



AMERICA 250

CONNECTICUT

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CTh
CThumanities

In 2026, the United States will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, William Williams, and Oliver Wolcott represented Connecticut as four of the 56 individuals who began the process of forming our Nation. They codified for us “certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” As we commemorate this anniversary, we recognize the many people who fought and died for these rights. The formation of our country, both then and now, is about people whose important contributions have often been omitted from our stories.

Connecticut's commemoration will go beyond 1776, reflecting how much we have changed in the last 250 years. It will reflect on our revolutionary ideas and ideals, and extend to our centuries-long civic tradition that strives to uplift the rights of individuals, the common good, and the role of representative government.

America 250 | CT Commission

In order to recognize this moment in our history, Governor Ned Lamont established the America 250 | CT Commission. He appointed Hon. Denise W. Merrill, former Secretary of the State of Connecticut, to chair the commission and Dr. Jason Mancini, Executive Director of CT Humanities (CTH), as its vice-chair.



By Executive Order, America 250 | CT is charged to:

- Assist in ensuring that any observance of the semiquincentennial of the American Revolution is inclusive and appropriately recognizes the experiences and points of view of all people;
- Encourage civic, historical, educational, economic, arts and other organizations throughout the state to organize and participate in activities;
- Collaborate with state and local tourism agencies to promote the state as a prominent cultural and heritage tourism destination;
- Encourage interdisciplinary and scholarly examination;
- Explore the ways in which the ethos of the United States' national founding period and the two hundred fifty years that follow influence the country's present and can shape its future;
- Develop, encourage, and execute an inclusive celebration through civic, cultural, and historical education and programming; and
- Coordinate, engage, and liaise with the United States 250th Commission and other state and local commissions and private and public organizations and partners.

Read the full text of Executive Order 22-2 at ct250.org/executive-order.

Above: *The Great Compromise*. U.S. Senate Collection.

Commission Members

Hon. Denise W. Merrill
Chair

Jason R. Mancini, Ph.D.
Vice Chair

Nicolas Angeli
Connecticut's Old State House –
Youth Leader

Stephen Armstrong
Connecticut State Department of
Education

Michael Johnson
Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation*

Anthony Champalimaud
Member of the Public

Kathryn D'Amato
Office of the Governor*

Steven Hernández, Esq.
Commission on Women, Children,
Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

Andrew Horowitz, Ph.D.
State Historian

Robert Kret
Connecticut Historical Society

Catherine Labadia
State Historic Preservation Office*

Douglas Lord
Connecticut Library Association

Merle McGee
Member of the Public

Deborah Schander, MLIS, JD
State Librarian

Elizabeth Shapiro
Department of Economic and
Community Development*

Jonathan Slifka
Department of Aging and Disability
Services

Joe Smith
Mohegan Tribe*

Stephanie Thomas
Secretary of the State

Maisa Tisdale
Mary and Eliza Freeman Center for
History and Community

Sally Whipple
Connecticut Democracy Center

Amrys O. Williams, Ph.D.
Connecticut League of History
Organizations

* *designee*

Vision & Goals

Defining Success

A successful 250th in Connecticut will be defined by its reach and impact; specifically, the number of opportunities created for civic engagement, and the degree to which those opportunities make all residents of Connecticut feel represented and included. Connecticut will serve as a model for revolutionary civic participation that inspires others with our people's passions, histories, and capacity to create positive and sustainable change—together. The legacy of the 250th will be greater access to sites across the state and a deeper sense of belonging.



Guiding Values

Events surrounding the commemoration of the 250th will take a variety of forms, from celebratory to analytical to commemorative, and will involve people with a variety of backgrounds and beliefs. Regardless of what form their participation takes, we ask that organizations align their initiatives with inclusive themes and values, provide access to all, and consider the reverberations of our words and actions.

CT Humanities and the Commission

CT Humanities is the non-profit organization recognized by the State of Connecticut to coordinate and lead the state's plans for commemorative, educational, and civics-based initiatives surrounding the 250th. Therefore, CTH will serve as the administrative agent and act as the nonprofit fiduciary on behalf of any activities undertaken by the America 250 | CT Commission.

With public and private investment, and guidance from the commission, CT Humanities will drive collaborative and innovative programs as we approach the Nation's 250th. As a lead funder of cultural and civics organizations in Connecticut, CT Humanities will bring together communities and resources throughout our state and lead the sector in developing a meaningful commemoration. America 250 | CT presents a unique opportunity to align the goals and projects of the commission with those of cultural and tourism organizations around the state.



Connecticut: A State of Ideas and Ideals

From our revolutionary origins to today, Connecticut is a driver of American innovation. Connecticut is a maker state, generating ideas and ideals as much as it does creators and entrepreneurs. This entrepreneurial spirit is in our DNA. The 250th presents an opportunity to reflect on and uplift our past achievements while inspiring our future citizens. The power of place—the people, events, and ideas—that created Connecticut are still here.

