the America 250 events. These guidelines will be announced and made available publicly in parallel with the national launch of America

250 in early 2020, as well as be available on the Commission's website. We have learned from discussions with other similar commissions that clear guidelines for participation are a critical element in ensuring the quality and integrity of partner programs and events.

- The Commission has begun to consult with many other organizations on their America 250 planning, including The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, The National Society Sons of the American Revolution, the American Association of State and Local History and PA250. Next steps will be to develop a target list of important private organizations and NGOs to begin cultivating relationships to encourage participation in America 250 (e.g., Ford Foundation, Gates Foundation, Woodrow Wilson Foundation, Brookings Institute, American Red Cross). Sponsorship, licensing and trademark opportunities need to be fully designed and pass legal scrutiny.

Status of Strategic Priority IV. Ensure Excellence in Our Execution. The Commission is committed to embodying best practices in organizational infrastructure and practice to successfully execute the strategic plan. At the same time, the Commission is very much akin to a business in its start-up phase—resources and funding must be secured, highly qualified and diverse staff and operational professionals must be recruited and retained, staff support systems must be designed (e.g., finance, accounting, legal and human resources) and a transparent and effective Commission governance structure must be put into place. Finally, the Commission must establish an organizational culture that is exemplary in its stewardship and ethical practices. The Commission has made solid progress in advancing our objectives in this area, including:

- The American Battlefield Trust was selected by the Secretary of the Interior to serve as the Administrative Secretariat for the Commission, and is providing management and administrative support and coordination to the Commission, until such time as the America 250 Foundation is fully operational.
- The governance structure of the Commission has been established with the creation of six committees: Finance, Development, Program Planning and Development, Communications and Marketing, Government Relations and Governance. Chairs and members have been appointed, and each of these committees is active.
- The Commission has established the America 250 Foundation as the fundraising entity to support the America 250 effort and has retained professional services to establish a funding strategy to include more than 100 initially targeted companies for sponsorships, licensing and trademark agreements. Our next priority is to staff up the Foundation to achieve greater capacity. We also anticipate organizing boards and advisory committees to facilitate the participation of prominent Americans who can assist in the Foundation's fundraising efforts, while becoming active ambassadors for the America 250 celebration.
- The Commission is receiving administrative management support on budgeting and accounting services through the federal GSA offices.
- We are establishing a clearinghouse for communications and public relations under our Communications and Marketing Committee. This function will be critical to staff as it becomes operational, with one of the first tasks being the successful initial public launch of America 250 in early 2020.
- We have integrated lessons learned from our dialogue with third-party experts. For instance, we have learned from Canada 150 and Milan 2015 Exposition organizers of the primary importance of security (both physical and cyber) as we design systems and begin to plan for physical events at various venues.
- We seek to be highly participative in leading the America 250 program and event planning beyond the national programs, and to encourage innovation and creativity from our institutions, our states, our communities and individual Americans.

- We are building our staff expertise and seeking to recruit a core group of diverse, talented and committed professionals who view their role as a “calling” to the vision of America 250, rather than merely a job or next career move. The Commission is fully committed to staffing decisions that honor the diversity of America.
- The Commission must be consistently vigilant in maintaining a culture of trust, respect, transparency and ethical stewardship.

Four Strategic Pillars

The Commission’s work is grounded in the following strategic pillars:

I. Create an engaging, educational vision: *Not only are we commemorating the first 250 years of our democracy, we must also inspire Americans to work together in the future to preserve those founding inspirational freedoms we cherish. We will strive to create legacy initiatives that survive well beyond 2026.*

II. Build relationships and secure valued partners: *In designing the America 250 observance, we want to encourage creativity, innovation and pride across the United States in the design and execution of events and programs. This can only happen through building trusted private and public partnerships.*

III. Be comprehensive in scope, and both national and local in impact: *The goal to reach all Americans will require broad visibility of national events and programs. But the goal to reach each American will require a significant focus and customization of programs at the local level, which feature those experiences which are the most meaningful sources of pride in local communities.*

IV. Ensure excellence in our execution: *Our goal is to create meaningful experiences in which all Americans can participate and take pride. The sheer scope and scale of that goal will require the Commission to lead this effort in a way that demonstrates high standards, responsible and transparent stewardship, and exemplary ethics.*

America 250 Strategic Priorities and Objectives

Vision and purpose: “To inspire the American Spirit among all Americans and each American, based on our founding principles, on our journey to a more perfect union”

Key Themes: Unity, Civic Engagement and Education

Priority I. Create an Engaging, Educational and Inspirational Vision

The goal of inspiring “all Americans and each American” will require a world-class communications and messaging effort. The importance of a clear, simple statement about why we celebrate the nation’s 250th will be pivotal. Not only what we are celebrating about our past and present, but also the need to look ahead to the next 250 years and emphasize how important it is that we continue to work together to preserve those things we value about our democracy. In addition, the communications, messaging and experiential events provide a great educational opportunity to promote greater knowledge and understanding of American history and civics.

Objective I.1. Create an engaging America 250 thematic architecture. The America 250 message and events must promote an enthusiasm and a call to action for each American. The themes of Unity, Civic Engagement and Education should resonate throughout our messaging and event planning. And the goal to achieve an even more perfect union should be energizing and promote civic engagement.

Objective I.2. Be fully inclusive in soliciting broad input into the America 250 design and execution. We will proactively seek input and advice from a comprehensive representation of organizations and a broad cross section of Americans in the design of programs and events for the 250th anniversary. These efforts will include surveys, focus groups, task forces and town halls.

Objective I.3. Develop and execute a comprehensive national marketing, branding and communications plan.

We will create a visible, recognizable brand among all Americans about the 250th anniversary and why they should want to be personally involved. The national branding efforts should emphasize our history, as well as our aspirations for the future. The impact of the national programs and events we undertake should ultimately impact people in a personal, reflective way.

Objective I.4. Emphasize the educational opportunity in the brand messaging and event designs. America 250 provides a unique window within which to raise the level of knowledge and awareness of American history and civics among Americans of all ages. These educational opportunities present themselves in both formal and informal (education) educational opportunities, as well as through experiential events and programs. This category will include, but not be limited to museums, universities, schools, publishers, historians, authors, foundations and scientific institutions, think tanks and foundations.

Objective I.5. Leverage the powerful reach of the Arts and Entertainment industries in promoting national focus. We are specifically targeting a significant list of organizations in the Arts and Entertainment categories to join with us in creating and disseminating an inspirational message about America 250. These categories will include, but not be limited to, museums, sports teams and leagues, musicians/songwriters, movie studios, theatres/playwrights, authors/publishers, theme parks and media.

Priority II. Build Relationships with Valued Partners and Stakeholders

For America 250 to be of, by and for all Americans and each American, the Commission must build relationships across the country and around the world within the context of its visionary framework and participatory frameworks. The commemoration's anticipated scope and scale require the creative involvement of a broad range of partners and stakeholders to achieve its purpose and express its themes. These relationships will involve give and take, with the Commission providing high-level leadership, guidance and support to public and private partners, and stakeholders providing a vast array programming across local, tribal, state, regional, national and international jurisdictions. The Commission will leverage these relationships to empower creative, innovative and collaborative partners and stakeholders to bring America 250 to life.

Objective II.1. Establish direct relationships with partners. The word “partner” is crucial here, implying ongoing engagement and mutual support. Partners are those having a direct relationship with the Commission/America 250 Foundation. Partners will be involved with America 250 in design, engagement and/or resource roles. The design role involves providing input to framing overall strategy and conceptualizing programs. The engagement role involves program development and implementation in direct coordination with the Commission/America 250 Foundation. The resource role involves providing money, people or tools through formal arrangements with the Commission/America 250 Foundation to support America 250 programming and operations.

Objective II.2. Support indirect relationships with America 250 stakeholders. Most America 250 stakeholders will engage indirectly with the Commission through key partners in the context of participatory frameworks. In addition, the Commission will connect with stakeholders through its ambassadors, online information clearinghouse, marketing and communications initiatives and other promotional activities.

Objective II.3. Maintain relationships with partners and stakeholders. Once established, these relationships will require ongoing engagement and communication to support broad, decentralized America 250 participation aligned with the Commission's visionary framework.

Objective II.4. Establish the America 250 Foundation to cultivate and ensure broad participation from partners—especially those providing resources to support America 250 operations and programming. The America 250 Foundation is the Commission's organizational resource to spearhead a wide range of resource-raising initiatives (e.g., sponsorships, licensing arrangements, commercial activities and in-kind contributions of goods and services). The Foundation also is the Commission's point of contact for partner and stakeholder relationship building and coordinated participatory framework execution.

Priority III. Be Comprehensive in Scope, and National and Local in Impact

The goal to reach all Americans will require compelling national visibility and scope of programs and events. The goal to reach each American will require significant focus and customization of programs and events at the local and community level. The indispensable ingredient needed to reach each American will mean events and programs that are highly experiential, requiring multiple participatory frameworks allowing people to convene and interact across various jurisdictions from international to national to local.

Objective III.1. Create and execute compelling National Signature programs to engage all Americans. The centerpiece of the America 250th anniversary will be a series of National Signature events and programs that are the most visible to Americans on a broad scale. These events and programs, such as national touring exhibits or major events in Washington or other places of historical significance, will garner the most media and popular attention. This series of events must truly be world-class in their design and execution; places and events that allow people to convene and interact on a large scale.

Objective III.2. Collaborate with the State Department to fully engage with all international partners that want to participate. The State Department has the leading role in engaging foreign nations to invite them to join in America 250, with the Commission providing necessary support and coordination.

Objective III.3. Ensure that federal and national agencies and entities develop and execute commemorative programs. Federal agencies and entities are stewards of significant aspects of our nation's story, and together already connect each American. For example, the National Park Service, with its reach to more than 300 million visitors each year, has a unique opportunity to engage all Americans, each American and friends of America. The Commission will work with federal agencies as they pursue appropriate commemorative activities.

Objective III.4. Encourage states and territories to develop and facilitate statewide and community 250 programs. The Commission is in contact with all 50 state governors, and will be conferring with each state and territory to encourage creating its own commission to design and execute plans uniquely customized to that state's history and American connection, and facilitate the America 250 program development by communities and private organizations at the local level.

Objective III.5. Coordinate national and regional public/private programs. The Commission recognizes and will support a significant number of national and regional programs that do not fall within the scope of the other participatory frameworks. These programs may be on a grand scale, but will be initiated and led by public/private partnerships.

Priority IV. Ensure Excellence in Our Execution

Our goal is to create a meaningful experience for 350 million Americans leading up to and including 2026, as well as creating legacy initiatives beyond that time. As comprehensive a goal as that statement implies requires the Commission to organize, structure and staff itself at a world-class level. There are fundamental hallmarks of highly effective, and highly efficient, organizations that we must achieve, including the creation of a mission-driven culture that inspires the commitment and dedication of our people.

Objective IV.1. Provide effective, ethical and transparent stewardship of all resources, financial and human. We will ensure that a hallmark of our performance over the period of the Commission will be a reputation for conspicuous transparency and responsible stewardship. Nothing would jeopardize our credibility more than any lapse in ethical conduct.

Objective IV.2. Generate needed resources through innovative fundraising efforts. The America 250 Foundation will focus fundraising efforts to secure individual donors, corporate sponsors and licensing partners, while exploring other funding opportunities, including federal appropriations and bond issues.

Objective IV.3. Establish clear, enforceable federal regulations for issuing the official logo (trademark) of America 250, and for its use by the states, nonprofit charitable organizations and commercial licensing. These will be powerful resource-generating opportunities for the Commission. We will be clear and resolute regarding

guidelines in these areas with organizations that choose to engage.

Objective IV.4. Collaborate with and provide oversight of the America 250 Foundation. This 501(c)3 organization will be vital to securing the needed financial resources to successfully execute a nationwide initiative of this scale. The Commission will be responsible for ensuring that high professional and ethical standards are adhered to at the Foundation.

Objective IV.5. Establish effective external communications, public affairs and media and public relations efforts. The visibility and scope of the America 250 programs and events, as well as the sheer number of organizations involved, will require a highly effective communications capability at the Commission. Media expertise and credibility, as well as crisis management capability, will be important.

Objective IV.6. Ensure highly effective security standards are in place, both physical and cyber. Given the high-profile nature of the America 250 events, and the visibility and international notoriety of many of the individuals who will be central to the 250 events and programs, it will be critical to establish fail-safe security standards for the 250th events and programs. This includes physical security, but also information protection and cyber security.

Objective IV.7. Maintain an active, interactive website and social media platform. Coordination of activities, ability to quickly access information by key partners and the ability to poll and survey large numbers of people quickly and efficiently will require a sound technology platform.

Appendix A. Illustrative Excerpts from Commissioners' Blue Sky Essays

Unity theme

- “Americans have moved beyond deep personal discord toward more unity.”
- “As a newly registered voter exclaimed, ‘All of America stands together today!’”
- “A democracy is only as strong as its least enfranchised citizens.”
- “The commemoration successfully included every generation.”
- “The best productions also gave due attention to the ways our social and political practice fell short of our noblest professions.”
- “A celebration of, by and for the American people.”
- “A revival in national unity recognizing the contributions of our diverse peoples.”
- “*E pluribus unum*, the nation’s motto, has been restored to its rightful place.”
- “Millions of Americans coming together ... young, old and those in between.”
- “Myriad intertwining historical narratives that reflect a spirit of ‘*E pluribus unum*’ awakened a deep and personal sense of connection to the United States.”
- “Family programs involved people across generations ... library programs connected people from vastly different backgrounds and circumstances for thoughtful conversations about community needs.”
- “Communities came together to celebrate their cultural traditions and contemporary landscapes ... it mobilized a generation of students.”
- “Helped the American people understand themselves and their shared experience, while underscoring the importance of equity and inclusion.”

Civic Engagement theme

- “The 250th was a turning point that came just in time, making patriotism ‘cool.’”
- “Will the unity, patriotic spirit and civic awareness generated especially among our nation’s youth last?”
- “A record number of young people have registered to vote.”
- “The nation showed its collective pride of what it means to be American.”
- “Volunteerism has also blossomed.”
- “a rebound in patriotism has influenced attitudes toward civic participation, from voting to volunteerism.”
- “Unprecedented engagement sparks national renewal... a renewed hope for the great American Experiment... the renewal is just beginning”
- “Decades of diminishing voter turnout in local, state and national elections was dramatically reversed by the My VoteCounts ... local civic affairs and citizenship dramatically increased volunteerism.”
- “Many students stated that the programs ignited in them a desire to pursue higher education in the areas of history, civics, journalism, folklore, media and the arts.”
- “Substantive discussions of important civic issues that ... inspired millions of people to believe that their involvement would make a difference.”
- “The 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States served as an unexpected platform for cultivating civic engagement.”
- “Millions of Americans came together in acts of service to their neighbors and communities ... the Serve 250 effort brought tangible improvements to communities, including safer neighborhoods and healthier communities.”
- “Millions of Americans have yet again put into practice the lifeblood of democracy, the people rising up and reaching out a hand to strengthen our civic fabric ... communities worked together to serve one another ... a record number of people cast their ballots in local and national elections.”

Education theme

- “Schools, universities, think tanks all contributed their diverse outlooks.”
- “A year-long interactive digital and internet experience and exhibits for lesson plans in schools.”
- “The intense year-long focus has resulted in a more knowledgeable community of Americans.”

- “Books, plays and student essays were written and read across the country.”
- “Only 23% of 8th graders were proficient in civics and 44% of school districts had cut back time devoted to social studies.”
- “From high school AP history tests and contests, to award-winning documentaries.”
- “Nationwide, books, plays and student essays were written.”
- “After the 2026 Semiquincentennial, polls and student test scores demonstrate that student knowledge of the Declaration of Independence is at an all-time high.”
- “The 250th served as an unexpected platform ... for producing substantive scholarship and history programs ... history curricula across the country have been revised, and schools have increased instruction hours devoted to history.”
- “The Serve 250 effort brought [about] ... higher performing schools.”
- “Thousands of colleges integrated the America 250 curriculum into their civic engagement programs.”
- “Developed a national program for high school students ... students stated that the program ignited in them a desire to pursue higher education.”
- “Institutions from the Smithsonian to rural county historical societies played their part to educate a nation.”

Appendix B: Organizations included in design efforts thus far

Ex Officio Agencies¹

The Department of Defense
The Department of Education
The Department of the Interior/National Parks Service
The Department of Justice
The Department of State
The Library of Congress
The National Archives
The Smithsonian Institution

Other National, State, Territorial, and Native American Public and Private Organizations

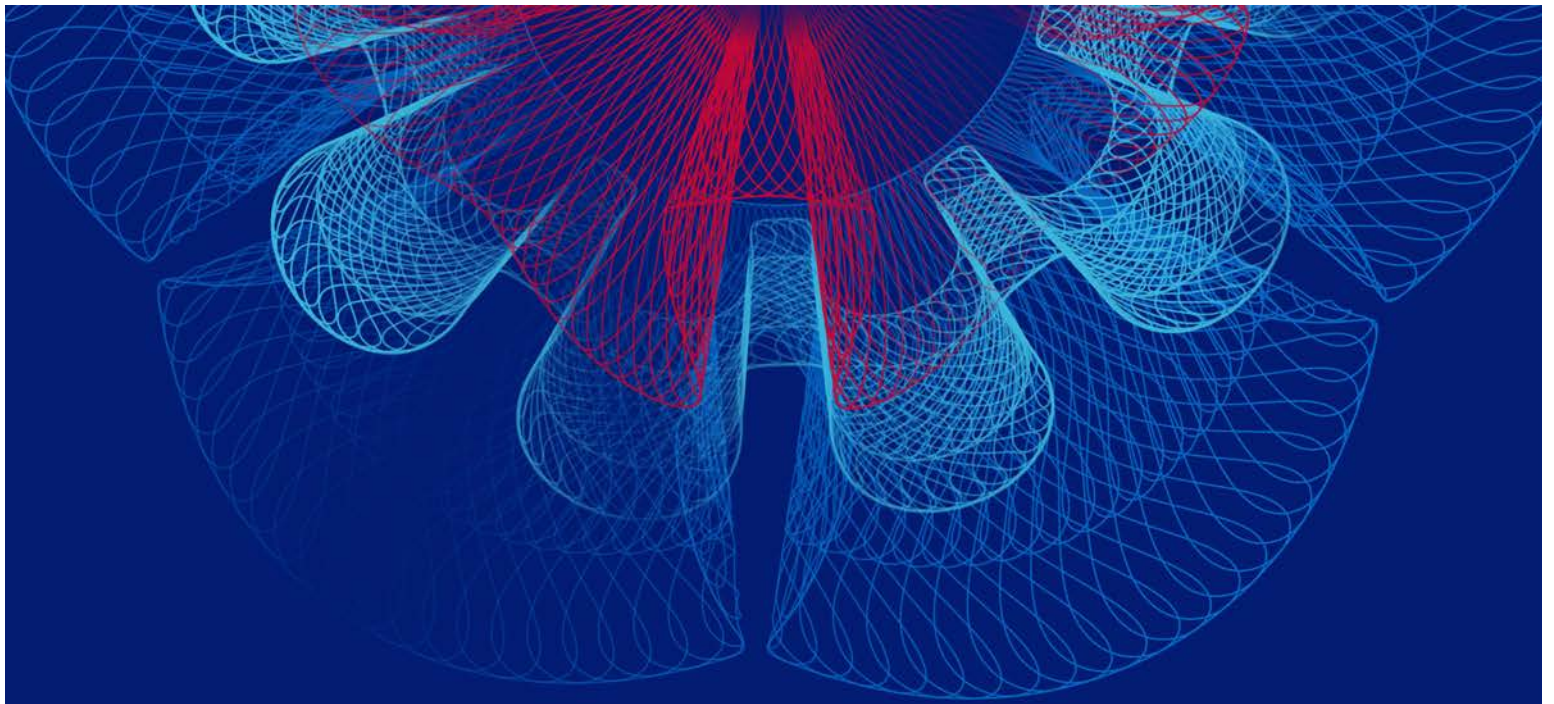
- 1 Abercrombie and Fitch New Employees
- 2 Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- 3 Alabama Department of Archives & History
- 4 Albert Lepage Center for History in the Public Interest, Villanova University
- 5 Alexander Hamilton Awareness Society
- 6 American Alliance of Museums
- 7 American Association for State and Local History
- 8 American Civil War Museum
- 9 American Historical Association
- 10 American Indian Library Association
- 11 American Legion
- 12 American Philosophical Society
- 13 American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati
- 14 American University
- 15 Ancestry
- 16 Arizona Director of Boards and Commissions
- 17 Arkansas Governor's Office
- 18 California Institute of the Arts
- 19 Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum
- 20 Constituting America-We the Future contest winners
- 21 Corporation for National and Community Service
- 22 Council of State Archivists
- 23 Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area
- 24 Daughters of the American Revolution
- 25 District of Columbia Mayor's Office
- 26 Federation of State Humanities Councils

¹ The Presiding Officer of the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities is vacant. The Commission Chairman invited the Chairmen of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities (listed under Other National, State, Territory, and Native American Public and Private Organizations) to participate on the Commission as if they were designated ex-officio members and has requested that they be added to the Commission by amendment to the United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016.

- 27 Florida Governor's Office
- 28 Ford's Theatre
- 29 Fort Sill Apache Tribe
- 30 George Washington's Mount Vernon
- 31 Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance
- 32 Hearst Corporation
- 33 Heinz History Center
- 34 History Made By US
- 35 History Relevance Initiative
- 36 iCivics
- 37 Idaho Governor's Office
- 38 Institute of Museum and Library Services
- 39 Institute of Puerto Rican Culture
- 40 Interfaith Youth Core
- 41 International Coalition of Sites of Conscience
- 42 Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum Complex
- 43 Iowa Governor's Office
- 44 Jicarilla Apache Nation
- 45 Joslyn Art Museum
- 46 Kennedy Center
- 47 Kentucky Governor's Office
- 48 Kentucky Historical Society
- 49 Lopevision, Inc.
- 50 Maine State Archives
- 51 Maryland Governor's Office
- 52 Massachusetts Historical Society/Revolution 250
- 53 Michigan Governor's Office
- 54 Minnesota Governor's Office
- 55 Minnesota Historical Society
- 56 Minnetrista
- 57 Missouri Governor's Office
- 58 Montana Governor's Office
- 59 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- 60 National Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- 61 National Civil Rights Museum
- 62 National Coalition for History
- 63 National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers
- 64 National Council for the Social Studies
- 65 National Council on Public History
- 66 National Education Association
- 67 National Endowment for the Arts
- 68 National Endowment for the Humanities
- 69 National Gallery of Art
- 70 National Governors Association

71	National History Day
72	National Humanities Alliance
73	National Museum of the United States Army
74	National Park Foundation
75	National Park Service-Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site/Nicodemus National Historic Site
76	National Park Service-Cultural Resource Office of Interpretation and Education
77	National Park Service-Golden Gate National Recreation Area
78	National Park Service-Independence National Historical Park
79	National Park Service-Minute Man National Historical Park
80	National Park Service-Tribal Historic Preservation Program
81	National Park Service-Yosemite National Park
82	National Trust for Historic Preservation
83	National World War II Museum
84	Nebraska Governor's Office
85	New Jersey Historical Commission
86	New Mexico Governor's Office
87	New Mexico Historic Sites
88	New Mexico State Library
89	New York State Office of History
90	North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
91	Northeast Document Conservation Center
92	Ohio Department of Education: Whole Child Initiative
93	Ohio History Connection
94	Oklahoma Governor's Office
95	Organization of American Historians
96	Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma
97	Pennsylvania 250 Commission/PA250
98	Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration
99	RevolutionaryVA250
100	Rhode Island Governor's Office
101	Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation
102	Rose Bowl Parade
103	San Francisco Historical Society
104	Santa Clara Pueblo Community Library
105	Seminole Tribe of Florida
106	Sequoyah National Research Center
107	Smithsonian Institution-National Museum of American History
108	Smithsonian Institution-National Museum of Asian Art/Freer Sackler Gallery
109	Smithsonian Institution-National Museum of the American Indian
110	Sons of the American Revolution
111	South Carolina Sestercentennial Commission
112	South Dakota Governor's Office
113	Tennessee Historical Society

- 114 Tennessee Semiquincentennial Commission
- 115 Texas Governor's Office
- 116 Thomas Jefferson's Monticello
- 117 U.S. Consulate General Curacao
- 118 United Service Organizations (USO)
- 119 United States Army Center of Military History
- 120 United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration
- 121 University of North Carolina
- 122 USA 250
- 123 Utah Division of State History
- 124 Utah Governor's Office
- 125 Vermont Governor's Office
- 126 Virginia Museum of History and Culture
- 127 Washington State Historical Society
- 128 West Virginia Council on Arts & Culture
- 129 White House Historical Association
- 130 Wyandotte Nation



APPENDIX D

**SUMMARY REPORT OF AMERICA 250
SURVEY CONDUCTED BY
SHUGOLL RESEARCH**



America 250 Survey

Quantitative Research Findings

Prepared for:
America 250
1800 G St, NW
Washington, D.C.
20006

Prepared By:
Shugoll Research
7475 Wisconsin Ave.
Suite 200
Bethesda, MD 20814



Background

America 250 contracted with Shugoll Research to conduct a quantitative survey with respondents from all 50 states and DC to measure their reactions to a national celebration of America's 250th birthday.

All respondents were screened to ensure that they:
Live in the United States
Are at least 18 years old

Shugoll Research developed a 12-minute online survey. The sample was obtained from a national panel of research respondents. It included at least 100 respondents from each state and D.C. The sample ensured inclusion of significant racial and ethnic groups. This provides enough respondents to break out data by state, race and ethnicity.

Between October 21st and November 6th, 2019, 5551 respondents completed the survey. The data were then weighted by state population and gender to match their percentage in the United States population.

Total (n=5551) (data are accurate within +/- 1% at a 95% confidence level)

Summary

Americans are positive about the idea for a 250th birthday celebration, they feel it is appropriate to use government funds for this purpose and many plan to participate in the celebration in some way. These findings suggest that planning for this event should move forward.

- Three-quarters of Americans are positive about an America 250 celebration with almost 6 in 10 (59%) very positive. Only 6% are negative. All demographic groups support the celebration.
- Two out of three Americans feel it is appropriate to use government funds to celebrate America's 250th birthday (and 51% highly agree). Only 14% disagree.
- Over two-thirds of Americans are interested in participating in some way (68%) with almost half (49%) very interested in participating.

The preliminary work of the America 250 Commission is well received by Americans. They support the goal and purposes of the 250 celebration that the Commission created. While some might be shortened or wordsmithed, there are no red flags in any of them.

- Two-thirds are positive about the goal “to seek to encourage each American to participate in this nationwide event, and share how their own personal story and family journey fits into the larger fabric of our national community.” Almost half (48%) are strongly positive and just 10% are negative.
- Americans also are positive about the purpose of America 250: “to inspire the American Spirit among all Americans and each American, based on our founding principles and our journey (as stated in the Constitution) to a more perfect union.” Over 7 in 10 (72%) are positive about this purpose, 55% are strongly positive and few (9%) are negative.

In addition to just being a celebration, Americans believe America 250 can have positive impacts for the nation. These include helping to unify the country, encouraging civic engagement and promoting interest in civics and American history. These findings further justify investment in America 250.

- Over two out of three Americans (69%) believe the America 250 programs and events can help unify America (and 50% strongly agree). Only 13% disagree.
- At least two-thirds of respondents feel that each of the ambitious goals of America 250 are believable: America 250 will not just look back at history but will inspire hope for the future; local programs and events will reflect the local language and customs of the many diverse traditions and places in America; America 250 could lead to greater citizen participation in community organizations, voting, volunteerism, and other methods of civic engagement; and America 250 can jump-start the next generation's interest in civics, history and American culture.

Summary

Among other things, Americans want America 250 to take a realistic look back at American history and to not “whitewash” it. They want America 250 to acknowledge that there are periods of our history where this country has failed to live up to its founding principles.

- Americans strongly support that America 250 will not just look back at history but is intended to inspire hope for the future (77% feel positive about this and 61% very positive) and that it will not “whitewash” history - it must acknowledge that there have been periods where we have failed as a country to live up to our founding principles (75% feel positive about this and 61% very positive).

Americans support broad community input in the planning of programs and events and the involvement of various cultural institutions. But they appear to feel planning and events should be by and about Americans. They do not strongly support significant participation by other countries.

- Americans are particularly positive about four areas of planning for America 250: ideas will be sought from all Americans (82% positive, 67% highly positive), ideas will be sought from all ethnic and racial groups (81% positive, 67% highly positive), will encourage visitation to our country’s national parks and historic sites (80% positive, 62% highly positive) and will have highly visible national programs and events (78% positive, 60% highly positive).
- Three other areas of planning are just slightly less well received, but still strong: will encourage highly customized programs and events in each state and local community (76% positive, 56% highly positive); ideas will be sought from the youth of our country (74% positive, 57% highly positive); and will team with a variety of arts and entertainment organizations such as major sports leagues, museums, theatres and cultural centers, and Hollywood production companies (70% positive, 50% highly positive).
- Fewer Americans believe America 250 should include significant participation by other countries and our allies (53% positive, 33% highly positive). The significant drop off here suggests an area for careful further evaluation by the Commission.

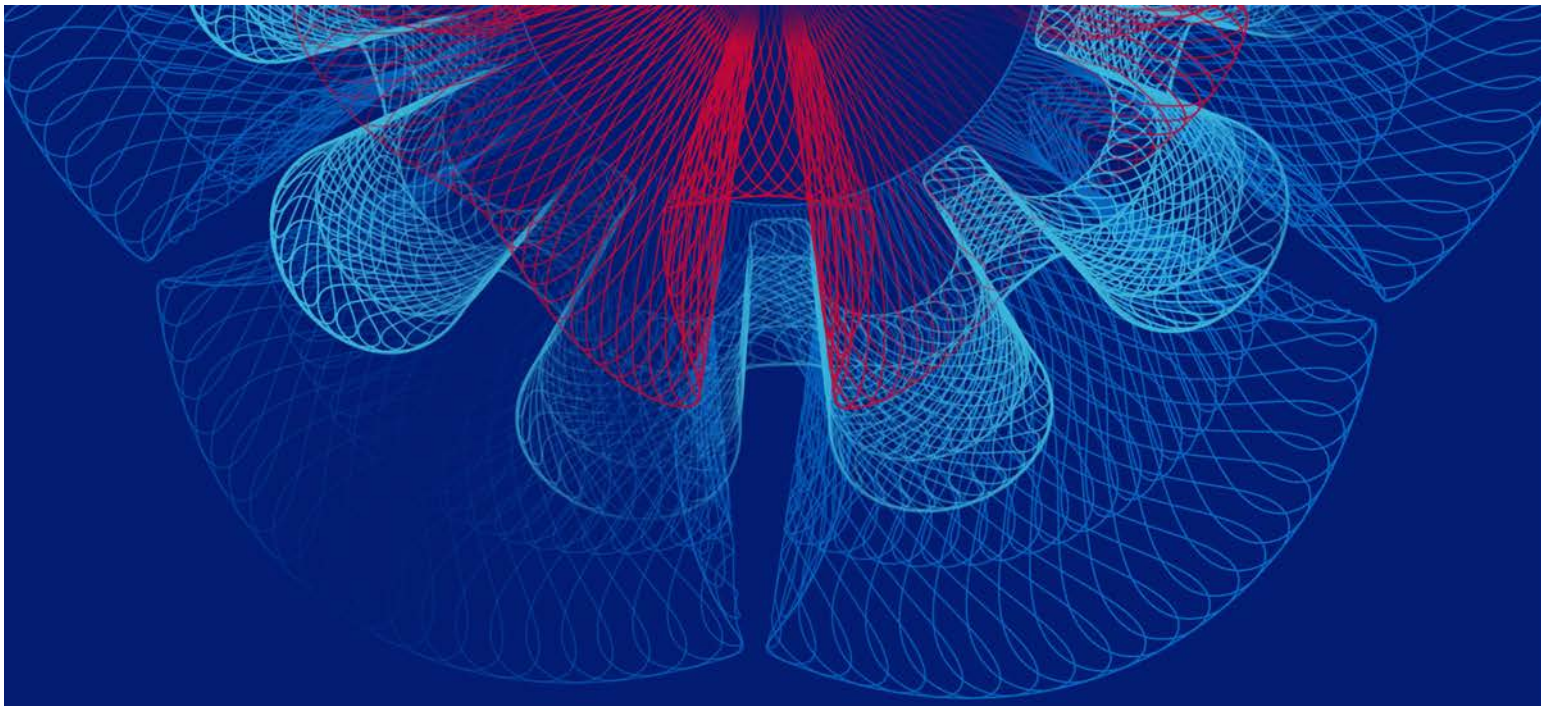
Summary

Encouraging inclusiveness is a well supported element of the celebration. Note that the word diversity is preferred to inclusiveness. An emphasis on patriotism has slightly less support, although this could change if the phrase American spirit was used instead of patriotism.

