

America250 | Planning America's 250th Anniversary | July 4, 2026

A FIVE YEAR UPDATE: 2016-2021

# REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT

Submitted by  
The U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission  
January 31, 2022



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U.S. SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMISSION

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January 31, 2022

The Honorable Joe Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the United States Semiquincentennial Commission, it is my privilege to provide you with an update on the Commission's activities since our creation by Congress in 2016 and signed into law by then President Obama.

We have been given a significant responsibility to commemorate the 250th anniversary and founding of our United States of America. It has been almost 50 years since the Bicentennial, the last major milestone of the greatest experiment in democracy in the history of the world.

The Commission envisions America250 (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.

Since the first official meeting of the Commission in Philadelphia in November of 2018, we have accomplished much. From our recent partnership with the National Football League presenting the America250 Awards at halftime on Thanksgiving Day, our Veterans Salute photo mosaic at the WWI Museum honoring Sgt. Henry Johnson, our historic federal agency signing ceremony, to the establishment and continued growth of the Congressional America250 Caucus, we remain fully committed and energized to lead this milestone in American history.

My fellow Commissioners and I stand ready to assist you and your staff with any questions that may come to mind from this update of our first five years. We look forward to working with your Administration and Congress to coordinate America250.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. DiLella'.

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

# COMMISSION OVERVIEW

On July 22, 2016, Congress enacted and then-President Obama signed Public Law 114-196 ('the Act'). This Act created the United States Semiquincentennial Commission, whose purpose is...

“to provide for the observance and commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States 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” (P.L. 114-196, 130 Stat. 685, Sec. 2(b)). Technical amendments to the Act were authorized in Public Law 116-282.

The Commission as created by Congress is a bipartisan group of twenty-four Commissioners and is composed of the following members: Four members of the Senate of which two are appointed by the majority leader of the Senate and two appointed by the minority leader. Four members of the House of Representatives of which two are appointed by the Speaker of the House and two are appointed by the minority leader.

There are sixteen private citizens serving on the Commission. Four of which have been appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, four appointed by the Senate minority leader, four appointed by the Speaker of the House and four appointed by the minority leader of the House, respectively. One of the private citizen commissioners is designated by the President of the United States as Chairman.

## Current voting members of the Commission:

Senator Robert Casey, Jr. of Pennsylvania	Daniel M. DiLella of Pennsylvania (Chairman)
Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas	Cathy Gillespie of Virginia
Senator Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire	Noah Griffin of California
Senator Patrick Toomey of Pennsylvania	Amy Gutmann, Ph.D. of Pennsylvania
Representative Robert Aderholt of Alabama	Andrew Hohns, Ph.D. of Pennsylvania
Representative Dwight Evans of Pennsylvania	Jim Koch of Massachusetts
Representative Maria Salazar of Florida	Lucas Morel, Ph.D. of Virginia
Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman of New Jersey	Wilfred M. McClay, Ph.D. of Oklahoma
Robert A. Brady of Pennsylvania	Rosie Rios of California
Ambassador David L. Cohen of Pennsylvania	James L. Swanson of Washington, D.C.
Val Crofts of Wisconsin	Thomas Walker, Jr. of Alabama
Joseph Crowley of New York	Lynn Forney Young of Texas

The Act also called for Executive, Judicial, and Legislative branch, and other governmental and nonprofit heads to serve as non-voting ex-officio members of the Commission. Additional departments were added as ex-officio members of the Commission with the passage of a technical amendment package, Public Law 116-282.

## Current ex-officio non-voting members of the Commission:

Department of the Interior	Institute of Museum and Library Services
Department of State	Library of Congress
Department of Justice	National Archives and Records Administration
Department of Defense	National Endowment for the Arts
Department of Education	National Endowment for the Humanities
United States Supreme Court	Smithsonian Institution

### **The Commission's Vision**

To honor the boldness of our nation's founders, the Commission has set forth an ambitious vision for an anniversary that aims to promote unity, education, and civic engagement.

The vision requires the participation of all Americans. This milestone anniversary gives each and every American the opportunity to strengthen common bonds, hear each other's voices and rededicate ourselves to the ongoing pursuit of our country's founding principles on our continuing journey to form "a more perfect union."

The Commission envisions the commemoration will:

- Inspire the American spirit;
- Educate and foster a deeper understanding of our founding principles, our democratic institutions, and our history;
- Spark civic engagement and volunteerism;
- Encourage Americans to come together to promote the common good;
- Honor and thank active-duty military and veterans for their service and sacrifice;
- Generate more than 100,000 engaging programs at the local, territorial, state, national and international levels;
- Increase tourism in communities across the country;
- Make a lasting impact for the generations of Americans to come.

From celebratory fourth of July events down main streets across the United States to traveling showcases and virtual reality programs, the planning is underway for a series of national signature programs.

In addition to America 250's national signature programs, we are in discussions with organizations, like the Smithsonian and the National Park Service, to partner on what we expect to be up to 500 partner programs. Federal partners, international partners, cultural institutions, historical societies and many more are planning to make their mark on this once-in-a-lifetime event.

We envision grassroots programs will begin to emerge in communities from sea to shining sea so that all Americans are able to participate in this monumental endeavor. America250 will serve as a facilitator and resource for the many organizations and individuals who will participate in the commemoration across the country. Planning frameworks are underway in an effort to inspire the American Spirit in every community nationwide.



# STRATEGIC PLAN

At its inaugural meeting in Philadelphia in November, 2018, the Commissioners recognized the value in developing a comprehensive set of strategic priorities and goals to guide the work of the Commission. Over the first eight months of 2019, the Commissioners actively engaged in a comprehensive planning process, which included:

- Essays written by Commissioners on the goals of the Commission
- Town hall meetings which included over 125 diverse national organizations for input
- Over 35 task forces of Commissioners at various stages of development to ensure Commissioner input was continuously integrated into the plan
- A review of major national surveys done over the prior five years on ‘patriotism’, ‘pride in America’, education regarding knowledge of U.S. history, ‘unity’, ‘inclusion’ and ‘diversity’
- A customized national survey of over 5,500 Americans from every state and territory on their opinions regarding America and its 250th celebration and commemoration

The Commission was fortunate to secure the pro bono services of Dr. Anthony Rucci to facilitate the development of the strategic plan. Dr. Rucci has had an extensive career as an executive officer in three Fortune 50 companies, as well as a fifteen-year career as a professor at the Ohio State University. In addition, he has been quite active in providing pro bono strategic planning advisory services to large nonprofit organization boards.

The strategic plan was completed in mid-2019 and was then ratified by the Commissioners at their regular quarterly meeting in September 2019. It established the governance blueprint for the Commission to include oversight of: the mission, themes and priorities for the Commission’s work, National Signature Programs, partnership priorities, state, Federal and International government engagement, and operational and financial oversight in compliance with the Bylaws.

The purpose and key themes and goals of the Commission were finalized and formed the basis for the submission of an extensive Report to the President in late December 2019, as required by the Public Law which created the Commission. That report was later shared in-person by the Commissioners with Vice President Mike Pence at the White House on January 16, 2020.

Simply stated, the strategic planning process yielded a clear statement of purpose, three simple themes/goals and four strategic priorities to guide the work of the Commission in planning the 250th commemoration of the founding of the United States:

## **Purpose**

Inspiring the American Spirit within all Americans and each American, grounded in our nation’s founding principles, for our continuing journey to a more perfect union.



## Key Themes/Goals

- 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?**

## Strategic Priorities

- I. Create an Engaging, Educational and Inspirational Vision
- II. Build Relationships with Valued Partners and Stakeholders
- III. Be Comprehensive in Scope, and Both National and Local in Impact
- IV. Ensure Excellence in Our Execution

These simple statements of themes, goals and priorities have guided the work of the Commission and the America250 Foundation over the past three years. While communications, marketing and survey efforts since 2019 have enabled the expansion and embellishment of these key themes and priorities, they remain the foundation of the Commission’s focus and work. A few highlights, among many, of the planning process included:

**Customized National Survey of Americans:** Once we gained Commissioner input on key themes and goals we took that information and commissioned an independent, customized survey sample of over 5,500 Americans from every state and U.S. territory. That survey both reinforced the Commissioner’s themes but also led to modifications. Among the important results of the survey were:



- 87%: programs should honor those who serve
- 83%: take pride in being an American
- 82%: ideas will be sought from all Americans
- 81%: emphasize opportunities to give back
- 80%: should inspire hope for the future
- 78%: emphasize diversity and inclusiveness
- 76%: design highly local, customized programs
- 75%: acknowledge we have sometimes failed
- 75%: positive about an America250 national celebration
- 67%: believe it's appropriate to support with government funding

Commissioners took the results of the survey work and their own essays and between March 2019 and August 2019 Commissioners participated in over 35 focused task forces to expand on the survey implications and begin to identify goals for America250.

**Continuing Listening and Inclusion Efforts:** The Commission has continued its goal of listening and including input from across America, from all Americans.

- The strategic plan has been shared with over 125 national patriotic organizations for input and suggestions.
- Virtual meetings have been held with noted historians and state commission representatives.
- Federal agencies have been collaborating with America250 planning efforts, meeting routinely each quarter since early 2020
- America250 has reached out to all 56 states and territories to help each establish its own America250 Commission for state-wide celebrations
- America250 social media sites have been established for nearly two years now, inviting input and suggestions through Twitter, Instagram and Facebook
- A second national survey of Americans was conducted in mid-2021, and corroborated the key themes from the 2019 national survey: 85% “proud to be an American”

**Summary:** As disciplined and comprehensive as the planning process from 2019 has been, strategy must be dynamic and revisited routinely. The Commission recognizes that dynamism and is routinely assessing its messaging and communications to ensure that the themes and priorities remain relevant and effective.