The 250th will bring together arts, culture, and tourism to share the breadth of Connecticut's story through civic engagement, exhibits, educational programs, and public arts. Connecticut will advance itself as a center for heritage tourism, innovation, and education, with a rich cultural landscape and people who change the world.



Programs & Themes

The founding legislation for the National Endowment for the Humanities states in a foresighted manner that “democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens.” We recognize this as the foundation for reinvigorating our democracy. By recognizing this moment in our history, the nation has the opportunity to **lay the groundwork for a reawakening of civic engagement** by encouraging the participation of all residents.

America 250 | CT is leading the state’s efforts to support diverse, inclusive, and impactful programs in collaboration with cultural, education, history, and arts organizations throughout the state. It will encourage capacity building and partnership among different organizations in local communities to address the needs of external stakeholders and engage broader communities.

Programs in Connecticut

In order to recognize the commemoration of the 250th in Connecticut, the commission will:

- Manage a calendar and website to raise awareness, build excitement, encourage tourism, and inspire civic participation in activities around the Semiquincentennial.
- Bring together organizations across Connecticut to celebrate the stories of all residents, to be managed through CTH granting programs that will fund exhibitions, public programs, symposia, and documentaries, among other projects.
- Collaborate with state agencies on capital improvements and increasing access to and signage at historic sites across Connecticut.
- Provide guidance to local committees across the state to encourage programming from the grassroots level.
- Host signature events throughout 2026 that will attract millions of residents and tourists to the state.



Above: Education program at Litchfield Historical Society

Themes of America 250 | CT

TELL INCLUSIVE STORIES

The 250th serves as inspiration for CTH, its grantees, and the people of Connecticut to share stories that represent all of its people, past and present. For much of our history, the United States has excluded people—women, free and enslaved African Americans, Indigenous people, immigrants, people with disabilities, the poor, and many others—from full participation and representation in the nation’s political, economic, and cultural life.

This commemoration is an opportunity to **continue the nation’s reckoning with the totality of its past**. By telling previously untold stories we will enable everyone to find a place in our nation’s narrative.

POWER OF PLACE

Connecticut is comprised of 169 towns and cities, five recognized tribes, and countless communities with unique identities and contributions. The **creation of a community-based structure** will allow each of Connecticut’s towns and cities to define their own programs and ideas about how they can engage their residents. The building of an understanding of our American past will begin in the public spaces dedicated to learning: libraries, community centers, local museums, and historic sites.

FOR THE COMMON GOOD

As we reckon with what the nation’s 250th means in Connecticut, we will **encourage civic engagement** to continue to build our communities, state, and nation using the democratic ideals outlined in our founding documents. The 250th anniversary offers an opportunity to reconsider the origins of our government, democratic institutions, and broader civic life, and a chance to reflect on the ways we have changed them over time. Discussions about our democracy and civic intuitions can help strengthen understanding, inspire action, and reveal ways that all of us can participate in and shape our democracy.

DOING HISTORY

To renew public engagement with history, the public must be invited to participate in the process of doing history. Using avenues such as the digital humanities, cross-sector convenings, and engagement with social studies teachers, we will build a collaborative environment and recognize the value of sharing the history of all residents in Connecticut. Inviting audiences to engage with the historical method can help them become more comfortable with the ambiguous, contested, and always-evolving nature of history.

The commission’s work will focus on **the role of Connecticut, its people, sites, and historic context of the time**. It can boost tourism in the state by amplifying the stories at historic sites, trails, and buildings, and by constructing programs around notable events.

Budget

America 250 | CT will be a statewide initiative that touches every municipality and tribal nation, hundreds of arts and culture organizations across the state, and students and families throughout Connecticut. Anticipated expenses over the next five years include:

ADMINISTRATION	Administrative costs include management of programs and projects, travel to coordinate with national and regional conveners, staff professional development, and infrastructure needs to act as a public commission.	\$1,375,000
EDUCATION & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Education costs include an annual conference, teacher professional development, curriculum coordination, field trip subsidies, and content development. Organizational development costs include hosting focus groups and public workshops, a statewide exhibition, evaluation, and fellowships.	\$3,250,000
CULTURAL GRANTS	Cultural grants to support public arts and public humanities will range from \$5,000 to \$75,000 for at least 100 projects across CT. They will also include capacity-building programs such as Museum Makeover, Collections Assessment, and Digitization.	\$5,700,000
MARKETING & TOURISM	Marketing & tourism costs include advertising, media partnerships, and events throughout the state.	\$3,000,000

Public-Private Partnership

Private funding totaling \$5 million will support direct expenses of the commission, outlined above, to amplify the reach of the commission's work throughout the state. Cultural grants in particular will have match requirements that will spur investments of an additional \$3 million in the sector.

In addition to private funding for direct costs of commission activities, CT Humanities and its partners are advocating for state support of a variety of related initiatives, including capital infrastructure improvements to support accessibility of historic buildings, tourism readiness for sites throughout the state, and partnerships with the Connecticut Office of Tourism, Department of Economic and Community Development, and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.