

AMERICA 250

CONNECTICUT

America 250 | CT Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 16, 2024
Fairfield Museum & History Center
Fairfield, CT

Watch recording: <https://www.youtube.com/live/qHF2Ed9jAsM>

Attendees

Commissioners

Denise Merrill - Chair (In Person)
Jason Mancini - Vice Chair (In Person)
Merle McGee (In Person)
Arienne Orozco (In Person)
Melvette Hill (In Person)
Jon Slifka (In Person)
Steve Armstrong (In Person)
Amrys Williams (In Person)
Deborah Schander (In Person)
Sally Whipple (In Person)
Andy Horowitz (Virtual)

Staff

Cyndi Tolosa (In Person)
Rachel Gonzalez (In Person)
Scott Wands (In Person)
Mike Kemezis (Virtual)

Members of the Public

Carey Weber (In Person)
Michelle Cheng (In Person)
Michael Jehle (In Person)
Mark Barnhart (In Person)
Sylvester Salcedo (In Person)
Michael Werner (Virtual)
Megan Baker (In Person)

The meeting began at **11:06 a.m.**

Welcome

Denise Merrill called the meeting to order. All Commissioners & staff present at the Fairfield Museum and via Zoom briefly introduced themselves. D. Merrill shared some brief remarks on a new exhibit at Greenwich Historical Society and turned the meeting over to Jason Mancini to start the agenda.

- Approval of Minutes from [July 17, 2024 Meeting \[Attachment A\]](#): Begins at 4:30 in recording.
- Motion: Deborah Schander
- Second: Steve Armstrong
- VOTE: Yes (11); No (0); Abstain (0)

National/Regional Update

This section begins at 5:10 in recording.

J. Mancini opened with a brief summary of national/regional happenings before turning over to staff for updates. Cyndi Tolosa shared that we have officially signed on as a state partner with the national commission. The national commission has also launched their America's Field Trip program for this year, which is an initiative for K-12 students that runs through the academic

year. Scott Wands shared an update on the American Association for State and Local History Conference, where CTH staff was able to engage with folks working with commissions in other states and showcase the Connecticut Commission's work. In addition, AASLH has published a programming handbook for the 250th; the Commission has hard copies for distribution and it can also be downloaded electronically. AASLH will be hosting a virtual convening to discuss the 250th in February. J. Mancini expanded on the experience at the AASLH conference, and briefly summarized activities at a convening hosted by the Pennsylvania Commission in Philadelphia. C. Tolosa shared information on an initiative being planned by some state commissions, [Two Lights for Tomorrow](#), which will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Lexington in April 2025, and proposed that Connecticut consider participating. This will entail having two lights lit in State Houses around the country on the evening of April 18, 2025, followed by a day of service on Saturday, April 19. Potential partners to aid with the day of service may include Serve CT, the United Way, and Campus Compact. Amrys Williams suggested that we consider planning some sort of ceremony around the lighting that may help raise awareness. A. Williams also shared an ad placement by the Massachusetts Commission for their own 250th efforts.

Funding Update

This section begins at 20:50 in the recording

J. Mancini introduced discussion of the FY25 Budget [*Attachment B*]. He noted that not included on the budget are the grants that CT Humanities has awarded, as those go through the CTH budget. Also not included is the expected \$10million in bond funds for Good to Great.

M. McGee opened a discussion on the potential turnout of the election and how it may impact the work that the Commission is doing. In discussion, it was noted that, as a state commission, the work that is being done is relatively insulated from national politics.

C. Tolosa shared that Mohegan Sun has donated a box, meals, and drinks for their Pentatonix concert on November 14, 2024. Sponsorships are currently in progress and individual ticket sales will commence soon. D. Merrill requested that, once public sales are open, Commissioners share with their networks. A discussion on ways in which this fundraiser may help to boost youth engagement and ways to increase net revenue ensued.

Subcommittee Updates

This section begins at 41:55 in the recording.

Arienne Orozco shared an update of the Governance subcommittee's work, including welcoming Deborah Schander and Melvette Hill as new subcommittee members. A demographic survey in alignment with the Secretary of the State's biannual survey of commissions was conducted and the results have been compiled in this report: [Demographic Survey](#) [*Attachment C*]. C. Tolosa reviewed the findings of the survey, noting that all responses were aggregated together rather than reporting separately on Commissioners and subcommittee members. The areas which most notably diverged from state of Connecticut demographics included under-representation of those who identified as Hispanic and those under 18. The Commission discussed ways in which we may be able to utilize subcommittees or local commissions as a means to bring folks from under-represented groups into the work. There would need to be a vacancy or an expansion through amendment of the Governor's Executive Order to impact the demographic makeup of the Commission itself. Discussion focused on youth engagement, with

recommendations to potentially work with schools, History Day and Kid Governor alumni through The Old State House, local commissions, and/or Made By Us as potential avenues.

A. Orozco also provided a brief update on the affiliate program's first deadline, with 48 out of 49 affiliate applications accepted. The annual reporting process will begin shortly; A. Orozco requested that subcommittee chairs submit a draft to Governance by November 22, 2024.