# OPERATIONAL AND GOVERNANCE DISCIPLINE

## The Commission Governance Structure

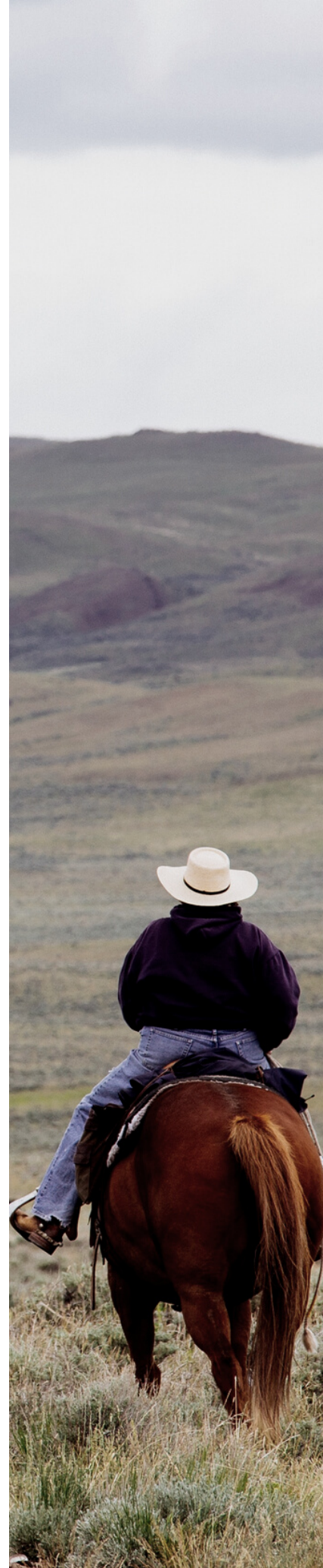
Following the Commission’s initial meeting in November 2018, a number of governance initiatives were established, including: 1. creation and approval of Commission Bylaws; 2. creation and membership appointments of seven Commission committees; 3. development of an America250 strategic plan to advise the adoption of programs and events which the Commission would authorize and allocate resources toward. The governance activities of the Commission have remained routine and active over the past two years. Despite the global pandemic, the Commission has convened quarterly through September of 2021, which is more frequent than required by the Act. The Commission Committees, chaired and populated with appointed Commissioners, have also convened routinely since late 2018.

**Commission Bylaws:** The Commission was fortunate to secure the pro bono services of the law firm of Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders, LLP, as “counsel” to the Commission, and the first order of business was the creation and adoption of Commission Bylaws. Following extensive assessment of Commission best practices, the full Commission voted to approve the Commission Bylaws in November of 2019.

**Commission Committees:** The Bylaws established seven committees, all chaired by and populated with appointed Commissioners:

- Executive Committee, Commissioner and Chairman Daniel M. DiLella, the officers of the Commission (Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary) who chair Committees along with the Chairs of all other Committees
- Finance Committee, chaired by Commissioner Rosie Rios
- Governance Committee, chaired by Commissioner Lynn Forney Young
- Development Committee, chaired by Commissioner/Ambassador David Cohen
- Marketing and Communications Committee, chaired by Commissioner Noah Griffin
- Planning and Program Development Committee, co-chaired by Commissioners Tom Walker and Val Crofts
- Government Relations Committee, chaired by Commissioner Cathy Gillespie

These Committees have been meeting on a routine basis for briefings,



recommendations and approvals in their respective areas. The Executive Committee, acting on the Commission’s behalf between quarterly Commission meetings, has met routinely since November of 2018 with strategic, operational and financial status reviews. In addition, each of the chairs have provided Committee reports at quarterly Commission meetings. And finally, each of the Committee Chairs listed above have remained constant since November 2018, creating continuity on governance oversight in each area. In addition, Commissioner Andrew Hohns was appointed Chair of a special committee during 2019 and 2020 to assist the Planning and Program Development Committee in identifying potential national signature programs. These Committees also were directly engaged in reviewing and making recommendations to the strategic planning progress throughout 2019.

**The Commission Operational Structure**

The Act stipulated two organizational and operational requirements regarding the Commission: first, the appointment of an Administrative Secretariat, and second, the appointment of an Executive Director for the Commission.

**The Administrative Secretariat:** Following a competitive proposal process, in May of 2018, the Secretary of the Department of the Interior appointed the Civil War Trust (subsequent name changed to the American Battlefield Trust), an independent 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization to become the Administrative Secretariat for the Commission. The Trust was established in 1987 and is actively engaged working with the National Parks Service in the reclamation, restoration and preservation of lands central to the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812 and the Civil War. Since its inception, the Trust has reclaimed over 53,000 acres of battlefield lands in 24 states.

The primary role of the Administrative Secretariat was to work with the Commission to determine the most effective way to discharge the responsibilities of the Commission as stipulated under the Act. Following extensive due diligence and collaboration with the law firms of Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders, LLP, and Reed Smith, LLP, as well as senior staff, the Administrative Secretariat recommended and the National Park Service approved the direction from the Executive Committee of the Commission to create a sole supporting nonprofit organization: the America 250 Foundation, Inc., incorporated in the State of Delaware in June of 2019. The first meeting of the Board of Directors of the Foundation occurred in December of 2019.

The Commission was required under the Public Law to maintain control, authority, and oversight over the activities of this Foundation, including strategic planning, operations, programs, communications, marketing, fundraising, and financial matters. Therefore, the appropriate determination was that the Foundation should apply as a Type II, 509(a)(3) sole supporting organization of the Commission (a Federal entity), and also as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit under the Internal Revenue Code. The Foundation obtained this determination from the Internal Revenue Service on July 16, 2020.



Having established the governance structures of both the Commission and the Foundation, both organizations created their organizational structures to execute the strategic and fiduciary responsibilities of each entity.

**Appointment of Commission Executive Director:** The Act anticipated the establishment of a Commission operational structure, and the first step in doing so was to appoint an Executive Director of the Commission. At its November 2019 meeting, the Commission approved the appointment of Mr. Frank Giordano as the Executive Director for the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission. Mr. Giordano is a long time recognized nonprofit board leader, having served as Chair of the Philly Pops, Chair of the Union League of Philadelphia and member of the Kennedy Center Board, among others. One of Mr. Giordano’s responsibilities has been to staff the Commission with the needed resources to carry out the Commission’s oversight role of the Foundation. There are currently seven Federal employees at the Commission, with the intent to maintain a minimal staff at that level. Those staff are engaged in government relations, administrative, legal, and financial activities. In addition, pursuant to an interagency agreement, the General Services Administration/USDA oversees the financial activities of the Commission’s U.S. Treasury account.

**The America250 Foundation Governance Structure**

An important outcome of the strategic planning process was the recommendation to create the America250 Foundation as a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization and a Type II, 509(a)(3) sole supporting nonprofit organization to the Commission. As an established best practice by many other Federal and Congressional Commissions, the Foundation is designed to be the supporting operational and managerial entity for the Commission’s activities, programs, and events. The America250 Foundation secured the *pro bono* services of the law firm of Reed Smith, LLP, as “counsel” to the Foundation in 2019.

**Foundation Board:** The Board of Directors was approved in April 2020. As directed by the Foundation’s Bylaws, a majority of the Board must be Commissioners and the Executive Director of the Commission. This Board membership was designed to ensure oversight, and the ongoing, collaborative relationship needed between the Commission and the Foundation. Previously, in December 2019, at its inaugural session of the Foundation Board, the Board approved its Bylaws and created and delegated authority to Committees.



**Foundation Committees:** The Foundation has three authorized Committees under its Bylaws:

- Executive Committee, chaired by Commissioner and Board chairman, Daniel M. DiLella
- Audit and Finance Committee, chaired by Commissioner Rosie Rios
- Social Responsibility Committee, formerly chaired by Commissioner/Ambassador David Cohen

The Foundation Board has met quarterly since December of 2019, and the Audit & Finance and Social Responsibility Committees also have convened to provide oversight to those activities of the Foundation.

### **The America250 Foundation Operational Structure**

Once the America250 Foundation was incorporated and its Bylaws and governance structure were established, the next step was to build the operational capabilities of the Foundation to execute its supporting role to the Commission under the Master Services Agreement of May 2020.

**Appointment of Foundation CEO:** Based on his intimate involvement in the strategic planning process, Chairman DiLella secured Dr. Rucci's agreement in late 2019 to become the founding CEO of the Foundation. Dr. Rucci continued to provide his time and services in that role on a pro bono basis. Dr. Rucci stepped away from the CEO role in early 2021 but continues as a pro bono senior advisor to the Commission and Foundation. The Foundation conducted a national search for the new CEO and the Foundation's Executive Committee has subsequently hired Mr. Joe Daniels as its new CEO in October 2021. Mr. Daniels was hired from among over 400 distinguished candidates who had submitted their resumes. Mr. Daniels has had a distinguished career, including as President and CEO of the National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York, and more recently as the CEO of the Medal of Honor Museum in Dallas.

**Staffing the Foundation:** The Foundation was created during a period of limited financial resources and operated with a small staff of eight individuals at its inception. It was not until early 2021, following the FY 2021 Congressional appropriation, that the Foundation was able to increase its staff to 28 individuals as of December 31, 2021.

From both a Governance and Operational standpoint, both the Commission and the Foundation have established structures customized to execute their respective duties and responsibilities under the Act and their respective Bylaws, as well as fulfilling the Master Services Agreement between the Commission and the Foundation.



# FEDERAL, STATE, AND LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENT

In Public Law 114-196, the Commission is charged with 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. Further, the Commission is responsible for all State, local, international, and private sector initiatives, with the purpose of coordinating and facilitating all fitting and proper activities honoring the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

The Commission has directed the creation of several targeted divisions to accomplish these directives. Within the Planning and Programming section, focused initiatives include Federal Programs and Partnerships, State Partnerships, Public Outreach and Inclusion, Tribal and National Partnerships, International Programs and Partnerships, Engagement, and National Signature Programs.

