



America 250 | CT Commission Meeting
Wednesday, January 15, 2025 at 10:00 AM
Legislative Office Building
Minutes

Watch Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95-fwbZlZ_s

Attendees

Commissioners

Jason Mancini - Vice Chair (In Person)
Liz Shapiro (In Person)
Andy Horowitz (In Person)
Sally Whipple (In Person)
Deborah Schander (In Person)
Steve Armstrong (In Person)
Stephanie Thomas (In Person)
Arienne Orozco (In Person)
Melvette Hill (In Person)
Margaret Khan (In Person)
Jon Slifka (In Person)
Rob Kret (Virtual)
Nicholas Angeli (Virtual)

Staff

Cyndi Tolosa (In Person)
Michael Werner (In Person)
Scott Wands (In Person)
Megan Baker (In Person)
Rachel Gonzalez (In Person)
Ashley Malcolm (Virtual)
Misa Giroux (Virtual)
Mike Kemezis (Virtual)

Members of the Public*

Sylvester Salcedo
Lee McFadden

*Additional members of the public were in attendance; the names listed are those who gave public comment.

The meeting began at 10:07 a.m.

Welcome

This section begins at 3:00 in the recording.

After a brief delay to ensure quorum was reached, Jason Mancini called the meeting to order, as Chair Denise Merrill was unable to attend. J. Mancini shared brief remarks on the timeline of the commemoration and thanked legislators for their participation.

- Approval of Minutes from [October 16, 2024 Meeting](#) [Attachment A] - begins at 5:20 in recording
 - Motion: Steve Armstrong
 - Second: Melvette Hill

- o Discussion: J. Mancini commented that the upcoming election had been discussed at the October meeting, and that the commission would like to table any discussion of changes to the America 250 initiative from the new presidential administration until more concrete information is available.
- o Vote: Yes (12); No (0); Abstain (1)

National/Regional Update

This section begins at 7:00 in the recording.

Cyndi Tolosa shared updates on upcoming national and regional convenings, including 250 Con in late February (virtual convening hosted by the American Association for State and Local History for small organizations), A Common Cause to All in late March (Virginia, for all state commissions), and a national convening in Washington, D.C. in late July hosted by the national commission. The national America 250 Commission has announced there are no changes to staffing or structure planned at this time.

Two Lights for Tomorrow is a national initiative coming up in April; more information will be forthcoming.

Funding Update

This section begins at 9:50 in the recording.

J. Mancini shared that CT Humanities is working with the CT Office of the Arts, CT Office of Marketing and Tourism, the CT Tourism Coalition, and the CT Arts Alliance on a legislative ask for the 2025-2026 budget. The ask will be \$5M for CT Humanities, \$5M for the Office of the Arts, and \$12M for the Office of Tourism. Embedded in this ask are funds that will be directed to the 250th.

Scott Wands shared an update on CT Humanities grants for projects tied to the 250th that were awarded at the most recent grant deadline. To date, CTH has granted just over \$307k from the CTH Fund and over \$2M from the Good to Great Fund. The next quick grant deadline is in February 2025. The next major grant deadline is May of 2025.

- Recent [CTH Grants](#) for 250th Projects [Attachment B]

Annual Report

This section begins at 13:50 in the recording.

C. Tolosa shared an overview of the Annual Report to the Governor, including achievements from 2024, goals and subcommittee work plans for 2025, and a distribution plan for the completed annual report. A copy of the presentation given can be found [here](#).

Discussion and Questions: Stephanie Thomas asked for clarification on what types of people are leading the town committees so she may do outreach to encourage towns to establish committees. C. Tolosa noted that it is varied by town, so many different constituents could be the “best” person to contact. J. Mancini encouraged those in the room and online to reach out to town leadership if their own town is not yet represented on the map.

Subcommittee Updates

This section begins at 35:05 in the recording.

Governance: Arienne Orozco, subcommittee chair, shared that the Governance subcommittee is now meeting monthly to ensure timely review of affiliate applications. The vast majority of applications thus far have been approved unanimously, with a handful needing additional follow up and just one decline. The subcommittee is requesting assistance from the full commission on identifying gaps in the currently approved affiliates so staff may do additional targeted outreach. Rachel Gonzalez summarized the organizations that have been approved thus far and a brief recap of the first affiliate meeting, which was held virtually on January 8 and was attended by approximately half of approved affiliates.

