



AMERICA 250

CONNECTICUT

administered by
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 signers. They codified for us “certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

As we approach this anniversary, we recognize the many people who fought and died for these rights. 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*

Anthony Champalimaud
Member of the Public

Tom Scanlon
Office of the Governor*

Melvette Hill
Commission on Women, Children,
Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

Andrew Horowitz, Ph.D.
State Historian

Michael Johnson
Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation*

Margaret Khan
Connecticut Library Association*

Robert Kret
Connecticut Museum of Culture and
History

Catherine Labadia
State Historic Preservation Office*

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.



In one word, how do you wish to feel after the 250th?

Role of CT Humanities

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.



Top: 2023 Kid Governor Ellie Mendez is sworn in by Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas at the Old State House
Bottom: Commission site visit on board the schooner *Amistad*

AMERICA 250 | CT THEMES

TELL INCLUSIVE STORIES



The 250th serves as an inspiration to share stories that represent all of its people, past and present. For much of our history, the United States has excluded people 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.

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. 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



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

CONNECTICUT PLANS & PROJECTS

Celebrating July 4, 2026

Connecticut will come together in and around the Capitol on July 4, 2026. In the morning, towns will be invited to nominate a representative to recommit to the ideals outlined in the Declaration of Independence, with a ceremony where every town signs the document acknowledging the anniversary and looking ahead to the future of our democracy.

Later in the day, every municipality and affiliate organization around the state will be invited to participate and host a booth where they are able to share their commemorative projects, promote organizations in their town, and engage with members of the public. The day will also include presentations highlighting the four themes of Connecticut's commemoration, live music, and a fireworks display to end the celebration.

Held in partnership with the City of Hartford and Hartford Bonanza.

Recommitment Ceremony: \$50,000

Fireworks and CT Exposition: \$150,000

Free Museum Admission in Hartford: \$250,000

Free Museum Admission Statewide: \$1,250,000

CT Visit Activation

In partnership with the Connecticut Office of Tourism, the America 250 | CT Commission will create a tourism portal for the 250th on the state's tourism website to facilitate visitation of heritage sites, restaurants, and other local attractions. Support for this initiative will include sponsorship credit across CT Visit, ad buys throughout Connecticut, and opportunities for brand alignment and custom article creation.

CT Visit Sponsorship: \$100,000

Custom CT Visit Article: \$15,000



Top: Connecticut Capitol; Middle: Bushnell Park
Bottom: Commission site visit at Fort Trumbull

Statewide Exhibition

The America 250 | CT Commission and the Connecticut Office of Tourism will work together to create an America 250 | CT Statewide Exhibition and Trail. The trail and exhibition will tie into the four themes of the commission, as well as bring in sites for historic dining and lodging across the state, pulling together tourism, history, and civics to highlight Connecticut's role in the founding and building of the United States of America. The exhibition will focus on Connecticut's story and highlight the importance of people, events, and ideas from Connecticut to shaping our Nation.

Along with the exhibition and trail, educational resources highlighting stories that are featured in the exhibition will be developed and shared with teachers in relevant grade levels. These resources will be tied to the Connecticut Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Standards, approved October 4, 2023.

Exhibition Development: \$25,000
Lending Library: \$15,000
Educational Materials: \$75,000
America 250 | CT Trail: \$150,000



White Oak Tree Project

To celebrate the role of the white oak tree as Connecticut's state tree and honor the history of the Charter Oak, we will share white oak trees with every municipality in Connecticut. Working with the University of Connecticut Extension and its Forest Crew, acorns have been planted and are being prepared for distribution. White oak lumber will also be shared with vocational schools to encourage student projects, and educational materials will be shared with the local school community.

White Oak Tree Procurement: \$2,500
Distribution and Outreach: \$5,000
Plaques for Municipalities: \$25,000
Education and Documentary: \$2,500



Top: Commission site visit on board the schooner Amistad
Middle: Reenactors at Old New-Gate Prison and Copper Mine

Arts and Culture Funding

As a lead funder of cultural and civics organizations in Connecticut, CT Humanities brings together communities and resources throughout our state and has led the cultural sector in developing commemorative activities. It has hosted conferences, webinars, and programming to support nonprofits statewide in bringing the 250th to their local communities. CT Humanities has established the 250th as a funding priority and supported almost 50 projects with \$570,000 in grants, but there is still a need for more funding.



Grants to Date from CT Humanities: \$570,000

Additional Need from Cultural Orgs: \$1,000,000

Funded projects include:

- America 250 in Ridgefield: A Deep Dive into the Declaration of Independence
- Building an American Voice (Fairfield)
- Connecticut edition of the National Scrollathon (Ridgefield)
- Dinner + Dialogue at the Museum (Westport)
- For Which it Stands...A Semiquincentennial Exhibition (Fairfield)
- Gov. Jonathan Trumbull House Interpretive Plan (Lebanon)
- Lafayette's Connecticut 1824 Bicentennial Tour (Statewide)
- Liberty's Daughters in Northeastern Connecticut: Women, Textiles, and the Nonimportation Movement in the Revolutionary Era (Windham)
- Maritime Trades in the Connecticut River Valley: Surfacing Stories of African Americans and Indigenous Workers (Essex)
- Our City, Our Neighborhoods: 250th Celebration (Waterbury)
- Perspectives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color During the Civil War (Vernon)
- Pursuing Equality: The Impact of the Declaration of Independence in Greenwich
- Reflections on a Complex Connecticut (Hartford)
- Rethinking the Amistad Story (New Haven)
- The Legacy We Carry: Roots of Resilience, A Black Heritage Exhibit (Stratford)
- The Phillips Manuscript: A Declaration of Independence from a Formerly Enslaved Man (Hartford)
- The Wide Awakes: Campaigning for Lincoln (Hartford)
- Think What I Have Felt: Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of "Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave" (Litchfield)
- 'Tools for Coming Together' at the Webb Deane Stevens Museum (Wethersfield)
- Voices of Portland (Portland)