## **Federal Engagement**

The Federal Partnerships team serves as the link between the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission and other federal entities, helping to ensure an alignment of goals and planning for America250. The team works closely with the federal entities described in the Act and whose leadership serves as ex-officio members of the Commission. From there, many other federal offices are anticipated to join in commemoration activities. We have the ambitious goal of working with some 200+ federal entities.

On August 2, 2021, 245 years from the day 56 members of the Second Continental Congress started signing the Declaration of Independence, America250 announced a historic agreement with more than 20 federal agencies. America250 put in place an interagency agreement to showcase this coalition, and has ratified trademark sublicense agreements with key partners – including the Department of State, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian Institution – to allow co-branding of related projects. Other agreements are in negotiation.

The Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in support of the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America (MOU), was announced at an official ceremony held at the Library of Congress, with Dr. Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress, presenting the opening remarks. Frank Giordano, Executive Director of the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission, provided the welcoming remarks to assembled federal partners in the Great Hall of the Thomas Jefferson Building.



## FEDERAL, STATE, AND LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENT

The Congressional legislation that created the Commission outlines, among other things, that, “Federal agencies shall cooperate with the Commission in planning, encouraging, developing, and coordinating appropriate commemorative activities.” A list of signers (in person or electronically) to the MOU include:

Department of Education*	Corporation for National and Community Service
Department of the Interior *	Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
Department of Justice *	Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
Department of State *	Inter-American Foundation
Institute of Museum and Library Services *	National Gallery of Art
Library of Congress *	Railroad Retirement Board
National Archives and Records Administration *	U.S. African Development Foundation
National Endowment for the Arts *	U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
National Endowment for the Humanities *	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Smithsonian Institution *	U.S. Office of Government Ethics
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	U.S. Trade and Development Agency
American Battle Monuments Commission	

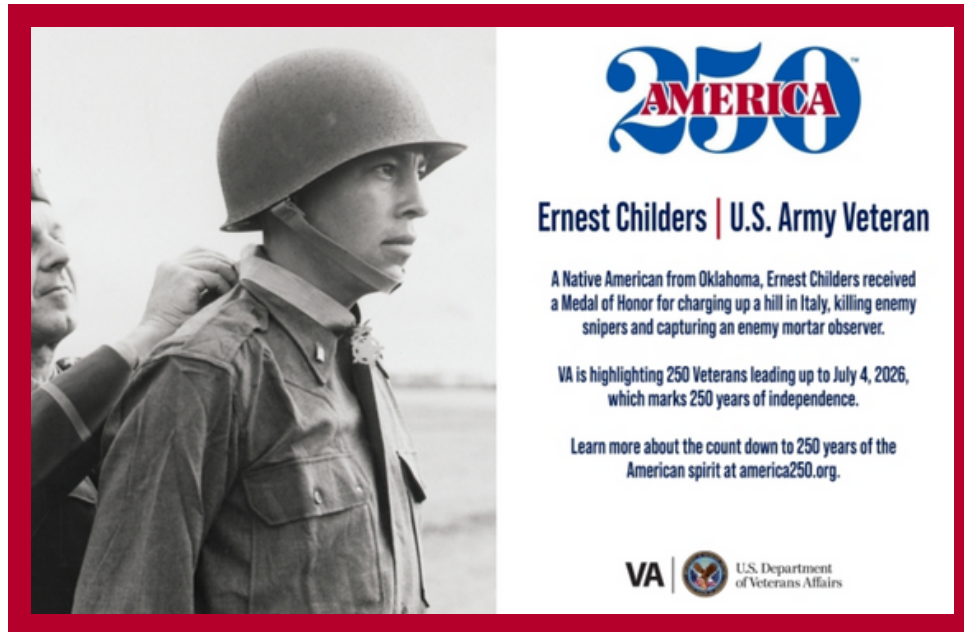
\* Ex Officio members of the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission



### **Other Federal Agency Cultivation**

While America250 has concentrated on stewarding relationships with the agencies whose leadership serves as ex-officio members of the Commission, we have expanded our outreach to include a wide swath of the federal government. Among this network, the Department of Veterans Affairs, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Peace Corps, U.S. Agency for International Development, and U.S. Postal Service are just some of our engaged partners.

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (the VA) has been an active and engaging partner. The VA launched one of the first federal agency programs to date, Salute250, on September 23, 2021. This five-year initiative is a once-a-week post to highlight a military hero and will continue until July 2, 2026. The VA’s communications team has been very active in promoting America250 programs, including the 2021 November Salute. They were able to reach their network of 12+ million blog subscribers and social media followers, which helped quadruple the number of photo submissions for this year’s November Salute.



### **Federal Detailees Assigned**

Several Federal agencies have joined with the Commission to assist in the execution of its mission.

- A representative of the General Services Administration's Financial Service Center assists in administrative and budgeting areas.
- A representative of the World War I Commission serves as special assistant to the Executive Director and assists in the areas of technology, payroll, and administration.
- A representative of the Department of the Interior's National Park Service serves as the coordinator of the ex-officio members of the Commission and assists in planning the activities of the 250th celebration in concert and independent of the America250 programs.

### **Federal Appropriations**

Since FY 2019, the Commission has received annual federal appropriations provided by Congress and seeks to continue to receive funds through the end of the Commission's term on December 31, 2027. Congress has appropriated \$500,000 in FY 2019, \$3,300,000 in FY 2020, \$8,000,000 in FY 2021, and a projected \$8,000,000 in FY 2022. As we approach 2026, the Commission anticipates an escalating amount of federal funds will be required to support the mission and operations of the Commission as set forth by Congress.

### **Reports to Congress**

Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, enacted on December 27, 2020, Congress appropriated \$8,000,000 to the Commission in H.R. 133 (Public Law 116-260). Included in the underlying legislation of H.R. 133, language was included directing the Commission to provide the Congressional Appropriations Committees with quarterly reports detailing spending by activity to continue to help the Committees understand the Commission's funding needs. Reports have been submitted after the end of each quarter since enactment.

## **Report to the President I**

In accordance with Public Law 114-196, as amended, section 5(c)(1) requires that a report to the President be submitted. A report was submitted on December 31, 2019, presenting the preliminary plans for observances marking the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

## **Formation of the Congressional America250 Caucus**

Led by U.S. Semiquincentennial Commissioners Senator Pat Toomey (R-PA) and Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ-12), the Congressional America250 Caucus was formed to provide members the opportunity to assist in the planning of congressional activities surrounding the America250 commemoration.

Elected Commissioners have been active advocates to further the mission of the Commission encouraging their colleagues to join and support the Commission’s mission and in securing annual federal appropriations to support the operations of the Commission.

## **Congressional America250 Caucus Membership**

Caucus co-chairs are the eight elected Members of Congress who serve as Commissioners:

Senator Bob Casey (D-PA)	Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-AL-04)
Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR)	Rep. Dwight Evans (D-PA-03)
Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)	Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar (R-FL-27)
Senator Pat Toomey (R-PA)	Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ-12)

As of December 31, 2021, 70 Members of Congress have joined the Caucus. Congressional America250 Caucus members are:

<b>Senate</b>	Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI-12)	Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (D-PA-05)
Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)	Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-TX-35)	Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D-NJ-11)
Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)	Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-TX-16)	Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID-02)
Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME)	Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-01)	Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY-21)
Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-ND)	Rep. Lizzie Fletcher (D-TX-07)	Rep. Bryan Steil (R-WI-01)
Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA)	Rep. Morgan Griffith (R-VA-09)	Rep. Thomas Suozzi (D-NY-03)
Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT)	Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-WI-06)	Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA-15)
Sen. Cynthia Lummis (R-WY)	Rep. French Hill (R-AR-02)	Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY-20)
Sen. Christopher Murphy (D-CT)	Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-IA-01)	Rep. Marc Veasey (D-TX-33)
Sen. James Risch (R-ID)	Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA-06)	Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR-04)
	Rep. Richard Hudson (R-NC-08)	Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA-07)
	Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA-50)	Rep. Roger Williams (R-TX-25)
<b>House of Representatives</b>	Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX-18)	Rep. Robert Wittman (R-VA-01)
Rep. Jodey Arrington (R-TX-19)	Rep. Fred Keller (R-PA-12)	
Rep. Brian Babin (R-TX-36)	Rep. Daniel Kildee (D-MI-05)	
Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE-02)	Rep. John Larson (D-CT-01)	
Rep. Stephanie Bice (R-OK-05)	Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX-10)	
Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL-12)	Rep. John Moolenaar (R-MI-04)	
Rep. Sanford Bishop, Jr. (D-GA-02)	Rep. Alex Mooney (R-WV-02)	
Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX-08)	Rep. Barry Moore (R-AL-02)	
Rep. Michael Burgess (R-TX-26)	Rep. Troy Nehls (R-TX-22)	
Rep. Jerry Carl (R-AL-01)	Rep. Ralph Norman (R-SC-05)	
Rep. John Carter (R-TX-31)	Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA-10)	
Rep. Matthew Cartwright (D-PA-08)	Rep. August Pfluger (R-TX-11)	
Rep. Madeleine Dean (D-PA-04)	Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC-07)	
Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT-03)	Rep. Michael F.Q. San Nicolas (D-GU-00)	
Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-TN-06)		



### **Circulating Commemorative Coin Redesign Act of 2020**

In a bill introduced by Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA-13), the Circulating Commemorative Coin Redesign Act of 2020 (H.R.1923) orders the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Treasury to issue up to five quarters annually for years 2022-2025 depicting prominent American women. The bill also allows the Secretary to change the design on any of the coins authorized and minted for issuance during the one-year period beginning January 1, 2026, in celebration of the U.S. Semiquincentennial. Specifically, the Secretary may issue quarter dollars in 2026 with up to five different designs emblematic of the U.S. Semiquincentennial. One of the quarter dollar designs must be emblematic of a woman's or women's contribution to the birth of the Nation or the Declaration of Independence or any other monumental moments in American History. Also, the Secretary may, in addition to the coins produced for issuance during the one-year period beginning January 1, 2026, produce \$1 dollar coins with designs emblematic of the U.S. Semiquincentennial. Representative and Commissioner Bonnie Watson Coleman as well as 43rd Treasurer of the U.S. and Commissioner Rosie Rios played pivotal roles in securing the Semiquincentennial coin language in the final bill. The bill was enacted on January 13, 2021, and became Public Law 116-330.