- At least three-quarters feel America 250 should do each of five things identified by the Commission: encourage open dialogue and discussion, without rancor or divisiveness (82% important, 67% very important); highlight American traditions of innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship (80% important, 63% very important); encourage inclusiveness (79% important, 63% very important); encourage diversity (78% important, 63% very important); and be highly patriotic (75% important, 58% very important).
- To shape messaging, respondents were asked which of pairs of words they prefer to describe the event. More prefer to call it a celebration (63%) than a commemoration (37%) and suggest using the word diversity (57%) than inclusiveness (43%). Americans strongly favor using the words American spirit (60%) to patriotism (40%).

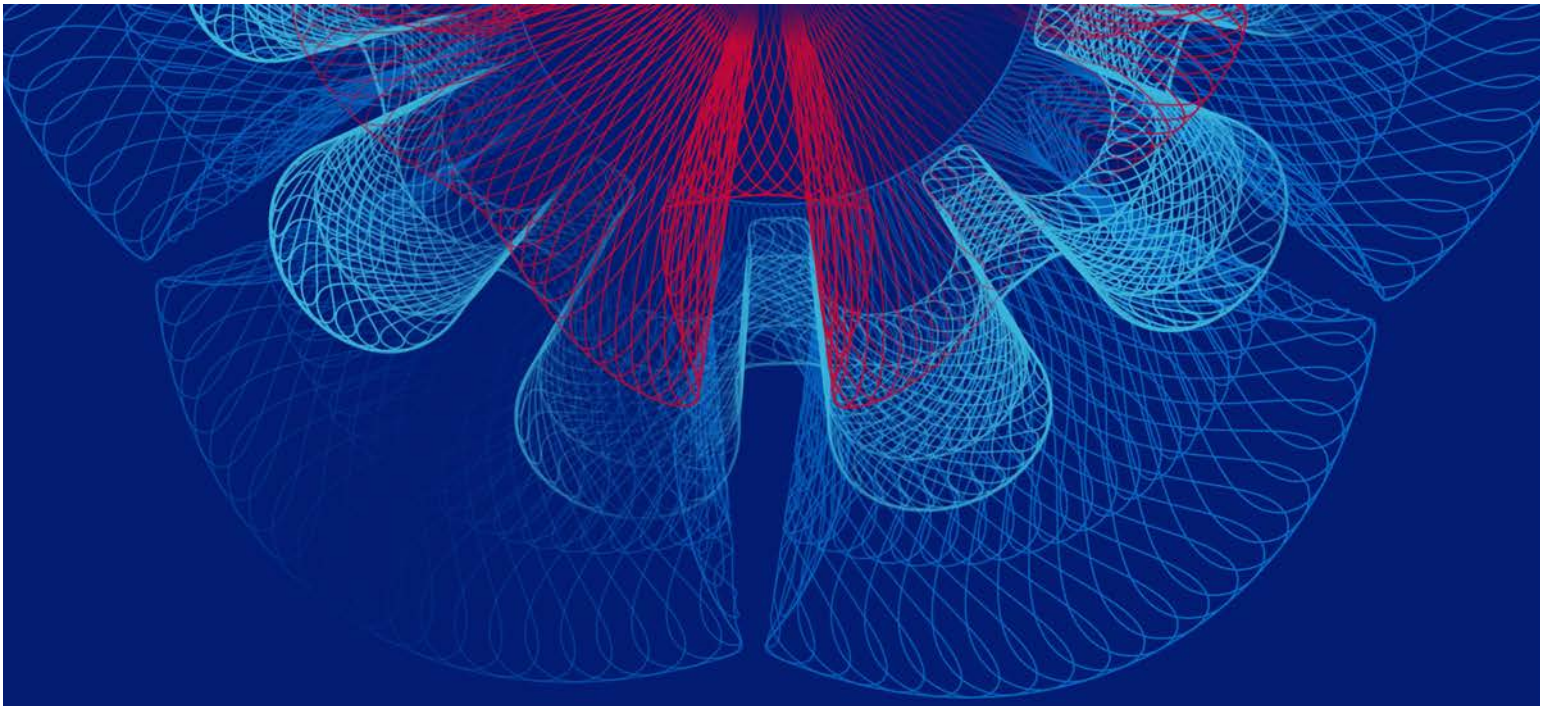
The types of programs and events in the planning stages are well received. One that might require more thought since it is not as strongly endorsed is the concept of a national campus to host all Americans. This may just mean a refining of language to more clearly explain what it is or a more significant evaluation of its feasibility. Americans particularly like the idea of programs and events that will feature inspiration and focus on hope for the future

- Three types of events are particularly well received: programs and events at historic sites and national parks that help tell the story of our nation and its peoples (81% rate this positively, 63% as excellent/very good); the use of historic structures and places for programs and events over an extended period of time (78% positive, 58% excellent/very good); and exhibitions and showcases that will travel throughout the country to bring America 250 to every corner of America (76% positive, 58% excellent/very good).
- Rated just slightly lower are a series of technology-driven virtual and digital “experiences” that are easily accessible and interactive (72% positive, 50% excellent/very good) and venues where Americans will be invited to convene and interact, kind of a national campus to host all Americans (70% positive, 50% excellent/very good).



APPENDIX E

FEDERAL AGENCY REPORTS TO THE COMMISSION



APPENDIX E-1

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR- NATIONAL PARK SERVICE REPORT



IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

We hold these truths to be self evident...

**USA 250TH
COMMEMORATION**

STUDY REPORT

JULY 2018

OVERVIEW

As directed by the United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-196), the Secretary of the Interior has conducted a study of appropriate actions to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States on July 4, 2026.

This report presents the results of the study, proposing a comprehensive list of recommendations for further preserving and developing historic sites and battlefields ahead of the 250th celebration. The report fulfills the Secretary's responsibility to provide a broad outline of potential opportunities to restore and enhance important historic and cultural sites that would enable all Americans to celebrate the accomplishments of our nation's 250 years in the places where that history was made.

Cover: Declaration of Independence; reenactment at Minute Man National Historical Park; visitors viewing the Declaration of Independence.

Background: Declaration of Independence.

Delaware

DECREE

The United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-196)* outlines the inspiration and requirements of this national commemoration. In particular, the following citations outline the need and contents of this study report:

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that July 4, 2026, the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, as marked by the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the historic events preceding that anniversary—

(1) are of major significance in the development of the national heritage of the United States of individual liberty, representative government, and the attainment of equal and inalienable rights; and

(2) have had a profound influence throughout the world.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to establish a Commission to provide for the observance and commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and related events through local, State, national, and international activities planned, encouraged, developed, and coordinated by a national commission representative of appropriate public and private authorities and organizations.

SEC 6: COORDINATION

(2) DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall undertake a study of appropriate actions that might be taken to further preserve and develop historic sites and battlefields, at such time and in such manner as will ensure that fitting observances and exhibits may be held at appropriate sites and battlefields during the 250th anniversary celebration.

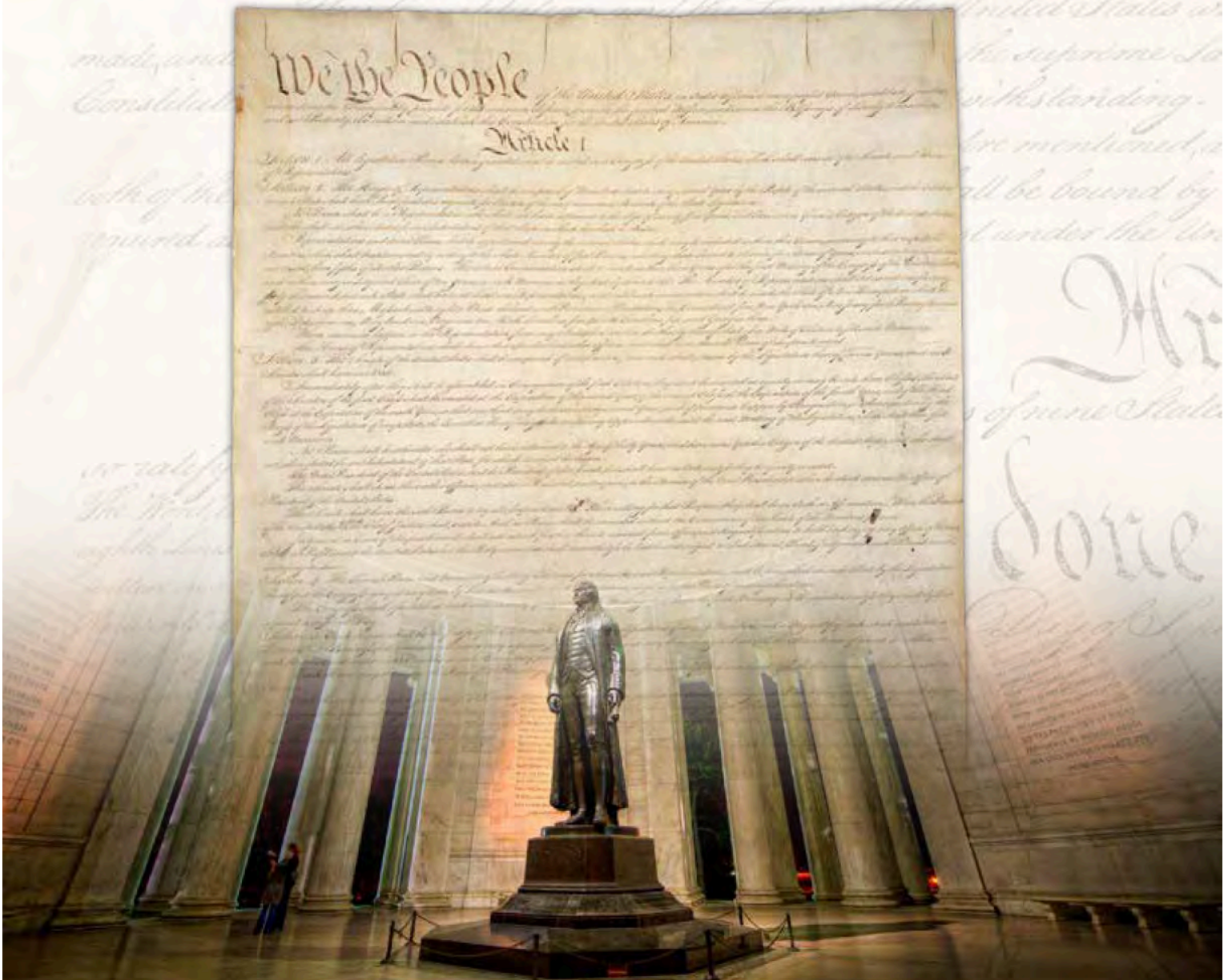
(B) REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit to the Commission a report that contains the results of the study and the recommendations of the Secretary

*For the full text see page 28

VISION

The most sacred of the duties of a government to do, equal and impartial justice to all its citizens.

THOMAS JEFFERSON, NOTE IN DESTUTT DE TRACY, 1816





The 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 2026 provides an unparalleled opportunity to celebrate, remember, and recommit ourselves to the ideals outlined by its authors.

As the stewards of many significant places that enshrine American history and values, the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service will play a key leadership role in commemoration and public engagement activities, leading to and culminating with the celebration of the 250th anniversary on July 4, 2026.

In honor of this important milestone, we will engage Americans in a dialogue about the concepts that have shaped our national identity: pursuit of individual liberty; government for, of, and by the people; and the inalienable human rights that we all deserve. There is no better backdrop for this national celebration and conversation than the cherished lands and historic sites that tell our collective story.

To commemorate one of the most significant events in world history properly and successfully, the settings and stories of American independence in the care of the National Park Service will be preserved, rehabilitated, and restored. This effort will include updating existing exhibits and developing new ones that encourage Americans and visitors from around the world to experience history that is audience-centered, digitally immersive, and accessible to all.


A modern approach that honors the legacy of the Declaration of Independence, and envisions a future inspired by it, will engage Americans from all backgrounds and experiences in a shared celebration of the document that united us in many of the core beliefs that define the United States of America.

Left: Constitution, Jefferson Memorial. Background: Declaration of Independence. Above: Liberty Bell.

KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Infrastructure and Deferred Maintenance

In 2018, the National Park Service has over \$11.6 billion in unmet maintenance needs, and many of those needs influence the experiences of visitors to national parks. This backlog of deferred maintenance projects affects many sites critical to the 250th commemoration. Nearly 25 percent of the \$11.6 billion backlog is for sites related to the Semiquincentennial—from deteriorating historic buildings and utility systems to poor accessibility and unsafe roadways. A substantial investment in infrastructure is crucial to the success of this significant anniversary.



*Liberty, when it begins to
take root, is a plant of rapid growth.*

GEORGE WASHINGTON, LETTER TO JAMES MADISON, MARCH 2, 1788

Signature Opportunities

Memorials Constitution Gardens along the National Mall in Washington, DC, is a living legacy to the nation's founding. The gardens were dedicated in May of 1976 for the U.S. Bicentennial and recognized as a living tribute to the Constitution in 1986 during the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. A memorial honors the 56 Signers of the Declaration of Independence.



Historic Structures Declaration House, part of Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was recreated for the U.S. Bicentennial. The original house contained the rooms rented by 33-year-old Thomas Jefferson where he painstakingly drafted the Declaration of Independence in the summer of 1776. Declaration House requires rehabilitation and exhibit and film modernizations.

*Left: Constitution Gardens.
Above: Declaration House.*

Visitor Centers Kings Mountain National Military Park in Blacksburg, South Carolina, commemorates the patriot victory that Thomas Jefferson hailed as "the turn in the tide of success" in the American Revolution. The visitor center, constructed for the 1976 U.S. Bicentennial, needs renovations to welcome visitors and appropriately honor this crucial battle.

Jamestown, a unit of Colonial National Historical Park in Virginia, was established in 1607 as the first permanent English settlement in North America. European, American Indian, and African cultures came together to create a new society that would eventually seek independence from Great Britain. On October 19, 1781, American and French troops defeated the British at Yorktown in the last major battle of the American Revolution. The Yorktown Visitor Center, also part of Colonial National Historical Park, requires infrastructure improvements.

KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Exhibits and Visitor Education

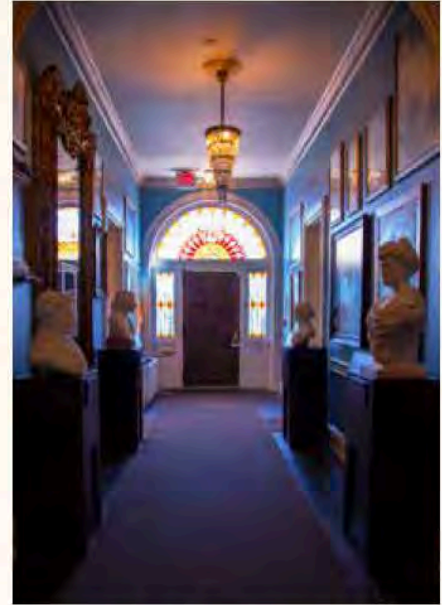
The 250th anniversary presents an extraordinary opportunity to inspire and connect people to the ideals and values founded in the Declaration of Independence. More than simply a commemorative celebration, the 250th anniversary is the ideal occasion to explore the concepts that inspired the founding of our nation and to examine ongoing barriers to achieving those ideals fully.



Signature opportunities

Outdoor Exhibits Valley Forge National Historical Park in Pennsylvania was the site of the Continental Army's 1777–78 winter encampment. The park honors the sacrifices and perseverance of those who fought in the American Revolution. Funding is needed for 50 new wayside panels that will be complemented by accompanying augmented reality smartphone technology, immersing visitors in the saga of America's fight for freedom and independence.

Films Fort Moultrie in Charleston, South Carolina, was the site of the first major patriot victory in the American Revolution. The fort continued to defend the U.S. coastline for over 170 years. A new park film is needed to replace the current one, nearly 50 years old.



Digital Media Equal rights for all Americans was not fully realized on July 4, 1776, nor even a century later. Many female descendants of the nation's founders became active suffragists, fighting successfully for the Nineteenth Amendment that granted women the vote in 1920. A digital archive and educational curriculum will enhance appreciation for the suffragists' stories and the ongoing struggle for equal rights.

*Children should be
educated and instructed
in the principles of freedom.*

JOHN ADAMS, DEFENSE OF THE CONSTITUTION, 1787

Left: Valley Forge reenactment and childrens' program. *Above:* Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument.

GOALS

Individual liberty is individual power, and as the power of a community is a mass compounded of individual powers, the nation which enjoys the most freedom must necessarily be in proportion to its numbers the most powerful nation.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS





- Restore the sites where American history is told through place, improving accessibility and experiences for visitors during this significant anniversary by **addressing deferred maintenance** and infrastructure improvements at sites of significance.

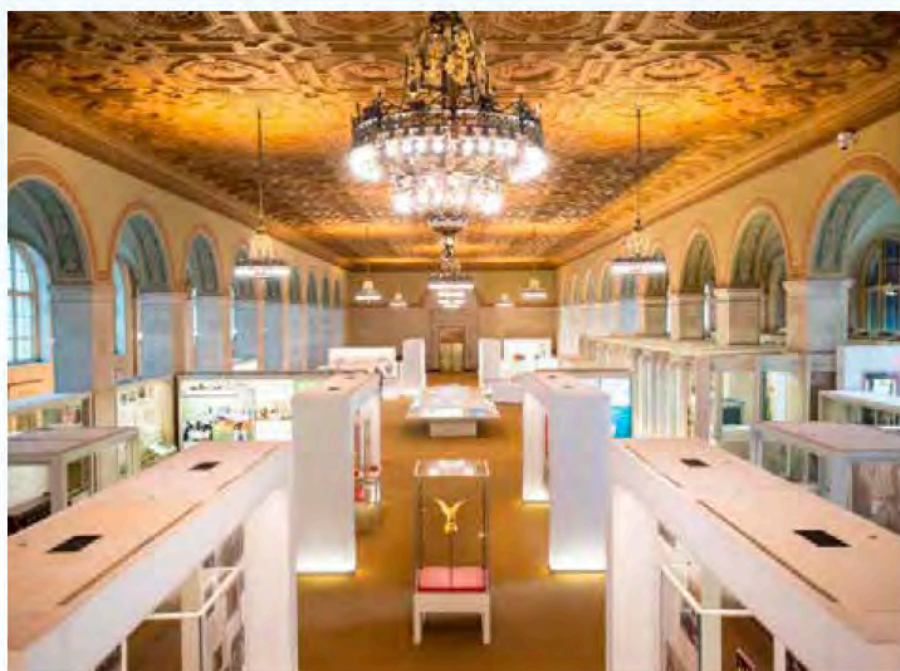
- Engage the public in meaningful experiences of learning and sharing around common values and diverse perspectives by **creating compelling new educational exhibits** and restoring others that are aging.



- Inform and connect people to each other and our founding ideals by **leading the nation in digital storytelling** and compelling virtual experiences.

- Expand understanding and documentation of the lasting legacy of American liberty by **updating and enhancing traditional publications and films**.

Left: Manzanar, Booker T Washington, Susan B Anthony, Martin Luther King Jr., César Chávez. Above: Lincoln Memorial app, park brochures. Right: White House Visitor Center.



STRATEGIES

Government is a trust, and the officers of the government are trustees; and both the trust and the trustees are created for the benefit of the people.

HENRY CLAY





Left and above: Fort McHenry childrens' programs.

Developing Partnerships

Partnerships will be a cornerstone of the 250th celebrations. In addition to the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission, established by Congress to oversee the anniversary, countless partners—local and national, public and private—will provide funding, event planning, exhibitions, and more. The National Park Foundation will be a key partner in the National Park Service's efforts. Many other cooperating associations like Eastern National and park friends groups will provide retail items, educational materials and publications, volunteer programs, infrastructure improvements, and much more.

Leveraging NPS Fund Sources

Prioritizing fund sources, including revenue generated through recreation fees, and leveraging program funds, including the Centennial Challenge and Challenge Cost-share, will address many high-priority needs identified at sites associated with the 250th celebration.

Supporting New Legislation

The Department of the Interior is working with Congress to advance legislation that would provide a new source of funding to address

the backlog of deferred maintenance in national parks. This legislation would be a significant step in ensuring 250th-related sites receive critical maintenance funding before 2026.

Enhancing Visitor Experience and Education

(curriculum, digital, exhibits, publications, films) This anniversary presents a rare and significant opportunity to educate and inspire people across the country and around the world through the story of American democracy. The 1976 U.S. Bicentennial events still resonate with countless Americans. By 2026, with the digital assets at our disposal, we can broaden that impact exponentially and inspire younger generations to recommit to the ideals of individual liberty, representative government, and equal and inalienable rights for all citizens.

Events and Personal Services

Millions of visitors from around the world will attend events, programs, ceremonies, and exhibitions for several years before and after July 4, 2026. A separate strategy will identify needs and opportunities for these events, as well as the workforce surge required for success.

STUDY RESULTS

MULTI-PARK PROJECTS

Cultural Resources Management
Produce multi-park exhibition on 250 years of celebrating nation's independence.

Create shared programming among national historic landmarks, national heritage areas and national park system sites to explore and interpret concept of independence.

Northeast Regional Office

Conduct inventory and evaluation of sites related to the American Revolution Centennial and Bicentennial for eligibility for national historic recognition.

Produce Administrative History of the NPS commemoration of American Revolution.

Develop evaluation strategy, assessment, and concluding report in 2031 for commemoration of 250th anniversary of U.S. independence.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument

Rehabilitate Belmont-Paul house to modernize infrastructure.

Improve accessibility for exhibits and incorporate civil rights theme.

Produce exhibits on suffrage movement's use of American Revolution language, imagery, and philosophy.

Produce media on women in the American Revolution and new nation.

Produce media on suffragists who were descendants of nation's founders.

Capitol Hill Parks

Clean and repair Nathanael Greene statue in Stanton Park.

Construct irrigation system for Lincoln Park.

Construct irrigation system for Stanton Park.

Construct irrigation system for Marion Park.

Construct irrigation system for Folger Park.

Construct irrigation system for Pennsylvania Avenue—Southeast median.

Construct irrigation system for Seward Square.

Restore turf in five Capitol Hill parks.

Produce wayside exhibits for five Capitol Hill parks.

Carter G. Woodson Home National Historical Site

Produce site exhibits.

Constitution Gardens

Rehabilitate lake, walks, landscape and add new concessions.

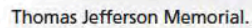
Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

Rehabilitate auxiliary house for use as education center.

Repaint interior and exterior of visitor center.

Produce new park film.

Produce new visitor center exhibits.

A photograph of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C., showing the neoclassical building with its dome and columns. In the background, a tall construction crane and other equipment are visible, indicating ongoing work.

Thomas Jefferson Memorial.

National Mall and Memorial Parks

Conduct conservation treatment for George Washington statue.

Restore Washington Circle park.

Restore John Paul Jones Memorial.

Conduct conservation treatment for John Barry statue.

Conduct conservation treatment for Count Casimir Pulaski statue.

Construct welcome center at Sylvan Theater.

Construct café at Sylvan Theater.

Construct four conversation areas at World War II Memorial and Lincoln Memorial.

Construct additional water fountains.

Establish native plant garden to demonstrate 18th-century natural resources.

Produce exhibits for native plant garden.

Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site

Repair features and landscape of John Marshall Park.

Repair features and landscape of Freedom Plaza.

Thomas Jefferson Memorial

Replace Jersey barriers with permanent vehicular barrier security system.

Repair settlement and drainage problems below colonnade due to several areas of differential settlement and sinkholes.

Conduct laser cleaning to remove biofilm.

Rehabilitate undercroft of memorial.

Improve accessibility for targeted features.

Washington Monument

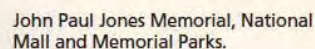
Repair water damage to the interior that's causing rust stains, algae growth, and standing pools of water that has continued since the 2000 exterior restoration.

Clean and repair 193 commemorative stones.

Improve life safety infrastructure.

Repair turf and irrigation system.

Install 50 1776 flags.

A photograph of the John Paul Jones Memorial statue, a bronze figure of a man in 18th-century attire standing on a pedestal. The statue is set within a stone archway.

John Paul Jones Memorial, National Mall and Memorial Parks.



Junior Ranger program booklet.

White House President's Park

- Replace/reseal windows.
- Construct new facility to replace Ellipse Visitor Pavilion.
- Replace pony shed maintenance facility.
- Replace turf on Ellipse.
- Replace restroom facility in Lafayette Square.
- Replace National Christmas Tree that is showing signs of stress from its transplant, and continue bringing local and national communities together to celebrate the season and share a message of peace.
- Construct fencing around memorials and statues in Lafayette Square.
- Rehabilitate Bulfinch gatehouses.
- Repair walkways on Ellipse.
- Repave portion of E Street.
- Install wayfinding pylons.
- Develop turf management plan.
- Repave portions of Pennsylvania Avenue, Madison Place, and Jackson Place.
- Improve irrigation for E Street turf area.
- Produce temporary exhibit on American Revolution-era statues in Lafayette Park.
- Develop War of 1812 teachers' workshops.

Develop War of 1812 children's summer camp.

Develop American Revolution teachers' workshops.

Develop American Revolution summer camp for children.

GEORGIA

Cumberland Island National Seashore

- Expand park website to include interpretive section on American Revolution and War of 1812.
- Produce social media presentation on British occupation of St. Marys in 1815.

LOUISIANA

Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve Chalmette unit

- Replace cannon battery support timbers at battlefield.
- Repaint exterior of visitor center and restrooms.
- Build parking lot at battlefield.
- Produce historic structure report/condition assessment and conserve Chalmette Monument.
- Produce "Choosing Sides/Becoming American" exhibits.
- Produce online material and mobile app based on "Choosing Sides/Becoming American" exhibits.



Volunteers place Memorial Day flags at Chalmette National Cemetery, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve.

Produce educational materials based on “Choosing Sides/Becoming American” exhibits.

Produce Junior Ranger activity book based on “Choosing Sides/Becoming American” exhibits.

MARYLAND

Baltimore-Washington Parkway

Construct stone walls along the mainline parkway to replace guardrails, improve safety, and enhance visitor experience.

Construct stone walls at exit ramps along the mainline parkway to replace guardrails, improve safety, and enhance visitor experience.

Produce wayside exhibits for parkway segment of Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail.

Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park (also in District of Columbia, Maryland, and West Virginia)

Develop wayside exhibit plan on role of canals in early U.S. commerce and transportation.

Fort Washington Park

Stabilize historic fort infrastructure.

Remove vegetation to restore cultural landscape and viewshed.

Replace cannon carriage and preserve historic cannon.

Resurface lighthouse road/path.

Repair fence at park’s perimeter.

Conduct lead paint abatement and rehabilitate historic main gatehouse and casemates.

Repair porches and replace HVAC at visitor center.

Produce exhibits in visitor center.

Produce wayside exhibits.

Greenbelt Park

Relocate campfire circle to meet accessibility standards.

Repave campground roads and pads.

Rehabilitate 40 campsites.

Oxon Cove Park and Oxon Hill Farm (also in District of Columbia)

Repair erosion damage to roads and bridge.

Renovate visitor center and restrooms.

Construct new trail identified in 2016 planning efforts.

Resurface existing hiker-biker trail at Oxon Cove.

Repair and repaint historic brick stables.

Piscataway Park

Repair decking and handrails on Pumpkin Ash Trail boardwalk.

Upgrade gravel parking lots to improve accessibility.

Remove deteriorating structure to restore natural landscape and historic viewshed.

Repair and maintain historic barn.

Stabilize Marshall Hall structure.



Faneuil Hall, Boston National Historical Park.

Implement Development Concept Plan for National Colonial Farm.

Repair roads, parking lot, and drainage system at Marshall Hall.

Replumb dockside fire hydrants at Fort Washington Marina.

Produce new wayside exhibits parkwide.

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (also in District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia)

Create mobile app and online content thematically connecting trail's sites.

Thomas Stone National Historic Site

Upgrade restrooms at visitor center to improve accessibility.

Rehabilitate exterior and interior of visitor center.

Remove modern house to restore cultural landscape.

Produce new interpretive film and install new audiovisual equipment.

Produce new exhibits for visitor center.

Produce new historic furnishings for mansion.

Produce orientation wayside exhibits.

Develop new Junior Ranger Program and produce new brochures and badges.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area

Update documentation and related National Register listings for American Revolution-era sites at park.

Boston National Historical Park

Rehabilitate Dorchester Heights hardscapes to improve accessibility and eliminate safety hazards.

Rehabilitate interior of Dorchester Heights Monument.

Rehabilitate exterior of Dorchester Heights Monument.

Develop plan to repair and prevent water damage to Bunker Hill Monument and Lodge.

Upgrade roof structure of Bunker Hill museum.

Repair brickwork pointing on Bunker Hill Monument roof pyramidium and observatory.

Repair and paint interior of Old South Meeting House.

Repair brickwork pointing on masonry of Old South Meeting House.

Upgrade climate control and energy efficiency at Old South Meeting House.

Upgrade infrastructure and life safety systems at Old North Church.

Upgrade energy efficiency with new HVAC system to prevent damage to burial crypts caused by high humidity levels at Old North Church.



Old North Church, Boston National Historical Park.

Paint and repair 41 windows at Old North Church.

Replace roof on Old North Church 1918 Chapel Roof.

Upgrade HVAC system and improve energy efficiency at Old State House.

Provide universal accessibility to Old State House.

Develop condition report for Old State House with recommendations for preservation.

Rehabilitate vestibule and flooring at Old North Church to meet current accessibility standards.

Restore historic artifacts and features in Old North Church.

Upgrade courtyard and brick paths at Old North Church to meet current accessibility standards.

Replace interior and exterior lighting at Old North Church.

Paint steeple of Old North Church.

Remodel Washington Garden and Courtyard at Old North Church.

Construct new plaza area for visitor orientation at Old State House campus.

Preserve and restore interior and exterior of Old South Meeting House.

Produce new exhibits and film for Faneuil Hall Visitor Center.

Produce wayfinding signs along Freedom Trail.

Produce new "We the People" exhibits for Old State House.

Produce new exhibits on American Revolution for Old South Meeting House.

Produce new archeology exhibit for Faneuil Hall.

Produce new orientation film on Boston historic trails for Faneuil Hall Visitor Center.

Produce new illustrated publication on Paul Revere midnight ride.

Minute Man National Historical Park

Renovate Minute Man Visitor Center: install HVAC, upgrade restrooms, replace visitor information desk, and repair exhibits.

Develop operating site plan for park's newest site, Barrett's Farm.

Rebuild barn at Barrett's Farm.

Construct new bus drop-off area and accessible parking for Minute Man Visitor Center.

Rehabilitate and upgrade theater at Minute Man Visitor Center.

Upgrade restrooms at North Bridge, Hartwell, and Meriam.

Rehabilitate Hargrove Barn for educational programming.

Paint exterior of and replace roof on Brooks House.

Restore Hartwell House site shelter.

Install fire protection system at Barrett's Farm.

Upgrade air conditioning and restrooms at Minute Man Visitor Center.



Historical spinning demonstration, Minute Man National Historical Park.

Replace boardwalk decking and railings on Battle Road Trail.

Reroute Battle Road Trail to for safety and visitor experience.

Replace entrance signs and improve park entrances.

Replace roof of Elisha Jones House.

Restore exterior of Buttrick House.

Replace roof of Buttrick House.

Replace roof of and repaint Whittemore House.

Replace roof of Job Brooks House.

Develop Cultural Landscape Report for Barrett's Farm.

Rehabilitate 70 acres of historic agricultural fields, which are an essential component of the battlefield and viewshed, aimed at preserving known extant historic scenery in a sustainable manner.

Conduct interpretation seminar for NPS and partners staff.

Provide conservation treatment for Minute Man Statue.

Update Collections Management Plan.

Provide conservation treatment for 11 monuments.

Replace post-and-rail fences along Battle Road Trail.

Repair stone walls along Liberty Street and in North Bridge commemorative landscape.

Rehabilitate Meriam House.

Replace roof of Smith House.

Rehabilitate East Quarter Schoolhouse.

Paint exterior of McHugh Barn.

Resurface four stone dust parking areas.

Rehabilitate Joshua Brooks House.

Produce new exhibits for Barrett's Farm.

Construct interactive digital kiosk that will invite visitors to investigate how the site of Parker's Revenge was studied and to see the evidence revealed by each layer of investigation.

Replace 20 worn out wayside exhibits and add 5 new for a total of 25 wayside exhibits.

Produce audio station recordings in six languages for North Bridge, Battle Road Trail, and Parker's site.

Produce new fiber optic map and install new projectors.

MISSISSIPPI

Natchez Trace Parkway (also in Alabama and Tennessee)

Replace trail bridge at Gordon House.

Produce 3D digital documentation of Mount Locust and Gordon House historic structures and landscapes.

Replace roof on Mount Locust historic structure.

Produce accessible exhibits at Mount Locust historic structure.



Soldiers' huts, Morristown National Historical Park.