[Affiliate Program](#) [Attachment C]

Discussion and Questions: Liz Shapiro noted that there may be a need for a press release and/or direct outreach to news outlets to help publicize and share information about the affiliate program. Margaret Khan asked for clarification on what affiliates are being asked to do - the commission/staff just asks that in planning for 250th-related programming, affiliates amplify the commission's themes, as well as to submit events to the commission's calendar and potentially share data on attendance to programming.

M. Khan, A. Orozco, Melvette Hill, Steve Armstrong, and J. Mancini shared additional thoughts on potential organizations to contact.

Education: Steve Armstrong, subcommittee chair, shared updates on the subcommittee's work. Currently a small group is working on a packet of educator resources targeted for Grades 3, 5, 8, and high school, which are the grade levels where social studies standards connect with the Revolution. The subcommittee is also looking to get students involved with local commissions.

Discussion and Questions: Deborah Schander noted that connecting with service organizations like Rotary Club may also be a way to connect with youth-serving organizations as they have youth-affiliate clubs.

Community & Organizational Engagement: Amrys Williams, subcommittee chair, was unable to attend; C. Tolosa provided an update in her absence. The subcommittee has been focusing on engagement with towns, both encouraging new committees to be formed and providing resources to those that already exist.

- [Local Organization Progress](#) & Engagement

Marketing & Tourism: C. Tolosa shared an update on behalf of Anthony Anthony from the CT Office of Tourism. The commission will have access to a portion of CTVisit.com to share America 250 events around the state. CTH staff will be meeting with the Office of Tourism in early February to begin populating the commission's page on the website. Additionally, CTH staff has been working with a graphic designer with the State of Connecticut to develop some graphics for use on the website, marketing materials, etc.

Discussion and Questions: Megan Baker noted that these graphics could be used for a coloring book.

J. Mancini closed by thanking Representative Jason Rojas and his staff for sponsoring the use of the hearing room in the Legislative Office Building, as well as thanking other legislators who attended a portion of the meeting.

Public Comment

This section begins at 1:06:10 in the recording.

Sylvester Salcedo shared that his hometown of Orange will plan to participate, and echoed that outreach to veterans groups is important.

Lee McFadden shared that the CT Daughters of the American Revolution is now an affiliate of the commission, and 4 DAR members are the liaison for their town committees.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at 10 AM
Location TBD

Appendix: [2025 Meeting Schedule](#) [Attachment D]

Attachment A

**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 Commissions 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

Attachment B

250th-Related Grants

CTH Fund

Total Grants: 29

Total Dollar Amount: \$307,340

Good to Great Fund

Total Grants: 8

Total Dollar Amount: \$2,125,434

CTH Fund: FY23

Total Grants: 4

Total Dollar Amount: \$76,186

1. *Gov. Jonathan Trumbull House Interpretative Plan*

Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution

This project will plan a new interpretation for the Gov. Jonathan Trumbull House that will reinvigorate and expand the museum's visitor experience as well as provide direction for the interior restoration of the house to support this new interpretation of the Trumbull family home. The completed project will include a professionally informed understanding of the history and evolution of the house with recommendations for new visitor experiences critical for the re-opening of the museum.

2. *Reinterpretation at Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center*

Keeler Tavern Museum

Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center continues a major reinterpretation, reexamining the stories we tell at our site and prioritizing previously marginalized and/or underrepresented voices and experiences. This project includes research, development, and prototyping for two new tours: "American Dream" explores the promise and myth of that "dream" through the lens of our 20th-century residents; "In Service" shares stories of those who provided and sought services at our site across centuries.

3. *Spirit of Revolution: The Connecticut Line Explored!*

Connecticut Explored

CTExplored will create Spirit of Revolution: The Connecticut Line Explored, a non-competitive online multiplayer digital simulation. It will immerse players in the world of the Revolutionary War to imagine themselves as part of the Continental Army's Connecticut Line from 1775-1781. Players choose an identity from a mix of diverse characters, making decisions that put the fate of the revolution in their hands. The educational game includes age-appropriate curricula to enhance the experience.