Steve Armstrong provided an update on the work of the Education subcommittee, which is currently focused on spreading the word of the Commission's work with educators and leadership throughout the state. To that end, a [One-Sheet for Teachers](#) has been created for distribution, with a more in-depth packet to come by the end of this academic year. The Connecticut Council for the Social Studies will plan a conference for 2025 with the 250th as a primary focus. Mike Kemezis shared that CT Humanities has hired a Digital Humanities Education Manager who will be able to assist in some of this work. Updates are being made to CTHistory.org to include the Commission's themes as well.

A. Williams shared that local organizations have been referencing the Commission's work, including the IDEA guide developed by the Community and Organizational Engagement subcommittee.

There is now a map published on our website to show [Local Organization Progress](#) with committee contact information. C. Tolosa shared that we currently have contacts for 50 municipalities and are hosting monthly Zoom meetings to connect with them. The next meeting is scheduled for October 22, and will include information on funding opportunities beyond CT Humanities' grant lines. In addition to working with local committees, CTH staff has been coordinating convenings of organizations in municipalities that have not yet set up a committee, including a broad swath of organizations that include museums, education, theater & arts, and civics. Convenings have been held in Hartford and Bridgeport, with additional municipalities in the planning stages. Two site visits to Norwich and Lebanon took place over the summer, where staff and commissioners met with local committee members, viewed historic sites, and learned about their commemoration plans.

Rachel Gonzalez shared that CTH staff and Commissioners attended the Boom Box Parade on the 4th of July in Willimantic as well as 5 festivals to raise awareness amongst the general public. Staff will work with the Community & Organizational Engagement subcommittee to develop an outreach plan for next year.

Work Plan Update

This section begins at 1:26:25 in the recording.

Information on the work plan is included in *[Attachment D]*. C. Tolosa provided an update on the work that has been done, including:

- Plans for a Commission conference on March 21, 2025 at the University of Connecticut
- The affiliate program
- Progress working with the CT Office of Marketing and Tourism on using CTVisit.com to showcase 250th events

Andy Horowitz shared an update on the planning process for an exhibit to be available in 2026 for use by local libraries, historical societies, and others. He is in conversation with the Museum of Connecticut History on a collaboration.

Public Comment

This section begins at 1:35:25 in the recording.

Brief comments were made by Mark Barnhart, Carey Weber, Sylvester Salcedo, and Michael Werner.

The meeting ended at **11:52 a.m.**

Next Meeting

January 15, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Location to be determined

DRAFT

Attachment A

**America 250 | CT Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 17, 2024
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jL88g_9XyOs

Attendees

Commissioners

Denise Merrill, Chair (In Person)
Jason Mancini, Vice Chair (In Person)
Arienne Orozco (In Person)
Steve Armstrong (In Person)
Deborah Schander (In Person)
Jonathan Slifka (In Person)
Sally Whipple (In Person)
Kathy D'Amato (In Person)
Joseph Smith (Virtual)
Nicolas Angeli (Virtual)
Andy Horowitz (Virtual)
Amrys Williams (Virtual)
Anthony Champalimaud (Virtual)
Liz Shapiro (Virtual)
Michael Johnson (Virtual)
Melvette Hill (Virtual)
Michael Werner (In Person)

Staff

Megan Baker (In Person)
Cyndi Tolosa (In Person)
Rachel Gonzalez (In Person)
Scott Wands (Virtual)
Dana Barcellos-Allen (Virtual)

Members of the Public

Tanya Pohrt (In Person)
Claudine Casey (In Person)
Kia Baird (In Person)
Deb Mathiasen (In Person)
Linda Christensen (In Person)
Sylvester Salcedo (In Person)

The meeting began at **10:05 a.m.**

Welcome

This section begins at minute mark 1:46 in the recording.

Denise Merrill called the meeting to order and briefly summarized the commission's charge. Two new commissioners will be joining, but were not able to be at the beginning of the meeting to comment.

- Melvette Hill, who will represent the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, & Opportunity. M. Werner, current designee, will continue on the Governance subcommittee and participate in M. Hill's absence.
- Margaret Khan, who will represent the CT Library Association. M. Khan will also serve in place of Doug Lord on Community & Organizational Engagement subcommittee.

Jason Mancini acknowledged the location of the meeting and shared some brief remarks about the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation's history.

Discussion of the motion to approve minutes from the April 17, 2024 meeting begins at minute mark 8:58 in the recording.

1. Motion for approval of the minutes from the [April 17, 2024 Meeting](#) [Attachment A]
 - a. Motion: Steve Armstrong
 - b. Second: Jon Slifka
 - c. VOTE: Yes (12), Abstain (2)

National/Regional Update

This section begins at minute mark 9:50 in the recording.

J. Mancini provided updates from a state/territory commission convening hosted by the America 250 Commission in Washington, D.C., including:

- Almost all established commissions had representatives in attendance.
- [Polling data](#) on public sentiments showed that we should seek ways to engage Gen Z, as that generation is broadly disconnected from the 250th
- The national commission's tentpole program will be [America Gives](#)/days of service so we should consider ways to engage Connecticut residents in this.
- A 2nd place winner from [America's Field Trip](#) is a Fairfield, CT resident.