NEW JERSEY

Morristown National Historical Park

Produce signs for segment of Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail.

Construct new interpretive trail for 1780-81 encampment area.

Rehabilitate Jockey Hollow Visitor Center and upgrade accessibility.

Produce new exhibits for Jockey Hollow Visitor Center.

Rehabilitate replica soldiers' huts.

Construct bike lane along entrance road.

Produce temporary visitor contact station at Schuyler Estate.

Conduct conservation treatment of plaques and monuments throughout park.

Produce 60 wayside exhibits for park tour road and upgrade accessibility.

Produce new exhibits and other public areas for visitor center.

Produce new historic furnishings for Neilson House.

Produce reproduction cannons and carriages for battlefield.

NEW YORK

Saratoga National Historical Park

Conduct archeological survey of battlefield.

Upgrade physical security of park.

Construct new restrooms at battlefield.

Upgrade visitor center parking lot to include overflow area.

Upgrade black powder shed to improve safety.

Replace traffic signs throughout park to improve safety.

Construct towpath trail along Champlain Canalway Trail segments in park.

Install solar energy system in visitor center.

Produce temporary exhibit of Saratoga-related artifacts from outside institutions.

Produce mobile app on battles to be georeferenced to battlefield.

NORTH CAROLINA

Fort Raleigh National Historic Site

Replace seating chairs in the Waterside Theatre.

Renovate restrooms at the visitor center.

Replace fencing and benches in historic area.

Remove water treatment plant and connect to the municipal water system.

Resurface asphalt trail serving the Waterside Theatre.



Reenactment, Moores Creek National Battlefield.

Produce wayside exhibits for the Waterside Theatre.

Produce orientation film and online educational resources.

Document archeological resources that are at risk due to shoreline erosion.

Guilford Courthouse National Military Park

Update trail and wayside system on newly acquired lands.

Reverse direction of park driving tour road to follow the historic direction of the battle.

Collaborate with other parks to develop and produce database of military participants in the American Revolution.

Produce mobile app on park's role in American Revolution.

Produce children's online activity about Declaration of Independence and battle.

Collaborate with other parks to produce distance learning program on Southern Campaign.

Update guidebook about North Carolina's signers of Declaration of Independence.

Produce children's program about Declaration of Independence and battle.

Moores Creek National Battlefield

Extend History Trail boardwalk.

Resurface History Trail in battlefield area.

Replace park signage on nearby roads.

Produce new interpretive exhibits for visitor center.

Produce new wayside exhibits for Historic Rockfish and Cross Creek driving tour.

Purchase 18th-century swivel gun for interpretive demonstrations.

Produce interpretive program for youth to learn and demonstrate colonial trades.

Develop youth fife and drum corps.

Produce Tar Heel Trail exhibit and educational guide about naval stores industry.

Purchase reproduction 18th-century galloper cannon for interpretive demonstrations.

Develop living-history program for interpretation of historical era.

Host national American Revolution workshop and conference.

Develop preservation and interpretive plan for historic Negro Head Point Road.

Produce digital and audio battlefield tours.

Develop online and printed educational materials about American Revolution history.

Collaborate with local military installations to develop history education program for students.

Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail (also in South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia)

Conduct site and trail restoration by youth crew.



Exhibits, Fort Necessity National Battlefield.

Enhance trail access and interpretation at Lake James; partnership with North Carolina State Parks.

Produce 3D digital models for online and hands-on exhibits. Project includes Cowpens National Battlefield, Kings Mountain National Military Park, and Ninety Six National Historic Site.

Produce historical exhibit for Elkin town heritage center.

Produce and maintain comprehensive GIS mapping data for entire trail corridor.

Upgrade Market Street buildings' carpet and furnishings; paint and repair.

Install restrooms in Pemberton House.

Upgrade computer system in Second Bank building.

Repair and replace benches throughout park.

Produce new exhibits for New Hall Military Museum.

Produce new exhibit for President's House site.

Produce new park film.

PENNSYLVANIA

Fort Necessity National Battlefield

Produce exhibit on region's role leading up to and during American Revolution.

Independence National Historical Park

Remodel and upgrade public restrooms at 5th and Chestnut streets.

Upgrade First Bank building for visitor use.

Upgrade Second Bank building's exterior lighting and windows.

Upgrade park HVAC systems.

Restore Welcome Park landscape.

Repair walkways and features throughout Independence Mall.

Restore landscape, lighting, and design features of Rose Garden.

Repair walkways and features throughout park.

Rehabilitate Declaration House.

Produce new exhibits for Declaration House.

Construct display facility in Benjamin Rush Garden for Bicentennial Bell.

Upgrade "Great Essentials" exhibit.

Develop new options for touring Independence Hall.

Upgrade exhibits parkwide to foster relevancy to new audiences.

Expand operation to year-round at Deshler-Morris and Brighthurst houses.

Purchase three historic portraits for exhibit.

Valley Forge National Historical Park

Produce 25 wayside exhibit panels throughout park.



Wayside exhibit, Cowpens National Battlefield.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Congaree National Park

Produce wayside exhibits at McCord's Ferry (Bates Ferry).

Cowpens National Battlefield

Periodic maintenance of core battlefield to include labor, materials, and restoration.

Periodic maintenance to include clearing invasive species and restoring the native canebrake.

Repair damaged concrete around monument.

Replace benches, trashcans, and bulletin boards to meet current accessibility standards.

Develop plans for auditorium addition to visitor center.

Construct outdoor pavilion for increased dynamic interpretive programming.

Produce 3D digital models for online and hands-on exhibits. Project includes Kings Mountain National Military Park, Ninety Six National Historic Site, and Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail.

Purchase 3-pound cannon for use in interpretive demonstrations.

Conduct search for Gen. Morgan's headquarters and camp using students and volunteers.

Replace several wayside exhibit panels and bases on core battlefield and Green River Road.

Produce new interactive map exhibit; redesign exhibit space.

Expand interpretive mobile app.

Produce searchable database for soldiers who served in the American Revolution's Southern Campaign.

Fort Sumter National Monument Fort Moultrie unit

Replace restrooms with universally accessible facilities.

Replace 14 visitor center windows and replace four sets of double glass doors (to include modular device that meet current accessibility standards). Also replace two restroom doors and three wooden exterior doors.

Produce new orientation film.

Replace audiovisual equipment in visitor center.

Produce mobile app to interpret American Revolution sites throughout South Carolina.

Produce new Unigrid park brochure.

Kings Mountain National Military Park

Replace auditorium projector and visitor center public address system.

Replace two bridges on Browns Mountain Trail.

Enhance cultural landscape of Battlefield Trail.

Clean and re-stain exterior siding of visitor center.

Replace two bridges on Garner Creek Trail.



Observation tower, Ninety Six National Historic Site.

Replace visitor information desk to improve accessibility, circulation, and storage and display of materials.

Clean and repair pointing on Centennial Monument and clean smaller monuments.

Replace visitor center windows.

Replace and resurface visitor center walkways.

Renovate visitor center lobby.

Repair and preserve pavement on main park road and visitor center parking lot.

Replace visitor center roof.

Install solar canopy over amphitheater seating area to generate electricity.

Repair seating area and improve drainage system at amphitheater.

Renovate visitor center to accommodate new museum collection storage facility, as well as additional office space.

Produce 3D digital models for online and hands-on exhibits. Project includes Cowpens National Battlefield, Ninety Six National Historic Site, and Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail.

Conduct archeological survey of Colonial Road.

Replace park entrance signs.

Conduct four-week remote sensing and archeological field school.

Preserve, digitize, and provide public access to archival microfilm.

Develop virtual park field trips for third- through eighth-grade students. Research and prepare National Historic Landmark nomination for park.

Produce comprehensive Archeological Overview and Assessment report.

Conduct comprehensive archeological survey.

Ninety Six National Historic Site

Repair and prevent further erosion damage on Cherokee Path Trail.

Replace observation tower.

Construct RV pad for use by park volunteers.

Replace Gouedy grave shelter structure.

Restore battlefield behind 1781 Town of Ninety Six.

Restore/replace rifle tower.

Host three-day 18th-century civilian lifeways living history workshop.

Produce 3D digital models for online and hands-on exhibits. Project includes Cowpens National Battlefield, Kings Mountain National Military Park, and Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail.

Update museum collection records to meet NPS standards.

Purchase cannon, swivel gun, and related equipment for interpretative demonstrations.

Conduct archeological search to locate Fort Ninety Six and Gouedy trading complex.

Develop Cherokee and American Indian interpretive programming.



Colonial National Historical Park.

Conduct archeological search to locate 1781 patriot army siege campsite.

Conduct archeological search to locate Col. Henry Lee's 1781 siege trenches.

Locate, inventory, excavate, and interpret American Revolution-era burials.

Conduct archeological search to locate American Indian sites.

Conduct oral history interviews for archives and to capture institutional knowledge.

Produce press kit and host Public Affairs Day workshops for the four Southern Campaign Group parks.

Develop educational materials to meet state curriculum standards.

Conduct archeological surveys and develop Earthworks Management Plan for battlefield resources.

VIRGINIA

Colonial National Historical Park

Restore rooftop viewing platform at Yorktown Visitor Center.

Produce new exhibits for Yorktown Visitor Center.

George Washington Birthplace National Monument

Upgrade visitor center interior: paint, replace carpet, replace auditorium chairs, and upgrade visitor center desk.

Resurface deck of visitor center.

Establish native plant landscaping outside visitor center.

Renovate Colonial kitchen garden.

Produce new exhibits for Memorial House museum and historic area.

Replace park film that is outdated and inaccurate and upgrade audiovisual equipment.

Develop new Junior Ranger Program and produce new brochures and badges.

George Washington Memorial Parkway (also in District of Columbia and Maryland)

Restore the Patomack Canal at Great Falls Park.

Produce new canal construction film.

Produce interactive canal exhibit.

Produce exhibit on Washington Treasury.

Produce audio tour.

Make repairs to roadway.

Prince William Forest Park

Stabilize, restore, or rehabilitate Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail segment in park.

Develop living history program for Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail segment in park.

Produce new wayside exhibits for Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail segment in park.

Produce educational digital media on Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail and related themes.

WEST VIRGINIA

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (also in Maryland and Virginia)

Stabilize and restore Moler Cemetery on School House Ridge.

Remove trees on upper armory grounds prior to archeological study.

Repair/rebuild river wall at Dam 3 for Armory Canal Trail.

Construct new visitor center.

Produce George Washington surveying exhibit at Harper House.

Produce four wayside exhibits for Armory Canal Trail.

Develop interpretive trails for armory site.

Develop interpretive trails for Halls and Virginius islands.

Restore Harper House interior to early 1800s historical era.



Wayside exhibit, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Public Law 114-196
114th Congress

An Act

To establish the United States Semiquincentennial Commission, and for other purposes.

July 22, 2016
[PLR. 4875]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.

(a) **FINDINGS.**—Congress finds that July 4, 2026, the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, as marked by the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the historic events preceding that anniversary—

(1) are of major significance in the development of the national heritage of the United States of individual liberty, representative government, and the attainment of equal and inalienable rights; and

(2) have had a profound influence throughout the world.

(b) **PURPOSE.**—The purpose of this Act is to establish a Commission to provide for the observance and commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and related events through local, State, national, and international activities planned, encouraged, developed, and coordinated by a national commission representative of appropriate public and private authorities and organizations.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **COMMISSION.**—The term “Commission” means the United States Semiquincentennial Commission established by section 4(a).

(2) **PRIVATE CITIZEN.**—The term “private citizen” means an individual who is not an officer or employee of—

- (A) the Federal Government; or
- (B) a State or local government.

(3) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—There is established a commission, to be known as the “United States Semiquincentennial Commission”, to plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate the commemoration of the history of the United States leading up to the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

United States
Semiquin-
centennial
Commission Act
of 2016.
35 USC 101
note prec.

(b) COMPOSITION.—The Commission shall be composed of the following members:

(1) Four members of the Senate, of whom—

(A) two shall be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate; and

(B) two shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate.

(2) Four members of the House of Representatives, of whom—

(A) two shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

(B) two shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives.

(3) Sixteen members who are private citizens, of whom—

(A) four shall be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

(B) four shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;

(C) four shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(D) four shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives; and

(E) one of whom shall be designated by the President as the Chairperson.

(4) The following nonvoting ex officio members:

(A) The Secretary.

(B) The Secretary of State.

(C) The Attorney General.

(D) The Secretary of Defense.

(E) The Secretary of Education.

(F) The Librarian of Congress.

(G) The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

(H) The Archivist of the United States.

(I) The presiding officer of the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

(c) TERM; VACANCIES.—

(1) TERM.—A member shall be appointed for the life of the Commission.

(2) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Commission—

(A) shall not affect the powers of the Commission; and

(B) shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

(d) MEETINGS.—All meetings of the Commission shall be convened at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to honor the historical significance of the building as the site of deliberations and adoption of both the United States Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

(e) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number of members may hold hearings.

SEC. 5. DUTIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall—

(1) prepare an overall program for commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and the historic events preceding that anniversary; and

President

Pennsylvania.

(2) plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate observances and activities commemorating the historic events that preceded, and are associated with, the United States Semiquincentennial.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In preparing plans and an overall program, the Commission—

(A) shall give due consideration to any related plans and programs developed by State, local, and private groups; and

(B) may designate special committees with representatives from groups described in subparagraph (A) to plan, develop, and coordinate specific activities.

(2) EMPHASIS.—The Commission shall—

(A) emphasize the planning of events in locations of historical significance to the United States, especially in those locations that witnessed the assertion of American liberty, such as—

- (i) the 13 colonies; and
- (ii) leading cities, including Boston, Charleston, New York City, and Philadelphia; and

(B) give special emphasis to—

- (i) the role of persons and locations with significant impact on the history of the United States during the 250-year period beginning on the date of execution of the Declaration of Independence; and
- (ii) the ideas associated with that history, which have been so important in the development of the United States, in world affairs, and in the quest for freedom of all mankind.

(3) INFRASTRUCTURE.—The Commission shall—

(A) evaluate existing infrastructure;

(B) include in the report required under subsection (c) recommendations for what infrastructure should be in place for the successful undertaking of an appropriate celebration in accordance with this Act; and

(C) coordinate with State and local bodies to make necessary infrastructure improvements.

Evaluation.
Recommendations.

Coordination

(c) REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE PRESIDENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to the President a comprehensive report that includes the specific recommendations of the Commission for the commemoration of the 250th anniversary and related events.

(2) RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES.—The report may include recommended activities such as—

(A) the production, publication, and distribution of books, pamphlets, films, and other educational materials focusing on the history, culture, and political thought of the period of the American Revolution;

(B) bibliographical and documentary projects and publications;

(C) conferences, convocations, lectures, seminars, and other programs, especially those located in the 13 colonies, including the major cities and buildings of national historical significance of the 13 colonies;

(D) the development of libraries, museums, historic sites, and exhibits, including mobile exhibits;

(E) ceremonies and celebrations commemorating specific events, such as—

- (i) the signing of the Declaration of Independence;
- (ii) programs and activities focusing on the national and international significance of the United States Semiquincentennial; and
- (iii) the implications of the Semiquincentennial for present and future generations; and

(F) encouraging Federal agencies to integrate the celebration of the Semiquincentennial into the regular activities and execution of the purpose of the agencies through such activities as the issuance of coins, medals, certificates of recognition, stamps, and the naming of vessels.

(3) REQUIREMENTS.—The report shall include—

(A) the recommendations of the Commission for the allocation of financial and administrative responsibility among the public and private authorities and organizations recommended for participation by the Commission; and

(B) proposals for such legislative enactments and administrative actions as the Commission considers necessary to carry out the recommendations.

Recommendations:

President:

(d) REPORT SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS.—The President shall submit to Congress a report that contains—

(1) the complete report of the Commission; and

(2) such comments and recommendations for legislation and such a description of administrative actions taken by the President as the President considers appropriate.

Recommendations:

(e) POINT OF CONTACT.—The Commission, acting through the secretariat of the Commission described in section 9(b), shall serve as the point of contact of the Federal Government for all State, local, international, and private sector initiatives regarding the Semiquincentennial of the founding of the United States, with the purpose of coordinating and facilitating all fitting and proper activities honoring the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

SEC. 6. COORDINATION.

Consultation:

(a) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out this Act, the Commission shall consult and cooperate with, and seek advice and assistance from, appropriate Federal agencies, State and local public bodies, learned societies, and historical, patriotic, philanthropic, civic, professional, and related organizations.

(b) RESPONSIBILITY OF OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Federal agencies shall cooperate with the Commission in planning, encouraging, developing, and coordinating appropriate commemorative activities.

(2) DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.—

Study:

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall undertake a study of appropriate actions that might be taken to further preserve and develop historic sites and battlefields, at such time and in such manner as will ensure that fitting observances and exhibits may be held at appropriate sites and battlefields during the 250th anniversary celebration.

Recommendations:

(B) REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit to the Commission a report that contains the results of the study

and the recommendations of the Secretary, in time to afford the Commission an opportunity—

(i) to review the study; and

(ii) to incorporate in the report described in section 5(c) such findings and recommendations as the Commission considers appropriate.

(3) ARTS AND HUMANITIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The presiding officer of the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities, the Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities shall cooperate with the Commission, especially in the encouragement and coordination of scholarly works and artistic expressions focusing on the history, culture, and political thought of the period predating the United States Semiquincentennial.

(B) LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, AND ARCHIVES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Librarian of Congress, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, and the Archivist of the United States shall cooperate with the Commission, especially in the development and display of exhibits and collections and in the development of bibliographies, catalogs, and other materials relevant to the period predating the United States Semiquincentennial.

(ii) LOCATION.—To the maximum extent practicable, displays described in subparagraph (A) shall be located in, or in facilities near to, buildings of historical significance to the American Revolution, so as to promote greater public awareness of the heritage of the United States.

(C) SUBMISSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS.—Each of the officers described in this paragraph shall submit to the Commission a report containing recommendations in time to afford the Commission an opportunity—

Reports.

(i) to review the reports; and

(ii) to incorporate in the report described in section 5(c) such findings and recommendations as the Commission considers appropriate.

(4) DEPARTMENT OF STATE.—The Secretary of State shall coordinate the participation of foreign nations in the celebration of the United States Semiquincentennial, including by soliciting the erection of monuments and other cultural cooperations in founding cities of the United States so as—

(A) to celebrate the shared heritage of the United States with the many peoples and nations of the world; and

(B) to provide liaison and encouragement for the erection of international pavilions to showcase the spread of democratic institutions abroad in the period following the American Revolution.

SEC. 7. POWERS.

(a) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold such hearings, meet and act at such times and places, take such testimony, and receive

such evidence as the Commission considers advisable to carry out this Act.

(b) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may secure directly from a Federal agency such information as the Commission considers necessary to carry out this Act.

(2) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—On request of the Chairperson of the Commission, the head of the agency shall provide the information to the Commission.

(c) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other agencies of the Federal Government.

(d) GIFTS.—The Commission may accept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of money, property, or personal services.

(e) ADDITIONAL POWERS.—As determined necessary by the Commission, the Commission may—

(1) procure supplies, services, and property;

(2) make contracts;

(3) expend in furtherance of this Act funds donated or received in pursuance of contracts entered into under this Act; and

(4) take such actions as are necessary to enable the Commission to carry out efficiently and in the public interest the purposes of this Act.

(f) USE OF MATERIALS.—

(1) TIME CAPSULE.—A representative portion of all books, manuscripts, miscellaneous printed matter, memorabilia, relics, and other materials relating to the United States Semiquincentennial shall be deposited in a time capsule—

(A) to be buried in Independence Mall, Philadelphia, on July 4, 2026; and

(B) to be unearthed on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the United States of America on July 4, 2276.

(2) OTHER MATERIALS.—All other books, manuscripts, miscellaneous printed matter, memorabilia, relics, and other materials relating to the United States Semiquincentennial, whether donated to the Commission or collected by the Commission, may be deposited for preservation in national, State, or local libraries or museums or be otherwise disposed of by the Commission, in consultation with the Librarian of Congress, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, the Archivist of the United States, and the Administrator of General Services.

(g) PROPERTY.—Any property acquired by the Commission remaining on termination of the Commission may be—

(1) used by the Secretary for purposes of the National Park Service; or

(2) disposed of as excess or surplus property.

SEC. 8. COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.

(a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—The members of the Commission shall receive no compensation for service on the Commission.

(b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from

the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of the duties of the Commission.

(c) STAFF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson of the Commission may, without regard to the civil service laws (including regulations), appoint and terminate an executive director and such other additional personnel as are necessary to enable the Commission to perform the duties of the Commission.

(2) CONFIRMATION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The employment of an executive director shall be subject to confirmation by the Commission.

(3) COMPENSATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Chairperson of the Commission may fix the compensation of the executive director and other personnel without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, relating to classification of positions and General Schedule pay rates.

(B) MAXIMUM RATE OF PAY.—The rate of pay for the executive director and other personnel shall not exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of title 5, United States Code.

(d) DETAIL OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An employee of the Federal Government may be detailed to the Commission without reimbursement.

(2) CIVIL SERVICE STATUS.—The detail of the employee shall be without interruption or loss of civil service status or privilege.

(e) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—The Chairperson of the Commission may procure temporary and intermittent services in accordance with section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals that do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of that title.

(f) ADVISORY COMMITTEES.—The Commission may appoint such advisory committees as the Commission determines necessary.

SEC. 9. EXPENDITURES OF COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—All expenditures of the Commission shall be made solely from donated funds.

(b) ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARIAT.—The Secretary of the Interior shall, through a competitive process, seek to enter into an arrangement with a nonprofit organization, the mission of which is consistent with the purpose of this Act. Under such arrangement, such nonprofit organization shall—

(1) serve as the secretariat of the Commission, including by serving as the point of contact under section 5(e);

(2) house the administrative offices of the Commission;

(3) assume responsibility for funds of the Commission; and

(4) provide to the Commission financial and administrative services, including services related to budgeting, accounting, financial reporting, personnel, and procurement.

(c) PAYMENT FOR FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), payment for services provided under subsection (b)(4) shall be made in

advance, or by reimbursement, from funds of the Commission in such amounts as may be agreed on by the Chairperson of the Commission and the secretariat of the Commission.

(2) RELATIONSHIP TO REGULATIONS.—

Applicability.

(A) ERRONEOUS PAYMENTS.—The regulations under section 5514 of title 5, United States Code, relating to the collection of indebtedness of personnel resulting from erroneous payments shall apply to the collection of erroneous payments made to, or on behalf of, a Commission employee.

(B) NO PROMULGATION BY COMMISSION.—The Commission shall not be required to prescribe any regulations relating to the matters described in subparagraph (A).

Time period.

(d) ANNUAL REPORT.—Once each year during the period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act and ending on December 31, 2027, the Commission shall submit to Congress a report of the activities of the Commission, including an accounting of funds received and expended during the year covered by the report.

SEC. 10. TERMINATION OF COMMISSION.

The Commission shall terminate on December 31, 2027.

Approved July 22, 2016.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 4875 (S. 2815):

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 162 (2016):

July 5, considered and passed House.

July 12, considered and passed Senate.

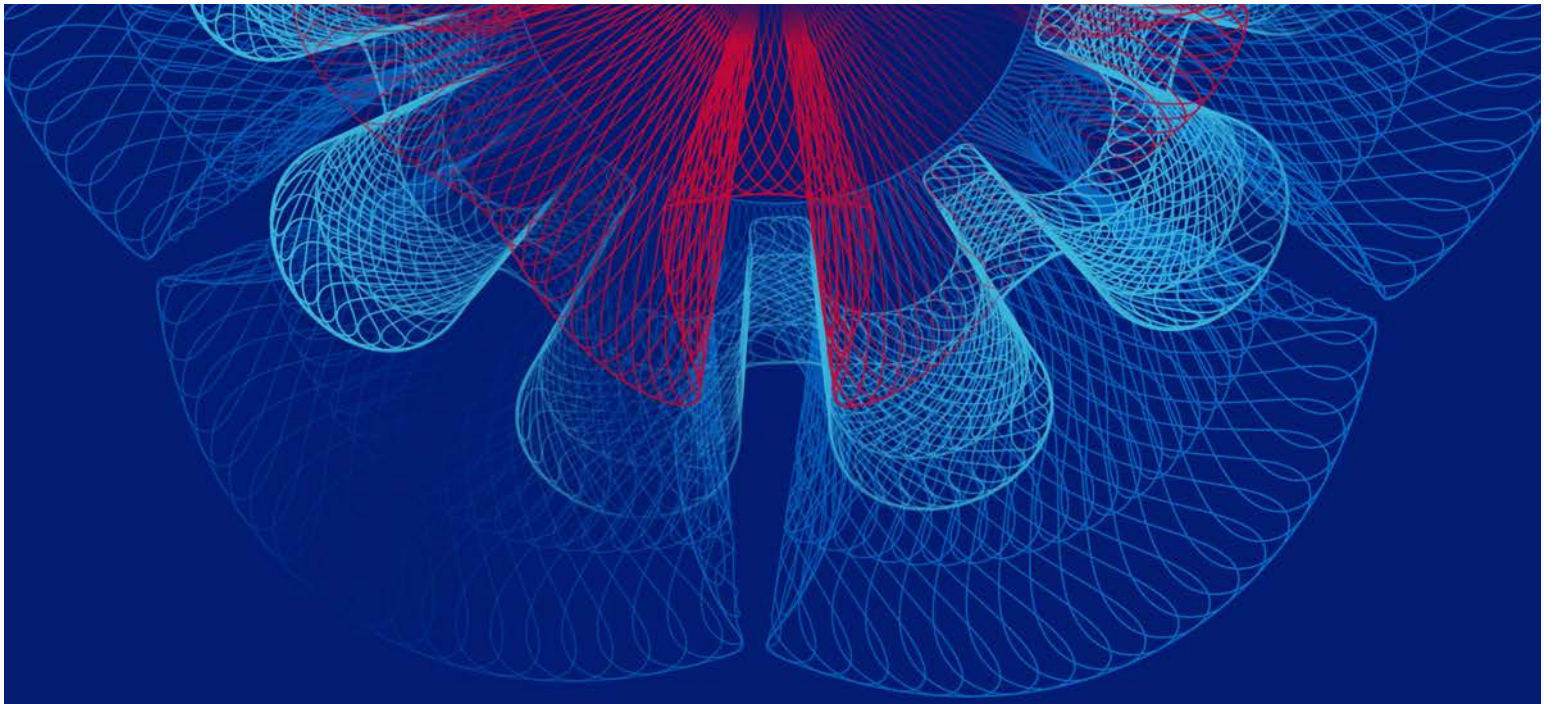
○



... saying no jurisdiction in such matters, as if requiring us to prove in every case
 will dictate that governments long established should not be changed, yet equal and honest
 will be superior, than to right themselves by arms, and the means to which they are accustomed
 as a design to reduce them under absolute despotism. It is true, now, the true duty is
 to be patient sufferers of these evils, and not to employ any violent means, because the
 British is a nation of spirited enterprisers and a republic, and justice in that respect the principle
 of the law. — He has argued his opponents, the more experienced and more
 and speaking impetuous, more impetuous in their opinions, but the report should be shown
 page after page for the accommodation of every desire of justice, and these pages would seem
 to be granted only. — He has called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 compliance with the measures. — He has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 along time after such disputation. — He has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 of the measures proposed to be taken, and has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 being the laws for the restoration of the rights of justice, and has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 Administration of justice, in regard to the laws, and has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 and preservation of the laws. — He has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 us in times of peace. — He has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 with the laws, and has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 around the government, and has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 and to be tried for political offences. — He has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 to be tried for political offences. — He has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform

... to be tried for political offences. — He has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 altering the security of our governments, and has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 He has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 of our people. — He has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 fearfully paralleled in the most ancient times, and has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 this country, to secure the security of the laws, and has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 inhabitants of our frontier, the most ancient times, and has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 have petitioned for redress in the most ancient times, and has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 to be tried for political offences. — He has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 able jurisdiction over us. — He has also called for a more vigorous and more uniform
 by the ties of our common kindred, to discover how it has been so long and so long





APPENDIX E-2

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS REPORT

FINAL REPORT
to the
**UNITED STATES SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL
COMMISSION**
from
THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
on
DECEMBER, 2019

Executive Summary

Predicated on funding from or through the Commission and/or Congress (the “*Funding*”), the National Endowment for the Arts (“*Arts Endowment*”) recommends that the Commission, as defined herein, creates, develops, and implements a national initiative titled “*We the People National Arts Initiative*” (the “*Initiative*”) designed to be open to and capable of including the participation of every living American while commemorating the common, shared values that brought the nation together – through a series of activities as specified herein.

The Arts Endowment recommends that the *We the People National Arts Initiative* involve three (3) general parts. **Part 1:** a bold, innovative initiative with the potential to engage and involve the participation of *every living American* in the creation of a collection of an audio story and an image from each American (the “*United Stories of America*” and the “*United Images of America*”); **Part 2A:** the conservation, digitization, curation and subsequent exhibition of an existing collection of photographic surveys funded by the National Endowment for the Arts to commemorate and celebrate the nation’s Bicentennial (1976) – some never before seen by the public – now in the custody and control of the Smithsonian Museum of American Art; **Part 2B:** using the Arts Endowment’s existing network of national, state and local arts organizations, collect, curate and exhibit images from every corner of America -- designed to commemorate and celebrate the Semiquincentennial; and, **Part 3A** and **Part 3B:** using revised guidelines that align with the Commission’s themes, priorities, and objectives, the Arts Endowment could *expand* its funding of direct grants to eligible organizations.

As outlined herein, the collection of the United Stories of America, United Images of America; existing collections from the Bicentennial; and the newly created images from America in 2026, herein collectively referred to as the “*Collection*” – is recommended to be gathered through a number of methods, curated and made publicly available in a searchable, non-commercial database format in public libraries and/or other suitable locations to be determined in each of America’s 3,007 counties, its 64 parishes, 19 organized boroughs, 10 census areas, 41 independent cities, the District of Columbia, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and America Samoa; and other locations as agreed upon.

An illustration of the Initiative’s most salient features are represented in Figure 1 below:



Figure 1

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Background

Statutory Authority

Consistent with Public Law 114-196: United States Semi-quincentennial Commission Act of 2016 (36 U.S.C. 101; Date: 7/22/2016; enacted H.R. 4875) (*“the Act”*); under enabling authority located in the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. §954(o)); and, consistent with the stated vision and purposes and key themes of the United States Semi-quincentennial Commission (the *“Commission”*) -- the following shall set forth the recommendations from the National Endowment for the Arts (the *“Arts Endowment”*) to the Commission.

For more than fifty years, the National Endowment for the Arts has relied on a small army of locally recruited, trained and active civilian and professional volunteers who serve as the Agency’s first line of review for the thousands of grant applications that flow into the agency each year. This local network is supported by the Arts Endowment’s professional staff based in Washington and via its on-going commitment to visit each state – each year -- conducting grant workshops, site visits and other agency related activities in the state. Note that the National Endowment for the Arts is the only grant maker, private or public, that operates in every Congressional District in the United States.

The Arts Endowment also has created relationships with the state arts agencies in each of the fifty states and US Territories. By law, 40% of the Arts Endowment’s annual funding is distributed directly to the states – each state must have its own, designated, non-profit state art agency to receive our funding and matching funds from each state’s legislature. This second tier of networking is further supported by the Arts Endowment’s relationships with regional and national arts agencies such as the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. To prepare its recommendations to the Commission, the Arts Agency conducted interviews and solicited the opinions of and counsel from entities within each part of its network.

National Network

As America’s cultural agency for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts has a direct, deeply-rooted and on-going relationship with national, regional, state, and local arts organizations in every state and U.S. territory (*“Arts Organizations”*). Further, as a part of its national best practices, the National Endowment for the Arts’ professional staff, on an on-going basis, recruits, cultivates, and trains citizens from across the United States and its territories to serve on peer review panels for each grant application and/or project proposal across the broad spectrum of its categories (*“Peer Review Process”*).

For review of the thousands of grant applications¹ that flow through the Arts Endowment’s process on an annual basis, a small army of locally based volunteers are the first level of the process. The grant review process is roughly expressed in Figure 2 below:

¹ In Fiscal Year 2019, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded 2,371 grants.