### **U.S. Semiquincentennial Commemorative Coin Act**

In July 2021, Senator Pat Toomey (R-PA) and Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ-12), introduced companion bills titled the Semiquincentennial Commemorative Coin Act (S. 2384 & HR 4429). If Congress passes and the bill is enacted, the Act will allow for the U.S. Department of the Treasury to mint and issue \$25.00 gold coins, \$2.50 silver coins, 25 cent clad coins, and proof silver \$2.50 coins in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the establishment of the United States.

All sales of coins issued shall include a surcharge as prescribed by the bill. All surcharges received by the Treasury from the sale of such coins shall be paid to the America250 Foundation (as described below) to fund the restoration, rehabilitation, and interpretation of units of the U.S. National Park System and its related areas, as a legacy of the Semiquincentennial commemoration.

As of December 31, 2021, eight U.S. Senators and 57 members of the U.S. House of Representatives have joined as sponsors and cosponsors. For legislative consideration, a minimum threshold of 2/3 majority in each chamber is required. The Commission seeks bill passage before the end of the 117th Congress.

### **States and Jurisdiction Engagement**

One of several high priority goals for America250 is to have all states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. jurisdictions establish

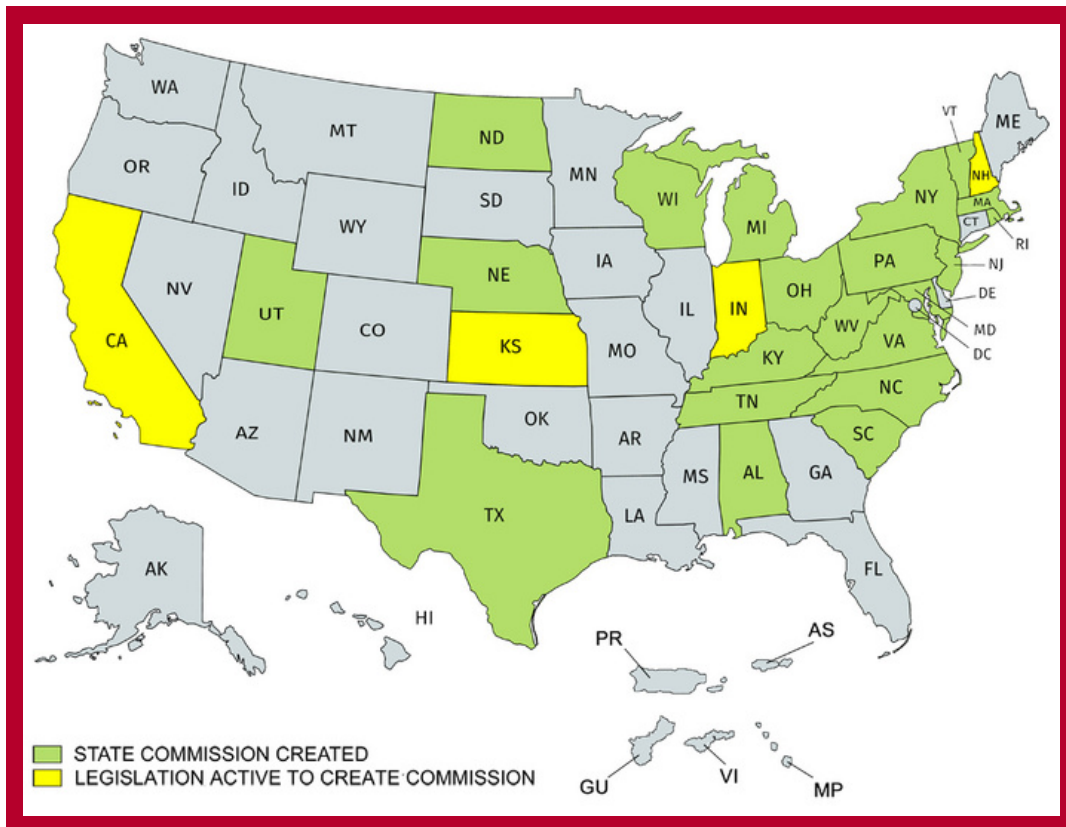


official 250th entities to ensure plans for the commemoration are implemented in communities throughout the nation.

To date, 21 states have established a commission, including: Alabama, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

California, Indiana, Kansas and New Hampshire have introduced legislation creating commissions, and several states are expected to introduce legislation in 2022.

In 2021, America250 also focused on creating a framework to best coordinate and partner with state commissions. We have begun signing partnership agreements with state commissions that outline our general intention to collaborate and cross-promote over the coming years as we build toward 2026. As part of these partnerships, the America250 Foundation is providing custom America250 state-specific logos (examples below) and branding and \$10K in initial partnership support to state commissions.



## **Tribal Engagement**

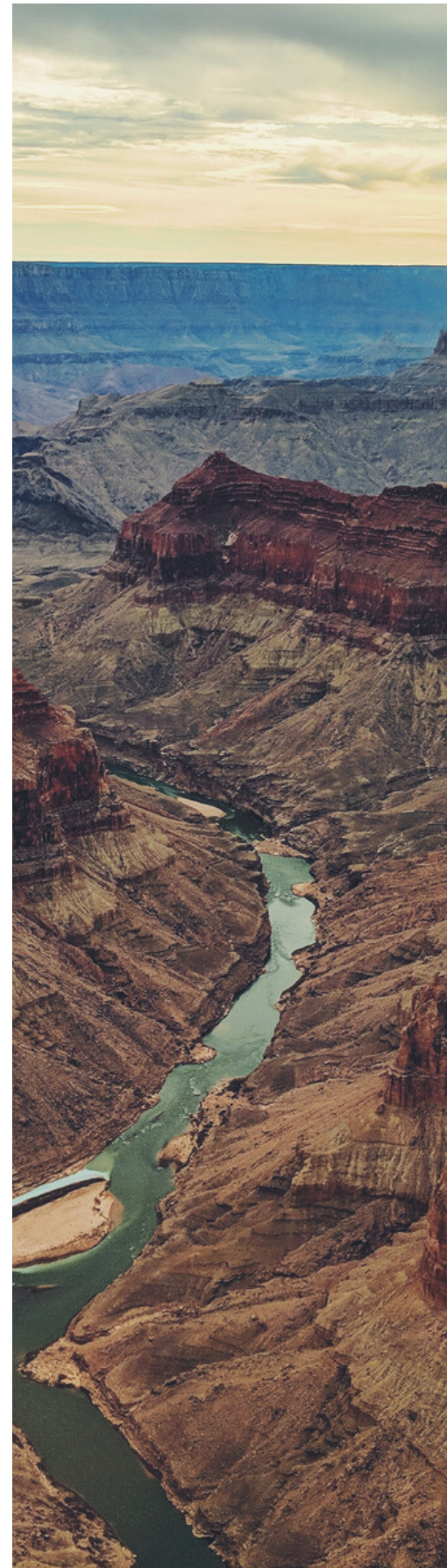
America250 honors the unique government-to-government relationship between Tribal nations and the United States. As we launch commemorative efforts, we will meaningfully and materially collaborate with Tribal nations, organizations, and communities through partnership and shared dialogue to engage with America's complicated past, understand our present, and envision our future together.

In June 2021, America250 staffed a team to lead Tribal and National Partnerships planning. Since then, that team has worked with America250 leadership to perform an internal assessment of and to update America250's strategic plan for Tribal engagement. Since June, the organization has markedly increased Indigenous representation on our Advisory Councils, in our engagement programming (book club event planning, exhibiting, community conversation planning, etc.), and ensured that Indigenous engagement is reflected across our planning efforts for each department. This includes our approach to National Signature Programs, State Partnerships, Federal Partnerships and beyond. The Tribal and National Partnerships team will continue to offer advice and support related to Federal-Tribal policy and consultation, and Indigenous engagement in commemoration planning and programming to all America250 teams and to our network of public and private sector partners.

In June, Department of the Interior Secretary Deb Haaland appointed Shannon Estenoz, Assistant Secretary of Fish and Wildlife and Parks, to serve as the official representative to the Commission and to assist America250 with appropriate consultation with Tribal nations. We are excited to work with the Department of the Interior to coordinate and support interagency government to government consultation between Federal partner agencies, America250, and Tribal nations.

The Tribal and National Partnerships team also developed a new strategic plan for Tribal engagement. The strategy is three-tiered, synergistic, and based on known best practices in commemorative planning. Each of the following components is essential to a commemoration that is meaningfully inclusive of Tribal nations and Indigenous communities:

- Tribal Roundtables and Convenings. America250 will work to coordinate regional virtual and/or face-to-face convenings with Tribal representatives and organizations. These periodic convenings will invite participation and build relationships with Indigenous nations and communities through listening and learning how we can be a good partner in this commemoration.