Cyndi Tolosa added that we will be receiving all of Connecticut's entries to America's Field Trip in the coming weeks and will share out when received. Additional important information from the convening included:

- The national commission will be establishing a funding directory for broad use.
- Changes in the way that the national commission is operating mean that we should reconsider signing on with them to receive a \$10,000 grant.

J. Mancini noted that the America 250 PA Commission will be hosting a convening in September and there will be another convening in Virginia in March.

Scott Wands shared updates from the American Association for State and Local History, including:

- They are building out a [resource page](#) on their website.
- A [programming handbook](#) has been published for organizations to use in planning 250th events & programs.
- There will be an annual conference in September with opportunities for CT Humanities to share out 250th updates with other states & territories.

Arienne Orozco noted that the National Association of Secretaries of State had their conference recently and there was some conversation of 250th-related activities. D. Merrill and A. Orozco agreed that it may be worth proposing a session for a future conference.

Funding Update

This section begins at minute mark 23:07 in the recording.

D. Merrill provided a brief update on the funding request that was put through the legislature after the April Commission meeting, noting that the Commission received a small amount of additional funds for administration and \$10 million in bonding funds for capital projects. Fundraising is underway, and the Leadership Committee for CT Humanities is currently planning a fundraiser at the Bruce Museum in Greenwich with Geno Auriemma as the featured speaker.

J. Mancini expanded on the process for use of capital funds, which are available through the Good to Great program, administered through a partnership with the CT Department of Economic & Community Development, via Liz Shapiro, and CT Humanities. While bond funds have been approved, they remain unallocated until they are put on the governor's bond agenda and authorized by the bond commission. Additional funding opportunities will be made available through the [National Park Service](#) and the [Institute of Museum & Library Services](#). On the state level, the Office of Policy and Management will be featuring the 250th on the next biennium's budget book.

C. Tolosa called attention to the [grants](#) that have been awarded through CT Humanities to 250th themed projects to date. [Attachment B]

Affiliate Program Feedback

This section begins at minute mark 32:35 in the recording.

C. Tolosa described the premise of the Affiliate program, which is intended to raise the profile of the Commission and tie us to projects around the state. To that end, staff have created [criteria](#) for Commission affiliates [Attachment C], which are rooted in the guiding values, as well as an [application form](#) [Attachment D]. Approved affiliates will be authorized to use an America 250 | CT Affiliate logo and have a streamlined process to submit events to the Community Calendar. The proposed criteria document was read aloud prior to opening the floor for discussion.

The criteria was discussed by the Commission, with the conclusion that the affiliate criteria and application form can be put into use with minimal edits. The Governance subcommittee will serve as the application review committee, and will bring any applications with which they have concerns to the full Commission for review. Affiliate organizations will be denoted on the Community Calendar, using a coding system which will be determined by staff.

Subcommittee Updates

This section begins at minute mark 1:04:53 in the recording.

Amrys Williams provided an update on the [IDEA Self-Assessment Guide](#) that the Community & Organizational Engagement subcommittee has been developing [Attachment E]. This document will be published for organizations to use in planning 250th events and programs, as a means for them to reflect on their processes and consider the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access in all phases of planning. Discussion of the document ensued. This document was approved for use after some minor revisions. The Commission hopes that this document can, among other things, help organizations engage with Gen Z and reinforce the need for historical accuracy in event and program planning.

At 1:28:04 in the recording, the conversation shifted to the Education subcommittee's work.

S. Armstrong presented the education subcommittee's plan moving forward, which includes developing a one-page document explaining America 250 for teachers (to be distributed through superintendents and other educational leaders), tying publicly available 250th-related educational resources to the new Connecticut Council for the Social Studies standards, and creating a series of teacher's guides that can be used to help teachers in lesson planning for the 250th at all grade levels. In the course of this discussion, it was noted by J. Mancini that the \$10,000 grant available from the national commission might be put to use by the education

subcommittee, potentially as a reward program for Red, White, and Blue Schools. After discussion, a motion was put forth. Discussion of this begins at minute mark 1:39:00 in the recording.

2. Motion: To accept a \$10,000 grant from the national America 250 group for use on education projects.
 - a. Motion: Michael Werner
 - b. Second: Steve Armstrong
 - c. VOTE: Yes (15) *Note - additional commissioner arrived during the course of the meeting

Work Plan Update

This section begins at minute mark 1:44:30 in the recording.

- C. Tolosa provided an update on staff progress since the last Commission meeting, including:
- An online [calendar of events](#) where organizations can share 250th programming.
 - A revamped communications schedule, with a monthly e-newsletter being sent to roughly 450 subscribers and increased social media presence in coordination with CTHistory.org
 - On the regional and municipal level, Commission representatives have presented to most Councils of Government. A Zoom meeting was held recently with approximately 30 municipalities in attendance, and our [contact list](#) of municipal committee leaders is growing.
 - [Brand guidelines](#) have been drafted for use with affiliate organizations [Attachment G].
 - Work on a museum makeover program is being done in coordination with Conservation Connection out of the CT State Library.
 - Andy Horowitz, in his role as State Historian, is beginning to frame out an exhibit for 2025 on Connecticut's role in the American Revolution.