Figure 2

For the implementation of its national initiatives and other programs², the National Endowment for the Arts works with arts associations that operate on a national scale such as the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and the Americans for the Arts; regional state arts agencies; and, the state arts agencies in each of America’s fifty states and six territories – depending upon the scale of the program. The Arts Endowment’s network of regional arts agencies is represented in Figure 3 below:

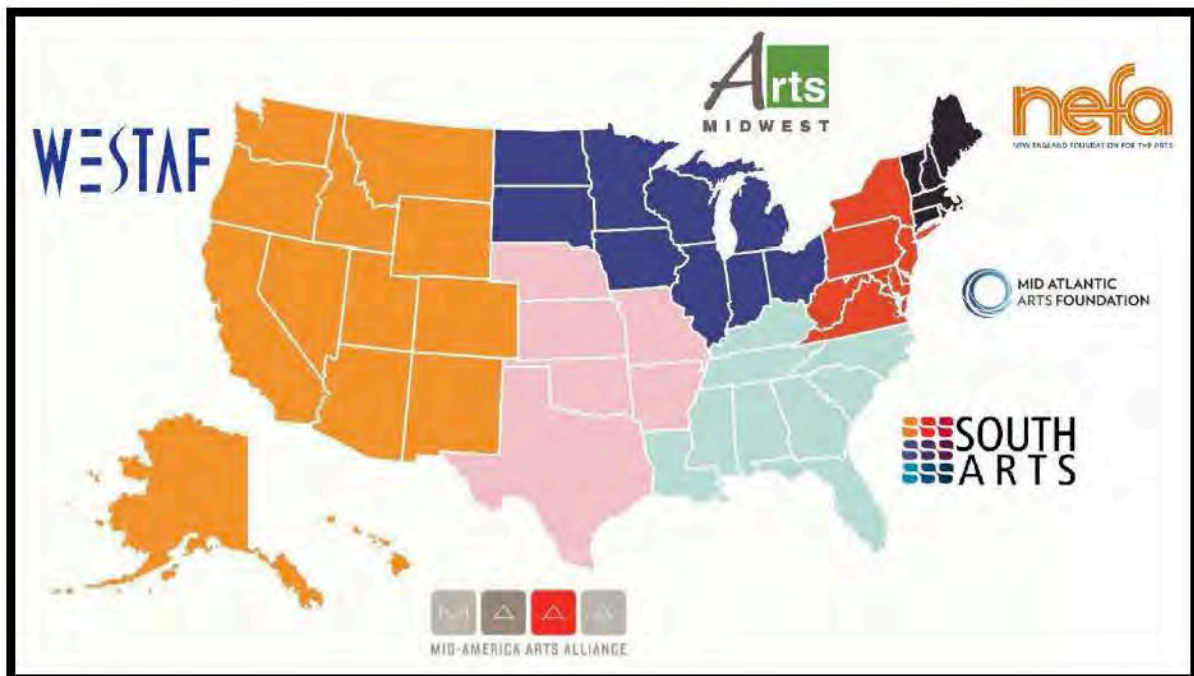


Figure 3

Positive Economic Impact of the Arts

The National Endowment for the Art’ funding impact at the state and local level might contribute to the Commission’s design of both its federal entity program participatory framework and its state and local program participatory framework. On its own, using funds authorized by Congress since 1965, the National Endowment for the Arts has found that the local impact of its grants are, in a word, profound.

² In Fiscal Year 2019, the National Endowment for the Arts operated 17 Cooperative Agreements.

From an economic perspective, research has found that for each one dollar invested into a local art project – up to nine additional dollars are contributed by local sources (both public and private). This 9:1 ratio is significant and a quantifiable metric of the financial value of the Arts Endowment’s contributions to localities across America. As such – contingent upon the Disclaimer – the Arts Endowment could envision using similar protocols to be used as a framework for the Arts Endowment’s participation in the Commissions’ approved project(s) for America 250.

Legacy Opportunity

Research data from dozens of studies supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and its partners including the National Institutes of Health show that the arts: (a) have a positive effect on the health of those who witness and or participate in its creation (from prenatal babies to combat veterans with brain injuries to those addicted to opioids to those suffering from alzheimer’s disease-- data show that the arts help the brain heal and nurture the body); and, (b) bring people and communities together allowing individuals from diverse backgrounds to feel connected to something important and larger than themselves. As such, based on our collective experiences shared by millions of those involved in the arts and now, hard data, the Arts Endowment maintains that the legacy to America of its recommendation to the Commission is, in itself, the vastness yet intimacy of its artistic value (i.e. through the individual and collective stories and images contributed by millions of Americans) and the positive communal impact that those individual and collective processes will have on all of those who witness and or participate in its creation.

Part 1: United *Images* of America & United *Stories* of America – available to Every Living American

Description of the Initiative³

Predicated on securing the Funding, starting on 4 July 2021 and ending on 4 July 2026, the National Endowment for Arts recommends that the Commission implement the Initiative whereby every American desiring to participate, would be empowered to upload a photo or image (“*Image*”) and, through the assistance of a facilitator or trainer as generally defined below, upload an audio story or podcast (“*Story*”) to a newly created digital national archival (data) repository which shall be made available to the public via the on-line and exhibition structure as outlined herein.

Each Image and Story, hereinafter referred as the “United Images and Stories of America” or the “*Collection*”—one from each citizen of the United States and its territories—is intended to be a representation of the life of that individual. The Collection itself is intended to be art as a representation or reflection of the life of each American individually and, together, all of America as a collection, as of 2026.

³ The implementation of Part 1—like all other parts of the Initiative—is predicated on securing adequate funding from the Commission or Congress (or a combination of the two). With adequate funding, the National Endowment for the Arts will assist The Commission in any manner as appropriate in the implementation of the Initiative.

Operation of the Initiative: Open to Every Living American

To assist Americans in the physical creation and uploading of their Images and Stories to the Collection, the Arts Endowment recommends to the Commission that the Initiative provide and involve the following:

1. Artist Assistance Programs. Artists will be engaged to work with local communities on personal history and community storytelling efforts such as:
 - a. Engaging collaboratively *with local communities* across the country to document personal histories, community stories, and healing dialogues about history, identity, and narratives around the America 250 theme.
 - b. Archiving the Collection with appropriate institutions and organizations.
 - c. Partnering with other federal institutions to archive the materials.
 - d. Working collaboratively across disciplines to suggest organizations and artists to perform this work for prospective residencies.
 - e. Soliciting and implementing partnerships *with appropriate institutions*—along with the Arts Endowment’s connections with state arts agencies—to ensure that these stories and histories are recorded and preserved.
 - f. Training “the Trainers” via webinars.
 - g. Accepting images that may be submitted with accreditation to an individual or anonymously.
2. Access. A network of access portals shall be placed in public libraries or other suitable locations to be determined in each of America’s 3,007 counties, its 64 parishes, 19 organized boroughs, 10 census areas, 41 independent cities, the District of Columbia, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and America Samoa, for a total of 3,148 (the “*We the People National Arts Initiative Portals*”).
3. Mobile Portals. In order to reach rural communities, persons with disabilities, Native American communities, and others not otherwise likely to visit a local library, *We the People National Arts Initiative* mobile portals will be created, manned, and deployed (“*Mobile Portals*”). The Initiative would provide no fewer than fifty (50) of these Mobile Portals or vans.
4. Interactive App. The Initiative will create and maintain an app designed to allow participants to record their Story and upload their Image to the Collection. The app will include a facilitator function designed to focus the content of the participant’s story.

Curating the Images and Stories

The Arts Endowment recommends to the Commission that the Collection would then be curated to produce a museum quality collection (the “*We the People National Arts Initiative Collection*”).

Exhibiting the Images and Stories: Going Public

The Arts Endowment recommends to the Commission that, after curation, the *We the People National Arts Initiative Collection* be exhibited in the following locations:

1. Public Displays. A network of interactive portals to be placed in and operated from public libraries or other suitable locations to be determined in each of America’s 3,007 counties, its 64 parishes, 19 organized boroughs, 10 census areas, 41 independent cities, the District of Columbia, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and America Samoa, for a total of 3,148 portals (the “*We the People National Arts Initiative Portals*”).
2. Interactive Internet Portal. Working with appropriate agencies and partners as deemed necessary, the *We the People National Arts Initiative Collection* shall be made available to every American via the Internet in a searchable, interactive driven platform.

Additional Activities to Support the Collection

Designed to support the exhibition and public use of the Collection, the National Endowment for the Arts recommends the following activities:

1. Time Capsule. A digitized copy of the *We the People National Arts Initiative Collection* is recommended to be included into the Commission’s Time Capsule as specified in Section 7, Paragraph (f)(1) of the Act.
2. Activities and Events. To commemorate the values of the semiquincentennial and advance the Initiative -- the National Endowment for the Arts will work with and encourage qualified arts organizations to create appropriate artistic programming.
3. Documentary Broadcast of the Collection. In an on-going effort to provide public access to the Collection, the Initiative shall encourage the creation and broadcast of a series of documentary programs.

(Remainder of this page left blank intentionally)

Part 2A: Bicentennial Photo Surveys: Bringing to Life Images *from America's Past*

The Smithsonian American Art Museum (“SAAM”) holdings include an existing group of thirteen photographic surveys, containing some 1,700 images, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts in conjunction with the commemoration and celebration of the nation’s Bicentennial. These images represent the foundation of SAAM’s photography collection, yet they have never been properly conserved, catalogued, digitized and organized for exhibition.

As a principal part of the Initiative, the National Endowment for the Arts, using Funding as described herein, recommends that the Commission fund SAAM’s conservation, digitization, curation and exhibition⁴ of these images from America’s past as a part of the Collection.⁵ Additional exhibits and methods of display of these images from America’s past shall be implemented.

Part 2B: Curated Images of America’s Present: Bringing to Life Images *from America’s in 2026*

Using Funds as described herein, the Arts Endowment recommends that the Commission acquire, digitize, curate and exhibit 250 new images from each state and territory designed to commemorate and celebrate the Semiquincentennial (“*Bringing to Life Images from America’s Present*”). The National Endowment for the Arts would make its Peer Review Process and national, state and local network of non-profit arts organizations available to the Commission as appropriate.

Additional exhibits and methods of display of these images from America’s present shall be implemented.⁶

As such, contingent upon the Disclaimer noted above -- Part 2B of the Arts Endowment’s recommendation (“*Part 2B: Curated Images of America’s Present: Bringing to Life Images from America’s in 2026*”) is intended to be procured from artists via grants from across America through the agency’s local peer-review approval protocols and curation process. Part 2B is also intended to be an integral and complementary enhancement to those *other* images and stories described in Part 1 and Part 2A of the recommendations submitted to the Commission.

⁴ By inference, these images and stories from America’s past will be exhibited as directed by SAAM; and available at no cost via the Internet on an interactive portal.

⁵ These Photographic Surveys will also enjoy the additional benefit of other programs as deemed appropriate by SAAM, such as: Research and Analysis; deposit of certain photos into the Time Capsule; Activities and Events; and Documentary Broadcast of the Collection.

⁶ Images and stories from America’s present will also enjoy the additional benefit of other programs including: Research and Analysis; deposit of certain photos into the Time Capsule; Activities and Events; and Documentary Broadcast of the Collection.

Part 3A: New Guidelines to Commemorate America 250 to Expand *Funding of Direct Grants*

Predicated upon securing the Funding, starting in 2021 and continuing through 2022, the Arts Endowment shall, to the best of its ability, develop and implement language amending its program guidelines encouraging grant proposals from qualified, arts organizations from across the United States, specifically designed to: (i) commemorate the values across the existing grant categories (“*Commemorative Grant Activities*”);⁷ and (ii) involve the attendance and or participation of the greatest number of citizens throughout the United States.

And, further, predicated upon securing funding, beginning in 2023 and continuing through 2027, for a total of five (5) fiscal years, the Arts Endowment may fund such Commemorative Grant Activities, as it deems appropriate.

Part 3B: New Guidelines to Commemorate America 250 to Expand *Existing National Programs*

Distinctly unique from its existing grant categories directed towards local and state projects, the Arts Endowment also funds its own *national* programs designed to reach and involve citizens from across the United States (“*National Arts Initiatives*”).⁸

Subject to existing guidelines placed on the Arts Endowment by Congress to allocate funds for some of its specific national projects and the Funding as defined herein, beginning in FY 2023 and continuing through FY 2027, the National Endowment for the Arts shall, to the best of its ability and subject to the availability of funding, distribute such funds as it deems appropriate in the following programs, among others, to reach citizens in every state and territory:

1. Creative Forces. Creative Forces is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs and the state and local arts agencies that serves the special needs of military patients and veterans with traumatic brain injury and psychological health conditions, as well as their families and caregivers. Presently, the program places creative arts therapies at the core of patient-centered care at 11 clinical sites throughout the country, plus a telehealth program, and increases access to community arts activities to promote health, wellness and quality of life for military service members, veterans, and their families and caregivers. It is our recommendation, subject to funding availability, for the Initiative to work to expand the reach of Creative Forces through new partnerships with additional,

⁷ The Arts Endowment may use its Grant Review Process in the awarding of all direct public funding of Commemorative Grant Activities that may include projects from any of its Existing Grant Categories.

⁸ The Arts Endowment’s grantmaking categories are: Accessibility; Artist Communities; Arts Education; Creative Placemaking; Dance; Design; Folk & Traditional Arts; International; Literature; Local Arts Agencies; Media Arts; Museums; Music; Musical Theater; Opera; Presenting & Multidisciplinary Works; Research & Analysis; State & Regional; Theater; and Visual Arts.

qualified non-profit organizations so that the program would be available to combat veterans and their families from every state and territory.

2. Poetry Out Loud. Currently in its 15th year of operation, Poetry Out Loud is designed to empower and help prepare high school youth for a successful adulthood. Open to high school students across America, participants select, memorize, and recite poems from an anthology of more than 1,000 classic and contemporary poems. Beginning at the classroom level, winners advance to the school-wide competition, then to regional and statewide competitions, and ultimately to the national finals in Washington, DC. And while almost 300,000 high school students across the United States participate in the program each year, it is our recommendation that the Initiative broaden the reach of Poetry Out Loud.

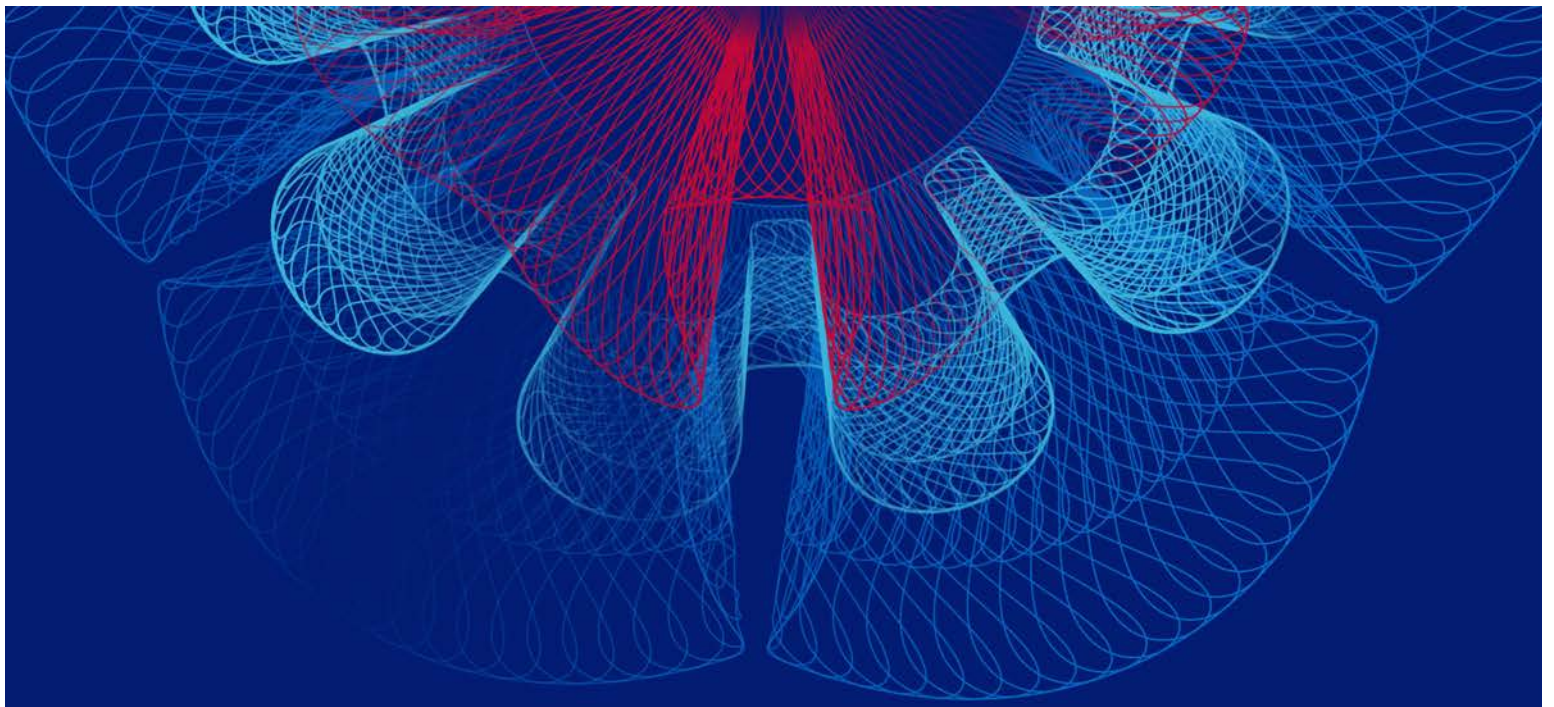
Additionally, it is recommended that, beginning in FY 2023 and extending through 2027, the anthology of poems from which high school students would draw their inspiration and use in their recitation for the competition would include those considered by the Arts Endowment and its non-profit partners to commemorate and advance the values as defined above.

On July 4, 2026 in an organized, orchestrated manner at the same moment across the country, the 2026 Poetry Out Loud state and territory winners would recite their poem in a public forum conducive to such activities as a part of the Initiative.

3. Big Read. Big Read is an on-going program of the National Endowment for the Arts designed to unify communities through the collective sharing and understanding of our world through outstanding literature. And while, as of 2019-2020, seventy five (75) grantees from a number of states are participating in the program, it is our recommendation for the Initiative to broaden the reach of the Big Read via additional grants and innovative programming designed to make the Big Read available to communities throughout the nation.

It is further recommended that, beginning in FY 2023 and extending through 2027, the anthology of books within the Big Read anthology will be expanded to specifically include those works that draw their inspiration from or otherwise advance the values as defined above.

(End of the Report)



APPENDIX E-3

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES REPORT

**REPORT TO THE
UNITED STATES
SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL
COMMISSION**



SUBMITTED BY

National Endowment for the Humanities

Jon Parrish Peede, Chairman

NOVEMBER 15, 2019



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Dear Commissioners,

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is pleased to support the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission. This report outlines NEH's steadfast commitment to providing the American people with the historical knowledge, cultural resources, and educational tools necessary to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the nation that President Abraham Lincoln so rightly called "the last best hope of earth."

Our new agency-wide initiative, "A More Perfect Union: NEH Special Initiative Advancing Civic Education and Commemorating the Nation's 250th Anniversary," will serve as the cornerstone of our grantmaking. "A More Perfect Union" is guided by NEH's Strategic Plan and the objectives of the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission. Anchored in civics education, the initiative will broaden the reach and impact of the humanities, strengthen the nation's humanities infrastructure, and commemorate American democracy. It will also focus on the needs of U.S. troops, military families, and veterans.

To implement this initiative, we have established the NEH Office of Special Initiatives to develop complementary partnerships and promote existing agency projects. The office will play a coordinating role with other federal agencies and local, regional, and national organizations.

NEH has found broad, enthusiastic support for "A More Perfect Union" from the state humanities councils, the cultural and higher education sectors, educational foundations, civic and government leaders, and among the general public.

My colleagues and I are committed to funding projects that promote a deeper understanding of American history and culture and that advance civics education and knowledge of our core principles of government. We see our duty as not only preserving artifacts, or underwriting research, or presenting exhibitions and films, but as the nearly sacred duty of pointing the way for the next generation of Americans so that they too can live meaningful, impactful, fulfilling lives.

The National Endowment for the Humanities looks forward to working with the Commission.

Respectfully,

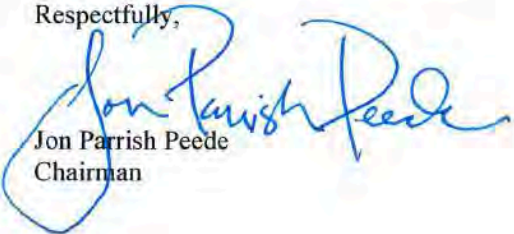

Jon Parrish Peede
Chairman



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I. Introduction and Overview: National Endowment for the Humanities and the U.S. Semiquicentennial

The legislation creating the U.S. Semiquicentennial Commission affirms the mission of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), stating that the NEH Chairman shall “cooperate with the Commission, especially in the encouragement and coordination of scholarly works and artistic expressions focusing on the history, culture, and political thought of the period predating the United States Semiquicentennial.”

NEH welcomes the opportunity to play a key national role in the 2026 Semiquicentennial, which continues our history of leadership in helping the nation mark major anniversaries. NEH has supported research, scholarship, education, public programs, preservation projects, and local history and culture related to the 1976 Bicentennial, the Bicentennial of the Constitution, the Columbus Quincentenary, and the Civil War Sesquicentennial.

For the 1976 Bicentennial, NEH awarded more than \$11.5 million in grants that ranged from supporting communities to produce their own events, to a book series, television and radio programming, youth debates, and a nationwide discussion program. Many of these programs were part of the “American Issues Forum,” an initiative co-sponsored by NEH and the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, which included a nine-month schedule of weekly discussions on “issues that have been fundamental to American society throughout [the nation’s] history.”

NEH is already at work on plans for the upcoming U.S. Semiquicentennial. Since becoming NEH Chairman in 2018, Jon Parrish Peede has directed the agency’s planning for the 250th anniversary. This report describes those efforts, as well as specific funding priorities and projects under the auspices of a special initiative, “A More Perfect Union: NEH Special Initiative Advancing Civic Education and Commemorating the Nation’s 250th Anniversary” (hereafter “A More Perfect Union”).



II. NEH’s Legacy of Support for American History and Culture

NEH was founded in 1965 as a grantmaking agency of the United States government dedicated to supporting research, education, preservation, and public programs in the humanities. From the beginning, NEH has invested in projects designed to illuminate the history of our nation for the American people.

For the 250th anniversary, NEH will build on this rich legacy of support as we fund innovative, new opportunities to explore our past. Our programs have:

Preserved and shared the documents that have defined our democracy

- NEH has supported ten presidential papers projects—from George Washington and Thomas Jefferson to Dwight D. Eisenhower—which make the words and deeds of the occupants of the White House accessible on a library shelf or through a database.
- The NEH-supported *Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution* and *Documentary History of the First Federal Congress, 1789–1791* provide essential resources for scholars, students, judges, political leaders, and citizens.
- NEH has also supported the publication of the papers of leading Americans, including Jane Addams, Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Benjamin Franklin, Martin Luther King Jr., George C. Marshall, Eleanor Roosevelt, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Mark Twain.
- *Chronicling America*, a partnership with the Library of Congress, contains more than fifteen million newspaper pages from forty-eight states in its free online database. It is widely used in middle school and high school classrooms nationwide.

Supported groundbreaking discoveries and riveting accounts of American history

- NEH-supported history books have won the Pulitzer Prize, including Bernard Bailyn’s *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution*, Jack Rakove’s *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution*, and James McPherson’s *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*.
- NEH has also supported Pulitzer Prize-winning biographies, including Joan Hedrick’s *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*, R.W.B. Lewis’s *Edith Wharton: A Biography*, Jeffrey C. Stewart’s *The New Negro: The Life of Alain Locke*, and David W. Blight’s *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*.
- With NEH support, archaeologists found remnants of the original 1607 Jamestown fort, expanding our knowledge of the first permanent English settlement in North America.
- Using NEH grants, a team of historians has assembled and made digitally available the records of twelve million enslaved Africans, changing our understanding of the slave trade in the process.

Made American history accessible to all Americans

- The NEH-supported *The Adams Chronicles*, broadcast to coincide with the Bicentennial in 1976, was one of the first blockbuster miniseries on public television.
- With NEH support, Ken Burns invited viewers to walk the battlefields of *The Civil War*, tap their feet to *Jazz*, steal home in *Baseball*, drink at a speakeasy in *Prohibition*, get to know *The Roosevelts*, and go “in country” in *The Vietnam War*.
- The NEH-supported *American Experience* series on PBS has profiled the larger-than-life presidents *TR*, *FDR*, and *LBJ* and the struggle for civil rights with *Freedom Riders* and *The Loving Story*. Recently *Chasing the Moon*, which chronicles the space race, captivated viewers on the fiftieth anniversary of the moon landing.

- *Latino Americans*, a six-hour NEH-supported documentary featuring nearly a hundred interviews with labor leaders, entertainers, writers, politicians, and more, explored how Latinos have shaped the history of the United States.
- The Library of America, started with seed money from NEH, makes available more than three hundred authoritative texts of our literary heritage, including works by Willa Cather, Raymond Chandler, W.E.B. Du Bois, Alexander Hamilton, Shirley Jackson, and Eudora Welty.
- “Picturing America” provided classrooms and libraries with reproductions of forty masterpieces of American art, along with teaching materials.
- The “We the People” Bookshelf provided thematic collections of books about American history and reading-and-discussion materials to school and public libraries.
- “NEH On the Road” brings exhibitions on topics such as Coney Island’s place in the American imagination to small venues, ranging from public libraries to post offices.



III. “A More Perfect Union”: NEH Special Initiative Advancing Civic Education and Commemorating the Nation’s 250th Anniversary

In support of the 250th anniversary, NEH crafted a strategic plan, vision, and goals underscoring our history and mission as one of the nation’s leaders in ensuring the founding principles and ideals endure.

NEH STRATEGIC PLAN

NEH’s strategic plan (2018–2022) calls for the agency to “assume [a] leadership role in celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States.” The plan includes designing new agency programs involving American history for the Semiquincentennial; making available NEH’s grantmaking expertise and peer-review process to other federal agencies awarding grants for the Semiquincentennial; and funding projects on the role of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, civil society, and civics in American life tailored to students and lifelong learners.

NEH GOALS AND VISION

The “A More Perfect Union” initiative will amplify our steadfast commitment to investing in projects that provide Americans with the resources to learn about our nation’s history. NEH is also placing a special emphasis on strengthening the nation’s humanities infrastructure, civic education, and veterans programming.

Strengthening the Nation’s Humanities Infrastructure

NEH’s programs for infrastructure and capacity building are intended to strengthen the institutional base of the humanities in the United States through matching grants to libraries, museums, archives, colleges and universities, historic sites, scholarly associations, and other cultural institutions for efforts that build institutional capacity or infrastructure for long-term sustainability.

This program requires a match of nonfederal funds, which may be used toward capital expenditures such as construction and renovation projects, purchase of equipment and software, sharing of humanities collections among institutions, documentation of lost or imperiled cultural heritage, sustaining digital scholarly infrastructure, and preservation and conservation of humanities collections.

The program is also placing a special emphasis on projects from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and two-year colleges to participate in the building and re-building of their institutions.

Civic Education

NEH’s enabling legislation states that the agency was created because “democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens.” In order to nurture good citizenship, NEH supports projects that promote a deeper understanding of American history and culture, while advancing civic education and knowledge of the country’s core principles of government. NEH-supported projects include National History Day and other programs for K-12 students and teachers; public humanities discussions in various venues and settings; film and media projects; and digitization and increased public accessibility to the papers and writings of America’s founders and other significant figures in American history.

Veterans’ Programming

In recognition of the importance of the humanities, both in helping Americans understand the experiences of service members and in assisting veterans as they return to civilian life, NEH created its “Standing Together” initiative. This initiative draws on the power of the humanities to support research that explores war and its aftermath; to promote discussion of the experiences of those Americans affiliated with the Armed Services; and to support returning veterans and their families.

Even though the agency has supported projects on civic education and veterans’ issues for decades, NEH expects an even greater focus on these areas in the years leading up to 2026.

IMPLEMENTATION OF “A MORE PERFECT UNION”

Creation of the NEH Office of Special Initiatives

To implement “A More Perfect Union,” Chairman Peede established the NEH Office of Special Initiatives to develop complementary partnerships and promote existing agency projects. The office is

under the direction of Dr. Anne-Imelda Radice and reports to the Chairman. It will coordinate NEH's Semiquincentennial-related efforts internally and externally, including supporting programs throughout the Endowment, working with the Commission and other federal agencies, and facilitating agreements with national organizations.

Over the past few months, the NEH Office of Special Initiatives has discussed mutual goals with many stakeholder organizations and groups, including the American Alliance of Museums, the American Association for State and Local History, the American Historical Association, the American Institute for Conservation, the Federation of State Humanities Councils, the National Archives, the National Museum of American History, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Supreme Court Historical Society, and the White House Historical Association.

NEH Funding Opportunities

In June 2019, NEH issued specific language that emphasizes the 250th anniversary as a funding priority. The grant language reads:

As our nation approaches its 250th anniversary in 2026, NEH encourages projects that promote a deeper understanding of American history and culture and that advance civic education and knowledge of our core principles of government. The agency-wide "A More Perfect Union" initiative will help Americans better understand the world's oldest constitutional democracy and how our founding ideals are met in a modern, pluralistic society.

NEH welcomes consideration of diverse topics in American history, from Native American culture to rural life to the rise of the industrial city, from the Civil War to the Cold War to the civil rights movement, projects that examine foundational documents in U.S. history, etc., as well as projects that examine historical objects, places, traditions, events, and individuals who collectively shaped our states and nation. Applications about the contributions of under-represented communities are highly encouraged.



IV. "A More Perfect Union": A Thematic Framework

For the Semiquincentennial, NEH is building on its legacy projects in seven areas by encouraging the humanities community to think about how they can best serve their audiences, stakeholders, and visitors by developing new approaches to exploring American history and culture. Examples of recently funded projects relevant to "A More Perfect Union" are included to demonstrate the scope and diversity of activities supported by NEH and the impact of the projects on their communities.

ENGAGING THE PUBLIC IN AMERICAN HISTORY

NEH supports a wide range of humanities programming that reaches large and diverse public audiences and makes use of a variety of formats—interpretation at historic sites, television and radio productions, museum exhibitions, podcasts, short videos, digital games, websites, mobile apps, and other digital media. These programs provide Americans with a wealth of opportunities to engage with our nation’s history.

For “A More Perfect Union,” special emphasis is being given to the production and distribution of short documentary films up to thirty minutes in length that engage audiences on American history topics in appealing ways. NEH is also emphasizing humanities discussions that feature at least six in-person programs related to the Semiquincentennial.

Examples of recently funded projects:

Walking Through History: Clio, an Open Platform for Humanities Scholars and Organizations to Reach the Public Where They Stand | Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia

Marshall University is expanding “Clio,” a free educational website and mobile application that guides the public to thousands of historical and cultural sites throughout the United States.

Scholars and organizations will be able to create walking tours and digital heritage trails that use location-aware audio, text, and media.

Revisiting the Founding Era | Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, New York, New York

This library outreach program for one hundred public libraries in underserved communities uses primary sources to prompt conversations about the Founding Era and how the period’s ideas continue to resonate today. The project is in cooperation with the American Library Association and the National Constitution Center.

Creating Together: Reimagining the High Desert Museum’s Exhibition on the Indigenous Columbia Plateau | High Desert Museum, Bend, Oregon

The High Desert Museum, tribal representatives, and scholars are updating the museum’s “By Hand Through Memory” permanent installation. The 4,500-square-foot exhibition will place American Indians at the center of the history of the American West in the twentieth century and examine how Plateau Indians actively maintained their cultures, traditions, and languages, while navigating pressures to assimilate.

Ratifying the Constitution: A Digital Game Opportunity | iCivics, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts

“Ratification: The Great Debate,” an online educational videogame created by iCivics, offers middle and high school students an immersive experience on the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

Slavery at Jefferson’s Monticello: Paradox of Liberty | Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc.,
Charlottesville, Virginia

This exhibition uses Monticello, the home and plantation of Thomas Jefferson, as a lens through which to explore the dilemma of slavery and the lives of the enslaved families and their descendants. The project includes a national tour to four African-American museums.

A Reinterpretation of the Imagined West | Autry Museum of the American West,
Los Angeles, California

The Autry Museum is updating its permanent exhibition to explain the historical significance of the “imagined West,” including how its geography has changed over time, the role of Native and Latino Americans, and its influence on American culture.

PRESERVING AND PROVIDING ACCESS TO THE NATION’S HERITAGE

NEH supports the preservation and creation of intellectual access to cultural resources important to scholarship, education, and lifelong learning. The physical deterioration of humanities collections in America’s libraries, museums, archives, and historical organizations puts the nation’s cultural legacy at risk. There is also a need to make these collections accessible to the public, whether in person or online. Ensuring the long-term and wide availability of primary resources about our nation’s history is a priority for NEH.

In anticipation of the 250th anniversary, small and mid-sized institutions—such as libraries, museums, and colleges and universities—with collections that tell our nation’s story from 1776 forward are encouraged to seek assistance with their preservation needs. Of particular interest are collections that detail the experiences of states and communities beyond the original colonies.

