



AMERICA 250

CONNECTICUT

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CTh
CThumanities

In 2026, the United States will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, William Williams, and Oliver Wolcott represented Connecticut as 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*

Arienne Orozco
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?

A State of Ideas and Ideals

From our revolutionary origins to today, Connecticut is a driver of American innovation. Connecticut is a maker state, generating ideas and ideals as much as it does creators and entrepreneurs. This entrepreneurial spirit is in our DNA. The 250th presents an opportunity to reflect on and uplift our past achievements while inspiring our future citizens. The power of place—the people, events, and ideas—that created Connecticut are still here. Connecticut will advance itself as a center for heritage tourism, innovation, and education, with a rich cultural landscape and people who change the world.



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

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

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 on to acknowledge the anniversary and look 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 in Bushnell Park to share their commemorative projects, promote organizations in their town, and engage with members of the public. Tourists will be entertained with live music in the park and special performances from the Hartford Symphony.

Around Hartford, museums will be open to the public, with special lectures, exhibitions, and public art installations. Theaters will hold special performances and shuttle services will take people throughout the city.

In the evening, a fireworks display will take place with the Capitol building as the backdrop.

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



Summer at the Museum 250

Museums are at the heart of initiatives related to the 250th in Connecticut. Free admission for Connecticut residents that coincides with 250th activities will expand access to the abundant learning opportunities that are available.

Whether it is through free admission to Hartford-area museums or to museums statewide from July 1-5, it is an opportunity for all Connecticut residents to learn about our rich history.



Statewide Exhibition

The America 250 | CT Statewide Exhibition and Trail will tie into the four themes of the commission to highlight Connecticut's role in the American Revolution for adults, students, families, and visitors to our state. They will tie together stories from the dozens of funded 250th projects around the state to create a fuller narrative of how Connecticut shaped the founding and building of the United States of America.

Sites on the trail will tie together historic dining and lodging, museums, battlefields, and other destinations with a website landing page, digital passport, and proposed itineraries for visitors.

The statewide 250th exhibition will focus on Connecticut's story and prominently feature the people, events, and ideas from Connecticut that shaped our Nation.

Along with the exhibition and trail, we will develop expanded educational resources spotlighting the stories that are featured in the exhibition and trail and share them with teachers in relevant grade levels. Resources will be tied to the Connecticut Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Standards, approved October 4, 2023.



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.



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.



Local Committee Projects

The Commission has encouraged and helped develop activities in Connecticut municipalities through work with local committees. These groups are comprised of individuals and organizations who are passionate about the 250th and what it means to their community. Support for their work would provide much needed funding for local projects including signage, festivals, educational programs, scholarships, and more.



Middle: Commission site visit on board the schooner Amistad
Bottom: Two Lights for Tomorrow ceremony in Bristol

BUDGET

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

ADMINISTRATION	• Management of programs and projects • Travel to national and regional convenings	\$500,000
GRANTS	• Support public arts and public humanities projects • Funding for small activations for 169 municipalities and 250 affiliate organizations across the state	\$1,000,000
EDUCATION	• Coordinate educational resources and teacher support, including field trips and outreach activities	\$500,000
ENGAGEMENT	• Statewide exhibition and Revolutionary Trail • Free admission to CT museums for Connecticut residents to learn about our Revolutionary history • Plant commemorative white oak trees statewide	\$1,750,000
MARKETING & TOURISM	• Advertising costs and media partnerships • CT Visit activation focused on CT250 • Support for 2026 signature events, including July 4th	\$750,000

Public-Private Partnership

Private funding totaling \$3.5 million will support direct expenses of the commission, outlined above, to amplify the reach of the commission's work throughout the state, supplementing \$1 million in state investment for administration and cultural grants.

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

SPONSOR BENEFITS

Sponsors will be recognized across the state during milestone events in 2026 and through post-commemoration initiatives in 2027.