4. *Lafayette's Connecticut 1824 Bicentennial Tour*

Norwalk Historical Society

The 1824 Project involves developing an educational and informational website to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the 1824 tour of a Revolutionary War hero, Marquis de Lafayette. It coincides with the 50th anniversary of the American Revolution, with a focus on his time in CT. Lafayette played a critical role in securing victory over the British and cemented himself as a hero of both America and France. The project will honor Lafayette's legacy by partnering with the towns he visited in CT.

CTH Fund: FY24

Total Grants: 16

Total Dollar Amount: \$110,327

5. *Perspectives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color During the Civil War*

New England Civil War Museum

The New England Civil War Museum is proud to re-imagine its tour experience, creating a more inclusive narrative that interweaves the perspectives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals from the American Civil War era. In collaboration with historians, descendants, and researchers in the field of BIPOC genealogy and research, the museum will introduce a sustainably inclusive tour framework to the public at the museum's annual Living History Day, September 28, 2024.

6. *Historical Video of the Stony Creek Quarry in Branford Connecticut*

Stony Creek Museum

The Stony Creek Museum is producing a video of the 150 year history of the Stony Creek Quarry and the thousands of immigrant laborers who provided granite for hundreds of iconic buildings and landmarks around the country including the Statue of Liberty, the Brooklyn Bridge etc. The video uses the expertise of a local historian, a Yale geologist, and local oral history of life in the quarry. Completion planned in 2024 with broad distribution to schools, libraries, and social media.

7. *"Tools for Coming Together" at the Webb Deane Stevens Museum*

Webb Deane Stevens Museum

Webb Deane Stevens Museum's Tools for Coming Together programming uses Wethersfield's colonial history to help people see & empathize with one another as we approach America 250, and features distinguished talent from CT and beyond. Symposia, lectures, performances, & film screening explore the relationship between individuals & community, elevating resonance & dissonance between CT's complex past & current concerns over issues like political speech, "cancel culture," & legislative dysfunction.

8. *Connecticut's role in the founding of United States of America*

Connecticut Heritage Foundation

The Museum of Connecticut History (MCH) at the Connecticut State Library (CSL) seeks funding to support planning for a new CT250 exhibition highlighting items from CSL's collection and key objects from other institutions statewide. With the help of consultants and a steering team, MCH/CSL staff will interpret the state's role in the American Revolution and the founding of the nation and develop an Exhibit Plan that will direct the installation of a CT250 exhibit at the MCH in the future.

9. *The Wide Awakes: Campaigning for Lincoln*

Connecticut Museum of Culture and History

This exhibition at the Connecticut Museum will feature the stories of the Wide Awakes, a nationwide political campaign organization founded by young adults in Hartford who supported Abraham Lincoln during the 1860 presidential election. Open from September 2024 to March 2025, we hope the exhibition will stimulate conversation and reflection about what it means to be politically active in the United States - both past and present - particularly among young adults.

10. *Liberty's Daughters in Northeastern Connecticut: Women, Textiles, and the Nonimportation Movement in the Revolutionary Era*

Windham Textile & History Museum

The project combines an exhibit, demonstrations, material culture, and videos to examine the role played by women in northeast Connecticut and the rest of southern New England in the non-importation movement that presaged the American Revolution. It specifically focuses on women's production of domestic textiles and the ways the Revolution changed that role and empowered women. Its goal is to make recent scholarship available to the general public in a local context.

11. *New Haven Museum presents, "Champion for Freedom: The Reverend Alexander Heritage Newton Story."*

New Haven Museum

New Haven Museum, (NHM), will premiere the documentary, "Champion for Freedom: The Reverend Alexander Heritage Newton Story," by preservationist Dolly Marshall with remarks by independent scholar John Mills and a discussion and Q & A moderated by Andre Keitt at CT's Old State House on Saturday, June 15, 2024, at 1 pm. The free Juneteenth event is part of NH250.