Examples of recently funded projects:

General Preservation Assessment for Local History Collection in the Mary Riley Styles Public Library | Mary Riley Styles Public Library, Falls Church, Virginia

The collection documents the history of the City of Falls Church, Virginia, from Revolutionary times through the present day. It includes maps of original land grants from the 1790s onward, Civil War letters and diaries, more than fifty original stereoscopic daguerreotypes depicting daily life at Camp Alger during the Spanish American War, several thousand photographic negatives documenting the mid-twentieth century, and oral histories from the 1970s and 1980s.

New England’s Hidden Histories: Providing Access to Founding Documents of American Democracy | American Congregational Association, Boston, Massachusetts

New England’s Hidden Histories collects and displays on its website all extant seventeenth- and eighteenth-century early New England church records of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Maine, as well as supporting ecclesiastical papers, which include diaries, synod records, and sermons.

Collections Storage Upgrade for Bridgton Historical Society | Bridgton Historical Society, Bridgton, Maine

Founded originally as an agricultural community in the 1760s, Bridgton later became a transportation center and today serves as a popular tourist destination in southern Maine. The grant will help the society store its diverse collection of historical objects, furniture, textiles, photographs, town and business records, and other items, which date from the eighteenth century.

Updating Manuscript Collections Housing | Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Hartford, Connecticut

This project improves the storage of manuscripts associated with Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of the influential abolitionist novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The collections include substantial correspondence by Stowe and fellow nineteenth-century American authors Mark Twain, Charles Dudley Warner, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman; abolitionists John Greenleaf Whittier and Thomas W. Higginson; and women's rights activists Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucy Stone.

U.S. Caribbean and Ethnic Florida Newspaper Project | University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida

This project will digitize 100,000 pages of newspapers published in Florida, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands of the United States as part of the National Digital Newspaper Program. These newspapers are a rich source of information about daily life, the region's colonial history, including slavery and emancipation, and the conflicts brought about by the transfer of the territories to the United States.

BUILDING HUMANITIES INFRASTRUCTURE

NEH offers matching funds, challenge grants, and cooperative agreements to help local, state, and national institutions secure their cultural resources for the future. By sustaining critical elements of their infrastructure, organizations will ensure that their historic buildings, humanities collections, and digital infrastructure will be available to the next generation of Americans. The "multiplier effect" is crucial to achieving this goal: recipients of a challenge grant must match every federal dollar with up to four nonfederal dollars.

Examples of recently funded projects:

Restoration of Christ Church Tower and Steeple | Old Christ Church Preservation Trust, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Christ Church was founded as part of William Penn's charter and played a role in the establishment of the United States. Notable members of the Philadelphia congregation included George Washington, Betsy Ross, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and thirteen other signers of the Declaration of Independence. The church archives include records of General Washington's Native American visitors.

Historic Dennis Farm House Restoration and Rebuilding Project | Dennis Farm Charitable Land Trust, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania

The Dennis Farm, located in northeast Pennsylvania, was settled two hundred years ago by a free African-American family from New England as part of the initial wave of settlement following the American Revolution. The project restores the nineteenth-century farmhouse and barn complex and transforms the facilities into a museum that will tell the family saga from colonial Massachusetts to today.

Building Renovation and Restoration | Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, Dallas, Texas

This project renovates the institute's three-building campus: the nineteenth-century Stroud House, early twentieth-century Thomas Hall, and the Marcus Conference Center. The improvements will bolster the institute's facilities for public and education programming, including its annual summer institute for teachers and Martin Luther King, Jr. Symposium.

Building Capacity for Humanities Special Collections at Historically Black Colleges and Universities | HBCU Library Alliance, Atlanta, Georgia

The project provides collections care services and training opportunities for members of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Library Alliance to strengthen stewardship of special collections documenting the African-American experience.

Taliesin West Accessibility and Infrastructure Improvements | Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Scottsdale, Arizona

Taliesin West served as architect Frank Lloyd Wright's winter home and studio from 1937 until his death in 1959. The project supports accessibility upgrades and theater renovations, along with the design of comprehensive engineering plans for the replacement of the site's failing water and sewage infrastructure.

HBCU Cultural Heritage Stewardship Program: A Cooperative Agreement with the National Trust for Historic Preservation | National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C.

This project will establish a cultural heritage stewardship program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). It will also support funding and technical assistance to develop historic preservation plans.

Reynolda House Roof Renovation | Reynolda House, Inc., Winston-Salem, North Carolina

This project will repair the 100-year-old tile roof at the Reynolda House Museum of American Art, once the country estate of R. J. and Katharine Reynolds, ensuring the preservation of the museum's collection of fine art, which includes works by Thomas Cole, Grant Wood, and Georgia O'Keefe.

TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT AMERICAN HISTORY

NEH strengthens teaching and learning about American history through support for professional development and innovative curricular programs. Intensive reading and discussion programs featuring recognized scholars bring together small communities of teachers at both the higher education and K-12 levels to investigate new themes and innovative approaches to our nation's history.

The Dialogues on the Experience of War program, which is part of NEH's "Standing Together" initiative, also provides opportunities for further study of American history. These dialogues, which use humanities resources as their foundation, are primarily designed to reach military veterans; however, men and women in active service, military families, and interested members of the public may also participate.

Examples of recently funded projects:

MakeHISTORY@Kean: William Livingston's World | Kean University, Union, New Jersey

This three-year project uses the archival resources of Kean University, the Liberty Hall Museum, and the Liberty Hall Academic Center, to engage undergraduates in creating a portfolio of original historical research to be shared with a broad public on the political, intellectual, and social worlds of William Livingston, first elected governor of New Jersey, signer of the U.S. Constitution, and builder of Liberty Hall, the estate on which Kean University now sits.

From Immigrants to Citizens: Asian-Pacific Americans in the Northwest | Wing Luke Memorial Foundation, Seattle, Washington

These Landmarks of American History workshops for K-12 educators examined Asian immigration in the Pacific Northwest and its role in the nation's development. Field trips to sites of cultural significance and scholar presentations explored a history that spans the Native Hawaiians who navigated the Pacific Coast and worked for the Hudson Bay Trading Company to the Chinese, Filipino, Korean, South Asian, and Japanese immigrants who fueled the region's development before World War II.

Veterans, Society, and Service | Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona

Arizona State University will offer an inaugural certificate in the study of Veterans, Society, and Service. The undergraduate certificate will focus on veterans during their service and transition back to civilian life. It will contribute to both studying and diminishing the gap between military and civilian cultures. It will explore what civilian society and veterans can learn from one another about the nature of national service.

The First Amendment and Twenty-first Century America | Rendell Center for Civics and Civic Engagement, Annenberg Public Policy Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

This intensive institute for K-12 educators explored the delicate balance between the rights of individuals and the need to govern society and keep it safe through a historical review and discussion of Founding documents, a study of the issues raised by the incorporation of the First

Amendment into the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause, and an examination of issues emerging out of the First Amendment as seen in major Supreme Court decisions.

John Steinbeck: Social Critic and Ecologist | San Jose State University Research Foundation, San Jose, California

This summer institute for K-12 educators explores why John Steinbeck remains relevant as a novelist, social critic, and ecologist. It will focus on the impact of ecological thinking on several of Steinbeck's major works, and how historical and contemporary agricultural and fishing industries influenced these works.

Living on the Edge of Empire: Alliance, Conflict and Captivity in Colonial New England | Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, Massachusetts

These Landmarks Workshops for K-12 educators, held in the Old Deerfield Village Historic Landmark District and surrounding historic sites, explores topics relating to the history of colonial America, including cultural interaction on the frontier and the European imperial struggle for control of North America that ultimately set the stage for the American Revolution.

ADVANCING OUR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AMERICAN HISTORY

NEH supports scholarly research that advances knowledge and understanding of the nation's history. Archival research in primary sources leads to articles, books, edited volumes, digital projects, document collections, and other resources that offer new insights into America's past and reflects the diversity of the American experience. This scholarship also informs public programs, documentary films, exhibitions, the teaching of history, preservation efforts, and other public-facing activities focused on American history.

As part of "A More Perfect Union," special emphasis is being given to documentary editing projects focused on American history. The projects will make available documents or pre-existing texts that are currently inaccessible or available only in inadequate editions or transcriptions. Typically, the texts and documents are significant literary, philosophical, and historical materials, but can be other types of work, such as musical notation.

Examples of recently funded projects:

A Biography of John Dickinson (1732–1808) | Jane E. Calvert, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky

This first full biography of Founder John Dickinson will examine America's first international political celebrity and leader of the resistance to British rule. Dickinson wrote more documents to support the founding of the nation than any other figure and held public offices in two states. With his belief in Quaker principles, he was also unique among the leaders of the generation in his advocacy of human rights.

Out of Small Beginnings: Plymouth Colony and the Making of American Liberty | John Turner, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

In conjunction with the 400th anniversary of the *Mayflower* crossing, this book narrates the history of Plymouth Colony during its seventy-year existence. At the center of the story are debates about the meaning and bounds of liberty, both religious and political.

After the Freedmen’s Bureau: Administering Freedom in the Age of Emancipation | Dale Kretz, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

This project explores how formerly enslaved men and women maintained their wartime foothold in the U.S. government from the Civil War until the New Deal. While claiming military benefits in extraordinary numbers, free people negotiated issues of slavery, identity, loyalty, dependency, and disability, all within an increasingly complex and rapidly expanding federal administrative state.

The Meaning of America: How the United States Became the City on a Hill | Abram Van Engen, Washington University in Saint Louis, Saint Louis, Missouri

This project explores the many lives of John Winthrop’s “City on a Hill” sermon, from its first delivery in 1630 to the present day. Cited today by politicians and many others as the origin of American exceptionalism, the sermon has become foundational to American history and literature.

The Complete Letters of American Writer Willa Cather | University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska
Scholars at the University of Nebraska are working on the final stage of an online, open access edition of the complete correspondence of novelist Willa Cather. The project will bring together 1,500 letters scattered in more than seventy repositories. Cather, who wrote about the lives and struggles of Nebraska’s early pioneers, is regarded as one of the most important authors of the early twentieth century.

From Indian Country to American Real Estate: A Spatial History of U.S. Territorial Expansion | Robert Lee, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

The project establishes a website combining data on roughly four hundred Indian land cession treaties and more than six million federal land patents. Between 1790 and 1890, 12 cents of every dollar spent by the United States went into the conquest of Indian Country. These expenditures underwrote hundreds of treaties, which transferred three out of every four acres now in the continental United States into the public domain.

The George and Ira Gershwin Critical Edition | Jessica Getman, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

This complete-works critical edition of the Gershwins, two of the most popular and influential composers of the twentieth century, facilitates both study and performance, giving a wide audience—musicians, scholars, students, and enthusiasts alike—greater insight into their creative output and process.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO EXPLORE OUR NATION'S PAST

NEH is a leader in supporting projects that use digital technologies to develop new methodologies for research on American history, as well as exploring innovative approaches to teaching and learning, public engagement, and scholarly communication. Open access and collaboration are fundamental to NEH-supported digital humanities projects, enabling cultural organizations across the country to benefit. NEH support has also been key to developing digital crowdsourcing tools used by archives and libraries to enlist assistance from “citizen scholars” to help transcribe and improve access to American history collections.

Examples of recently funded projects:

Freedom on the Move: Advancing a Crowdsourced, Comprehensive Database of North American Runaway Slave Advertisements | Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

“Freedom on the Move” creates a digital resource from an estimated 100,000 runaway slave advertisements from pre-1865 U.S. newspapers. These ads, placed by enslavers when enslaved people attempted to escape, constitute one of the richest sources of information about enslaved individuals in United States history. The database, which is freely available, is the first comprehensive collection of these ads.

Montpelier Digital Collections Project | Montpelier Foundation, Montpelier Station, Virginia

This project, done in partnership with Michigan State University, brought together leading humanities scholars, museum professionals, digital heritage experts, and members of the public for a workshop to design an online, publicly accessible digital library that integrates four collections associated with James Madison’s Montpelier house and plantation.

V. EDSITEment: NEH’s Online Resource for Teachers, Students, and Parents

With 2.5 million annual users, EDSITEment (edsitement.neh.gov) broadens the reach and impact of the humanities by connecting public, private, and home school educators and the American public to educational materials produced by NEH grant recipients and content experts. EDSITEment also offers resources developed in collaboration with state humanities councils and their respective grant recipients.

The website’s recent redesign includes a section on “A More Perfect Union,” which allows teachers to easily discover and use lesson plans that focus on key moments and events in American history. “A More Perfect Union” materials are already popular with teachers. Additional resources will be added over the next year.

EDSITEment collaborates with the Library of Congress to create materials that utilize the *Chronicling America* newspaper database and the Smithsonian Learning Lab on the design of materials for students who participate in National History Day. It also works with the Civics Renewal Network, a consortium of education organizations across the United States focused on civics education.

The website features resources in the areas of history and social studies; literature and language arts; and arts and culture.

Examples of available resources related to “A More Perfect Union”:

History and Social Studies, Grades K-5

These materials include the symbolism and meaning of the American flag, the Statue of Liberty, and the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. A set of lessons covering the three branches of government, the Declaration of Independence, and the creation of the Constitution provides younger students with foundational concepts and knowledge about the origins and uniqueness of American democracy.

History and Social Studies, Grades 6-12

Materials are available on the role of Native Americans during the American Revolution, a multiple perspective seminar activity on the Declaration of Independence, and a four-part lesson sequence on the events leading to the U.S. Civil War and the Reconstruction Era.

Literature and Language Arts

Available lesson plans encompass Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the poetry of Robert Frost and Maya Angelou, and short essays on folklore and language in the works of Zora Neale Hurston. In arts and culture, resources include a series on the language, music, and culture of the Hopi people, materials on the Great Migration art works of Jacob Lawrence, and activities that analyze the “Four Freedoms” paintings of Norman Rockwell.

Mission US

EDSITEment hosts the NEH-sponsored *Mission US*, a multimedia project that immerses players in U.S. history content through free interactive games. This technology puts students in the role of colonists during the Revolutionary War, an immigrant to the United States during the nineteenth century, or a farmer trying to survive the Dust Bowl during the 1930s.

Dialogues on the Experience of War

For fostering teaching and learning about U.S. troops, military families, and veterans, EDSITEment incorporates materials produced by NEH-supported “Dialogues on the Experience of War” grant recipients. Resources on conducting oral history projects, such as video interviews with Vietnam War veterans produced in collaboration with the Maryland Humanities Council, are also available.

VI. NEH and the U.S. Department of Education: American History and Civics Education

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education (ED), awarded a \$650,000 cooperative agreement to the civics education group iCivics to lead a coalition of experts in assessing the state of, and best practices in, the teaching of American history, civics, and government in K-12 education.

Educating for American Democracy: A Roadmap for Excellence in History and Civics Education for All Learners will bring together more than one hundred leading academics and practitioners in education, civics, history, and political science for convenings at Louisiana State University and Arizona State University to evaluate the current state of history and civics curricula across the country. Informed by these discussions, the group will issue a “roadmap for excellence” that would outline for teachers, schools, and district and state policymakers high-priority civic content areas, and recommend instructional strategies and best practices for integrating the teaching of civics and history at every grade level.

This roadmap and accompanying report on the findings of the convenings will be released prior to a national forum in September 2020 in Washington, D.C., co-hosted by the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History and the National Archives and Records Administration Foundation.

The Educating for American Democracy project is a partnership between the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University, the School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership at Arizona State University, Tufts University Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement and Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life, and iCivics, the country’s largest civic education provider.

The Educating for American Democracy project is the result of an NEH-Education Department call for proposals for a fifteen-month project that would highlight innovative approaches, learning strategies, and professional development practices in K-12 civics education, with an emphasis on activities and programs that benefit low-income and underserved populations.



VII. Working with State and Local Partners

For the 250th anniversary, NEH will be working closely with the fifty-five state and jurisdictional humanities councils to offer thought-provoking programming about American history that fosters discussion and promotes civic engagement. The councils sponsor book festivals, literacy campaigns, speakers bureaus, teacher development, cultural tourism, humanities publications, films, exhibitions, and Chautauqua performances. Their work is tailored to the resources, demographics, interests, and concerns

of their state or jurisdiction, making them uniquely positioned to help NEH extend the reach of “A More Perfect Union” into communities across the country.

During 2017–2019, NEH made six “Statehood Grants” to commemorate 150th and 200th anniversaries. These grants, described below, will pave the way for state commemorations of the Semiquincentennial.

ANABRANCH: Alabama’s Celebration of Literature and the Humanities | Alabama Humanities Foundation

Alabama Humanities Foundation hosted a humanities festival that celebrated literature and the humanities in Alabama, drawing on the state’s rich heritage of Pulitzer Prize winners, playwrights, poets, and novelists. The council added two days of programming to the well-known Alabama Book Festival focused on humanities speakers, presentations, and educational offerings.

Illinois Turns 200: A Bicentennial Podcast Series | Illinois Humanities

Illinois Humanities collaborated with the Studs Terkel Radio archive to produce a podcast series exploring the past, present, and potential futures of Alton, Vandalia, Atlanta, Peoria, Galesburg, Ottawa, and Chicago. Topics ranged from the Underground Railroad to the National Road, the Bunyan Giant, Mexican immigrant boxcar communities, and the Lincoln-Douglas debates.

ME 199: Bicentennial or Bust! | Maine Humanities Council

Maine Humanities Council and its partner organization Maine Historical Society, along with scholars and practitioners from across the state, planned and implemented the bicentennial summit “ME 199: Bicentennial or Bust!” The event provided an opportunity for many organizations to think more deeply about the bicentennial, how the anniversary relates to their community, and how bicentennial activities can benefit from a rich historical context.

Mississippi Writers Trail | Mississippi Humanities Council

Mississippi Humanities Council partnered with the Mississippi Arts Commission, Visit Mississippi, and others to create the Mississippi Writers Trail, which pays tribute to the state’s most influential writers through a series of historical markers that recognize the importance of place in an author’s life and educate the public about the legacy of Mississippi writers. The trail was launched in 2018 with the unveiling of the Eudora Welty marker in Jackson.

Struggle for Statehood | Missouri Humanities Council

Missouri Humanities Council created “Struggle for Statehood,” a traveling exhibition that chronicles the three-year political and ideological battle between free and slave states over Missouri’s request for admission into the Union—a national crisis temporarily resolved with the “Missouri Compromise.” The exhibition, created with assistance from the University of Missouri’s Kinder Institute of Constitutional Democracy, will tour the state through August 2021, the anniversary of Missouri’s entry into the Union.

“N 150” Nebraska Lectures | Humanities Nebraska

Humanities Nebraska’s Statehood Grant supported two projects that focus on the history of public education in Nebraska. A series of twelve public lectures on the history and culture of the state will be made available as podcasts. A virtual reality tour of the first building and surrounding grounds on University of Nebraska, which date from 1869, is also being created.

VIII. Promoting “A More Perfect Union” Initiative

NEH announced “A More Perfect Union” on Constitution Day, September 17, 2019, capping off the first phase of NEH’s outreach for the 250th anniversary. Along with a webpage dedicated to the initiative, Chairman Peede made a video explaining the initiative. The video is featured on NEH’s website (neh.gov) and was disseminated widely through various social media channels, EDSITEMent, and other humanities-related networks.

During his first official interview in summer 2018, Chairman Peede outlined his vision of marrying NEH’s funding of education, research, preservation, and public programs to the 250th anniversary. “One of my deepest concerns is about the lack of knowledge, of civic knowledge, about our country,” he told *Humanities* magazine. “As our country approaches 2026, the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, NEH is going to work with other national leaders to develop an initiative that helps us celebrate American ideals and study our nation’s history.”

Over the past eighteen months, Chairman Peede has highlighted the Semiquincentennial in speeches and media interviews and during his travels to meet with scholars, students, and cultural organizations across the country. His presentations emphasize the anniversary, civics education, and the importance of cultural infrastructure, along with a focus on humanities programs that support military veterans and their families. Venues for speeches included the Commonwealth North Club in Anchorage, Alaska; the Federation of State Humanities Councils meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana; the Society for Military History conference in Columbus, Ohio; and the World Humanities Forum in Busan, Korea.

NEH’s plans for the 250th anniversary appeared in articles in the Jackson, Mississippi, *Clarion-Ledger* about an NEH grant for the new Mississippi Writer’s Trail; in a Dallas KERA radio interview about NEH support for cultural institutions in Texas; in a *New York Times* article on 215 new NEH grants; and in a *Juneau Empire* article on the Chairman’s travels to Alaska and NEH’s commitment to funding projects in rural communities.

NEH also has promoted the Semiquincentennial in our grant announcements, especially regarding our funding for bricks-and-mortar infrastructure projects that will improve our nation’s cultural institutions and support for research, public programs, and preservation projects in American history.

IX. Conclusion

As the nation approaches 2026, NEH is well aligned with the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission’s mission “to provide for the observance and commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.”

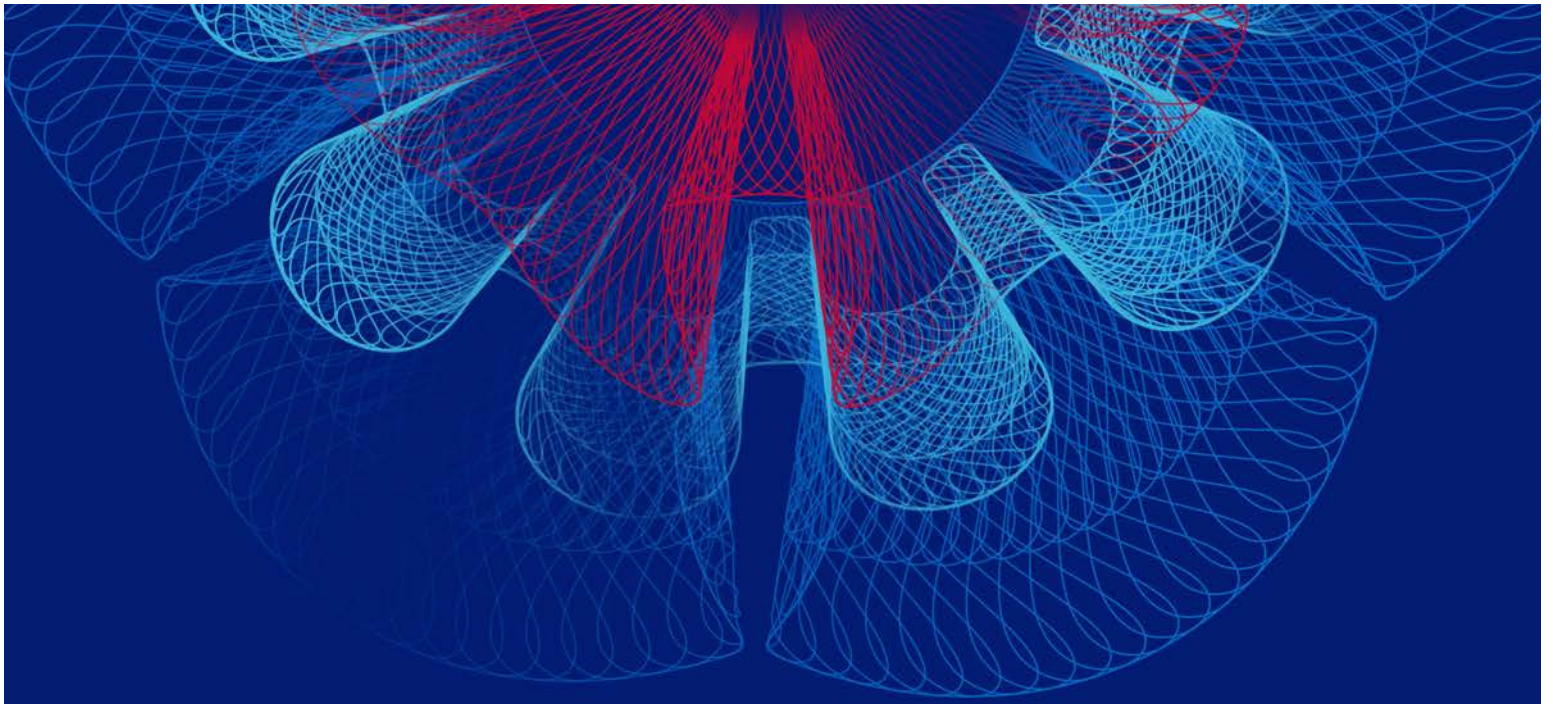
NEH projects tell the story of the United States from many perspectives and across multiple platforms. From *Chronicling America*, a free database of more than fifteen million pages of historical newspapers from forty-eight states sponsored jointly by NEH and the Library of Congress, to “NEH On the Road,” a program that brings high-quality traveling exhibitions to small venues in every corner of the country through a partnership with the heartland-based Mid-America Arts Alliance, NEH is poised to play a distinctive role in the Semiquincentennial.

The Endowment supports new approaches to learning about and studying the past—from virtual reality and interactive games to podcasts and digital tools. Drawing upon staff and panelist expertise, the agency thinks creatively about how emerging technologies can be used with traditional scholarship and primary sources to offer new avenues for exploration of American history. Each generation communicates and absorbs culture in different ways, requiring a range of projects and platforms to engage and excite its members. The use of these technologies will be important tools for connecting every age group to the 250th anniversary.

NEH provides critical support for the nation’s cultural infrastructure, with programs that preserve and make accessible—increasingly in digital formats—iconic collections, documents, and structures essential to an understanding of the history and culture of the United States. Where possible, these projects will leverage private giving to extend the reach of NEH’s support.

Finally, NEH’s “gold-standard” peer review system underscores our commitment to supporting high-quality projects that provide new discoveries, evidence, and foundations for the appreciation and understanding of American history. NEH’s role as a curator of content-rich projects ensures that the American public will have the historical knowledge, cultural resources, and educational tools necessary to commemorate the 250th anniversary.

Our nation cannot ask our youth and young adults to live up to the ideals of the world’s oldest representative democracy, if we have not provided them with the tools to understand what the rights and responsibilities of engaged citizenship entail. Ever faithful to our agency’s founding legislation that declares “democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens,” the National Endowment for the Humanities welcomes the opportunity to work with the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission to commemorate this historic anniversary.



APPENDIX E-4

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

REPORT

AMERICA 250

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS BLUEPRINT

LIBRARY LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS

In concert with the United States Semiquincentennial Commission, the Library of Congress is developing plans to commemorate America's 250th anniversary through a series of events, exhibits, digital initiatives, and publications, all of which will showcase items from the Library's collections to bring the nation's history to life. The Library's America 250 initiative will supplement the traditional approach of asking academics and other subject matter experts to interpret the anniversary with a wide-ranging, multi-disciplinary, multi-media approach that encourages widespread citizen participation. The Library will engage a wide variety of users both onsite and digitally—public intellectuals, thought leaders, librarians, educators, artists, veterans, children, and citizens from all walks of life—to identify collection items that inspire and inform diverse interpretations of American democracy. It is our hope that these efforts will foster a deeper connection between the American people and their national Library while commemorating the unique tapestry of the American experience.

COLLECTIONS

The Library of Congress is the largest library in the world, with almost 170 million items comprising its collection. This collection is the most diverse repository of human knowledge and expression ever assembled.

The Special Collections Directorate is responsible for much of the Library's extensive collections of unique or rare items in a variety of formats, including manuscripts, rare books, oral histories, photographs, prints, maps, and musical scores. Among these holdings are primary source materials associated with the Declaration of Independence (including Thomas Jefferson's rough draft), the Continental Congress, the Constitutional Convention, George Washington, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson.

Holdings from other eras in American history are equally impressive. From Abraham Lincoln's letters to his wife, to a collection of America's earliest baseball cards, from Rosa Parks's account of her bus arrest to audio recordings of bluegrass festivals around the country, Special Collections preserves millions of items reflecting the rich heritage, diversity, and creativity of the American people. Special Collections proposes a variety of *America 250* programs that invite audiences to commemorate the ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence.

Using the number 250 as an organizing principle, Special Collections proposes creating a signature list of 250 Library collection items, from 1776 to the present, that exemplify the story of American democracy. The Library will emphasize public participation to generate this list, drawing selections from the general public, authors, educators, creators, public intellectuals, and Library staff.

In addition to this signature list, Special Collections is considering interactive programs to enable broad public engagement in the creation of subsidiary lists such as 250 movies about American history, 250 books that shaped America, 250 songs about America, or 250 moments that matter in American

history. For example, the Library could engage the public in voting for a favorite item or an item most influential in their lives. Items for the various lists will be distributed digitally through blogs and social networking platforms.

New digitization and digital delivery initiatives will bring to public view the expressions of previously underrepresented voices of the Revolutionary War period by:

- Digitizing unique content relating to soldiers, women, enslaved people, farmers, immigrants, religious minorities, and Native Americans, with a focus on telling previously untold stories;
- Expanding crowdsourcing efforts to transcribe handwritten documents from this period to make the content searchable and more usable, with a distinct focus on providing access to a diversity of source material;
- Creating additional interpretive essays, topical pathfinders to support researchers, video blogs, and blog posts about hidden gems in the Library's early American holdings;
- Partnering with educators and the Library's Teaching with Primary Sources program to develop tools and resources to engage school-age audiences with the Revolutionary War period and other eras of American history by examining newly accessible primary sources in fresh and exciting ways.

Special Collections will consult with the Library's Music Division and the American Folklife Center to develop a musical concert series in 2026 to celebrate American creativity and ingenuity with live performances of classical, jazz, folk, and regional musicians. The Special Collections Directorate will consider commissioning composers to develop new musical works to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The concerts would be recorded and made available online.

EXHIBITIONS

The Library of Congress will set the stage for its *America 250* programming with two major exhibitions focused on the founding era and American democratic traditions. While these exhibitions will take place before the actual 250th anniversary, they could be featured by the commission as early commemorative events.

First, *Join In: The American Pursuit of Civil Society* will memorialize the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower Compact. Scheduled for a November 2020 opening, the exhibit will reveal the American tradition of building and strengthening communities through associations, charities, and societies as foundational to the country's system of democratic self-government. The exhibit will display colonial documents of the United States, including writings of Cotton Mather and the early laws of the Plymouth settlement. Ben Franklin's reflections on associations will also be included in the exhibit, as will the original charter for the Library Company of Philadelphia.

Second, the Library of Congress will host a pioneering study of two leaders on opposite sides of the Atlantic who, by shaping their respective worlds, shaped ours: George III of the United Kingdom and George Washington. *The Two Georges: Parallel Lives in an Age of Revolution* is scheduled to open at the Library of Congress either in late 2021 or 2022 and will feature correspondence, essays, and documents recently made available to scholars and the public for the first time. It will also include portraits and other artwork from the holdings of the Royal Collection, Royal Archives, and George Washington's home, Mount Vernon. The exhibit will highlight American treasures from Library collections, such as the broadside of the Declaration of Independence, a draft of the U.S. Constitution, historic maps of the colonies, and political cartoons of the period.

The Library is preparing companion volumes and digital corollaries for both the *Join In* and *Two Georges* exhibitions, which will extend the reach, duration, and impact of the content to those unable to view the displays in person.

Closer to 2026, the Library will open a major exhibition to commemorate the semiquincentennial. This exhibit will be displayed within the Treasures Gallery (scheduled to debut in 2022) inside the historic Thomas Jefferson Building on Capitol Hill. Objects displayed in the Library's Treasures Gallery will be presented in archival glass cases to give visitors clear visual access. Interactive touch screens will facilitate deeper exploration of selected items. Film and video components will enable narrative context.

One possible theme for the exhibit is *What Represents America to You?* with 250 items selected by a wide range of Library users. Another possible theme is *Celebrating 250 Years of Transformation*, which would explore revolutionary thought and the impact of the American perspective in the areas of literature and journalism, science and technology, design, exploration, and diplomacy over the past 250 years. Another possible theme might focus on a specific phrase in the Declaration of Independence or Constitution, such as *Created Equal* or *A More Perfect Union*. A selection of items, representing defining moments, events, people, or movements, would show how each generation of Americans has sought to achieve the lofty goals expressed in the country's founding documents.

In addition to an onsite exhibit, the Library may consider hosting a national tour of its treasures and collections, visiting town and cities across the United States in the year leading up to the July 4, 2026, commemoration. Researchers, curators, authors, and specialists would give presentations at various stops to highlight specific collection items. Members of Congress could also participate by hosting stops on the tour. Requirements would include a semi-trailer or tour bus, production support, staffing, and facsimile copies of top treasures. Such a project will require aggressive outside funding, but may serve as a capstone project at the conclusion of a multi-year Library of Congress capital campaign.

SIGNATURE EVENTS

The Library's Center for Learning, Literacy, and Engagement (CLLE) will support the Library's effort to create programming and resources related to *America 250*. In keeping with the Library-wide pursuit of developing curated lists of collection items, CLLE plans to draw on the resources of the Library's programming and events teams to develop and present a series of free, public events on the Library's Capitol Hill campus in 2026 inspired by the curated list of items. Programming could include film screenings, author talks, themed building tours, panel discussions, "pop-up" treasure displays, and other dynamic content designed to highlight the *America 250* theme for the Library's local, national, and international audiences. The Library will also leverage its existing signature events and programs, such as the National Book Festival, the Gershwin Prize for Popular Song, the National Film Registry, and the National Recording Registry, to commemorate the sesquicentennial.