Participation in America 250 | CT

Sponsors will be invited to participate in the shaping the commemoration's plans and projects:

- Periodic briefings about the America 250 | CT Commission's progress
- Opportunities to provide feedback on Commission progress and initiatives via the Advisory Council

Visibility and Recognition

Sponsors will be recognized in numerous ways throughout the duration of America 250 | CT activities:

- Banners at all America 250 | CT signature events, including celebrations in Hartford on July 4th, conferences, and commission meetings
- On the America 250 | CT website homepage and sponsors page
- In all digital communications related to America 250 | CT, including newsletters promoting events, sharing resources, and social media posts
- Exhibition panels at all CTH-funded exhibitions (approximately 15) statewide
- Credit banners at all CTH-funded programs (approximately 100) statewide
- Acknowledgment in all CTH materials, including the annual report
- Recognition of your commitment to the Nation's 250th commemoration in Connecticut presented by Governor Ned Lamont

Naming Opportunities

In addition to opportunities for statewide visibility and recognition, sponsors at the Constitution level or higher may choose to receive title recognition and engagement with one of America 250 | CT's projects, including:

- Connecticut in the Revolutionary War statewide exhibition
- CT social studies social studies teacher resources
- July 4, 2026 signature events
- Revolutionary Trail and CT Visit activation
- Cultural grants to specific areas or types of projects within the state

These and other benefits are open to negotiation.

Sponsorship Levels

In addition to statewide visibility and recognition, sponsors will receive the following for their support:

	Founding Partner \$500,000	Constitution Sponsor \$250,000	Charter Oak Sponsor \$100,000	Liberty Sponsor \$50,000
Naming and engagement opportunity with one of America 250 CT's projects	✓	✓		
Logo recognition with America 250 CT's projects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Representation in the 250th Leadership Committee	✓	✓		
Representation in the 250th Advisory Council	✓	✓	✓	✓
Priority admission to America 250 CT signature events	✓	✓		
Invitations to America 250 CT annual events, including 2026 sponsor recognition event	✓	✓	✓	✓
Opportunities to align your strategic priorities and initiatives with 250th themes via America 250 CT communications	All	All	2	1
Industry exclusivity (scope to be negotiated)	✓			
First opportunity to review and secure new sponsorship opportunities that may develop	✓			
Opportunities to steward the development of legacy projects through 2026 and beyond	✓			
Customized civic engagement opportunities for your employees	✓			

All contributions to America 250 | CT will be administered by CT Humanities, a 501(c)3 nonprofit with EIN #06-0902244. Your gift is tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Please contact Cyndi Tolosa at CT Humanities via phone at (860) 986-6704 or email at ctolosa@cthumanities.org with any questions.

REGIONAL SPONSOR BENEFITS

Regional sponsors will be recognized in target markets across the state during events in 2026 and through post-commemoration initiatives in 2027.

Participation in America 250 | CT

Sponsors will be invited to participate in the shaping the commemoration's plans and projects:

- Periodic briefings about the America 250 | CT Commission's progress

Visibility and Recognition

Sponsors will be recognized in numerous ways in their region throughout the duration of America 250 | CT activities:

- Banners at all America 250 | CT signature events, including celebrations in Hartford on July 4th, conferences, and commission meetings
- On the America 250 | CT website homepage and sponsors page
- In all digital communications related to America 250 | CT, including newsletters promoting events, sharing resources, and social media posts
- Exhibition panels at all CTH-funded exhibitions in the region
- Credit banners at all CTH-funded programs in the region
- Acknowledgment in all America 250 | CT and CTH materials, including the annual report
- Recognition of your commitment to the Nation's 250th commemoration in Connecticut presented by Governor Ned Lamont

Regional Sponsorship Levels

In addition to regional visibility and recognition, sponsors will receive the following for their support:

	Independence Sponsor \$25,000	Provisions Sponsor \$10,000	Eagle Sponsor \$5,000
Logo recognition with America 250 CT projects in your region	✓	✓	✓
Invitations to America 250 CT annual events, including 2026 sponsor recognition event	✓	✓	✓
Priority admission to America 250 CT events in your region	✓	✓	
Engagement opportunities for your employees	✓	✓	
Prominent recognition in your region, including speaking opportunities as appropriate	✓		



Target regions throughout CT will be used for marketing and promotional purposes.

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