12. *Maritime Trades in the Connecticut River Valley: Surfacing Stories of African Americans and Indigenous Workers*

Connecticut River Museum

The Connecticut River Museum received funding to support the work of a Lead Project Scholar who will work to rediscover stories of those African, African American, Indigenous, and other non-European people who were part of the substantial maritime trade industry beginning in the 17th century and continuing through the steamboat era. This under-researched focus will be the basis for a 2026 exhibit and will broaden scholarly knowledge of maritime trades in the River Valley.

13. *The Future is Here – Building a Better Future for the Ancient Burying Ground Association*

Ancient Burying Ground Association

In its recent history, the Ancient Burying Ground Association (ABGA) has successfully reached organizational goals and priorities to present more programs, build its online presence, and increase participation. The ABGA is now prepared to revisit its mission and vision to create a three-year strategic plan with the assistance of consultant Kathy Craughwell Varda. The plan will set goals and develop an action plan to insure the sustainability and growth of the organization for a better future.

CTH Fund: FY25

Total Grants: 16

Total Dollar Amount: \$147,453

14. *Voices of Portland*

Portland Historical Society

The Portland Historical Society, the town Committee on Solidarity, and the Portland Public Library will produce an Oral History series focused on the stories of Black Americans living and working in Portland, CT. The series will include 4 podcast episodes recorded in fall 2024, and spring 2025, and a live panel presentation in February 2025 for Black History month which will include a “memory recording booth” where all attendees will be invited to share memories inspired by the presentation.

15. *Diasporican: From Dispersion to Integration*

National Puerto Rican Diaspora Museum

"Diasporican: From Dispersion to Integration" is a comprehensive exhibition that will delve into the diverse Puerto Rican identities within the diaspora and document diasporic experiences related to Puerto Rico. Featuring the works of four Puerto Rican artists, the exhibition aims to initiate a dialogue about the ever-changing Puerto Rican community and its ongoing presence in the contemporary United States. The exhibition will run from 10/24/2024 to 02/13/2025, at ECSU Art Gallery.

16. *The Community Reads the New Library of America Latino Poetry Anthology, Places We Call Home*

Central Connecticut State University

The CCSU Latin American, Latino, and Caribbean Center in collaboration with community partners in New Britain, Meriden, and Wallingford, is hosting a Community Reads project around the Library of America's new Latino poetry anthology, "Places We Call Home," from October 2024 to April 2025. Participants will have the opportunity to read and discuss their ideas about the poems with two contributors to the anthology during public programs in October 2024 and April 2025.

17. *Building an American Voice*

Fairfield Museum and History Center

"Building an American Voice" will present an illustrated timeline of important moments in Connecticut's, and the nation's, historic struggle to have everyone's voice heard in the political arena. The exhibition will include objects and original documents that highlight how the history of freedom of assembly, speech, petition, and voting has helped achieve key victories in civil rights, voting, and other freedoms. The Fairfield Museum exhibition will be on view from Sept 13 – Feb 28, 2025.

18. *Fall 2024 Hartford History Lecture Series and Tour*

The Connecticut Democracy Center

The Hartford History Lecture Series returns to CT's Old State House in fall 2024 for its 7th consecutive season with the theme of "New Histories of Hartford." The aim is to bring before the public a variety of Hartford histories neglected or forgotten and uncovered by new scholarship.

19. *Reflections on a Complex Connecticut*

The Connecticut Forum

On November 14, 2024 The Connecticut Forum presents a public discussion, "Reflections on a Complex Connecticut," featuring Dr. Andrew Horowitz, CT State Historian; Christopher Newell, Tribal Community Member-in-Residence, UConn & Director of Education, Akomawt Educational Initiative; Dr. Fiona Vernal, Associate Professor of History, UConn, and Dr. Akeia de Barros Gomes, Senior Curator, Mystic Seaport Museum.

20. *Dinner + Dialogue at the Museum*

Everyday Democracy

Everyday Democracy and the Westport Museum for History and Culture will host an immersive event for Westport-area youth in January 2025. Students will learn from food and cultural experts about Afro-Indigenous foodways and explore connections between regional food culture, historical harms, and U.S. democracy today.