CLLE will work to leverage the Library's network of affiliated state organizations, including its Teaching with Primary Sources partners, to provide *America 250* related tools, opportunities, and resources for librarians and educators across the country. CLLE's goal will be to contextualize the list or lists of 250 items for teachers, possibly developing workshops, lessons, and teaching strategies that activate the collections for a nationwide audience. Our efforts will aim to reach across the curriculum as well as the grade spectrum, focusing on telling new, diverse stories about American history.

CLLE will also consider these programming goals and the *America 250* initiative when crafting a 2026 programming theme for the Library. Such themes inform organization-wide programming for a full year and help orient resources and strategic direction when divisions across the Library of Congress consider their annual programming proposals and goals.

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

The Library's Digital Strategy Directorate views the sesquicentennial as an extraordinary opportunity to share American history in a digitally enabled way. The Library's digital *America 250* presence will enable points of discovery by bridging the world of America in 1776 to contemporary inquiry. A tentative working title for commemorative digital programming is *America 250: Innovative Imagining and Digital Discovery*.

The Digital Strategy Directorate and Labs team are delighted to partner with colleagues across the Library to throw open our treasure chest and connect with as many audiences as possible. The digital team will support the showcasing of collections and innovative approaches to engage many audiences in three core ways: through creative uses of collections and data, enabling digital scholarship projects, and hosting data sets derived from these projects and collections items.

Digital projects and innovative approaches enable the Library of Congress to extend the reach of its rich programming, while also bringing its unparalleled collection items to people where they are. For example, the Digital Strategy Directorate has guided the launch of the Library's By the People crowdsourcing program. This initiative, premised upon civic engagement, invites volunteers of all ages and expertise to develop deeper connections to history, Library collections, and each other by transcribing digitized items. In consultation with Library collections experts and curators, By the People will feature the opportunity to transcribe manuscripts and other historical documents related to the sesquicentennial commemoration. Such transcription will facilitate new scholarly insights and the creation of unique data sets that will help answer questions about America's past and heritage.

The Digital Strategy Directorate also supports the Innovator in Residence program, a competition which solicits the services of artists, journalists, researchers, teachers, and others willing to imagine and prototype examples of creative, innovative, and novel uses of the Library's digital collections in artwork, visualizations, applications, or other publicly available tools, services, or exhibits. To commemorate the sesquicentennial, the Library will consider hosting several Innovators in Residence to focus on the *America 250* theme. The Library's Labs website features online experimental tools

to display collections in creative ways. These applications are created by Library users and facilitate exploration of the collection items. For example, Photo Roulette chooses a photo at random from the Library's collections and questions the user about the date it was taken. Such experimental applications can generate interest among the general public and encourage further curiosity. During the semiquincentennial, the Labs team will employ a range of digital tools to showcase the Library's historical collection of photographs, documents, and other items.

The Library's digital strategy emphasizes growing the digital collections, supporting digital research, collaborating with other heritage institutions, and cultivating innovation. As it plans for the *America 250* commemoration, the Digital Strategy Directorate is poised to realize these strategic goals by building on existing programs and creating new opportunities for expansion.

LAW LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Law Library of Congress sponsors various talks each year to commemorate Law Day, Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, and Human Rights Day. In the year leading up to 2026, the Law Library will employ *America 250* as the underlying theme for those talks and commemorations. As the Law Library develops new research guides and new Reading Room training for Congress.gov and Law.gov, instructors and creators of the research guides will feature *America 250* as a search strategy. Collections and small exhibit displays in the Law Library Reading Room will feature relevant items from the legal collection related to *America 250*. The Law Library's blog, *In Custodia Legis*, will feature multiple postings and content related to the semiquincentennial.

THE JOHN W. KLUGE CENTER

The John W. Kluge Center, the Library's endowed center focused on research and scholarship, brings together the world's best thinkers to contribute to the conversation about the challenges facing democracies in the twenty-first century. The Kluge Center will play a significant role in the Library's *America 250* initiatives. The Center's mission is, first, to sup-

port scholars from the humanities, social sciences, and related fields who take advantage of the Library's rich collections; and, second, to project relevant scholarship in accessible ways to Congress, other policymakers, and the interested public. Kluge is well-situated to host multiple scholars in residence who can contribute to a lively, intellectual conversation about American history and the future of American democracy.

Leading up to 2026, the Kluge Center will focus on supporting residential scholars who are writing about and researching the state of American democracy from a range of perspectives—including history, political science, law, and other fields. These scholars and other prominent intellectuals can be part of an effort to project scholarship in different forms through panels and conferences hosted at the Library, as well as through creative platforms on the Library website.

The Kluge Center is currently in discussion with the Omohundro Institute at the College of William & Mary about co-hosting a small group of American historians at the Library in 2021 to begin outlining the most helpful intellectual and scholarly lines of inquiry for 2026. Such a gathering would not only help the Kluge Center focus its programming and chair selections for the semiquincentennial, but could also help the Library of Congress and the Semiquincentennial Commission as they develop plans for the commemoration.

The Kluge Center proposes the following substantive areas of focus:

- How the historical interpretation of the Declaration of Independence has changed and diversified, including a survey of recent scholarship on this question
- The Declaration's influence on the United States Constitution, both historically and going forward;
- What the Declaration has meant for the search for equality over America's 250 years, and what might it mean in the future;
- How the institutions of government and the role of the states vis-à-vis the federal government have changed, and what the trend lines indicate for the future;
- The changing role of America in the world, and how that role might evolve in the decades ahead.

AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER

Congress created the American Folklife Center (AFC) in 1976 to “preserve and present American folklife” through programs of research, documentation, archival preservation, reference service, live performance, exhibitions, publications, and training. AFC proposes two programs for *America 250*.

First, *Foodways* is an accessible entry-point into multiple collections at the Library and allows exploration across time and multiple historical eras, enabling investigation of cultural and social influences, settlement patterns, cultural diversity, and immigration to America, as well as the development of American cuisine over 250 years.

A focus on *Foodways* will include lectures or demonstrations (from chefs such as Alice Waters and José Andrés or from bloggers or individuals from the Afroculinaria blog, Southern Foodways Alliance, etc.) at the Library. It could also feature a series of food-themed events on the Library grounds, including Dinner on the Grounds, picnics, or competitions. AFC can partner with the Library’s Publishing Office to create a book featuring 250 recipes from Library collections (such as Rosa Parks’s Featherlite Pancakes and contributions from veterans of World War II).

Second, AFC proposes a multi-year collaborative project with the Library’s Teaching with Primary Sources program to develop an oral history initiative with various high schools throughout the country to document the meaning of American democracy in contemporary community life. What does it mean to be an American today? How are the democratic ideals of the Declaration of Independence embodied and expressed in community life today?

Working with an advisory group of oral historians, educators, folklorists, American history/studies specialists, and others, Library of Congress staff would develop curricula, documentation training guides, and project planning materials to work with high school classes. AFC staff could conduct field training workshops and selected materials would be deposited in AFC collections and featured on AFC or Library websites. Partnerships with other federal agencies and community-based organizations would be possible and advisable.

PUBLICATIONS

New books and special editions of the Library of Congress Magazine will be developed to amplify the Library’s *America 250* initiatives. In addition to exhibit companions, new books might include an illustrated guide for general readers featuring and interpreting collection items that exemplify aspects of America’s 250-year experiment in democracy; a recipe book based upon the Library’s collections; a collection of essays by contemporary writers, music/film experts/historians, public intellectuals, and subject matter specialists; and a book highlighting the anniversary for children.

FUNDRAISING

The Library of Congress has begun planning a comprehensive fundraising campaign to enact its 2019 strategic plan. Programs in support of *America 250* will fall within the Library’s campaign funding priorities. Funds to support these efforts will need to be raised from various sources beyond federal appropriations to include corporations, foundations, and individual donors.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

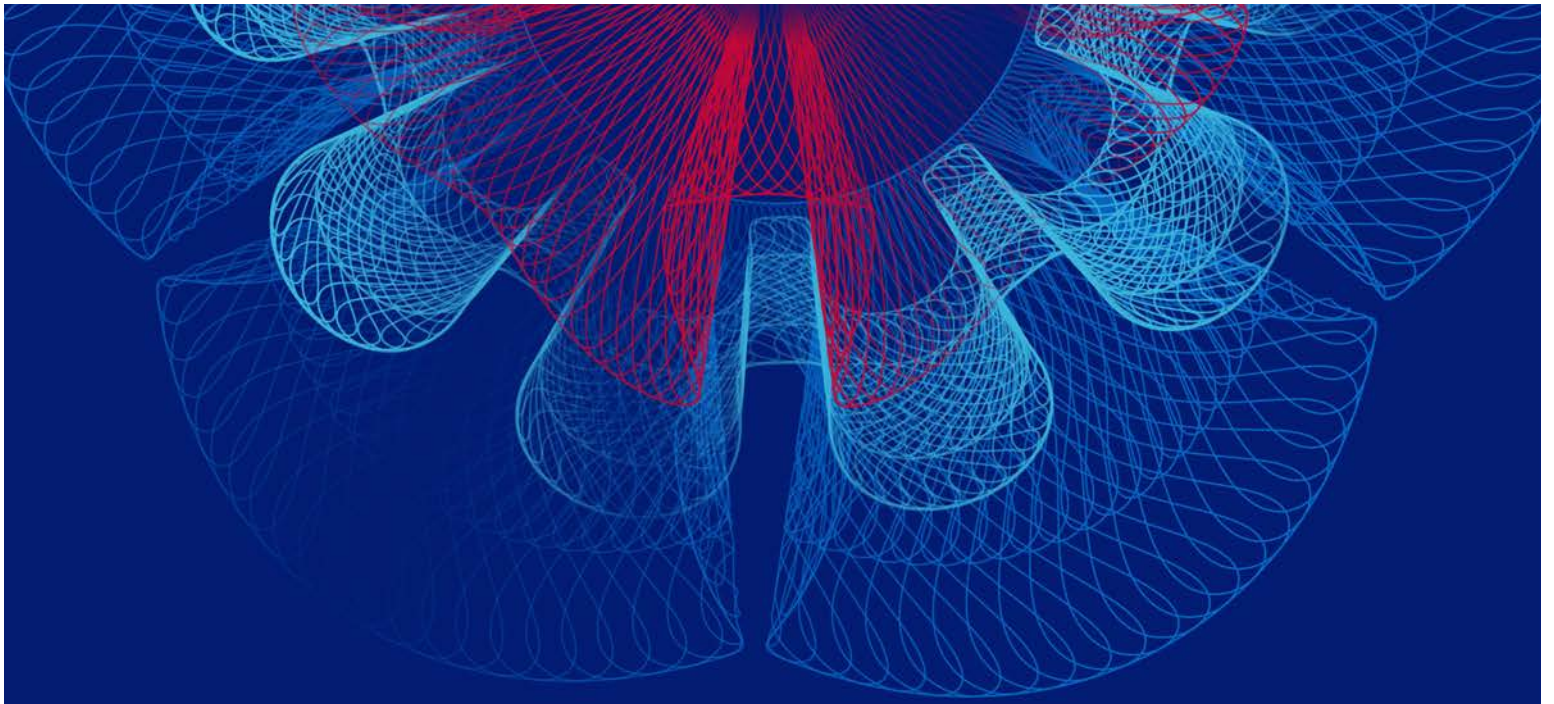
The Library of Congress mission is to “engage, inspire, and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.” This mission is directly applicable to the Library’s participation in commemorating the semiquincentennial anniversary of the United States.

The Library’s strategic focus on expanding users of the collection provides a solid foundation for the America 250 challenge. While the specific details of projects and initiatives outlined in this document will undoubtedly change as planning progresses, the Library will continue to improve discoverability and access to the remarkable array of diverse collection items in its repository. The Library of Congress looks forward to working with the United States Semiquincentennial Commission, the United States Congress, other federal cultural institutions, and supporting agencies to shape this important narrative interpretation of American democracy.



101 Independence Ave. SE Washington, DC 20540 • loc.gov





APPENDIX E-5

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

REPORT



Report of the Smithsonian Institution to the United States Semiquincentennial Commission December 2019

The Smithsonian Institution appreciates the opportunity to share its current plans and recommendations for the 250th anniversary of the American Independence with the United States Semiquincentennial Commission.

We are submitting this report pursuant to section 6(b)(3)(C) of the United States Semiquincentennial Act of 2016 (Pubic Law 114-196, 130 Stat. 685). The Act directs the Secretary of the Smithsonian to “cooperate with the Commission, especially in the development of exhibits and collections and in the development of bibliographies, catalogs, and other materials relevant to the period predating the United States Semiquincentennial.” *Id.* at § 6(b)(3)(B)(1).

Background

Since 1836, the story of the Smithsonian has been entwined with that of the country after Congress accepted a bequest from James Smithson, a British scientist, "to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge. . . ." In doing so, Congress pledged the full faith of the United States to support the Smithsonian as a public trust in perpetuity.

As a result of that promise, the Smithsonian belongs to Americans in ways unlike any other cultural and research institution.¹ Since 1855, when the first Smithsonian museum was completed to the opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in 2016, Americans have relied upon the Smithsonian to make knowledge available, meaningful, and accessible to all.

¹ The Smithsonian is overseen by a Board of Regents representing each branch of the Federal government and the private sector. The Regents are composed of the Chief Justice of the United States, the Vice President, three Members of the Senate, three Members of the House of Representatives, and nine other citizen Regents. Two citizen Regents must reside in the city of Washington, DC. The remaining seven must reside in a state, and no more than one citizen Regent may come from any state. The Chief Justice currently serves as Chancellor of the Smithsonian and the Board of Regents.



National Museum of African American History and Culture

No other nation makes as bold a statement on the primacy of education and learning as America has on the National Mall, lined by 11 of the Smithsonian's 19 museums.² The Smithsonian is primarily funded by the federal government, and most of its museums are free, an acknowledgement that an informed citizenry, no matter their socioeconomic status or background, forms the basis of a strong democracy.

While the Smithsonian's museums are its most visible stages, the behind-the-scenes work of Smithsonian scholars and scientists impact America and the world. The Smithsonian conducts cutting-edge research through nine research centers based in Massachusetts, New

York, Washington, D.C., Virginia, Maryland, and Panama. Smithsonian scientists, curators, anthropologists and scholars conduct research in over 140 countries and routinely collaborate with researchers from other prestigious national and global organizations.³

Throughout the Smithsonian, trained educators team with curators and scientists to identify ways to engage and inspire the public in intellectually meaningful ways. Among the five education centers in the Smithsonian is the Smithsonian Science Education Center, which makes available educational

² The 19 museums are: Anacostia Community Museum; Arts and Industries Building, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of Art; Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum; Freer Gallery of Art; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; National Air and Space Museum, National Museum of African American History and Culture, National Museum of African Art, National Museum of American History, National Museum of the American Indian, National Museum of the American Indian, Heye Center; National Museum of Natural History; National Portrait Gallery; National Postal Museum, Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Smithsonian Institution Building, Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center. The Cooper Hewitt and the Heye Center are located in New York City. The remaining museums are located in the Washington metropolitan area.

³ The Smithsonian operates nine research and three cultural centers: Archives of American Art; Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage; Museum Conservation Institute; Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center; Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory with Harvard University in Massachusetts; Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute; Smithsonian Environmental Research Center; Smithsonian Institution Archives; Smithsonian Institution Libraries; Smithsonian Latino Center; Smithsonian Marine Station; Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama.

programming and curricula used by teachers in over 1,450 school districts in all 50 states and 26 other countries, and the Smithsonian Center for Learning and Digital Access, which is charged with deepening and personalizing learning by encouraging the creative use of museum resources through collaboration with the education community.

As the world's largest museum, education, and research complex, the Smithsonian's strengths are a product of the breadth and depth of its facilities and field stations; its remarkable collections, both digital and analog, of over 155.5 million objects; and its comprehensive and thought-provoking exhibitions and outreach programs. But perhaps the Smithsonian's greatest strength is its people, over 6,350 staff and 7,300 volunteers committed to advancing the Smithsonian's mission through research, conservation, education, collections care, visitor services, and administrative support. Their dedication and success have attracted key private sector partners and created a global brand drawing visitors and scholars from all over the world.

Under our current strategic plan, the Smithsonian is committed to reach one billion people wherever they are. The Semiquincentennial is a historic opportunity to marshal the Smithsonian's unique assets to tell the nation's stories to all Americans and people across the world. Critical to achieving that goal will be our network of over 200 Smithsonian Affiliate museums and educational organizations in 45 states, Puerto Rico, and Panama, and SITES, the Smithsonian's traveling exhibition service.



Among the National Bird Collection's 625,000 specimens at the National Museum of Natural History

We are honored that the Secretary of the Smithsonian, Lonnie G. Bunch III, is an ex officio member of the United States Semiquincentennial Commission.

The success of the Semiquincentennial is a priority for the Smithsonian. We are confident that we can be a productive and trusted partner to the Commission, our interested Federal agency colleagues, and the Semiquincentennial's many stakeholders.

America 250 at the Smithsonian

In 1973, just prior to the Bicentennial, Robert Penn Warren, the first United States Poet Laureate, observed that “[h]istory, the articulated past-- all kinds, even our personal histories-- is forever being rethought, refelt, rewritten, not merely as rigor or luck turns up new facts but as new patterns emerge, as new understandings develop, and as we experience new needs and new questions...This is the old heartening, energizing promise the past makes to us. We, too, even in our flicker of time, can earn a place in the story. How? By creating the future.”

The Semiquincentennial presents us with a challenge and opportunity—to rethink, reexperience, and rewrite the American story in ways that will inspire us to create our own and collective futures.

We support the Commission’s vision “to inspire the American Spirit among all Americans and each American, based on our founding principles and our journey to a more perfect union”

and its commitment to promote American unity, understanding, and

civic engagement. Reflecting that vision and commitment, the Smithsonian is developing wide-ranging programming and activities that tell (and foretell) the American story in ways that are inclusive, accessible and relevant “to all Americans and each American.”⁴

Through our museums, web sites, social media outlets, educational offerings, *Smithsonian* magazine, and the Smithsonian Channel and streaming services, we are increasingly able to reach more people where they are and in ways tailored to them. The Smithsonian hosted almost 29 million in-person visits, 160 million website visitors, and 15 million social media followers last fiscal year. Smithsonian



Thomas Jefferson peace medal, 1801, owned by Powder Face (Northern Inunaina/Arapaho), from the exhibition “Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations,” at the National Museum of the American Indian



Lincoln's Top Hat (1865), from the collections of the National Museum of American History

⁴ The Act asks the Smithsonian to “cooperate with the Commission, especially in the development and display of exhibits and collections and in the development of bibliographies, catalogs, and other materials relevant to the period predating the Semiquincentennial.” Pub. L. 114-196 § 6(b)(3)(A).

travelling exhibitions were presented in 34 states plus Guam and the District of Columbia, and over seven million students were served by Smithsonian K-8 science curricula. These are just some of the vehicles we will deploy to reach and engage a diverse and rapidly changing American and international public.



The Space Shuttle "Discovery" at the National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center

We believe that the Smithsonian, given the scope and locations of its facilities, should serve as a major physical and digital hub for Semiquincentennial activities. As will be discussed below, we are planning to revitalize and reopen the National Historic Landmark Smithsonian Institution Building, or the "Castle," to include a state-of-the-art visitors center to provide physical and virtual visitors with information and guidance not only about the Smithsonian, but about Semiquincentennial events across the country and the world.

As we develop the concept of creating a physical and digital visitors' hub, the Smithsonian expects to also work closely with the Commission and our Federal entity partners to develop an "information clearinghouse" to connect participating organizations with one another to plan Semiquincentennial activities, identify potential collaborations, and locate funding opportunities.

Many of the programs presented in this report will be considered for traveling exhibitions across the United States by the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service. The Smithsonian will also leverage its international presence to share Semiquincentennial programming across the world. We routinely work with the United States Department of State, international embassies, non-government organizations, and other educational institutions to bring Smithsonian exhibitions and scholarship to other nations. We believe that the Semiquincentennial presents an historic opportunity to demonstrate the power and impact of cultural diplomacy and will develop our programming with an eye toward sharing content

beyond our national borders. Our Office of International Relations is a critical member of the Smithsonian's Semiquincentennial team and will be tasked with helping us create strong collaborations with other federal entity and private sector partners.

While we continue to develop and refine our Semiquincentennial plans, Smithsonian museums and research and cultural centers are moving forward on substantial collaborative programming. The following sections briefly describe our plans to date and are designed to provide the Commission with the themes we will explore through our Semiquincentennial commemoration and celebration.

At this point, we are determining the overall budget to support our Semiquincentennial activities. We anticipate some programming and grassroots activities to begin as early as 2023, culminating with the re-opening of the Castle and Arts and Industries Building in 2026. As suggested by the Act, we expect most of our exhibitions and programming to have accompanying catalogs and, where appropriate, bibliographies and other supporting materials as contemplated by the Act. Unless otherwise noted, each project is being developed with a strong digital component.

For purposes of this report and general reference, we have grouped our projects under four thematic headings:

[American Ideas](#)

[American Communities](#)

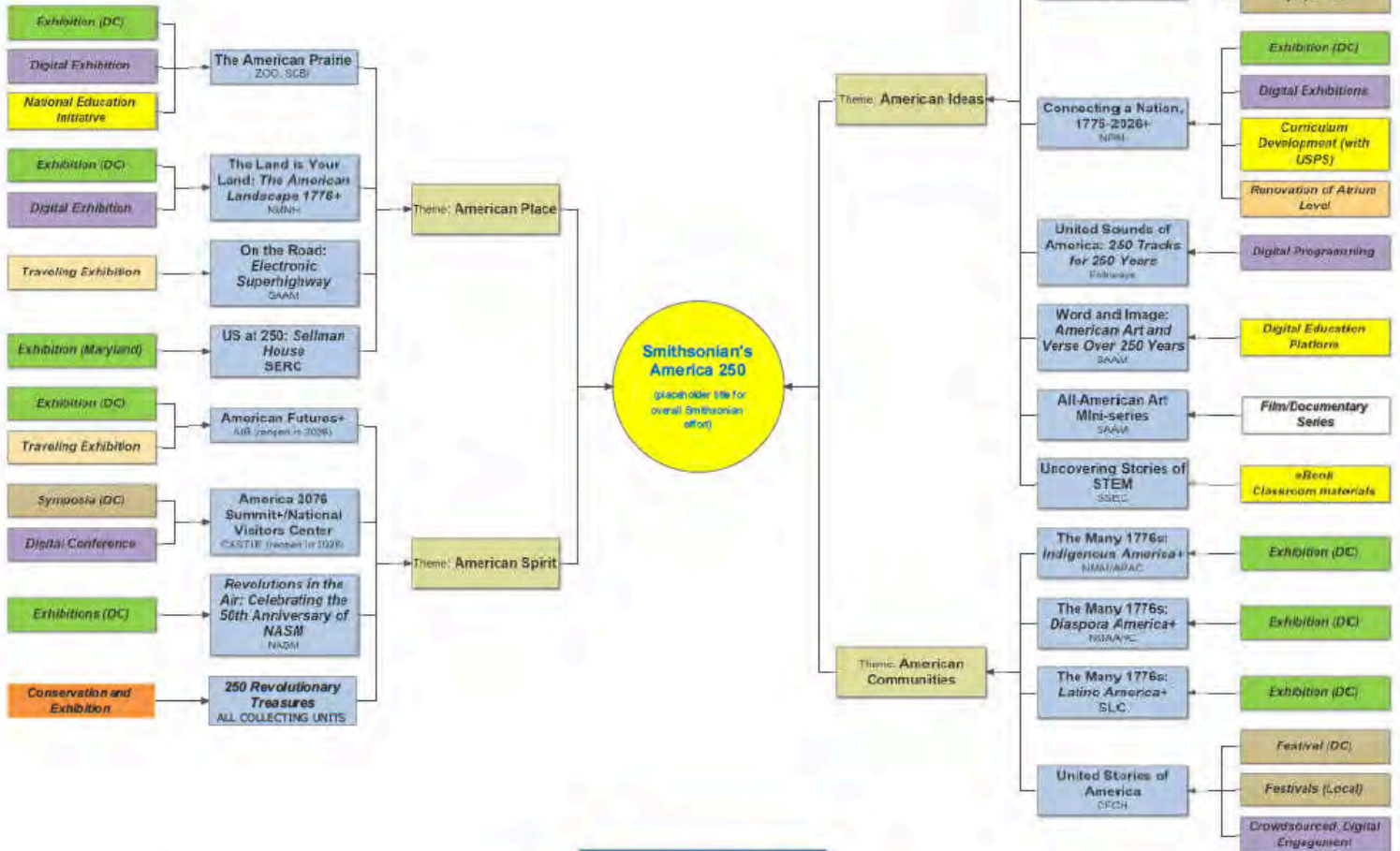
[American Places](#)

[American Spirit](#)

For ease of reference, on the following page we have included a map of the Smithsonian's proposed Semiquincentennial programmatic activities. Projects are group by theme with the Smithsonian lead and projects elements identified.



Jefferson's Declaration of Independence Desk (1776), from the collections of the National Museum of American History



Proposed Program Elements Proposed Programs by Unit

Other units developing plans not included above:
 Hirshhorn
 SITES
 Smithsonian Associates
 ** denotes placeholder title for purposes of this map

America 250
Smithsonian
Planning Status
 December 2019



Proposed Programs by Unit Proposed Program Elements

American Ideas

Project: “Made by US”

Smithsonian Lead: National Museum of American History (“NMAH”)

Brief: “Made by US” is a national coalition of history organizations joining together to provide the public, especially young people, with more relevant, accessible tools to understand the past and use it to shape the future. In the years leading up to 2026, “Made by Us” will launch a series of iterative, audience-first digital and physical engagements that bring the public into an exploration, together, of the unfinished American experiment.

History is a powerful catalyst for civic action, and we will help people use history not just to explore the idea of civic responsibility, but of civic *opportunity* – chances to pitch in, to take part, to play a role in shaping the next 250 years of American history.

As the origin of this project and a leading partner in developing “Made by US,” NMAH will shape this nationwide initiative, along with our partners the New-York Historical Society, Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, the Atlanta History Center, the Senator John Heinz History Center, and the National Archives. Over 1,000 history and civics organizations are expected to participate, initially reach through state historical organizations, as partners activating “Made by US” in every state, from historical societies to girl scout troops to military bases, bringing people together with historical context — and each other — to revive our “civic imagination” and help us chart the next 250 years.



Image from the Faris and Yamma Naff Arab-American Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

“Made by US” reflects one of the Smithsonian’s overarching goal—to promote participation by all American in Semiquincentennial activities and provide the means so that all voices can heard in the national conversations sparked by this important national milestone.

Critical components being considered include:

- An initial exploration of public opinion through “My Wish for US,” a digital and on-site program;
- An online platform for learning, engaging, and actively participating with history and civics material; and
- A national, branded public history campaign to identify opportunities for civic action with stakeholders in history and civics organizations, who agree to “team up” on events, exhibitions, and programs to help Americans cultivate our civic imagination and recognize opportunities.

American Ideas

Project: “Connecting the Nation, 1775-2016”

Smithsonian Lead: National Postal Museum (“NPM”)

Brief: In 2025, NPM, in partnership with the United States Postal Service (“USPS”), will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Postal Service. That celebration will serve as a precursor to our Semiquincentennial programming the following year.

At its heart, the vision for “Connecting the Nation” is simple: Demonstrating how networks of communication, primarily through the postal service’s evolution over time, are foundational to the formation of today’s America.



American Bicentennial Issue: The Spirit of '76 stamps, from the National Philatelic Collection, National Postal Museum

NPM will provide poignant, diverse, and intimate experiences for visitors to see how intrinsic human connection and communication have bound together the fledgling country, prior to the signing of the Declaration of Independence and for the 250 years since.

NPM’s plans include:

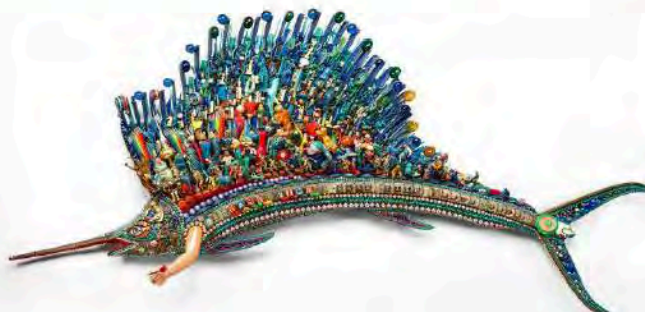
- A historical exploration of the monumental Second Continental Congress that convened in Philadelphia in 1775, the result of which was the country’s first postal service and the naming of Benjamin Franklin as the first Postmaster General. NPM will capitalize on the close geographic location of Philadelphia and Washington DC, as well as the history of early postal routes on travel and highways that still crisscross the country;
- A focus on the diverse spectrum of people and experiences that have contributed to what it means to be American, highlighting that diversity has always been an important part of the landscape. The postal service employed women and African Americans prior to the Pendleton Act of 1883, and the programming will show how the postal service has paved the way for a more inclusive federal government; and
- Digital exhibitions that will not only complement NPM’s in-house exhibitions but will also be stand-alone presentations accessible to all through the internet; and
- Meaningful curriculum guides and other classroom resources that will complement both the physical and digital exhibitions.

American Ideas

Project: “Making to Crafting in the United States: 1776-2026”

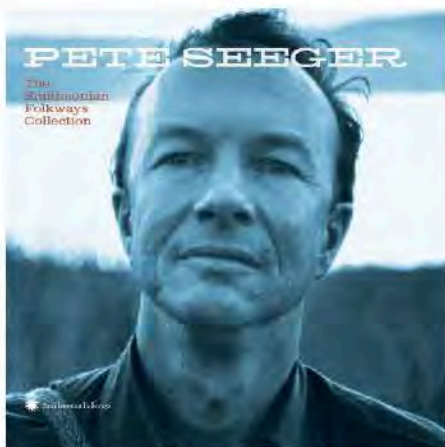
Smithsonian Lead: Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian American Art Museum

Brief: This year-long exhibition filling the entire Renwick Gallery will focus on the five major media used in craft: Glass, Clay, Metal, Fiber, and Wood from early America to present day. Contemporary artists will be invited to create new immersive works of art. The Renwick will draw on artworks from around the Smithsonian, as well as its own collection.



Larry Fuente, Game Fish (1988), from the collections of the Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian American Art Museum

Project: “United Sounds of America: 250 Tracks for 250 Years”



Cover: Pete Seeger, The Smithsonian Folkways Collection (2019)

Smithsonian Lead: Smithsonian Folkways

Brief: Smithsonian Folkways will produce a box set of 250 songs from our catalog that reflect the tragedies and triumphs of our nation. Instead of a chronological or geographical curatorial structure, these songs will be grouped into themes that define the United States.

Themes will range from slavery, migration, and war to the abolitionist, suffragist, civil rights, anti-war, and current protest movements of people who have fought against injustice.

We anticipate that the selection of the box set’s tracks will allow for collaboration with other federal and cultural entities, as well as a possible public component.

American Ideas

Project: “All American Art” Video Series

Smithsonian Lead: Smithsonian American Art Museum (“SAAM”)

Brief: SAAM will create a selection of teaching resources, pairing works of American art with poetic texts, designed to engage students with questions of identity and history through creative writing, poetry, and spoken word, culminating in student performances and/or an essay contest.

The materials will be designed to reach schoolchildren and K-12 teachers in every classroom around the Nation as well as engage online audiences using video and social media platforms. We expect that the series would be available leading into the Semiquincentennial.

Project: “Word and Image: American Art and Verse Over 250 Years”

Smithsonian Lead: Smithsonian American Art Museum (“SAAM”)

Brief: SAAM will produce a major new video documentary miniseries (also delivered online and across other technology platforms) about 250 years of American Art, to be shown on Netflix, PBS, and other venues through the voices of distinguished Americans across all fields in conversation with contemporary artists. Who are we as Americans? Who were we then and who are we now? What is contemporary art now and what was it in 1776?



Albert Bierstadt, Among the Sierra Nevada, California (1868), on display at the Smithsonian American Art Museum

American Ideas

Project: “Uncovering the Stories of STEM Throughout America’s History: A Smithsonian Perspective”

Smithsonian Lead: Smithsonian Science Education Center (“SSEC”)

Brief: SSEC will interview Smithsonian curators and historians to uncover the stories of science, technology, engineering, and math (“STEM”) throughout America’s 250-year history. Smithsonian curriculum developers and digital experts will develop an interactive eBook to collect, curate, and tell these stories for students ages 8-13.

SSEC will also create supporting professional development materials for elementary and middle school teachers in order to share content in K-8 schools across the county. SSEC will make the eBook available to youth throughout the Semiquincentennial year with editions translated into Spanish and the other official United Nations languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, and Russian) for classroom use here and abroad. SSEC will use social media and national education conferences to share these materials with K-8 schools.