Public Comment

This section begins at minute mark 1:48:19 in the recording.

Brief statements of introduction were made by all members of the public present, with public comment from S. Salcedo.

The meeting ended at **12:01 p.m.**

Next Meeting

Wednesday, October 16, 2024, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., location to be announced

Attachment B

America 250 | CT Budget July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

REVENUE	Budget	Actual	Notes
State of CT Appropriation	\$100,000	\$100,000	
State of CT ARPA Funds	\$100,000		Anticipated in early 2025
Dalio Philanthropies	\$100,000	\$100,000	
Mohegan Sun Event	\$100,000		
America250	\$10,000	\$10,000	
Other Fundraising	\$50,000		
CTH Operations	\$40,000		
Total Revenue*	\$500,000		
EXPENSES	Budget		Notes
Salaries and Benefits**	\$250,000		1.5 dedicated staff plus additional work
National Collaboration	\$15,000		Travel
In-State Meetings	\$2,500		
Administration	\$1,000		Zoom, supplies, etc.
Engagement	\$15,000		Statewide exhibition, outreach
Education	\$75,000		America 250 CT conference, fellowships
Publicity	\$50,000		Vendor tables, giveaways, sponsorships
Museum Makeover	\$50,000		
Other Initiatives	\$36,500		Flexible for other initiatives that may arise
Fundraising Events	\$5,000		
Total Expenses*	\$500,000		

*Total revenue & expenses do not include CT Humanities grants awarded.

**Salaries and benefits do not include any costs for J. Mancini (member of the Commission and not compensated for Am250 work).

Attachment C

2024 Gender & Racial Composition of the America 250 | CT Commission & Subcommittees

October 16, 2024

For over 25 years, Connecticut law (Connecticut General Statutes Section 4-9b) has required state boards, commissions, committees and councils (“boards and commissions”), which have at least one member appointed by the Governor or a member of the General Assembly, to report the gender and racial composition of their appointed membership.¹

Although the Commission is not required to report to the Secretary of the State’s Office in 2024, it has elected to collect data this year as a baseline and means for self-reflection before it is required to submit information in 2025. Included in this report are the gender and racial composition tables required by the state, as well as additional data collected to track progress towards inclusion, diversity, equity, and access for commission purposes.

Findings

Twenty of 21 Commission members and 21 of 45 subcommittee members responded to the survey, with a total of 41 responses collected. To ensure the privacy of all respondents, the data in this report has been aggregated to include all Commission and Subcommittee (hereafter referred to as “the Commission”) respondents in one data set.

Comparative data for the majority of categories has been sourced from the most recent census estimates available on the Connecticut Department of Public Health’s website. Where comparative data for the state of Connecticut was unavailable, U.S. Census Bureau data for the United States population as a whole was used. Census data for sexual orientation and gender identity is not yet available; however, based on the published timeline for the U.S. Census Bureau, this data will likely be available for comparison to 2025 results.

From the available data, some key points are as follows:

- The Commission includes a substantially higher percentage of female participants than the state as a whole (60% vs 50%).
- The Commission includes a higher percentage of White participants than the state as a whole (75% vs 63%)

¹ From the 2023 Gender and Racial Composition of Connecticut State Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Councils Report, Office of the Secretary of the State, https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sots/education/diversityreport/2023_gender_race_board_report.pdf

- Only one respondent identified as Hispanic, though this group comprises 18% of the state population.
- The percentage of respondents who identified as Black/African American was proportionally similar to the demographics of the state as a whole (12% vs 10%).
- Age distribution of the Commission is skewed towards the 35-50 year old bracket (36% vs 18% of the state as a whole). Other age brackets roughly mirrored their share of the Connecticut population, with the notable exception of youth aged under 18.
- While government data regarding sexual orientation and gender identity is not yet available, 2024 Gallup polling indicates that those who identify as LGBTQ+ comprise just under 8% of the U.S. population, vs almost 15% of the Commission.²
- Those on the Commission self-identified as having a disability at a significantly lower rate than the U.S. population as a whole (5% vs 14%).

Gender Representation

Respondents were given the option to select “Female,” “Male,” “Non-Binary,” or “Prefer not to say.” One respondent selected “Prefer not to say.” All others selected either “Female” or “Male.” Those identifying as female made up just over 60% of the Commission, compared to 50% of the population of the state of Connecticut. Those identifying as male comprise 39% of the Commission, as compared to 49% of the state’s population.