This event is part of Arts, Culture & Democracy, which uses art, culture, and dialogue to engage communities on democratic themes, strengthen social ties, and inspire civic action.

21. *Think What I Have Felt: Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of "Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave"*

Litchfield Historical Society

In 1825, William Grimes published an account of his enslavement, his escape to Connecticut, and the purchase of his freedom at "the sacrifice of all he had earned." In 2025, the Litchfield Historical Society will organize public programs commemorating and elevating Grimes's life and his seminal narrative. On May 3, 2025, we will present a dramatic reading of excerpts from "Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave," accompanied by a panel discussion led by Grimes's descendant, Regina Mason.

22. *New Haven Museum's "Rethinking the Amistad Story"*

New Haven Museum

New Haven Museum, with the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition, and the Amistad Committee, will host Dr. Marcus Rediker on Thursday, April 3, 2025 for a Meet & Greet with New Haven partners and representatives from Amistad sites at 4:30 pm, and a public program at 6:00 pm. Participants are invited to NHM's updated "Amistad: Retold" exhibition to view original artistic works and artifacts as they reflect on Rediker's interpretation of the Amistad.

23. *Their Kindred Earth: Photographs by William Earle Williams: Exhibition & Programs at the Florence Griswold Museum Exploring CT's Black History*

Florence Griswold Museum

The Florence Griswold Museum will present its first solo exhibition by a contemporary Black artist, "Their Kindred Earth: Photographs by William Earle Williams" (February 22 -June 22, 2025). This exhibition of new photographs will reveal unmarked locations throughout Old Lyme and CT with significance to enslavement and emancipation. An array of educational programs—many led by important Black scholars—will help visitors unpack these lesser-known CT stories and grapple with their ramifications.

24. *Planning for Fairfield 250*

Fairfield Historical Society

Fairfield Museum will plan an ambitious series of exhibitions and public programs to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, telling inclusive stories and celebrating the power of place. Funding from CTH will support consultation with humanities scholars, preparing content and design for three exhibitions, and planning for a symposium on the enduring ideals of the Declaration.

25. *The Legacy We Carry: Roots of Resilience, A Black Heritage Exhibit*

African American Society #024

The African American Society #024 (AAS) seeks to conduct an in-depth planning phase focused on engaging community voices, refining exhibit content, and ensuring cultural authenticity—critical steps in designing an inclusive and representative permanent exhibit. This grant will empower AAS to assemble a diverse team of curators, artists, and educators of color from across Connecticut, with a strong emphasis on the careful preservation and impactful presentation of historic cultural artifacts.

26. *Amistad-CT 250th Interactive Experience*

Discovering Amistad

DA is seeking planning funds to advance its “floating classroom experience” for America’s 250th, by developing a variety of interactive exhibits that elevate the narratives of “unsung heroes” of 1839 Amistad Uprising. DA will use its inclusive and culturally relevant approach to share BIPOC American stories and foster civic engagement; including upgrading/creating dockside exhibits, interactive ship portals, narratives and other multimedia components for ship, dockside and virtual.

27. *Indigenous Peoples in the Northwest Corner*

Sharon Historical Society

The Sharon Historical Society and Museum and Litchfield Historical Society will actively engage with representatives of Indigenous communities to create relationships leading to two distinct exhibitions focusing on the Northwest Corner. By building lasting structures that encourage mutual respect, communication, and sharing knowledge, we hope to increase understanding in the area about how Indigenous peoples, colonial settlers, and current residents have shared lands and histories.

28. *The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum will host the Connecticut edition of the National Scrollathon*

Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

To celebrate America’s Semiquincentennial, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum will host the Connecticut edition of the National Scrollathon. This special one-day community event will take place at the Museum on February 25, 2025, and will invite residents from diverse social, ethnic, and economic backgrounds to the Museum to participate in a workshop of civic engagement, asking them to reflect on their experience as an American and what they hope for the future of our nation.

29. *New Initiatives in American Art: Celebrating Puerto Rican Art and Culture [Working Title]*

New Britain Museum of American Art

NBMAA is pursuing a multi-year initiative addressing the intersections, past and present, between the art of Puerto Rico and the U.S., organized around two modes of presentation: 1. collaborations with museums and curators to bring historical Puerto Rican art into dialogue with the NBMAA's canonical American art collection. 2. An exhibition series featuring contemporary Puerto Rican artists and exploring themes of diaspora, community and national identity.