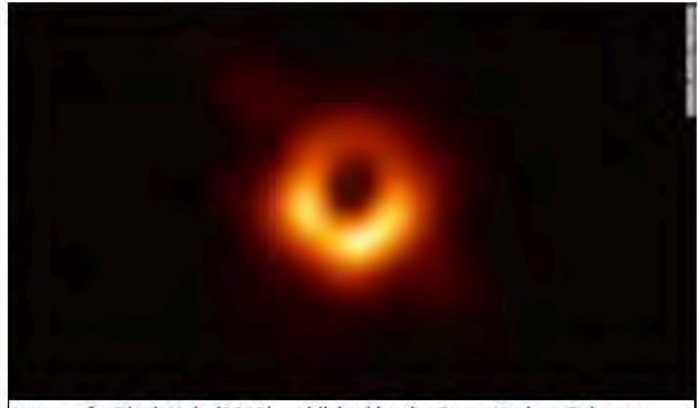


Image of a Black Hole (2019), published by the Event Horizon Telescope Collaboration, led by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory

The eBook will present stories that draw on the science, technology, engineering, and math of significant periods of American history:

- from 1776 when the Declaration of Independence was signed by candlelight and signatories traveled by horse;
- to the 1876 Centennial, where celebrants traveled by train and used electricity, the telegraph transformed communication, gas was lighting cities, Alexander Bell’s telephone helped us communicate widely, and inventions like the dishwasher were patented by women;
- to the 1926 Sesquicentennial, which gave way to the motorized car, electricity filled homes, movies and sound changed entertainment, and vaccines stopped the spread of diseases;
- to the 1976 Bicentennial, when radio and television brought the world into our homes;
- to finally the present, with an examination of the explosive impact of STEM after 1976 and a look to STEM in the future (drawing on some of the stories the will be presented in the revitalized Arts and Industries Building).

American Ideas

All stories will be drawn from Smithsonian science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) collections and research. In collaboration with outside partners from the University of Virginia, Princeton University, and the University of Northern Colorado, the eBook will contain supplemental 3-D printing activities that will allow students and teachers to print out 3-D replicas of objects from the collections of the National Museum of American History and the National Air and Space Museum, as well as interactive videos and augmented reality segments.

Project: “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness”

Smithsonian Lead: National Portrait Gallery (“NPG”)

Brief: NPG is exploring three interconnected historical American portrait exhibitions (1700 – 1900) in partnership with two major museums outside the Smithsonian and the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The exhibition would be focused around the themes of Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness. A symposium would accompany the exhibitions.



*Gilbert Stuart, George Washington
("Lansdowne" Portrait (1796), on display at the
National Portrait Gallery*

American Community

Project: United Stories of America: The 2026 Smithsonian Folklife Festival

Smithsonian Lead: Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (“CFCH”)

Brief: For more than 50 years, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival has provided a platform for Americans to share their stories with the widest possible public on the National Mall. Based on rigorous research, the



From “New York City at the Smithsonian,” 2001 Smithsonian Folklife Festival

Festival is an international model for cultural exploration, exchange, and engagement through its hands-on workshops, discussion panels, performances, and more. Our narrative stages provide facilitated conversations in which Festival participants and visitors can discuss the issues that matter most to them in a context of respect and curiosity. The Festival leverages social media throughout the research process, during the event and beyond, to share key insights and perspectives with our vast digital audience.

CFCH will produce a landmark event on the National Mall to create a vital portrait of the complex cultural and community landscape of contemporary America and to increase the broad understanding of diverse local expressions across the country for the Semiquincentennial.

In 2026, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival will feature *United Stories of America* to highlight the stories and experiences of hundreds of communities. Using content generated through research and at the Festival, we will share sensitive and powerful videos, images, text, and sound on a wide range of social media platforms to reach digital audiences. *United Stories of America* will explore the key idea that America’s diverse cultural traditions are a wellspring of creativity. What do Americans create from their traditions? How does living heritage help communities sustain a sense of belonging and difference? How does it nurture a relationship with their histories? What are the major themes that animate American communities? How are local community values and ideas expressed in social action?



From “Las Americas: Music in Latino Culture,” 2009 Smithsonian Folklife Festival

American Community

Project: *United Stories of America* Festivals Beyond the National Mall

Smithsonian Lead: Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (“CFCH”)

Brief: To promote creativity across the nation, the Smithsonian will co-produce local *United Stories of America* festivals with organizations already committed to cultural heritage documentation and representation. In this way, we can seed approximately 100 new successful and sustainable local festivals across the United States. The local festivals will:

- Raise awareness of cultural heritage by showcasing an array of excellent artists representing America’s diverse cultural traditions;
- Reach broad segments of the public, including traditionally underserved audiences, with unparalleled cultural experiences;



Bahamian Junkanoo procession (1996) for Smithsonian 150th Celebration on the Mall

- Foster cultural participation and community engagement through grassroots efforts across the country; and
- Champion cultural vitality in diverse communities by nurturing new, sustainable traditional arts events and new audiences in communities across the nation.

Beginning in 2023, CFCH will conduct an orientation symposium for our local collaborators to discuss the

ethics, history, and successful strategies for documenting and presenting traditional cultural expressions. In subsequent years, CFCH will provide more tailored support to our partners related to documentation, representation, marketing, and production of these events.

CFCH is looking to collaborate with Smithsonian Affiliates, the American Anthropological Association, and the American Folklore Society. In addition, we expect to partner with the National Council for the Traditional Arts, state arts councils, and state humanities councils. The National Endowment of the Arts Folk and Traditional Arts Program has already committed to encouraging funding proposals to support local organizations in their efforts to produce these events.

American Community

Project: “Many Americas, Many 1776s”

Smithsonian Leads: National Museum of the American Indian; National Museum of African American History and Culture; Smithsonian Latino Center

Brief: A coordinated major exhibition from three Smithsonian units that will explore 1776 not just in the 13 original colonies, but in all the geography that makes up the current day United States, from Alaska



Map of North America (circa 1760)

to Florida, Hawaii to Puerto Rico. “The Many 1776s” will examine the people, places, and cultures, many traditionally overlooked in Revolutionary histories, at the time of, and leading to, Independence. The exhibitions will also allow visitors to consider the ideals of the Revolution through the lenses of the Native American, African American, and Latino experiences. The exhibitions will highlight how today’s America is impacted by the people and cultures of pre-Revolutionary American—the Spanish influences in the American south, west, and Caribbean, the Native peoples across the continent and in Hawai’i, Alaska, and the country’s current territories in the Pacific Ocean and the

Caribbean Sea, and the America experienced by African Americans before and at the time of the Revolution.

One of the exhibition’s goals is to ensure that all Americans, no matter where they live, will see themselves in the telling of the American story. The Smithsonian will also reach out to state and territory government, tribal, and history organizations to invite them to “create their own 1776s” and reflect those efforts in their exhibitions and digital content in their home areas.

American Places

Project: The American Prairie

Smithsonian Lead: Smithsonian National Zoo

Brief: The Smithsonian National Zoo plans to renovate the former Black Bear habitat on its American Trail to a new *American Prairie* exhibit. The exhibit will reflect the Smithsonian’s critical conservation work and become home to native prairie species. The Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the non-profit organization, American Prairie Reserve, are collaborating to protect and restore one of North America’s greatest treasures — the prairie. Together, we are working to better understand how changes to the grasslands affect the wildlife that call it home — from the mighty bison to the tiniest insects — and ultimately reintroduce species, such as the swift fox and black-footed ferret that have disappeared from this landscape into prairie lands in northeastern Montana.



Buffalo Bull, Grazing on the Prairie (1832-1833), George Catlin, from the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum

The exhibition will also highlight the role the American prairie plays, and continues to play, in the shaping of the Nation.

Project: “Traveling Treasure - On the Road with Nam June Paik’s *Electronic Superhighway: Continental US, Alaska, Hawaii*”

Smithsonian Lead:

Smithsonian American Art Museum

Brief: One of the most loved and iconic works from the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Nam June Paik’s work, “*Electronic Superhighway: Continental US, Alaska, Hawaii*” (1995), would travel to five museums and five states across America to celebrate the Semiquincentennial.



Nam June Paik, Electronic Superhighway: Continental US, Alaska, Hawaii (1995), from the collections of the Smithsonian American Art Museum

American Places

Project: The US at 250: As Told through the Stories of the Sellman House, Its Occupants, and Their Impact

Smithsonian Lead: Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (“SERC”)

Brief: The 1735 Sellman House is the oldest in situ building in the Smithsonian’s collection and is the focus for SERC’s contribution to the America 250 commemoration and celebration.

The timeline of the Sellman House and its two families parallel the history of the United States. The building and surrounding sites on SERC property distinctly track the history of the country as a whole: from native use beginning thousands of years ago, to mid-17th century European settlement and the colonial period, through the Revolutionary War, with a Sellman General in the Continental



The 1735 Sellman House on the campus of the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Edgewater, Maryland

Army, the Federalist period of the fledgling country, a divided family in the Civil War, slavery and African-American sites, four centuries of farming and environmental impact, and beyond.

SERC has an active citizen science archeology program. Archeological finds have documented each of these periods in time and will be used in future museum exhibits that tell the story of the building, the

landscape, the two families that lived in the house and their impact on the landscape, along with the stories of the various groups who have lived on and/or used the site and the surrounding plantations. The site will serve as a visitor center to introduce visitors to SERC.

SERC intends to partner with the State of Maryland, the Four Rivers Heritage Area, the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, and the Anne Arundel County Planning and Zoning Cultural Resources Division for this project.

American Places

Project: This Land is Your Land: The American Landscape 1776

Smithsonian Lead: National Museum of Natural History

Brief: The museum plans to explore the state of natural history in North America, using 1776 as a baseline for environmental change for the continent.

The topic would be used as a theme for an exhibition, a series of presentations, a symposium, and/or a Smithsonian Channel television series.



Washington Sea Eagle (ca. 1836-1839), John James Audubon, from the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum

American Spirit

Project: Smithsonian Castle and National Visitors Information Center

Smithsonian Lead: Smithsonian Institution Central Administration



Brief: In early 2026, we plan to reopen the Smithsonian Institution Building (“Castle”), a National Historic Landmark, as a place for civic discussion and as a national visitors information center for the Smithsonian, Washington, D.C., and the Semiquincentennial.

At the revitalized Castle, visitors to Washington, D.C. will access information about Smithsonian museums and the Semiquincentennial, as well as help them structure their visit around important questions they have about America while in the nation’s capital. For example, a visitor could ask about opportunities to learn more about George Washington. A suggested itinerary would not only highlight George Washington at the Smithsonian, but also other relevant places in the metropolitan area (e.g., Mount Vernon, the Society of the Cincinnati, Alexandria Masonic Temple).

With visitor home state information, the center would suggest local museums and libraries to explore when they return to their cities and towns. For the Semiquincentennial, the information center would specifically highlight America 250 activities in the Washington area and visitors’ home states.

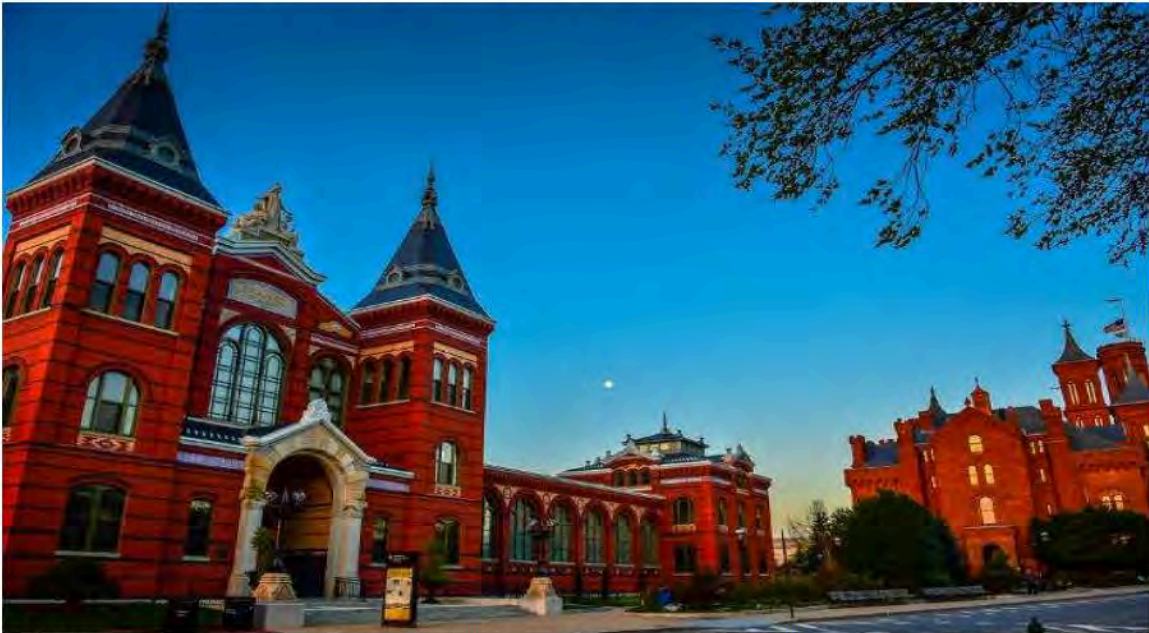
The revitalized Castle would also house spaces to host Smithsonian-curated exhibitions and conversations on topics of national interest. We are currently exploring an inaugural Semiquincentennial summit for the re-opened Castle on “America 300,” a look at the possible state of the nation on its Tricentennial and the ways we can influence that future today.

American Spirit

Project: The Arts and Industries Building: American Futures

Smithsonian Lead: Arts and Industries Building

Brief: The Arts and Industries Building (“AIB”) first opened in 1881 to house artifacts from the 1876 American Centennial Exhibition held in Philadelphia. Later, the Building was renovated and reopened in

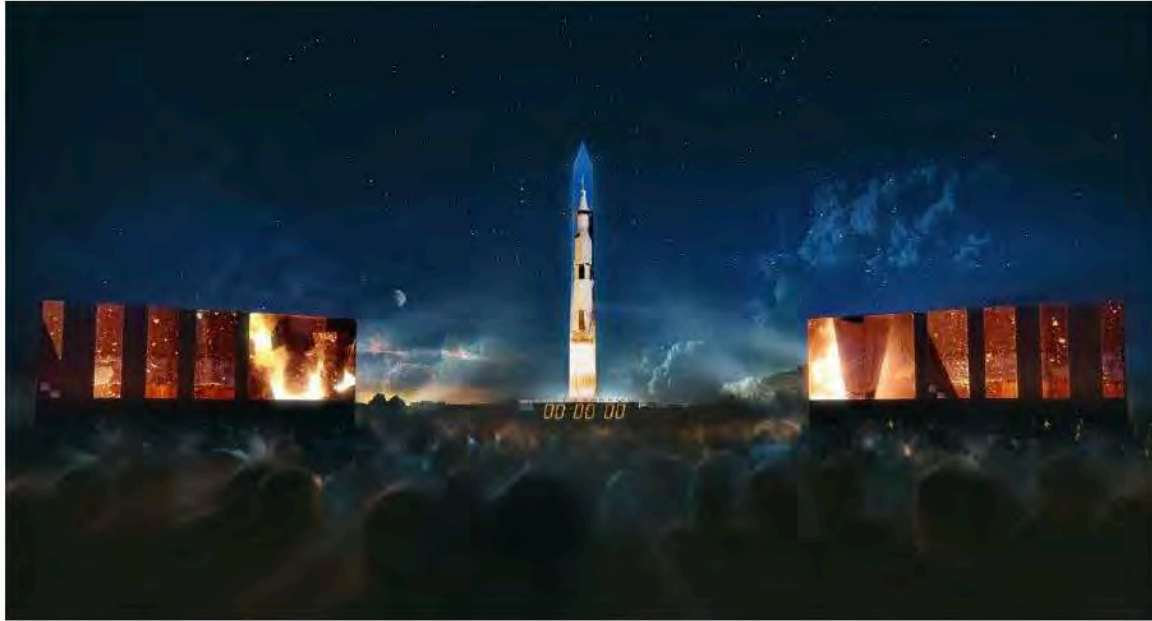


1976 with a recreation of the original exhibition for the Bicentennial. The Building has served as an incubator for new Smithsonian museums and a test facility for creative ways to engage the public.

In honor of the Semiquincentennial, the Smithsonian will permanently reopen AIB to the public as a new dynamic, flexible, visionary exhibits hall with a focus on the future, returning to the country its first National Museum. Beginning in early 2026, a year-long free celebration will blend cutting-edge content and community voices, including immersive exhibitions on how we’ll live, work, and play in the future; open access innovation labs; artist- and innovator-in-residence projects; showcases of leading-edge technology; emerging artist performances; and participatory programs that will spotlight diverse dreams of the future from across America.

American Spirit

Project: Revolutions in the Air: Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the National Air and Space Museum



"Apollo 50: Go for the Moon," organized and presented by the National Air and Space Museum, with 500,000 viewers on the National Mall

Smithsonian Lead: National Air and Space Museum

Brief: In celebration of the Bicentennial, on July 1, 1976, and with President Gerald R. Ford presiding, the National Air and Space Museum opened on the National Mall. Within 49 days, two million people had visited the museum. For the next 43 years, the Air and Space Museum has remained one of the most visited and iconic museums in the world. In 2017—the last full year before the museum’s current renovation process began—the museum hosted seven million visitors.



New Mall-side entrance to National Air and Space Museum

Beyond the extensive renovations to its building, the museum is reimagining and transforming all 23 of its galleries and presentation spaces to inspire the next generation of innovators and explorers.

By 2026, the new National Air and Space Museum will bring our exhibitions into the 21st century and reflect on where we are headed --50 years after America landed on the Moon and over a century after the Wright Brothers’ flight at Kitty Hawk,

American Spirit

North Carolina. The transformed Air and Space museum will look to the future while using the past and present to show our visitors that no matter who they are or what their personal challenges may be, they can, as others did before them, transform our world.

The first person to set foot on Mars will likely have stepped through the museum's doors first. We do not know who that may be, but we already know some of the things we need to do to help them get there: a STEM education pipeline that can build a nation of innovators and explorers capable of meeting this monumental challenge. Opportunities. A healthy planet to come home to. And most of all, the spark of inspiration that can fire a lifetime of discovery and wonder.

Project: 250 Revolutionary Treasures

Smithsonian Lead: Pan-Institutional Initiative

Brief: The Smithsonian holds over 155 million objects in its collections, with millions relating to the American history. We are exploring a project to identify and display 250 "revolutionary" objects from our collections that best capture what America means, how it became the society and nation it is today, and what it means to be an American. "Revolutionary" would not be limited in definition to just those artifacts of the American Revolution, but to those contributing a significant, or "revolutionary," impact on the development of the nation from Independence to its Semiquincentennial.



"Votes for Women" button, from the collections of the National Museum of American History

Selection of the "250 Revolutionary Treasures" will likely solicit input from both scholars and the general public. We would use the occasion of the Semi-quincentennial to conduct

public campaigns for restoring certain iconic objects, similar to the recent and successful campaign to conserve Neil Armstrong's Apollo 11 spacesuit.

We are also looking at new ways to share these objects outside of Washington, D.C. Objects identified for the exhibition would be scanned, allowing organizations to print 3D replicas for display accompanied with supporting content provided digitally by the Smithsonian.



Apple Macintosh Computer (1984), from the collections of the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum

Infrastructure Requests

The Smithsonian is a dedicated steward of some of the Nation’s most cherished icons and visited landmarks. Although our funding from Congress has been consistent and generous, it still has not been enough to properly maintain our physical infrastructure.

As our Secretary testified before Congress in September, the Smithsonian must address its deferred maintenance backlog, “to make sure that these amazing facilities are protected and made accessible to the American people.” Moreover, many works and artifacts we hold on behalf of the American people need conservation before they can be displayed at a Smithsonian museum or loaned to other institutions across the country.

We believe that, in addition to our regular appropriation requests for Fiscal Years 2021 to 2026, additional Semiquincentennial-related infrastructure funding, as contemplated by the Act, will be needed for us to deliver our proposed program. *Id.* at § 4(b)(3). These funds would be targeted to three

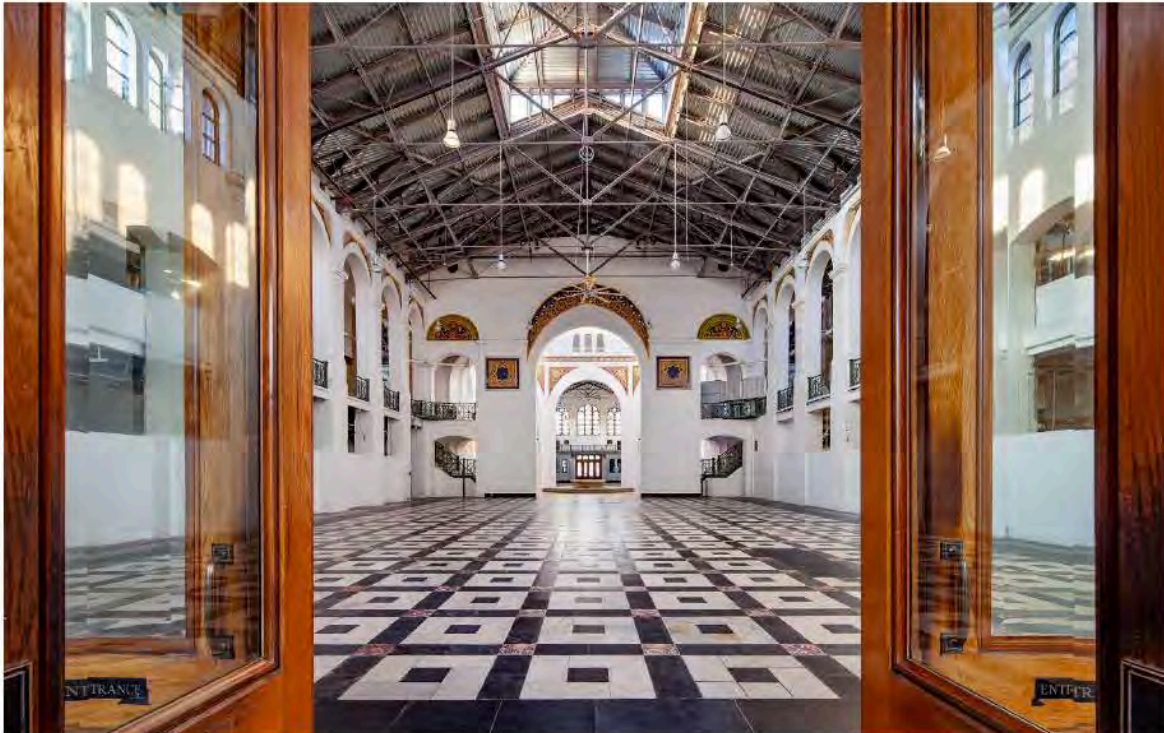


major infrastructure projects:

1. **The revitalization and reopening of the Smithsonian Institution Building (“Castle”), above, in late 2025 or early 2026.** We anticipate that the restored Castle will include new state-of-the-art conference and auditoria spaces to host public activities related to the Semiquincentennial. We are also exploring transforming the first floor “Great Hall” into an information hub, where visitors will be able to learn about the Smithsonian, the Washington, D.C. area, and Semiquincentennial activities around the country and the world. This infrastructure request is reflects both building revitalization

costs and information technology infrastructure and support to serve as the Semiquincentennial’s digital visitor hub and information clearinghouse for sponsoring entities and supports.

The Castle’s Great Hall, where the information hub will be physically located, will also host exhibitions that reflect the diversity of Smithsonian and the nation. Exhibitions will introduce the Smithsonian through its work in the arts, history, culture, and science; other exhibitions will serve as platforms to spark conversations on the themes that define current-day America: identity race, creativity and invention, and democracy.



2. **The revitalization and reopening of the Arts and Industries Building (“AIB”), above, in 2026.** The Arts and Industries Building first opened in 1881 to house artifacts from the 1876 American Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. Since then, AIB has served as an incubator for new Smithsonian museums and a test facility for creative ways to engage the public. For the Semiquincentennial, AIB will reopen and present exhibitions and programming looking to the future of America, with an eye toward the traits that made the Nation great – creativity, innovation, and optimism.
3. **Conservation of American works and objects from the National Collections particularly relevant to the Semiquincentennial.** Our initial efforts would focus on conservation of the Gunboat “Philadelphia” and the recently acquired archives of the Johnson Publishing Company.



The Gunboat "Philadelphia," being installed in the National Museum of American History ; "Philadelphia" on current display

The Gunboat *Philadelphia* is the oldest surviving American fighting vessel. Built in 1776, the *Philadelphia* was sunk in Lake Champlain during a naval battle with the British on October 11, 1776. The Continental Congress authorized the building of this 54-foot, 29-ton gunboat and eight other similar vessels for the defense of the Champlain Valley - the northern frontier of the colonies considered the key to the success or failure of the American Revolution. In summer 1776, under the leadership of Brigadier General Benedict Arnold, *Philadelphia* and her sister-ships were hurriedly organized into what historians consider "the first American Navy." The *Philadelphia* rested in the mud at the bottom of Lake Champlain for almost 160 years before being recovered in 1935. After its recovery, the *Philadelphia* moved – on a barge – to Washington D.C. in 1961 and became part of the Smithsonian's collections along with other artifacts found at the same site. The *Philadelphia* has been on continuous display since 1965 and is in need of restoration.

Restoring the *Philadelphia* and developing an accompanying exhibition interpreting its role in American history will provide a valuable opportunity to connect the public both with the Revolutionary War and the importance of preserving our National Heritage for future generations.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture recently acquired, with the Getty Research Institute, the photographic archives of the Johnson Publishing Company, publisher of the iconic *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines. *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines helped shape our nation's history, allowing



James Baldwin, from the Johnson Publishing Company Archives, National Museum of African American History and Culture

Americans -- of all colors -- to see the full panorama of the African American experience.

The archive is the most significant collection of photographs cataloguing African American life in the 20th century, containing about one million printed images, three million negatives and contact sheets, and several thousand hours of video footage.

Conserving these archives and making them more accessible to the public and researchers will contribute to telling a more inclusive and complete story of the nation for the Semiquincentennial.

Recommendations

The goal for our programming is for all Americans to see themselves in the Semiquincentennial and the continuing story of the America and hear their voices in the conversations the Semiquincentennial will inspire. But to accomplish that, all Americans need to have heard themselves in defining the meaning of, and planning for, the Semiquincentennial. We support the Commission's efforts to build a strong framework to encourage the widest possible participation in the planning process.

Providing every American the opportunity to participate is a monumental challenge, and we believe that the Commission cannot, nor should be expected to, do it alone. As Congress recognized in the Act, the Commission "shall consult and cooperate with, and seek advice and assistance from, appropriate Federal agencies, State and Local public bodies, learned societies, and historical, patriotic, philanthropic, civic, professional, and related organizations." Pub. L. 114-196 § 6(a). In turn, "Federal agencies shall cooperate with the Commission in planning, encouraging, developing, and coordinating appropriate commemorative activities." *Id.* at § 6(b).

Under the Act, the Secretary of the Smithsonian "shall submit to the Commission a report containing recommendations." Pub. L. 114-196 § 6(b)(3)(B)(1). Our recommendations reflect Congress's direction that Commission "provide for the observance and commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and related events through local, State, national, and international activities planned, encouraged, developed, and coordinated by a national commission representative of appropriate public and private authorities and organizations." *Id.* at § 2(b).

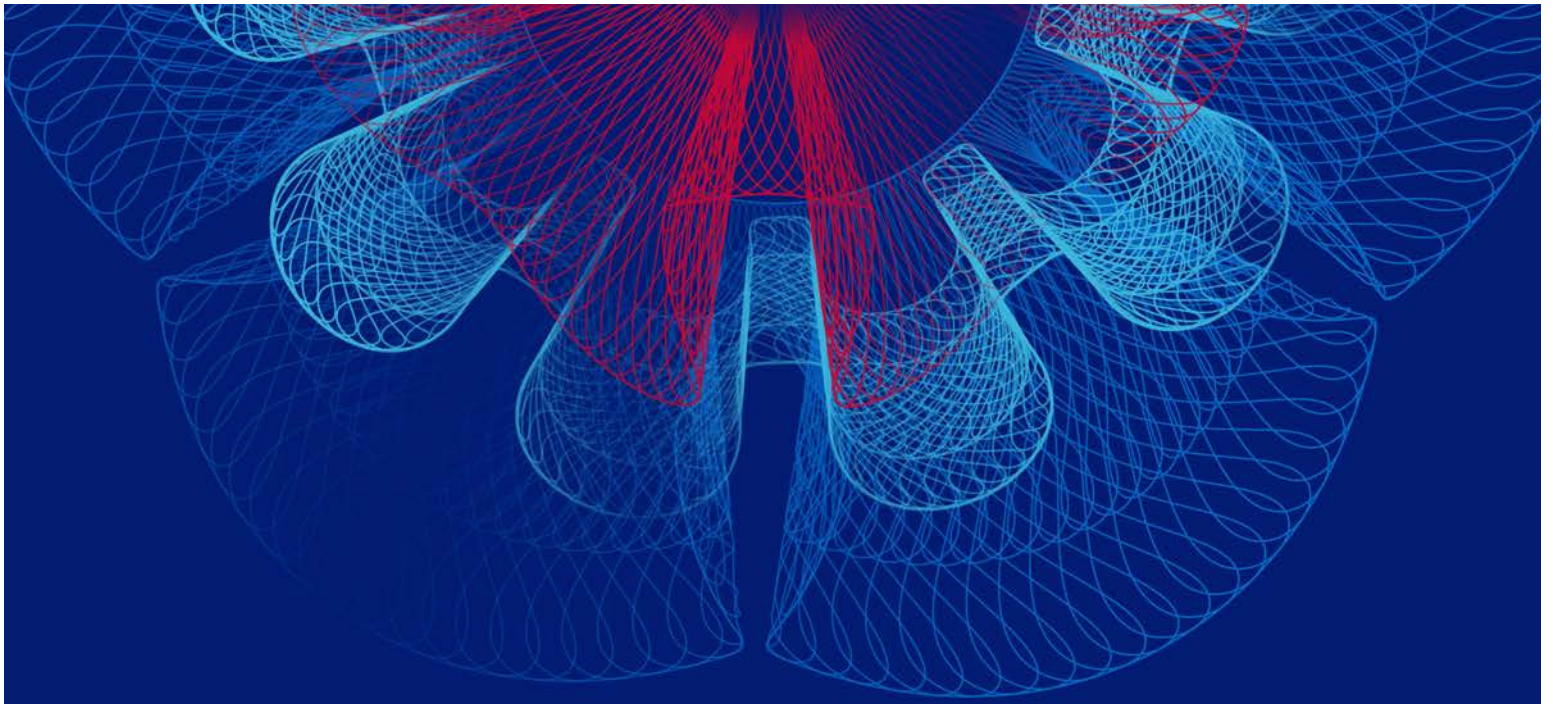
Smithsonian staff have attended Commission meetings and functions as well as met with Commissioners and Commission staff informally to discuss the Smithsonian's contribution to the Semiquincentennial effort and ways to increase the efficacy and impact of Commission operations and the articulate and strengthen the contributions of Federal entities to the Commission's work.

As a result, the Smithsonian submits the following recommendations to the Commission:

1. **Federal Entity Partners.** The Commission should consider developing a framework for Federal entity partners to provide "advice and assistance" on a regular basis as well as promote collaboration between Federal entities by:

- a. Requesting the Federal entities identified in the statute to establish a working group with membership consisting of each Federal entities and other agencies or state and local organizations as appropriate. Federal entity representatives should regularly report to the Commission on the working group’s plans and activities through their ex officio members. A Commission staff representative should serve as a liaison to the working group and participate in its proceedings;
 - b. Encouraging Federal entities to collaborate as much as possible on programming and promoting the Semiquincentennial; and
 - c. Charging its Federal agency partners to deploy their outreach infrastructure at the national, state, and local levels to better engage all American communities in program planning. Federal agency partners should provide “advice and assistance” to the Commission based on their expertise in reaching traditionally underserved American audiences.
2. **National Signature Events/Federal Entity Partners.** Given the potential breadth of the Semiquincentennial, the Commission should consider being the catalyst for the planning and execution of a few “signature” events that would, among other things, ensure geographic diversity and consider Federal entity partners as potential champions or lead organizers of certain events.
3. **Matching Grants and Seed Funding.** The Commission, or its associated 501(c)(3), should consider serving as a catalyst for events across America through a matching grant or seed funding program to state and local organizations.
4. **Clearinghouse.** The Commission should consider serving as a “clearinghouse” to connect donors and sponsors with non-profit and Federal and state participants. As the Smithsonian considers the information technology infrastructure to create a national information hub for its museums, other Washington attractions, and Semiquincentennial activities across the country, we would welcome working with the Commission to develop a Semiquincentennial clearinghouse.
5. **Federal Advocate.** The Commission should consider serving as an advocate for Federal support to programs at the Federal agency and state and local levels. Given its statutory mandate and the diversity of the Commissioners’ backgrounds, the Commission can serve as an objective, balanced, and strategic evaluator of activities competing for Federal resources.
6. **Smithsonian Infrastructure.** The Commission should consider supporting the Smithsonian’s infrastructure requests to the President and the Congress, as necessary for the “successful undertaking” of the Semiquincentennial. Id. at § 4(b)(3).