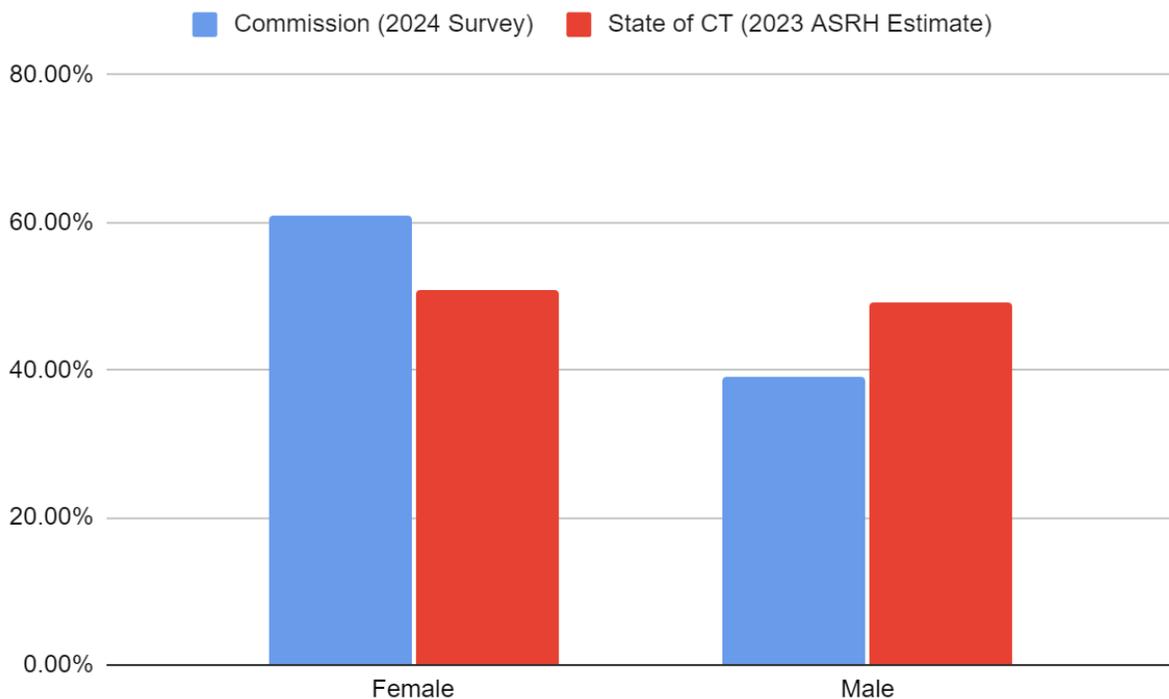
Table 1. Gender Representation of America 250 | CT Commission & Subcommittee Members versus State of Connecticut

Sex/Gender	Commission (2024 Survey)	State of CT (2023 ASRH Estimate) ³
Female	60.98%	50.96%
Male	39.02%	49.04%
Non-Binary	0.00%	-
Prefer not to say	0.00%	-

Chart 1. Gender Representation of America 250 | CT Commission & Subcommittee Members versus State of Connecticut

² Data from Gallup, “LGBTQ+ Identification in U.S. Now at 7.6%,” March 13, 2024, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/611864/lgbtq-identification.aspx>

³ Data from Connecticut State Department of Public Health, Annual State & County Population with Demographics, State-level ASRH estimate tables, 2020-2023, <https://portal.ct.gov/dph/health-information-systems--reporting/population/annual-state-county-population-estimates>



Racial Diversity

For three racial/ethnic groups, only one respondent self-identified with that group: Hispanic/Latino of any race, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Asian. The percentage of the Commission identifying as American Indian or Alaskan Native and Asian is roughly equivalent to the proportion of the state population. The proportion of respondents who selected Black/African American and Two or more races (not Hispanic/Latino) was slightly higher than the proportion in Connecticut as a whole. While no respondents selected Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, this group comprises less than 1% of the state's population.

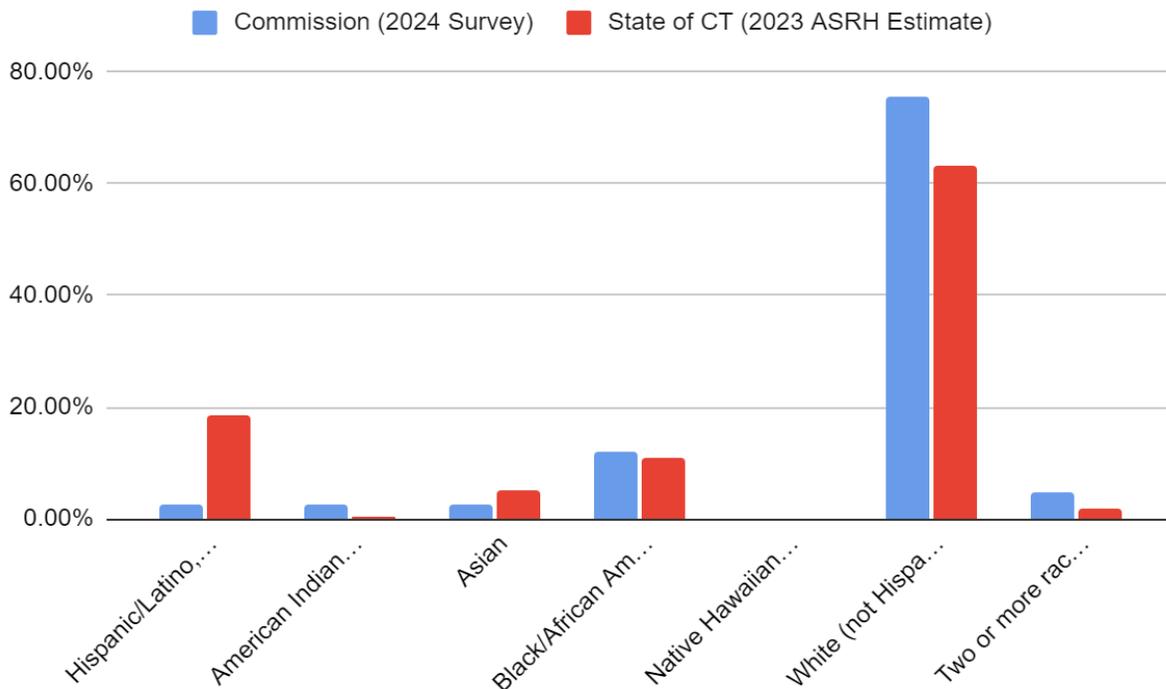
The racial/ethnic groups which were most notably divergent from the proportion of the state's population were Hispanic/Latino of any race and White (not Hispanic/Latino). Those identified as Hispanic/Latino only comprised 2.4% of the Commission versus almost 20% of the state as a whole. In contrast, those who identified as White (not Hispanic/Latino) comprised 75% of the Commission versus 63% of the state as a whole.