- Tribal Advisory Group. A key insight from successful commemorative collaborations with Tribes is that a Tribal and/or Indigenous Advisory Group is critical to sustainable and meaningful Indigenous participation. A Tribal Advisory Group at America250, to be shaped and potentially renamed by its leadership, will be a crucial component to supporting Tribal engagement and participation and to inviting representatives to directly shape our programming and planning.
- Programming Support. Programming support is crucial to ensuring Tribal nations and Native-led organizations can shape how we honor our past 250 years and shape our next 250. America250 should seek to offer material support in order to remove barriers to participation and bring the recommendations shared with us by our partners and the Tribal Advisory Group to life.

In September, the America250 hired a Senior Manager of Tribal Partnerships, Andrei Jacobs (Yup'ik and Inupiaq), who will be leading America250's efforts to launch our new strategic plan in 2022. Since then, we have exhibited at the 2021 American Indian Tourism Conference, presented at an American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Town Hall event and the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce, and will be exhibiting and hosting coffee chats at the Alaska Federation of Natives annual convention in December 2021. We have also partnered with the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association to plan a convening of Native-led organizations in 2022 to discuss and develop specific programming recommendations for America250. As we continue to develop and implement our strategic plan, we look forward to continuing to collaborate across America250 and with our partners to increase opportunities for Indigenous engagement across our efforts.

### **International Engagement**

America250 is working closely with the U.S. Department of State to coordinate the involvement of foreign nations in the U.S. Semiquincentennial, as well as to activate the full breadth of our diplomatic efforts at home and abroad. In June, a diplomatic cable was sent out to all U.S. overseas missions announcing the U.S. Department of State's partnerships with America250 and requesting that Ambassadors highlight the 2026 anniversary in their remarks as appropriate. Further planning is underway with the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.



# PROGRAMS, EVENTS, PARTNERSHIPS ESTABLISHED

The Semiquincentennial of the Nation's founding is built upon the framework of partnerships and programs planned by America250 and its partners. The following narrative highlights the significant progress made through 2021.

## **National Signature Program Planning**

America250's National Signature Programs (NSPs) are the Commission's most significant national initiatives, conceived and directed by America250, to achieve the mission first established in our enabling legislation "plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate observances and activities." The National Signature Programs will be facilitated by the help of inclusive public participation and strong partnerships, and their reach will ensure engagement by all Americans, at home and abroad. They represent the grandest aspirational scale of America250 planning. Building upon work completed during the Commission's Strategic Plan in 2019, work on National Signature Program Planning continued more formally in 2020, and was advanced in 2021 to include the creation of a thematic framework called the America250 Platforms.

Through a national competitive RFP process initiated in the summer of 2020, the Commission Planning and Program Development Committee selected CSM, a nationally recognized sports and entertainment marketing and event production company to help guide ideation for Commission National Signature Programs. Beginning with over 200 program ideas put forth by Commissioners, Federal Agencies, and potential partners and stakeholders, the consultant team supported America250 staff development and refinement of potential National Signature Programs through 2020. By year's end the list was narrowed to roughly fifteen National Signature Programs recommended to the Committee for further refinement and consideration. Programs ranged from event/venue-specific programs, to broad-reaching history education initiatives including but not limited to:

- America250 Coordination of Major Convening Sites for Communities and Cities on July 4, 2026
- America250 Coordination of Traveling Showcases throughout 2026
- Coordination of Programs at Federal, State, Local and Privately Held Historic Sites
- Virtual/Digital Experiences Historic Sites/Museums
- Recognition and Awards Programs
- Story-Driven Programs and Programs supporting History and Civics Education



In early 2021, through conversations with Commissioners and Federal Partners a broader thematic framework for programs and partnerships was created in the establishment of the America250 Platforms listed below. Also identified below are partnerships that have helped to launch initial national signature programs, like the America250 Awards made possible through partnership with the National Football League (NFL). In addition to the America250 Awards, work on the America250 Time Capsule advanced.

### **America250 Time Capsule - National Signature Program**

Work on the America250 Time Capsule™ advanced in 2021 through active assessment of potential sites and collaboration with Federal, and State & Territory partners.

Following the June 2021 Commission meeting, America250 staff reviewed several sites around Independence Mall for consideration in consultation with the National Park Service/Independence National Historical Park. Coordination with Federal Agencies who are providing expertise in the design, curation, and conservation objectives continues. Likewise outreach to the Biden Administration continues to garner presidential participation.

In tandem with the national Time Capsule effort, the Program and Planning Department is working on development of incentives and design for time capsules for each participating state and territory.

### **America250 Platforms**

As the national leader in Semiquincentennial planning, the need for a framework coordinating America250 programs and the programs of our partners was identified in late 2020. The resulting America250 Platforms present the portfolio of America250-led programs and provide unifying themes to our partners worldwide. A preliminary composition of America250 Platforms is under study and demonstrates shared goals to establish a blueprint for the commemoration.

Each platform makes room for commemorative and celebratory expressions while including opportunities to reflect upon our first 250 years and inspire Americans to imagine our next 250 years. Within each platform are envisioned programs and public engagement initiatives led by America250, with the potential for many more led by our partners, building out a robust portfolio of programs within each platform.



The initial portfolio of platforms supporting National Signature and Partner Programs is under study and includes the following, which will be further shaped and refined through 2026:

- Experience250: Initiatives orchestrating grassroots and signature celebratory and commemorative events.
- Showcase250: Initiatives delivering Semiquincentennial-themed showcases, exhibits, and collections to communities across the world.
- Discover250: Initiatives enriching history education, civic engagement, and lifelong learning.
- Explore250: Initiatives promoting visitation to America's cultural spaces, historic landmarks, and natural landscapes.
- Share250: Initiatives capturing America's shared stories, folklife, and cultural heritage.
- Exchange250: Initiatives fostering unity and understanding through shared discourse, dialogue, and diplomacy.
- Create250: Initiatives inspiring artistic expressions of the American spirit.
- Nourish250: Initiatives cultivating and revitalizing America's culinary and agricultural traditions.
- Play250: Initiatives championing games, sports, and recreational pastimes.
- Recognize250: Initiatives revealing the good done for each other and our country.
- Salute250: Initiatives honoring the service and sacrifice of America's veterans, military members, and their support communities.
- Innovate250: Initiatives amplifying American innovation and discovery.
- Impact250: Initiatives bettering our communities, nation, and environment.
- Promise250: Initiatives empowering youth and inspiring the next generation of American leaders.

### **National Partnerships**

America250 has developed the necessary tools and processes to enter into formal partnership agreements. We have established and continue to develop a cohort of National Partnerships that reflect our respect and gratitude for military service, highlight Founding Era history, allow us to connect with visitors to more than 200 of the nation's most significant cultural and recreational destinations, and demonstrate our commitment to youth engagement, and courageous civic dialogue about our nation's history. Additionally, these partnerships have allowed us to support and collaborate on exciting programs that are key to America250's mission and vision. These include supporting a Young People's Continental Congress



that will bring youth and educators from across the United States to Carpenters' Hall in Philadelphia in 2024, as well as partnering with the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association to plan a convening of Native-led organizations in 2022 to discuss and develop specific programming recommendations for the nation's Semiquincentennial commemoration.

While we continue to work to build a proposed partnership portfolio, we have engaged partners who are passionate about building on iconic signature programming from the Bicentennial in a new way to commemorate the 250th, including 2026 Freedom Train, Inc., Tall Ships America, and the Sail250 consortium of port cities, as well as partners who look forward to working with us to build new initiatives to mark the Semiquincentennial.

Current National Partners

2026 Freedom Train, Inc.  
400 Years of African American History Commission  
4-H Council  
American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association  
American Association for State and Local History  
Carpenters' Company of the City and County of Philadelphia - Young Peoples' Continental Congress  
Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)  
Eastern National  
Homecoming 250 Navy and Marine Corps  
Girl Scouts of the United States  
Grateful American Foundation

Major League Baseball (MLB)  
National History Day  
National Football League (NFL)  
National World War I Museum and Memorial  
National Hockey League  
Princeton Entertainment Group (America's Wonders)  
Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership  
Tall Ships America  
United States Tennis Association  
Up2Us Sports  
Western National Parks Association

Partnerships Under Development

Association of African American Museums  
Jazz at Lincoln Center  
Major League Soccer

Sail250  
YoungArts





## **Events and Partnerships Highlights**

Partnership programs of America250 began in earnest in 2020 with the establishment of several early Officially Recognized Programs and have grown to include a steady cadence of National Partnerships through 2021. The following summary highlights activity and events forged through partnerships through late 2021:

### **National Football League (NFL) partnership:**

- In 2021, America250 teamed up with the National Football League for the America250 Awards– a multiyear awards program recognizing exemplary Americans. As our first National Signature Program, the Awards recognize and celebrate exceptional Americans who are making a difference in their communities and demonstrate the diversity and resilience of the American spirit. The America250 Awards™ will be awarded annually from 2021-2026.
  - This year, the Detroit Lions hosted the 2021 America250 Awards at Ford Field during the Chicago Bears vs. Lions game on Thanksgiving Day. Commissioner Val Crofts and America250 Foundation President and CEO Joe Daniels had the honor of presenting the awards on-field during halftime in front of 56,000 attendees. With an estimated 26.7 million tuning in, Fox NFL anchor Curt Menefee introduced America250 and the 2021 honorees during the pregame show. Later, commentator Joe Buck highlighted the on-field ceremony during the live broadcast. More than 200 media outlets, including the AP and Yahoo, reported on the America250 Awards presentation, helping to create exposure to a potential audience of more than 161.2 million people.
  - The inaugural America250 Award™ recipients include Community Champion recipient Shreyaa Venkat of Ashburn, Virginia; 9/11 Hero recipient Army Sgt. 1st Class Christopher D. Braman of Orange County, California, and First Responder recipient Lilburn Police Sgt. Almedin Ajanovic of Dacula, Georgia. The 2021 award categories were inspired by and are in honor of the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.
  - The 2021 America250 Awards™ Honorees were selected by a panel of six distinguished judges, including Joe Daniels, America250 Foundation; Kathy-Roth Douquet, Blue Star Families; Usama Young, National Football League; Terry G. Sears, Tuesday’s Children; Val Crofts, U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission; and Elisha Rhodes, YWCA USA.
  - The partnership agreement between the NFL and America250 will also facilitate ongoing collaboration. For example, the NFL nominated Warrick Dunn to co-chair the America250 Sports & Entertainment Advisory Council. This Council, under the leadership of Mr. Dunn and Mr. Don Wildman, will aim to harness the reach and unifying spirit of sports and entertainment to expand America250’s impact on every American.
- **Major League Baseball (MLB) partnership:**
    - In 2021, Major League Baseball joined America250 as a National Partner. Together, we will explore and celebrate the rich history of baseball and unite Americans across the nation through the love of the sport. As a part of the partnership, Cal Ripken Jr. will serve on America250’s Sports & Entertainment Advisory Council, and be a part of shaping America250’s planning efforts.