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this report to the Commission and look forward to work with the Commission, other Federal entities, other stakeholders, and the public to ensure the Semiquincentennial' s success.



APPENDIX E-6

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION REPORT

National Archives and Records Administration

**Plans for the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the
Nation's Founding**

Report to the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission

November 15, 2019

National Archives: Plans for the 250th Anniversary of the Nation's Founding Report to the U. S. Semiquincentennial Commission

Introduction

As the nation's official record keeper, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) holds in trust for the American people its permanently valuable records, including the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, and Bill of Rights which are on permanent display in the Rotunda of the National Archives Building in Washington, DC.

The records of the National Archives date back more than two and a half centuries and capture the sweep of America's past: slave ship manifests and the Emancipation Proclamation, captured German records and the Japanese surrender documents from World War II, journals of polar expeditions and chronicles of space explorations, photographs of Dust Bowl farmers, Indian treaties making transitory promises, and the Louisiana Purchase Treaty, signed with a flourish by "Bonaparte," that doubled the territory of the young republic. The records are diverse in format, as well as content, including some 15 billion pieces of paper, 44 million photographs, miles of video and film, and more than 6 billion electronic records—the fastest growing record form. With 44 facilities that stretch across the country, including 14 Presidential Libraries housing the historical materials of every President from Herbert Hoover to Barack Obama, the National Archives is a nationwide institution.

As home to the original Declaration of Independence, as well as the official records of the First and Second Continental Congresses, the Confederation Congress, and the Constitutional Convention, the National Archives will be a natural focus of attention during the 250th anniversary period. We look forward to offering a broad range of programs, including those listed in this report, to engage the entire citizenry of the United States, both in Washington, DC, and across the country, during this landmark celebration.

Social and Media Engagement—Broad reach of the National Archives

The digital reach of the National Archives and its holdings extend to hundreds of millions of people. Approximately 93 million digital copies of National Archives records are already available online. The National Archives uses social media platforms to provide access to these

records, telling great stories, sparking deep conversation, and providing opportunities for civic engagement. More than 200 National Archives staff actively contribute to 130 social media accounts on 14 different platforms, generating hundreds of millions of views annually. Looking ahead to the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the founding of the country, the National Archives will find and choose stories related to the anniversary themes that will resonate with our audiences, make emotional connections, and increase understanding of our shared history and ideals.

Planning the National Archives' Celebration Guiding Principles

The National Archives' programs marking the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding will celebrate the diversity of the American people and the constancy of the political creed that unites them. What joins Americans to one another is their adherence to the ideals that inspired the birth of our country—freedom, equality, self-determination—as expressed in the Declaration of Independence. Our programs will seek to engage all people of all ages from across the 50 states and U.S. Territories, with stories that reflect the diverse origins of the American people, and will offer opportunities to connect with stories of the American Revolution and the founding principles upon which our country was established. The history of the United States has been a journey toward “a more perfect Union.” Our programming will pay tribute to the generations of American citizens who have, through their activism, pushed the nation closer to living out its professed ideals. Within that historical context, the National Archives will invite Americans to consider the obligations and opportunities of citizenship in a representative form of government.

Finally, as guardian of the nation's original, signed, record copy of the Declaration of Independence, the National Archives will invite the public to connect with the Declaration by coming to see the original, which is on permanent display in the National Archives Rotunda along with the U.S. Constitution, and Bill of Rights—and will make facsimiles available to those people who cannot come. In addition to disseminating information about the Declaration's meaning and impact on the world, the National Archives will also highlight the document's physical history that led to its current condition and the latest scientific research undertaken by National Archives conservators and scientists to ensure the physical preservation of this precious parchment for generations to come.

In addition to the one million visitors who come to the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, our audiences will include visitors to NARA's Presidential Libraries and regional archives located across the country, and the hundreds of millions more who already engage with the National Archives through a variety of social media platforms.

76-Hour Archives Open House: July 2 to July 5.

On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress voted for independence. John Adams was sure that July 2 would be the date forever celebrated as “the great anniversary Festival.” Two days later, on July 4, the Congress voted to adopt the Declaration of Independence.

Beginning on July 2, 2026, the National Archives will remain open for 76 hours, welcoming visitors day and night, offering a host of programs that might include demonstrations of the first printing of the Declaration that took place in Philadelphia during the night of July 4-5, 1776, political discussions with historical re-enactors, such as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Abigail Adams, and other figures associated with the founding period. A color guard will stand watch over the Charters of Freedom throughout the 76 hours.

Symposium

A series of presentations and panel discussions by the nation’s foremost experts on the American Revolution will explore the political, social, ideological, military, and economic conditions that gave rise to the birth of the nation. The sessions will represent the latest scholarship, often challenging widely held beliefs about the nation’s founding.

Senior conservators and scientists from the National Archives and partnering institutions will discuss the physical history of the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, and Bill of Rights—known collectively as the Charters of Freedom—and the latest scientific research undertaken to ensure the long-term preservation of the nation’s founding documents.

This program will be presented to a live audience in the McGowan Theater at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC around the time of the commemoration. Like many National Archives programs, the symposium may be streamed live online via the National

Archives' YouTube channel, or via other means, thus presenting an opportunity for citizens throughout the country and around the world to participate.

Expansion of Civic Education Outreach Initiative of the National Archives Center for Legislative Archives

To become informed citizens, students need to understand the civic principles embodied in the Charters of Freedom as well as the processes and institutions of government that put the Constitution into practice in everyday civic life.

Since 2010, the Center for Legislative Archives has conducted more than 100 teacher training workshops on civic education with the goal of educating today's young people to be tomorrow's active and informed voters. The workshops provide content knowledge, pedagogical instruction, and classroom-ready resources; they are focused on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and are presented to teachers new to the profession working in underserved schools. The program is currently operating in Florida, Texas and West Virginia; NARA is seeking to expand the programs.

National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) is the grants-making arm of the National Archives.

The legislation establishing the National Archives in 1934 also provided for a Historical Publications Commission to “make plans, estimates, and recommendations for such historical works and collections of sources as seem appropriate for publication and/or otherwise recording at the public expense.”

Three decades later, that program received its first appropriated funds, and since 1965, what is now known as the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) has been funding projects that make historical works and collections of sources available through documentary editions, in print, microfilm, and digital versions. The NHPRC has funded some 300 publications projects; a catalog of those projects may be found here:

<https://www.archives.gov/nhprc/projects/catalog>

Today, the NHPRC is a 15-member body, chaired by the Archivist of the United States and composed of representatives of the three branches of the Federal Government, and professional associations of archivists, historians, documentary editors, and records administrators.

The NHPRC sees the 250th anniversary as an opportune occasion to examine the role of historical documents and records in the civic life of the nation. It is, therefore, considering a proposal for a national convening of the leadership of organizations represented on the Commission (NHPRC), along with other stakeholders—including state archivists, academic research libraries, university presses, and research institutions—to collectively assess the strengths and weaknesses of the country’s approaches to collecting, organizing, describing, and making available the records and documents to explore, contemplate and understand the multitude of stories that comprise the history of the United states. If this proposal is approved by the Commission (NHPRC), then a convening of leadership could be undertaken as soon as early 2020, depending on the availability of funds and other factors.

In addition, the NHPRC intends to discuss adding language to several of its grant program descriptions that would encourage funding projects that commemorate the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding, if approved. The NHPRC will welcome projects that engage the public, expand civic education, and promote greater understanding of our history, democracy, and culture.

The following additional initiatives are presently under consideration by the National Archives, depending on the availability of funds and other resources.

Exhibitions on the 250th anniversary theme:

--Facsimile exhibits for wide circulation: NARA may develop “pop-up” facsimile exhibits on the 250th anniversary theme to be circulated throughout the 50 states and U.S. territories for display in schools, libraries, archives, museums, post offices, senior centers, etc. Digital facsimiles of the documents featured in the exhibit would be available to hosting venues.

--Exhibitions in Washington, DC: As the anniversary approaches, NARA will develop exhibitions on the 250th anniversary theme for its galleries in the National Archives Building on the mall.

--Presidential Libraries and Regional Archives: NARA’s Presidential Libraries and a number of NARA’s regional facilities have robust exhibit and public programs. As the commemoration approaches, each will develop programming suited to its own unique collections, audiences, and resources.

--Traveling Exhibition: NARA may consider developing a traveling exhibit of original documents on the 250th anniversary theme. This planning would be done in coordination and collaboration with traveling exhibits sponsored by other entities, including America 250, to avoid competition scheduling conflicts, etc.

Youth Summit:

NARA is considering the convening of a youth summit focusing on the role of a citizen in a republic and how students can live out the principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence. To make the summit a national event, it may be live streamed, inviting the participation of students throughout the country and around the world.

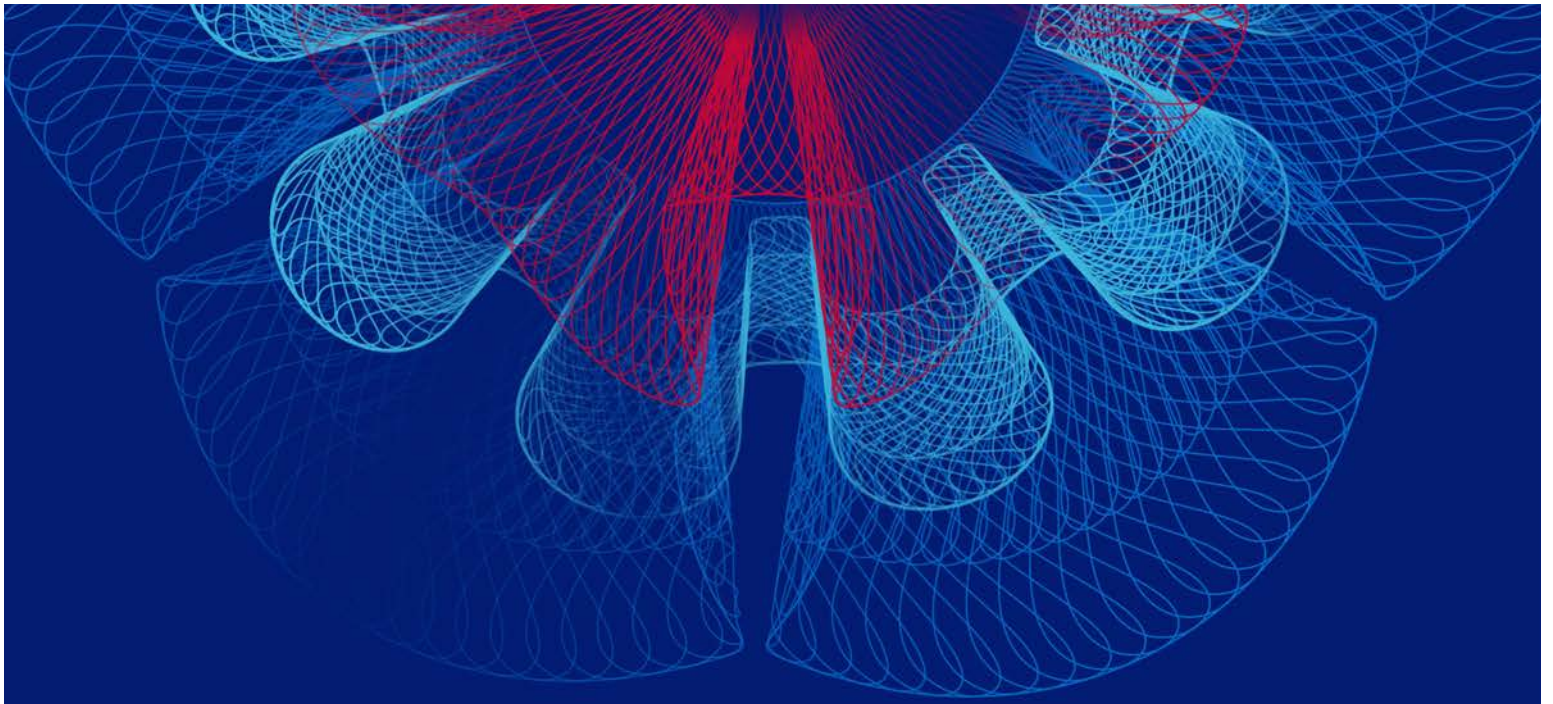
Special display of the “Sussex Declaration of Independence:”

The National Archives is exploring the possibility of hosting a special display of a rare 18th century ceremonial parchment copy of the Declaration of Independence that is in the holdings of the West Sussex Record Office in the United Kingdom.

Digital Platform for all 250th anniversary-related materials

NARA will devise a digital communication strategy to include social media, podcasts, materials that can be integrated with exhibit content, apps, etc., so that all relevant content developed by NARA to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the nation’s founding can be distributed digitally, as widely as possible,





APPENDIX F

NOTES FOR TABLE 2 PROJECTED PROGRAM NUMBERS BY FRAMEWORK WITH EXPLANATIONS

APPENDIX F

Notes for Table 2—Projected Program Numbers by Framework with Explanations

FRAMEWORKS*	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	EXPLANATION
Total programs	~53,200 to 137,100	The low end is a population adjusted extrapolation of total Canada 150 programs. The high end is a population adjusted extrapolation of total estimated Bicentennial programs. ^a
State, Territory, Local programs	~78,000 to 121,500	The low end is a population adjusted extrapolation of documented state and local Bicentennial programming (57,033 or ~89% of the total documented programs). The high end is a population adjusted extrapolation of the sum of documented state and local programming plus 89% of the difference between documented and estimated total number of Bicentennial programs. ^b
Federal Agency programs	~1,000	Based on the low end of an uncertain estimate of the total number of federal agencies ranging somewhere between 200 and 400 and a rough projection of five programs per agency on average. ^c
Native American programs	~400 to 1,750	Although the Commission invites all to participate, each tribe will consider its level of engagement. The low end conservatively projects roughly half of the federally recognized tribes will develop an America 250 program. The high end is a population adjusted extrapolation of the documented number of Bicentennial programs directed toward Native Americans. ^d
International programs	~5,000 to 10,000	This relatively loose estimate generally reflects the broad range of reported international involvement in the Bicentennial. The Bicentennial Administration could not document a complete list of international programs, but noted various figures ranging from a documented 1,937 programs that were expected to draw the greatest international interest, audience, or participation to more than 4,000 Bicentennial-related programs in West Germany during 1976 alone. ^e
COMMISSION		
Commission National Signature programs	~<10 owned and controlled with possible production/operation ~50 to 100 just owned and controlled	The Semiquincentennial Commission anticipates strong support by affiliates and resource partners who will offset most of the challenges associated with owning and controlling these programs.
Commission National/Regional Partnership programs	~250 to 500	During the Bicentennial federal planners recognized 284 similar programs while playing a relatively minor role in private funding. ^f Resource partners will play a more significant role in America 250.
*Appendix F presents the notes corresponding to the citations in this table.		

^a Readily available figures for the total number of programs undertaken for Canada 150 range from 5600 to 5800. The Commission used the Government of Canada, [Canada 150 at a Glance](#), to compile the low end estimate of 5600 from various figures and opted to use this number for the population adjusted estimate provided here. For the 5800 number, see Mia Rabson, [Canada 150 by the numbers: 87% of Canadians participated in at least one event](#), *The Canadian Press*, posted December 31, 2017. Statistics Canada estimated Canada's population as of July 1, 2017 at 36,708,083, which is nearly 9.5 times less than the projected United States population in 2026. [Annual Demographic Estimates: Canada, Provinces and Territories](#), 2017, Release Date: September 27, 2017. The estimated total number of Bicentennial activities was 100,000, American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II](#), June 30, 1977, 2:257. For the 2026 projection, see U.S. Census Bureau, [2017 National Population Projections Tables](#), Table 1. Projected Population Size and Births, Deaths, and Migration, Revised Release Date: September 2018—a 37.1 percent increase over 1976.

^b For the geographic breakdown of Bicentennial programs see, American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II](#), June 30, 1977, 2:264.

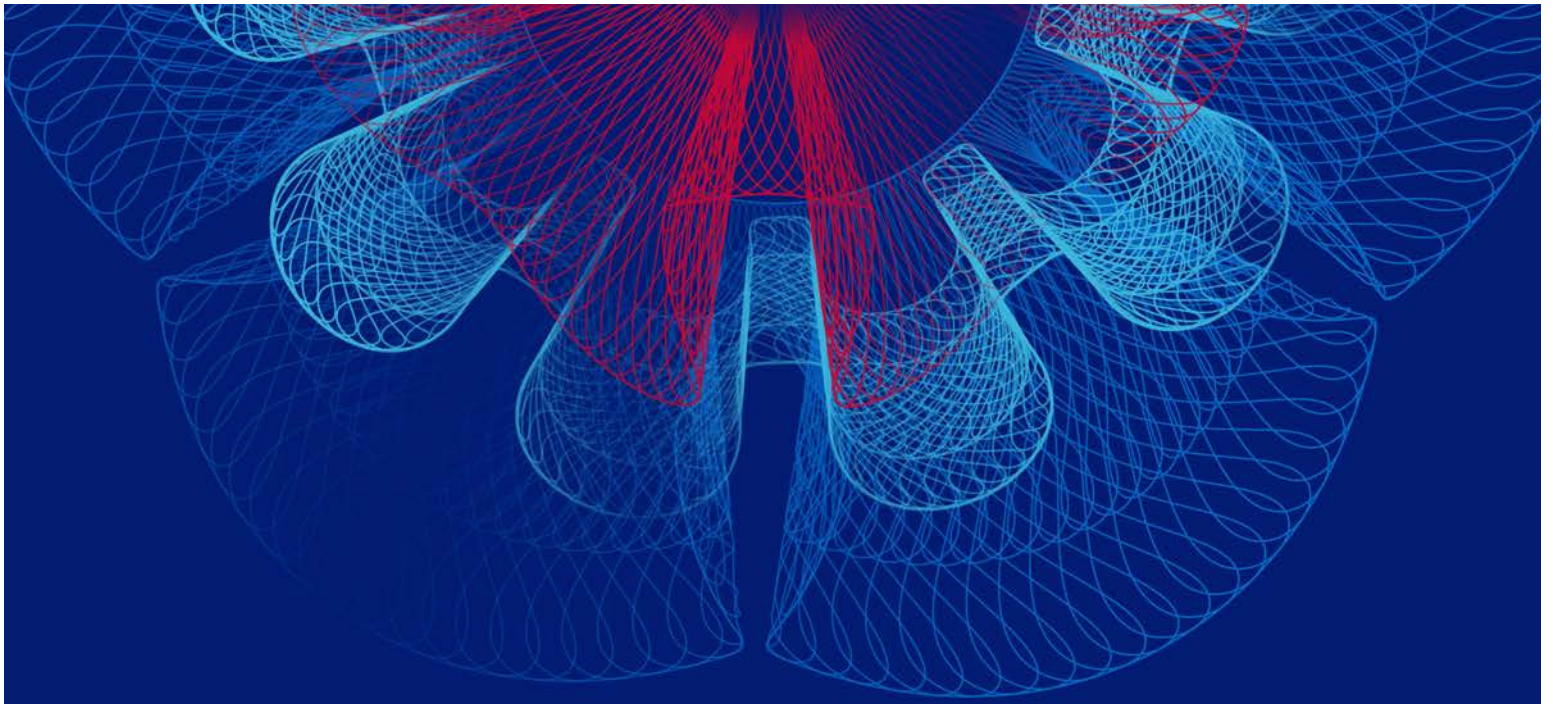
^c The widely varying reported numbers of federal agencies are found in Clyde Wayne Crews, Jr., [How Many Federal Agencies Exist? We Can't Drain the Swamp Until We Know](#), *Forbes*, July 5, 2017.

^d For the number of Bicentennial programs directed toward Native Americans, see the geographic breakdown of Bicentennial programs in American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II](#), June 30, 1977, 2:263. The projected population adjustment is a 68% increase between 1980 and 2025. For the 1980 figure of 1,420,000, see U.S. Census Bureau, [We The...First Americans](#), WE-5, September 1993, p. 2. For the 2025 projection of 4,452,000, see U.S. Census Bureau, [2017 National Population Projections Tables](#), Table 4. Projected Race and Hispanic Origin, Revised Release Date: September 2018.

^e American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II](#), June 30, 1977, 2:264, 296; and [The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume V](#), June 30, 1977, 5:503.

^f American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II](#), June 30, 1977, 2:142-143.





APPENDIX G

EXTRAPOLATION OF VARIOUS FINANCIAL AND RELATED BICENTENNIAL FACTORS INTO AMERICA 250 PROJECTIONS

APPENDIX G: Extrapolation of Various Financial and Related Bicentennial Factors into America 250 Projections

FACTOR*	BICENTENNIAL	AMERICA 250	NOTES
United States Population	218,000,000	346,500,000	US Census data actual (1976)/projected (2026) equals a 37.1% increase. ^a
Peak Bicentennial Administration Staffing	250	~160	Peaked in 1976 with over 35% likely in support staff roles that no longer exist in government offices, thus the reduced projection for America 250. ^b
	ACTUAL (\$)	CPI ADJUSTED TO 2018 (\$)^c	
Total Economic Cost/Investment	500,000,000	2,192,982,456	The Bicentennial figure is unreliable and likely grossly underestimated, but still points to a multibillion-dollar America 250. ^d
Total Economic Cost/Investment (population adjusted)		3,006,578,947	37.1% population adjustment
Bicentennial Commission/Administration Revenue and Expenditures			
Cumulative Appropriations	51,871,000	227,504,386	FY 1969-FY 1977 ^e
Cumulative Appropriations (population adjusted)		311,908,513	37.1% population adjustment.
Non-Appropriated Revenue	22,303,000	97,820,175	95% of the commercial revenue came from medals and stamp sales, with the remainder from licensing. ^f
Cumulative Operating Expenditures	~31,704,000	139,052,631	FY 1966-FY 1977. Does not include \$970,000 returned to the U.S. Treasury. ^g
Grants and Other Program Expenditures	41,500,000	182,017,544	FY 1966-FY 1977. Result of subtracting cumulative operating expenditures from total revenue less funds returned to the U.S. Treasury.
* These extrapolations provide a point of reference for further analysis and ongoing planning			

TABLE CONTINUED

Breakdown of Bicentennial Commission/Administration Grant Expenditures

FACTOR*	BICENTENNIAL	AMERICA 250	NOTES
	ACTUAL (\$)	CPI ADJUSTED TO 2018 (\$)	
States Assistance Grants (total)	8,925,000	39,144,737	Grants from appropriated funds to build capacity of the official state and territorial bicentennial organizations. ^h
Per State	165,000	723,684	This total was distributed in installments in accordance with annual appropriations from FY 1972-FY 1976. ⁱ
Per Territory	135,000	592,105	This total was distributed in installments in accordance with annual appropriations from FY 1972-FY 1976. ^j Five territories in 1976, six in 2026.
Project Matching Grants	19,750,000	86,622,807	Grants from non-appropriated and appropriated funds for state and territory administered support of largely local programming. ^k
Per State	360,000	1,578,947	This total was available installments for distribution between FY 1974 and FY 1976. ^l
Per Territory	350,000	1,279,240	This total was available installments for distribution between FY 1974 and FY 1976. Five territories in 1976, six in 2026. ^m
Estimated Matching funds	79,000,000	346,491,228	Assuming a 4 to 1 non-federal match as reported by the Bicentennial Administration. ⁿ
Bicentennial Commission/Administration Private Funding			
Corporate/Philanthropic Program Funding	38,900,000	170,614,035	These contributions were recorded by the Commission/ Administration but went directly to programs without flowing through or supporting the federal planners. This figure does not account for all private investment and is likely a gross underestimate. ^o
*These extrapolations provide a point of reference for further analysis and ongoing planning			

APPENDIX G: Extrapolation of Various Financial and Related Bicentennial Factors into America 250 Projections

^a For the 1976 estimated population figure see U.S. Census Bureau, [*Historical National Population Estimates: July 1, 1900 to July 1, 1999*](#), revised release date June 28, 2000. For the 2026 projection, see U.S. Census Bureau, [*2017 National Population Projections Tables*](#), Table 1. Projected Population Size and Births, Deaths, and Migration, Revised Release Date: September 2018.

^b The peak Bicentennial Administration staffing number comes from American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II*](#), June 30, 1977, 2:35.

^c The Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustments to 2018 dollars are based on a simple 1976 conversion factor found in [*Consumer Price Index \(CPI\) Conversion Factors for Dollars of 1774 to estimated 2028 to Convert to Estimated Dollars of 2018*](#), prepared by Robert C. Sahr, Oregon State University, revised August 6, 2018. It is possible that either the Congressional Budget Office or the Office of Management and Budget use a more sophisticated formula to convert historic federal appropriations and expenditures to current dollars.

^d This figure comes from Douglas Davis, "Sweeping Up America," *Newsweek*, July 12, 1976, 67. Semiquincentennial Commission staff have found no similar figure cited in the secondary literature of the Bicentennial. American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume I*](#), June 30, 1977, 1:253, asserted that the private sector paid "most of the cost of Bicentennial projects and events." Which, if true, calls into the question the figure cited in *Newsweek*, because Commission staff have compiled a well-documented but incomplete figure of \$307M figure of combined state and federal bicentennial appropriations through the same mid-1976 period.

^e American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume I*](#), June 30, 1977, 1:264.

^f American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume I*](#), June 30, 1977, 1:264. American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II*](#), June 30, 1977, 2:472.

^g American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II*](#), June 30, 1977, 2:332.

^h American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II*](#), June 30, 1977, 2:333.

ⁱ American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II*](#), June 30, 1977, 2:333.

^j American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II*](#), June 30, 1977, 2:333.

^k American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II*](#), June 30, 1977, 2:342.

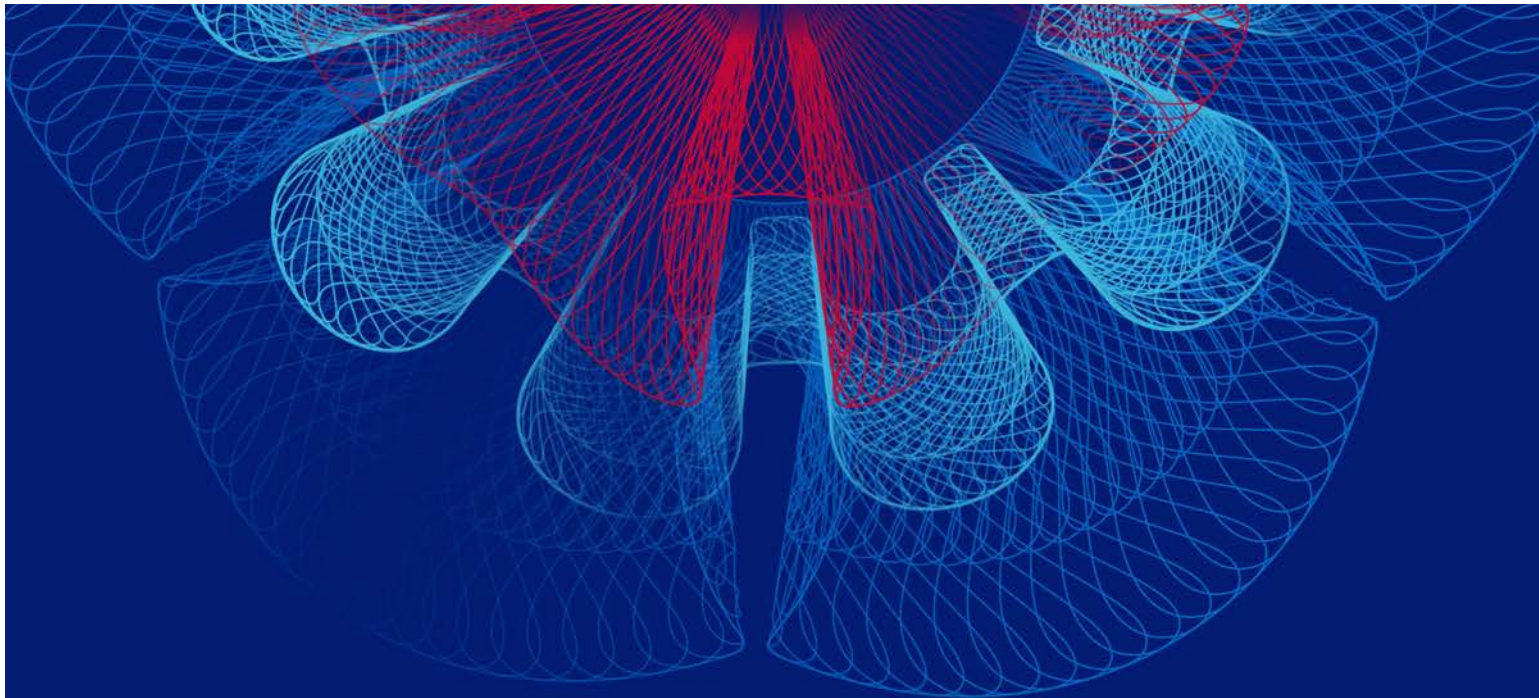
^l American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II*](#), June 30, 1977, 2:342.

^m American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II*](#), June 30, 1977, 2:342.

ⁿ American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume II*](#), June 30, 1977, 2:342.

^o American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, [*The Bicentennial of the United States of America: A Final Report to the People, Volume I*](#), June 30, 1977, 1:253





APPENDIX H

LIST OF DONORS AND OTHER CONTRIBUTORS TO AMERICA 250

FOUNDERS' COUNCIL

The Founders' Council has been established to exemplify and honor the philanthropic spirit of America, and is made up of individuals who, either personally or in their official corporate roles, have made contributions or pledges of \$100,000 or more to support the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission in its early phase work. Thanks to the generosity of these donors, the Commission has been able to conduct planning, coordinate with others, and carry out the work that has produced the vision and the strategic work plan outlined in the Report to the President. The Commission is pleased to recognize these civic-minded individuals who have contributed or made pledges in support of the Commission's work.

\$250,000 Level

David L. Cohen, Senior Executive Vice President & Chief Diversity Officer, Comcast.
Member, U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission

Daniel M. DiLella, Pennsylvania. Chair, U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission

Daniel J. Hilferty, CEO, Independence Blue Cross

Dr. Steven K. Klasko, MD, MBA. President, Thomas Jefferson University; CEO,
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\$200,000 Level

Christopher H. Franklin, Chairman & CEO, Aqua America

\$100,000 Level

John Aglialoro and Joan Carter, Pennsylvania

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Ira Brown, Area Executive, Philadelphia and New Jersey, M&T Bank

Dennis R. Glass, President and CEO, Lincoln National Corporation

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

The U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission is pleased to recognize the generous support of patriotic Americans who have made contributions or pledges to support the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission.

\$10,000 to \$99,999 Level

Daniel K. Fitzpatrick, Mid-Atlantic President, Citizens Bank

Cathy Gillespie, Virginia. Member, U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission

Amy Gutman, Ph.D., President, University of Pennsylvania. Member, U.S. Semiquincentennial
Commission

C. James Koch, Massachusetts. Member, U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission

Rosa G. Rios, California. Member, U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission

Lynn Forney Young, Texas. Member, U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission

Up to \$10,000

Andrew Hohns, Pennsylvania. Member, U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission

U.S. Senator Patrick Toomey, Pennsylvania. Member, U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission



DONATED SERVICES

The following is a list of corporations and individuals who provided value-in-kind, pro-bono, or other donated services to the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission. The value of these services were particularly important during the start-up phase of the Commission, when resources were limited.

\$100,000 Level or Above

American Battlefield Trust
Edelman
Frank Giordano, Moorestown, New Jersey. Executive Director of the Commission
Landor
Pepper Hamilton Law Firm
Reed Smith Law Firm
Dr. Anthony Rucci, Columbus, Ohio. Strategic Consultant to the Commission

Up to \$100,000 Level

American Historical Theatre
American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati
Daughters of the American Revolution
Equus
Hearst Corporation
Miles and Stockbridge Law Firm
PGA Destinations
Philadelphia Phillies
Union League of Philadelphia
White House Historical Association
World War I Centennial Commission



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THE UNITED STATES,
ORDER TO FORM A MORE
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JUSTICE, INSURE DOMESTIC
PEACE, PROMOTE THE GENERAL
WELFARE, AND SECURE THE
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AND OUR POSTERITY, DO ORDAIN
AND ESTABLISH THIS CONSTITUTION
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