When broken out by gender, these results do not change substantially.

Table 2. Racial Diversity of America 250 | CT Commission & Subcommittee Members versus State of Connecticut

Race/Ethnicity	Commission (2024 Survey)	State of CT (2023 ASRH Estimate) ⁴
Hispanic/Latino, of any race	2.44%	18.61%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2.44%	0.22%
Asian	2.44%	5.05%
Black/African American (not Hispanic/Latino)	12.20%	10.85%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.00%	0.04%
White (not Hispanic/Latino)	75.61%	63.25%
Two or more races (not Hispanic/Latino)	4.88%	1.97%
Preferred not to answer regarding race	0.00%	-

Chart 2. Racial Diversity of America 250 | CT Commission & Subcommittee Members versus State of Connecticut



⁴ Data from Connecticut State Department of Public Health, Annual State & County Population with Demographics

Table 3. Female Racial Diversity of America 250 | CT Commission & Subcommittee Members versus State of Connecticut

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Individuals - Commission	Percentage of Commission (2024 Survey)	Percentage of State of CT Population (2023 ASRH Estimate)⁵
Hispanic/Latino, of any race	0	2.44%	9.37%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	2.44%	0.11%
Asian	1	2.44%	2.60%
Black/African American (not Hispanic/Latino)	2	9.76%	5.66%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.00%	0.02%
White (not Hispanic/Latino)	9	41.46%	32.20%
Two or more races (not Hispanic/Latino)	1	2.44%	1.00%
Preferred not to answer regarding race	0	0.00%	-

Table 4. Male Racial Diversity of America 250 | CT Commission & Subcommittee Members versus State of Connecticut

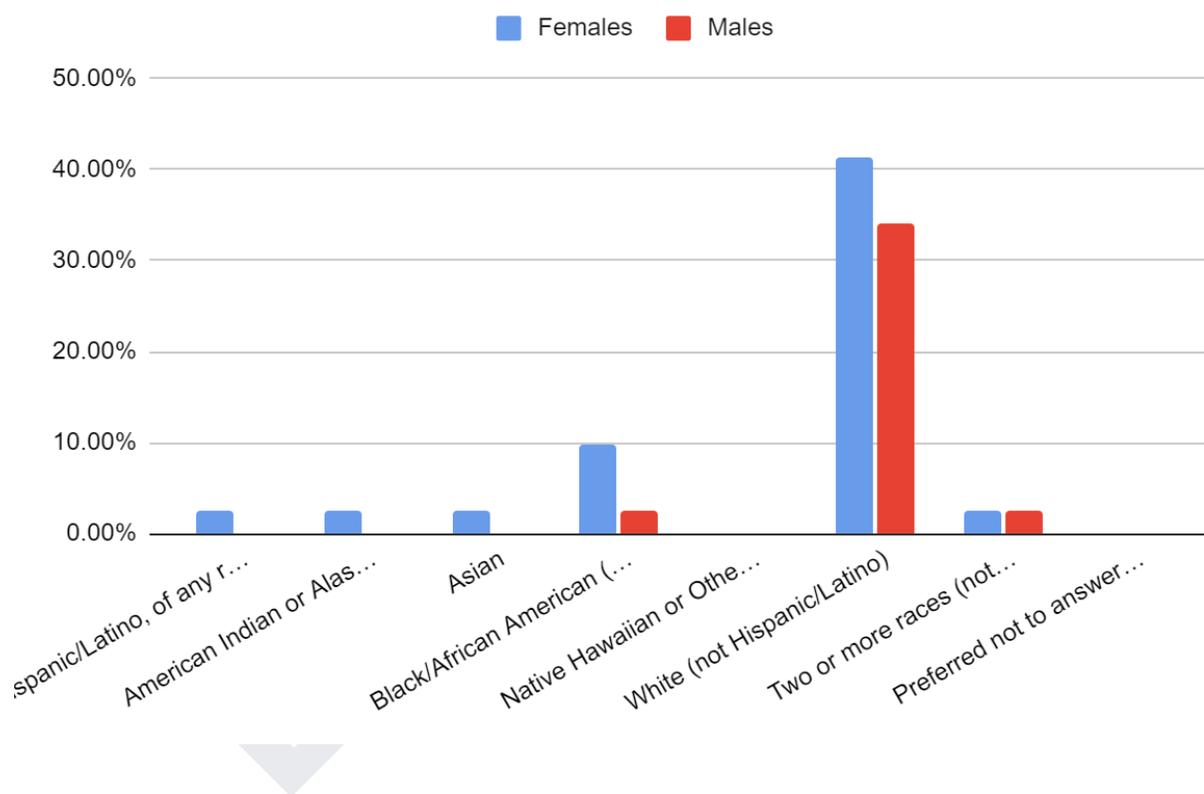
Race/Ethnicity	Number of Individuals - Commission	Percentage of Commission (2024 Survey)	Percentage of State of CT Population (2023 ASRH Estimate)⁶
Hispanic/Latino, of any race	0	0.00%	9.24%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0.00%	0.11%
Asian	0	0.00%	2.45%
Black/African American (not Hispanic/Latino)	1	2.44%	5.19%