- MLB will collaborate with America250 to highlight the sport's historic roots and cultural impact through multiple engagement and programming initiatives. The 2026 MLB All-Star Game will take place at Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia, the city where the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776 and one of the host cities in our legislation. Philadelphia also hosted the All-Star Game in 1976, America's bicentennial anniversary, and it will be one of the epicenters of activities commemorating the 250th.
- "Major League Baseball is proud to partner with America250 to celebrate an important milestone for our country," said Chris Marinak, MLB chief operations and strategy officer. "The history of baseball and the United States are intertwined with the sport serving Americans as an ever-present form of joyful entertainment, a right of passage for young people playing the game, a way for generations of family members to bond and a source of diversion and recovery through difficult times. We are honored to be a part of this national celebration and look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead for this partnership and for the game in this country."
- **November Salute 2021**
  - November Salute 2021 continues America250's annual engagement program to share America's stories and honors those who have served our country in uniform. For November Salute 2021, the images of service-members gathered under the online-web carousel of military members photos under November Salute 2020 was expanded through additional submissions by the public and used to create a digital photo mosaic and art installation depicting WWI hero Sgt. Henry Johnson. Our federal agency partners, including the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration, as well as our Commissioners, shared the call for submissions with their networks with tremendous results.
  - Commissioned by America250 and created by The People's Picture, the installation was unveiled at the National WWI Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri for Veterans Day 2021. It is also available digitally for exploration at the America250 website. Sgt. Henry Johnson was selected as this year's mosaic image in honor of the centennial of the dedication of the grounds of the National WWI Museum and Memorial and to recognize the unveiling of the National WWI Memorial in Washington, DC. The mosaic is composed of over 3,500 photos and stories celebrating U.S. military veterans, active duty service members, reservists, and guard members submitted by the public, and is combined with hundreds of images from the National WWI Museum and Memorial Archive.





- **November Salute 2020**

- In 2020 America250 launched its flagship engagement effort to spotlight the heroism and sacrifice of men and women who have served this country through military service. The 2020 November Salute came to life as an online microsite of the America250 website wherein Americans posted America250-branded photos of their or their loved ones' service photos. The program was promoted by America250, and amplified with the help of Federal partners, and the developing Advisory Councils across multiple channels to amplify the 6-week campaign resulting in over 700 submissions from 51 states and territories.
- The Home Depot circulated the call-to-action to submit photos for November Salute 2020 across its 35,000+ veteran employees and adding Home Depot branding to their member posts.

- **Operation Gratitude**

- America250 partnered with Operation Gratitude, a national nonprofit focused on strengthening the bond between Americans and their Military and First Responders through volunteer service projects, acts of gratitude, and meaningful community engagements. As part of the November Salute, America250 donated celebratory "250" care packages. In November 2020, Executive Director Frank Giordano, Commissioner Cathy Gillespie and America250 Foundation COO Scott Hommel participated in a volunteer care package assembly event at the D.C. National Guard Armory in Washington, D.C.

- **The Concord Museum - The Shot Heard Round the World**

- America250 officially recognized this interactive, virtual exhibit highlighting Concord, Massachusetts from January through July 2021 as the cradle of the American Revolution. The program focuses on the Battles of Lexington and Concord and how they shaped history.

- **Philly POPs Christmas**

- In December of 2020, America250 officially recognized the 2020 production of A Philly POPS Christmas: Spectacular Sounds of the Season. The performance was dedicated to frontline healthcare workers who have helped protect the citizens of Philadelphia through the events of 2020. The performance was broadcast regionally and featured Music Director and Principal Conductor David Charles Abell leading the POPS with Hamilton star and POPS Christmas favorite Mandy Gonzalez and Artistic Director for Jazz Terell Stafford on trumpet, with dazzling performer and improviser Charlie Albright on piano, performing digitally.
- The production was also distributed under The Seventh Annual Comcast NBCUniversal I'll Be Home For Christmas: A Salute to the Military and First Responders, the free Salute Series favorite designed to honor those who choose a life of service, expands its reach with a planned transmission by the American Forces Network (AFN). The AFN's transmission reached approximately 500,000 servicemembers domestically and 500,000 internationally at both military bases and seafaring vessels. This production was made available privately to members of the military, veteran communities, and the Police and Fire Departments.

- **Constitution Quiz**

- America250 aimed to deepen Americans' 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. America250's Constitution Quiz served as a kickoff to not only bring awareness for the brand but to have consumers interact with and experience what American 250 is all about. The program which ran online between September 16 - October 2, 2020, saw nearly 4,000 quiz entries, participation from 52 states and territories.

- **My Wish for U.S.**

- Officially recognized by America250 in 2020, My Wish for U.S. inspires the American Spirit. Produced by Made By Us, this virtual program invites anyone to share their vision for America's future. Made By Us is a nationwide collaboration of over 85 cultural and civic institutions.



### **Advisory Councils**

As of November 23, 2021, the Public Outreach and Inclusion division completed the launch of the Advisory Councils program. Following the Fall Advisory Council Chair Roundtable, where half of the Co-Chairs of each Advisory Council were featured in a 90-min discussion of the role of the Advisory Councils, most councils held their first meeting. During their year of service, each Advisory Council will provide America250 with insight and expertise on programming to create the largest and most inclusive commemoration and celebration in American history. These Councils also function externally to extend the reach and visibility of America250's mission into historically marginalized communities.

**Arts & Culture Advisory Council:** The Arts & Culture Advisory Council captures the essence of human creativity in its many manifestations and will highlight the unique impact of the arts through America250 programming and projects.

**Civics & Civic Engagement Advisory Council:** Civics and engagement is a cornerstone of our democracy. The Civics & Civic Engagement Advisory Council focuses on helping to broaden our shared understanding of self-governance as a means to encourage civic dialogue, participation, and service, and empower each American's individual role in "government by consent of the governed." We will use the 250th anniversary to inspire a reflective patriotism.

**Health & Wellness Advisory Council:** The Health & Wellness Advisory Council brings together America's experts in each area of health and wellness, covering topics of physical health, mental health, social well-being, and environmental health.

**History Education Advisory Council:** The History Education Advisory Council works to deepen our shared understanding of the nation's past and broaden our understanding of each other as Americans.

**Hospitality & Tourism Advisory Council:** The hospitality and tourism industry is essential in Americans' engagement in the Semiquincentennial celebration, with national and international visitors welcomed into every region and community of the country.

**Innovation, Science & Entrepreneurship Advisory Council:** The Innovation, Science & Entrepreneurship Advisory Council engages our national expertise as we seek to shape, inform, and inspire another 250 years of American ingenuity.



**International Advisory Council:** The overarching purpose of the International Advisory Council is to engage friends of America worldwide in the 250th commemoration, and to support the activities of the Department of State to engage foreign nations in America250.

**Parks, Preservation & Public Spaces Advisory Council:** The Parks, Preservation & Public Spaces Advisory Council supports the Foundation's priority to preserve and make ready the places where our collective and individual American stories unfold.

**Sports & Entertainment Advisory Council:** The Sports & Entertainment Council harnesses the unifying spirit of sports and entertainment as a tool to expand America250's influence and impact, thereby making the Foundation's resources, commemoration, and celebration accessible to each and every American.

**Veterans, Military & Family Members Advisory Council:** The Veterans, Military, & Family Member Advisory Council considers how to integrate the sacrifices of military service members, veterans, and their families to protect and uphold our nation's founding ideals in America250 partnerships and programming.

**Youth Engagement Advisory Council:** The Youth Engagement Advisory Council, led by professionals who have dedicated their careers to the betterment of America's youth, advises America250 on programs and projects that ensure that the next generation of leaders are inspired by and engaged in this milestone of American democracy.

### **Engagement Initiatives**

While planning and partnership formation continued, America250 began the launch of several engagement initiatives to raise public awareness of America250 themes and objectives, and provide platforms for dialogue and learning. The following engagement initiatives are being studied and launched in 2021 to hone public engagement in the run up to 2026.

**Mosaic Series:** The Mosaic Series uses publicly submitted images, videos, and stories to create art installations and digital mosaics, and is designed to be scalable and additive. The subjects of the mosaics may be themed for national, state, and local installations, for particular events or holidays, or historic sites. The yearly installations will culminate in 2026, with a grand mosaic installation representing all of America using all of the images collected throughout the series. In 2021 America250 hired The



People’s Picture, a female-led photography and design studio based in the U.S. and United Kingdom, to create the mosaics.

**Community Conversations:** Community Conversations are designed to engage with diverse communities across the United States and around the world. These conversations will be held at least every other month through 2026, giving people the opportunity to speak into and shape the America250 commemoration.