Good to Great Fund: FY23

Total Grants: 8

Total Dollar Amount: \$2,125,434

1. *Tell Us Your Story Project*

New England Air Museum

We're hearing visitors share their own personal stories as they experience the aircraft and exhibits, and we want to build a recording studio to save these memories for future generations. Our recently open exhibits provide emotional impacts to our visitors with their interactive displays proving a link with the visitor. In addition, a large number of veterans who come to the museum and many have flown the aircraft on display we want to encourage them to share their own personal stories.

2. *Restoration and Reinterpretation of the Hurlbut-Dunham House*

Wethersfield Historical Society

The Phase 2 Restoration of the Hurlbut-Dunham House will complete repairs on structural and exterior woodwork, repair windows, provide interior storm windows, repair brownstone sills, and headers, provide a new energy-efficient HVAC system, in addition to plaster repair and painting on the interior of the house. This project will provide a stable building, a healthy climate-controlled environment for visitors, and allow one of the servants' rooms to be interpreted and opened to the public.

3. *Bush-Holley House Preservation and Environmental Upgrade*

Greenwich Historical Society

The Bush-Holley House Preservation and Environmental Upgrade project will provide critical and timely environmental upgrades to protect this 18th-century National Historic Landmark and its collections that include historic artifacts and artwork original to the house and used in its dual interpretation of the Bush and Holley eras. The completion of this project improves the visitor experience and paves the way for the future restoration and interpretation of the back kitchen and slave quarter.

4. *Transforming Connecticut Landmarks Visitor Centers*

Connecticut Landmarks

Connecticut Landmarks will implement improvements to its visitor centers at 5 historic house museums to better connect with visitors and other arts and culture resources in our communities. Additionally, signage and marketing collateral will cohere to the organization's identity as a trusted source for heritage tourism experiences across the state.

5. *Historic Norwich - Site work at the Greenleaf House/Leffingwell House Museum Campus*

Norwich Historical Society

The Norwich Historical Society and our partner, the Society of the Founders of Norwich, plan to create a campus where the c. 1675 Leffingwell House Museum will be the museum space and the Greenleaf house will be the handicapped accessible multipurpose event space. We plan to build off of our 2019 Good to Great grant by implementing site improvements at both properties which includes handicapped accessible parking and access, constructing outdoor event space, and other landscape enhancements.

6. *The EPTN Indoor/Outdoor Archeological Museum*

Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation

Recognizing the connectivity between Native history and culture with CT's emphasis on tourism and visitor experience, the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation (EPTN) is eager to (1) promote our proud heritage and culture (2) develop public programs that value our ancestry, traditions, and way of life, and we will capitalize on the walking tours on our reservation that bring alive our insights and concerns that surely will preserve and foster the well-being for our next seven generations.

7. *Hill-Stead Museum's "Downstairs" Stories*

Hill-Stead Museum

Implementation of state-of-the-art access control will be utilized to secure the museum rooms and the administrative space—formerly the 1901-1946 working part of the residence.

Secure accessibility will allow for expanded behind-the-scenes interpretation of the other family of individuals, the servants, who called Hill-Stead home in the rooms that were once theirs, and also interweave these voices into the existing tour narrative more deeply and consciously throughout tours of the museum.

8. *Pratt House Culture Campus*

Essex Historical Society

EHS seeks to create a "Culture Campus" at Pratt House, expanding our capacity to host collaborative events, such as America's 250th in 2026. We seek to increase the underused site's public relevance by physically connecting it to the town park, adjacent to the Town Hall and Essex Library, by a wooded walk or 'campus connector', natural amphitheater for programs, converting a reproduction barn into a Welcome Center and installing handicap ramps into the house.