⁵ Data from Connecticut State Department of Public Health, Annual State & County Population with Demographics

⁶ Data from Connecticut State Department of Public Health, Annual State & County Population with Demographics

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Individuals - Commission	Percentage of Commission (2024 Survey)	Percentage of State of CT Population (2023 ASRH Estimate) ⁶
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.00%	0.02%
White (not Hispanic/Latino)	14	34.15%	31.06%
Two or more races (not Hispanic/Latino)	1	2.44%	0.97%
Preferred not to answer regarding race	0	0.00%	-

Chart 3. Racial Diversity by Gender of America 250 | CT Commission & Subcommittee Members



Age Representation

Respondents were asked to select one of five age brackets or were given the option to select “prefer not to say.” The state of Connecticut population as a whole are roughly evenly divided amongst the five given age brackets, with approximately 20% of the total population in each group. Amongst the Commission, youth under age 18 are not represented. The 19-34 and over 65 age brackets roughly mirror the demographics of the state as a whole. A significantly higher

percentage of the Commission falls within the 35-50 age bracket - roughly double that age group's share of the total population. Individuals in the 51-65 age bracket outnumber their share of the general population as well, though not as dramatically.

Table 5. Age Diversity of America 250 | CT Commission & Subcommittee Members versus State of Connecticut

Age	Number of Individuals - Commission	Commission (2024 Survey)	State of CT (2023 ASRH Estimate) ⁷
Under 18	0	0%	22.75%
19-34	7	17.07%	19.02%
35-50	15	36.59%	18.67%
51-65	11	26.83%	20.47%
Over 65	8	19.51%	19.10%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%	-

Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity

Question: Are you a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

Six respondents selected "yes," 34 respondents selected "no," and one selected "prefer not to say." This equates to close to 15% of the Commission self-identifying as members of the LGBTQ+ community. While census data on this question is not yet readily available, in a recent Gallup poll, 7.6% of the U.S. population self-identified as LGBTQ+, indicating that the Commission includes a higher proportion of members of this community than the country at large.

Table 6. Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity of America 250 | CT Commission & Subcommittee Members

LGBTQ+	Number of Individuals	Percentage of Commission (2024 Survey)
Yes	6	14.63%
No	34	82.93%
Prefer not to say	1	2.44%

⁷ Data from Connecticut State Department of Public Health, Annual State & County Population with Demographics

Disability Characteristics

Question: “Are you a member of the disability community?”

Two respondents selected “yes,” 38 selected “no,” and one selected “prefer not to say.” This equated to just under 5% of respondents on the Commission self-identifying as a member of the disability community, in contrast with almost 14% of the United States Population as a whole.

Table 7. Disability Characteristics of America 250 | CT Commission & Subcommittee Members versus U.S. Population

Disability Characteristics	Number of Individuals - Commission	Percentage of Commission (2024 Survey)	Percentage of U.S. Population (2023 U.S. Census Bureau) ⁸
Yes	2	4.88%	13.60%
No	38	92.68%	86.40%
Prefer not to say	1	2.44%	N/A

Conclusions

The America 250 | CT Commission’s stated Mission and Vision prioritizes an inclusive commemoration in which all Connecticut residents may see themselves reflected. The results of this survey indicate many areas of strength in that regard, as well as some notable areas of weakness. Where gaps have been identified, there is room for reflection on the appropriate actions to close these gaps.

For the next demographic survey, separate but identical questionnaires (received from the Office of the Connecticut Secretary of the State) will be sent to Commissioners and subcommittee members, to ensure the integrity of the data received.