Three conversations have been held so far, co-moderated by America250 staffers Dr. Megan Springate (Director of Engagement) and Dr. Carleen Carey (Director of Public Outreach and Inclusion): Military Families; members of LGBTQ+ communities and their allies; and representatives from U.S. Jurisdictions (“Beyond the 50 States”). Upcoming Community Conversations include members of: Latinx and Hispanic communities (January 2022); historic preservation community (March 2022); Indigenous communities (April 2022); Asian American and Pacific Islander communities (May 2022); people with disabilities (July 2022); international representatives (September 2022); and African American communities (November 2022).

**“What We Are Reading” Book Club:** The “What We’re Reading” Book Club provides another avenue for the public to engage with the complex and expansive histories of what we now know as the United States. Books selected for this program fall within the genres of memoir and historically-based fiction. Planning for the book club is underway, and will begin in early 2022.

**America250 History Podcast:** This podcast series explores our histories and our future by engaging with more formal histories. The first installment, based on Cokie Roberts’ book *Founding Mothers*, is currently in production with PRX, a leading podcast producer.

**“Histories Of...” Article Series:** The history of this place that we call the United States encompasses a collection of histories that extend back to time immemorial and forward to the present. They are histories of individuals, of groups of people, of events, of places, of landscapes, of objects, and of these histories themselves. This article series, published in English and Spanish, is designed to engage readers in aspects of American history that they may not otherwise be familiar with. Articles are written by subject matter experts, and include installments that are geared toward children, with activities included. Authors include subject matter experts hired to write, America250 partners, America250 staff, America250 Commissioners, and students in the HIST1776 class at Harvard University.



**America250 National Art Competition:** Currently in planning for early 2022, the America250 National Art Competition will engage artists of all ages to produce work around an annual theme. The theme for 2022 is “America.” As the competition expands, different types of artwork will be solicited, ranging from graphic arts to poetry, music, performance, and more. In addition to celebrating the winners, artwork can be displayed across the country, in virtual venues, used on America250 products, and feed into additional works such as the Mosaic Series.

### **Communication Initiatives**

America250 has a steady presence in print, broadcast, and online news, helping to spread awareness about its mission and highlight the nation’s Semiquincentennial. Stories about America250 and its partnerships, supporters, and programs were carried in multiple media outlets in 2021, including the *Associated Press*, *Business Insider*, *The Washington Post*, *The Hill*, *USA Today*, *MLB.com*, *NFL.com*, *Sports Business Journal*, *FOX Sports*, *Yahoo! Finance*, and more.

One major story this year about the America250 Awards™, which honors exemplary Americans, ran in more than 200 media outlets, helping to create exposure to a potential audience of more than 161.2 million people.

America250 is consistently growing its presence on social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and TikTok. In addition to sharing American stories, America250 also produced paid and organic campaigns to celebrate heritage months, including Black History Month, Women’s History Month, Pride Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Native American Heritage Month. These channels also promote America250 initiatives, including November Salute, a program honoring those who serve and have served, and the America250 Awards. America250 has increased audience growth across Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and TikTok by 223% throughout 2021.

Email communications are an effective tool for America250 with more than 170,000 subscribers, a 260% audience increase in 2021. The top contributors to the subscriber list are the U.S. Department of State, Social Security Administration, and Transportation Security Administration.

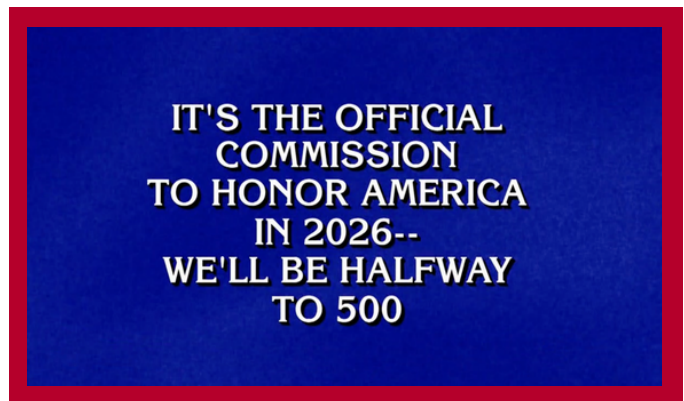




On June 30, 2021, America250 launched its revamped website. It has a cohesive brand design, improved multimedia support capabilities, and a newsroom section to provide frequent updates. America250.org has seen a 457% increase in users since 2020.

America250 produced two 30-second public service announcements (PSA) in 2021. The first PSA supported the summer campaign, highlighting the United States’ core values of liberty, self-government, equality, individualism, and unity. The first PSA was aired across Comcast NBCUniversal networks from July 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021. The second PSA captures the spirit of service and gratitude while featuring essential and frontline workers, military service members, and the very best of American culture. The second PSA was aired across Comcast NBCUniversal networks from September 2, 2021 through November 2021. Both PSAs were translated into Spanish with voiceover and closed captions.

In partnership with Social Science Research Solutions, Inc. (SSRS), a leading public opinion and market research firm, America250 conducted an online survey of 1,249 American adults and 327 teenagers in May 2021 on a range of issues tied to America250’s mission. Findings were used in communications, press strategy, and will be used to inform Semiquincentennial planning. Top findings include: Ninety-two percent (92%) of adults are united in wanting to help make America a better place to live. They collectively believe in the American Dream of working hard (83%). Like adults, teens want to help America become a better place to live (77%) and 66% would like to see America250 encourage unity through focusing on shared common bonds. Just three in 10 adults (31%) believe American history is taught in a fair and balanced way. In addition, most adults (90%) think a better job should be done teaching civics. At least four in five American adults find several America250 goals important: open dialogue, American traditions, justice, accessibility, and diversity.



Jeopardy! is produced and owned by Sony Pictures Television Jeopardy Productions, Inc.

**Trademark Applications**

The Technical Amendments to the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission Act (Public Law 116-282) recognizes the ability of the Commission to apply for the registration of trademarks. The Commission has applied for trademark registration for the “word” and “design” marks for “America250”, and many of the National Platforms, also have applications pending.

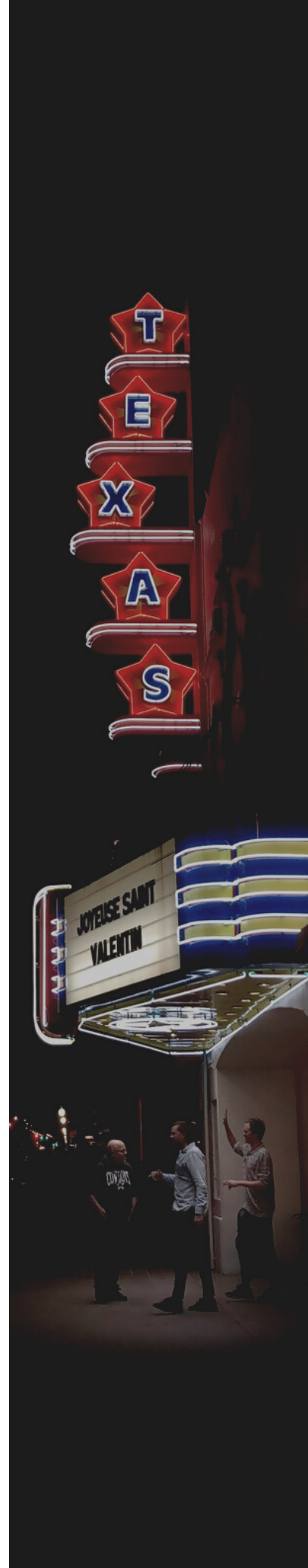
# DIVERSITY: STAFF TALENT RECRUITED/DEI FOCUS TO EARLY PROGRAMS

As of November 23, 2021, the Public Outreach and Inclusion division completed the first data-collection survey to initiate the retention of statistics on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at America250. Our 2021 survey achieved a participation rate of 85%. As a best practice, the EEOC recommends voluntary collection of diversity data on at least an annual basis. Because we prioritize diversity, we will conduct this annual survey to ensure that we are capturing growth in key areas, such as representation of identities across a wide variety of differences. This data will inform our internal DEI strategy and structure. Moreover, the process and practice of data collection will also help us to provide guidance to our partners. DEI guidance is frequently requested from a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including Advisory Council Co-Chairs, members, and vendors, suggesting that the time is right to reexamine our efforts to create an environment where everyone can be a valued contributor to a more perfect union.

The Commission and the Foundation envision the America250 commemoration as a monumental, multiyear initiative, engaging each and every American in what we expect to be the largest and most inclusive anniversary observance in our nation's history. To help partners operationalize this commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, America250 has commenced outreach to such organizations as the Northern Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce, and the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce to solicit vendor contact information. We have also developed guidance on how to find and include small businesses, such as veteran-owned and women-owned businesses, among other groups. The goal is to help our state commission partners collaborate with Disadvantaged and Business Enterprises during their commemoration planning.

## **Public Outreach and Inclusion on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

The Commission and the America250 Foundation employ 37 individuals as of December 31, 2021. Our staff brings a variety of experiences, perspectives, and skill sets to the organization and a range of perspectives to ensure that our priorities around diversity, equity, and inclusion are demonstrated and observable to the public.



The resulting data from our survey conducted in the fourth quarter of FY 2021 demonstrates that our staff is 61% female, a higher rate than both the 43.3% of the federal workforce and 47% of the civilian labor force. In terms of race and ethnicity, our staff is also higher than the federal workforce in the category of Black people at 23.2%, Hispanic people at 13.3% Hispanic, and non-Hispanic multiracial people at 10%. However, our staff is lower than the federal workforce in the category of Asian people at 3.3%, as compared to 6.1% in the federal workforce and 6.2% in the civilian labor force. Overall, our distribution of total minorities is currently at 46.7%, which exceeds the federal level of 37.7% and the civilian level of 38%.

- 23.3% Black
- 13.3% Hispanic
- 3.3% Asian
- 0% Native American/Pacific Islander
- 10% Non-Hispanic Multiracial
- 46.7% Total Minorities
- 53.3% White

Our staff survey revealed that our age diversity is one of our greatest strengths. With our wide range of ages represented, we are positioned to execute improved results as a team. We also have a range of abilities represented on staff, as 10% of our people identify as having a non-observable disability. This means we need to provide multiple avenues of participation in our work and products to ensure that it is accessible to all.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement**

Advisory Councils have been created and are comprised of members representing a broad cross section of differences, including but not limited to geographic regions, race and ethnicities, sexualities, classes, political affiliations, religions, ages, genders, and people with disabilities. In honoring this depth of diversity, each member agrees to respect the unique perspectives and experiences of their fellow members, to communicate openly and thoughtfully, and to work collaboratively on our journey towards greater equity. This broadly inclusive approach aims to create a climate of trust, encouraging creativity and innovation across America250.



When we think about the role of belonging, we consider how we can strategically plan our resources and actions, so that every American feels valued and included. This guidance was requested from a broad spectrum of people, suggesting that the time is right to reexamine our efforts to ensure that everyone feels like they are a valued contributor to a more perfect union. Our DEI Toolkit assists in accomplishing this mission by:

- **Increasing Diversity**

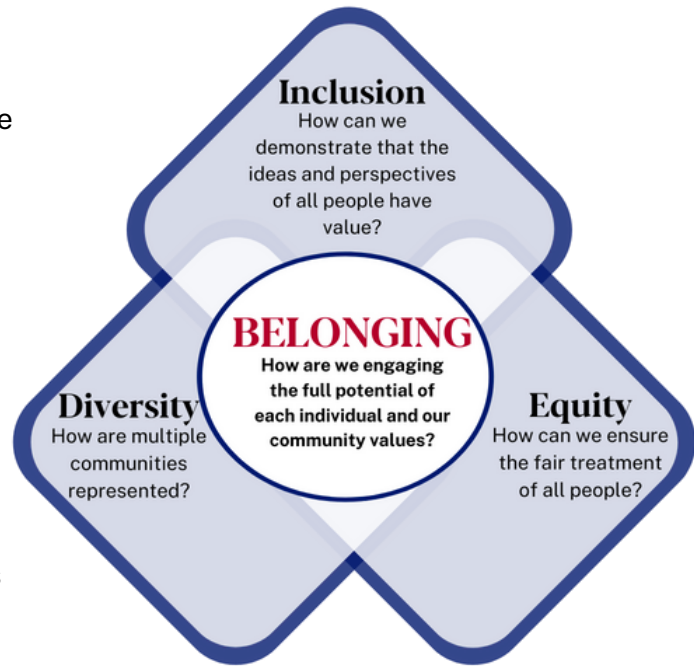
- To inform and implement this commemoration, America250 partners are advised to prioritize gathering a diverse group of participants across many kinds of differences. America250 encourages partners to include a wide range of experiences and perspectives, in order to demonstrate the benefits of diversity as a strength of our nation.

- **Expanding Equitable Policy**

- By including a range of people from a variety of backgrounds, partners are encouraged to reimagine existing policies. Creating new policies that increase avenues to participate in the commemoration will facilitate increasing the impact of this historic event. Barriers to equity in opportunity to serve in this event are to be identified and eliminated to increase the social impact of the America250 commemoration.

- **Generating Inclusive Practices**

- To make websites, gatherings, and events accessible to every American, partners are advised to develop inclusive practices in business operations. Planning practices such as targeting vendors from your state's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise directory, including veteran-, micro, women-, and minority-owned small businesses in the purchasing process can demonstrate your commitment to include every American in this historic event.



# PRUDENT FINANCIAL AND FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

The Commission strives to be a good steward of Federal and private funds in all activities executed for the purpose of commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

Although the Commission was created on July 22, 2016, by enactment of Public Law 114-196, the Commission began incurring expenses in the third quarter of 2018. P.L. 114-196 did not provide for Federal appropriations to support the Commission, but was later amended by Public Law 116-282, allowing for federal funds to support the mission and operations of the Commission. The Commission began to raise donations from private sources beginning in late 2018 and has received Federal funds as follows:

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019, enacted 2/15/19	\$500,000
Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, enacted 12/20/19	\$3,300,000
FY 2021 Omnibus and COVID Relief and Response Act, enacted 12/27/20	\$8,000,000

For FY 2022, the Commission has requested \$8,000,000. Beyond FY 2022, the Commission will seek annual Federal funds in escalating amounts for fiscal years 2023 through 2027.

Total revenue received through September 30, 2021, is \$15,740,908, which includes both Federal appropriations and private donations/sponsorships, but does not include any estimated value for “in-kind/pro bono” resources provided by individual contributions, companies, or organizations.

A report summarizing the fiscal condition of the Commission as of September 30, 2021, was recently prepared and completed. The report reflects all cash received and cash paid (revenue and expenses) by the Commission, the Administrative Secretariat, and the America250 Foundation collectively for fiscal years 2016 through 2021.

## EXPENSES FOR PERIOD FY 2016 - FY 2021

Personnel Costs	\$5,272,646	46.5%
General Administration Expenses	\$497,900	4.4%
Travel, Meetings, & Events	\$249,621	2.1%
Grants	\$75,000	0.7%
Professional Fees & Services	<u>\$5,245,880</u>	46.2%
TOTAL	\$11,341,047	

As expected, personnel costs along with consulting costs have dominated expenses. The staff has grown from a small group of American Battlefield Trust staff and consultants in 2018 to a complement of 37 individuals (9 Federal; 28 Foundation) as of December 31, 2021. The current cadre of



full-time staff are required for the basic running of operations on an annual basis. The Commission anticipates that additional staff will be necessary to continue basic operations and to execute programs and other activities to achieve the Commission's Congressional mission.

### **Positive Cash Balance**

As of September 30, 2021, the combined Commission/General Services Administration and Foundation accounts reflected a positive cash position of \$4,399,861.

### **Pro Bono Services**

The Commission has accepted services on an in kind and pro bono basis that would have otherwise would have required payment of fees paid to outside parties or staff. Commission leadership has prudently and aggressively sought and secured highly credible professional expertise on a pro bono basis, especially during the early, critical phases of standing up the Commission and Foundation (e.g., legal counsel, logo and wordmark development, strategic planning office space, etc.). An estimate of in-kind value received from various entities is well over \$4.25 million since 2016.

### **In-Kind Services**

The General Services Administration has provided office space in Washington, D.C. and New York City. We pay rent for the NY and DC spaces. Other in-kind contributions for the use of meeting space have been provided by the American Historical Theater, Daughters of the American Revolution, Equus Capital Partners, the Philadelphia Phillies, The Society of the Cincinnati, The Union League of Philadelphia, and the White House Historical Association.

### **Private Fundraising**

A majority of revenues (75%) have been from Federal appropriations. However, the Commission expects that private donations and corporate sponsorships will provide a significant supplement of operating funds supporting the Commission's mission. As of September 30, 2021, the Commission has been successful in securing nearly \$4,000,000 in private contributions. A corporate sponsor has provided an initial \$2,000,000 donation, but asked to delay any public announcement until a later date. The Commission anticipates that upon announcement of this significant donation, our ability to secure additional private and corporate donors will be greatly enhanced.

### **Website Donations**

In an effort to provide the opportunity for every American to support the 250th anniversary, the Commission began the process to solicit charitable donations from the public. In compliance with federal guidelines, the Commission began the state charitable registration process in November 2020. Now completed, the Commission remains in compliance with all states that require registration. Soon after, the Commission launched its donation page - America250.org. As of September 30, 2021, the Commission has received more than \$2,000 in contributions from public citizens to support the commemoration. As an additional source of revenue, the Commission launched an online store on August 5, 2021. Members of the public can purchase nearly 20 different items that are all manufactured in the United States.

# A LOOK AHEAD

Over the past two years, the staff and leadership of America250, under the direction of the Commission, have made significant strides in establishing the framework to accomplish our mission. As the organization charged with commemorating this significant milestone in American history, we are moving forward with enthusiasm and looking forward to what will be a pivotal year for the organization.

During summer of 2021, a selection committee composed of Commissioners engaged in a national search for the President and CEO of the America 250 Foundation. Joe Daniels, who formerly served as the founding President and CEO of the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, was selected and officially started October 1, 2021. The hiring of Mr. Daniels was a major step forward in moving our organization from the first five years of the conceptual phase to the next five years of the execution phase.

Over the course of the next six to seven months the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission will oversee, finalize, and approve an initial program portfolio for commemorating America's first 250 years. The finalization of this portfolio known as the "Playbook" will be comprehensive in scope and an expansion of what has been detailed throughout this report.

Specifically, we look forward to incorporating the programs from our federal agency partners, finalizing a series of national signature programs, expanding and refining programs with current national and state partners, as well as identifying big new ideas that will inspire America as we look forward to the next 250 years.

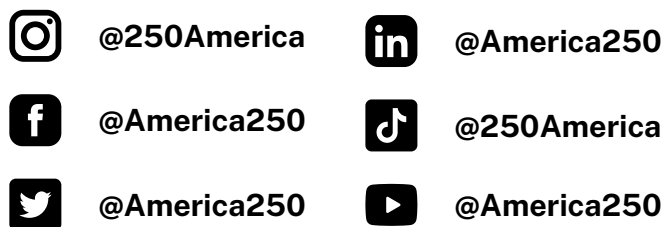
America is exceptional because of our diversity not despite our diversity. This is the fabric of our collective planning. The Commission strives to execute an overall program that all Americans will embrace, enjoy, and remember for decades to come. Our Commission has been given a tremendous responsibility by the Congress; to commemorate the most daring experiment in Democracy in the history of the world. Our task is great but our determination is greater.





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Photos courtesy of Unsplash