Attachment C

Commission Affiliates

- ❖ Afro Caribbean Cultural Center
- ❖ America 250 Norwich CT Committee with support from the Norwich Historical Society
- ❖ Amity and Woodbridge Historical Society
- ❖ Ashbel Woodward Museum
- ❖ Barnum Museum Foundation, Inc.
- ❖ Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
- ❖ Blue Slope Country Museum
- ❖ Bridgeport Generation Now
- ❖ Bristol America 250 Committee
- ❖ Capture Visual Marketing
- ❖ Center for Connecticut Studies
- ❖ Christmas Town 250
- ❖ City Lights
- ❖ Connecticut League of Museums
- ❖ Connecticut Museum of Culture and History
- ❖ Connecticut River Museum
- ❖ Connecticut State Historical Records Advisory Board
- ❖ Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo
- ❖ Conservation ConneCTion
- ❖ CT Daughters of the American Revolution
- ❖ Cultural Coalition - Southeast & Northeast CT
- ❖ Danbury Museum
- ❖ Discovering Amistad
- ❖ Essex 250th Commission
- ❖ Everyday Democracy
- ❖ Fairfield Museum and History Center
- ❖ Fairfield University Art Museum
- ❖ First Night Hartford / Hartford Bonanza
- ❖ Florence Griswold Museum
- ❖ Franklin Historical Society
- ❖ Friends & Neighbors of Putnam Memorial State Park
- ❖ Greenwich Historical Society
- ❖ Historical Society of Easton
- ❖ Historical Society of Glastonbury
- ❖ Housatonic Museum of Art
- ❖ INTEMPO

- ❖ Keeler Tavern Museum
- ❖ Litchfield Historical Society
- ❖ Litchfield Patriots, Inc.
- ❖ Mary Floyd Tallmadge Chapter Inc., NSDAR
- ❖ Mattatuck Museum
- ❖ Middlebury Historical Society, Inc.
- ❖ Middlesex County Historical Society
- ❖ Museum of Connecticut History at the Connecticut State Library
- ❖ Music at the Red Door
- ❖ Mystic Museum of Art
- ❖ Mystic Seaport Museum
- ❖ New Haven Museum
- ❖ New London Cultural District Commission
- ❖ Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society
- ❖ Northwest Connecticut Arts Council
- ❖ Norwalk Historical Society
- ❖ Pequot Library Association
- ❖ Portland Historical Society
- ❖ Public Art CT
- ❖ Putney Chapel Meeting House
- ❖ Quinn & Hary Marketing
- ❖ Rediscovering History, Inc.
- ❖ Ridgefield Commemorates America at 250 Committee
- ❖ Ridgefield Historical Society
- ❖ Salisbury Association Historical Society
- ❖ Shoreline Arts Alliance
- ❖ Sibbil Dwight Kent Chapter of the NSDAR
- ❖ Silvermine Arts Center
- ❖ Stratford Historical Society
- ❖ Suffield Historical Society
- ❖ Temple Beth Israel Preservation Society, Inc.
- ❖ Thames River Heritage Park
- ❖ The Connecticut Democracy Center
- ❖ The Last Green Valley
- ❖ The Ruby & Calvin Fletcher African American History Museum
- ❖ The Troutbeck Symposium
- ❖ Town of Monroe, Edith Wheeler Memorial Library
- ❖ Town of Wethersfield, Connecticut - Tourism Commission
- ❖ Wallingford Public Access Association, Inc. d/b/a WPAA-TV
- ❖ Watertown History Museum
- ❖ Weston History & Culture Center
- ❖ Westport Historical Society, Inc.

- ❖ Westport Museum for History & Culture
- ❖ Winchester Historic Commission

Attachment D

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

Tuesday, February 11, 2025 – 2:00 to 3:30 PM
Tuesday, May 13, 2025 – 2:00 to 3:30 PM
Tuesday, August 12, 2025 – 2:00 to 3:30 PM
Tuesday, November 11, 2025 – 2:00 to 3:30 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, January 13, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Monday, February 10, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Monday, March 10, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Monday, April 14, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Monday, May 12, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Monday, June 9, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Monday, July 14, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Monday, August 11, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Monday, September 8, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Monday, October 20, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Monday, November 10, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Monday, December 8, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 PM

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

TBD

Marketing & Tourism Subcommittee

Thursday, July 10, 2025 – 10:00 to 11:00 AM