⁸ Data from U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Disability Characteristics 1-Year Estimate Tables, 2023, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2023.S1810?t=Disability>

Attachment D

America 250 | CT 2024 Accomplishments

Community and Organizational Engagement

- Tabled at **five festivals** this summer to engage the general public and received 78 answers to “In one word, how do you wish to feel after the 250th?”
- Participated in the Boombox Parade in Willimantic and a reading of the Declaration of Independence in New Haven
- Led **four site visits and community convenings** to engage a variety of community organizations, build relationships, and gather feedback, with plans for an additional 1-2 convenings this year; received 65 answers to “In one word, how do you wish to feel after the 250th?”
- Recruited **50 local committees** and hosted two meetings of local committee leaders
- Published **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Program Planning Guide**

Education

- Hosted **Declaring Freedom, Day 3** to create conversations about the Commission and its themes
- Began planning 2025 conference with plans to release **Call for Proposals** by end of October
- Created **educator one-sheet** to share with teachers across the state, including statewide social studies initiatives that they can participate in

Governance

- Launched **affiliate program** for organizations who are interested in being connected to the work of the Commission, accepting 48 applications with one deadline to go this year
- Surveyed and reported on **demographic make-up** of the Commission to compare to overall demographics of Connecticut
- Continue **annual report** to the Governor’s Office

Marketing and Tourism

- Launched **calendar of events** on CT250 website to begin sharing out events happening throughout the state
- Released **branding guidelines** to encourage use of America 250 | CT brand by grantees, affiliates, and sponsored events
- Working with CT Office of Tourism on **CT Visit website** redevelopment to host America 250 | CT events and tourism initiatives

Other

- Awarded \$187,513 to 21 America 250 | CT related projects through the August 2024 deadline
- Participated in **four national convenings** and **one regional convening** to encourage collaboration among states
- Begin planning for a **statewide exhibition** that will be made available free of charge to nonprofits and municipalities

- Relaunching **Museum Makeover** to fund projects related to the Commission's themes
- Working with other funders to raise awareness and make America 250 a **funding priority**

America 250 | CT 2025 Goals

Community and Organizational Engagement

- Continue to find the **general public** where they are (festivals, parades, events, programs, etc.)
- Create **America 250 | CT collateral** that can be loaned to local committees to raise brand awareness and increase outreach with less burden on CTH staff
- Continue to host **site visits and convenings** in towns throughout Connecticut to learn about how the Commission can be most helpful, what is in progress, and how we can make connections
- Continue to **recruit local committees** with the goal of reaching every municipality and create more tangible opportunities for them to participate, including a municipal proclamation and a planting of charter oak seedlings
- Work with organizations and communities to build skills to ensure that all CT residents feel a **sense of belonging** in this commemoration

Education

- Host **2025 conference** with breakout sessions and key takeaways to build a community of practice and engage cultural organizations, local committees, educators, and others
- Assemble **educator resource packet** with 10-12 pages of background and curriculum materials
- Encourage participation in **America's Field Trip** and other national efforts

Governance

- Continue to review **affiliate program** applications and begin to identify who may need more direct outreach
- Conduct another survey of the Commission's **demographic make-up** in tandem with the Secretary of the State
- Continue **annual report** to the Governor's Office

Marketing and Tourism

- Use **CT Visit** website and visitation to raise brand awareness for America 250 | CT
- Identify partner organizations with which to launch **marketing initiatives**
- Plan **signature events** for 2026 in collaboration with partner organizations and the CT Office of Tourism, with smaller events leading up to July 4, 2026

Other

- **Encourage funding** of America 250 | CT projects from both CT Humanities and other grant funders
- Complete **statewide exhibition** for use in late 2025, 2026, and onwards to tell the story of the Revolutionary War in Connecticut

- Continue participation in **national and regional convenings**
- Incorporate **public service and volunteerism** into the work of the Commission, tying into national efforts for America Gives
- Begin to incorporate **evaluation efforts** to track success of the Commission and the 250th

DRAFT

Attachment E

America 250 | CT Commission 2025 Meeting Dates

Commission

Wednesday, January 15, 2025 – 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Wednesday, April 16, 2025 – 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Wednesday, July 16, 2025 – 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Wednesday, October 15, 2025 – 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Community & Organizational Engagement Subcommittee

Thursday, February 13, 2025 – 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM
Thursday, May 8, 2025 – 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM
Thursday, August 14, 2025 – 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM
Thursday, November 13, 2025 – 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Education Subcommittee

Tuesday, January 28, 2025 – 3:30 to 5:00 PM
Tuesday, April 29, 2025 – 3:30 to 5:00 PM
Tuesday, July 29, 2025 – 3:30 to 5:00 PM
Tuesday, October 28, 2025 – 3:30 to 5:00 PM

Governance Subcommittee

Monday, February 10, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Monday, May 12, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Monday, August 11, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Monday, November 10, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Subcommittee

TBD

Marketing & Tourism Subcommittee

Wednesday, February 12, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Wednesday, May 14, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Wednesday, August 13, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Wednesday, November 12, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM