



Freedom 250

City and State Toolkit

January 2026



Freedom 250

Dear Friends and Fellow Stewards of America's Story,

In 2026, our nation reaches a milestone that comes only once in a lifetime: the 250th anniversary of the United States of America – This is more than a date on a calendar. It is a generational invitation.

For 250 years, America has been shaped not only by presidents and patriots, but by communities—by cities and states where history unfolded in town squares, on front porches, in factories, classrooms, houses of worship, and along main streets. The Semiquincentennial is our moment to honor that shared inheritance and to pass it forward with intention.

Freedom 250 exists to help unify and elevate this national celebration—to provide a banner under which America can come together to remember where we came from, reflect on who we are, and recommit to the ideals that bind us as one people. But the true power of this anniversary will not come from Washington alone. It will come from you.

It will come from governors who light their capitols in red, white, and blue and invite their citizens to gather in pride and gratitude.

From mayors who reimagine beloved local traditions through the lens of America's 250-year journey. From state agencies, cultural institutions, schools, veterans' groups, artists, faith leaders, and small businesses who see this moment and decide: we will rise to it.

This toolkit is not a checklist. It is a call to imagination and leadership.

Inside, you'll find ideas, frameworks, and resources to help you activate your state or city—whether through large-scale signature moments or deeply local expressions of civic pride. Some communities will create spectacles seen around the world. Others will host intimate gatherings that change lives just the same. Both matter. All of it matters.

Our hope is that you will do more than commemorate history—you will make it.

That years from now, people will say:

“I remember where I was during America's 250th.”

“I remember how my city showed up.”

“I remember feeling proud, hopeful, and united.”

This is your moment to help write the next chapter of the American story.

Thank you for your leadership, your creativity, and your willingness to dream boldly on behalf of your community and your country. Together, let us make the Semiquincentennial a celebration worthy of the past—and a gift to the future.

Keith Krach
CEO, Freedom 250



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Visibility and Branding

Making America's 250th visible, unmistakable, and unforgettable

Visibility matters. These initiatives ensure that residents and visitors alike see the Semiquincentennial reflected across the civic landscape.



Light to Unite

Illuminate your State Capitol and other iconic buildings in red, white, and blue on July 4 and other significant dates.

Public and Private buildings are encouraged to participate!



State-Based Projection Experiences

Replicate the Washington Monument projection show on prominent landmarks or government buildings within your state.

A fee for resizing and projector rentals applies (\$1M+). For more information, contact: contact@teamesi.com

Let's Decorate!



Decorating your State Capitol and key buildings in honor of the Semiquincentennial is a great way to show that you are part of the Movement. We've put together a guide of ideas for any budget:

[Freedom 250 Decorating Guide](#)

For wholesale orders of Freedom 250 merchandise:

[Freedom 250 Wholesale](#)

For custom-scale bunting, column wraps, road banners: Independence Bunting / independencebunting@gmail.com

For custom signage, decals, banners: AMI Graphics / aaron@amigraphics.com

For LARGE custom flags (in any dimension): Colonial Flag / paul@colonialflag.com

Visibility and Branding

(continued)

Making America's 250th visible, unmistakable, and unforgettable

- **State & City Flags:** Fly the Freedom 250 flag at state capitols, city halls, courthouses, and municipal buildings on key dates.
- **Government Seals & Letterhead:** Add a temporary “Freedom 250” mark to official correspondence, proclamations, and press releases.
- **License Plate Decals:** Optional Freedom 250 decals or frames available through DMVs.
- **Transit Branding:** Wrap buses, trains, ferries, or station signage with Freedom 250 visuals and messaging.
- **Landmark Projections:** Project the Freedom 250 logo onto iconic buildings, bridges, water towers, or monuments on select nights.
- **Street Banners:** Freedom 250 banners on main streets, downtown corridors, and near schools and libraries.
- **Time Capsules:** Install a Freedom 250–branded community time capsule in a prominent public space.
- **Co-Branded Festivals:** Integrate the Freedom 250 logo into fairs, parades, concerts, and fireworks celebrations.
- **Opening Ceremonies:** Use Freedom 250 branding at the start of sporting events, cultural festivals, and major public gatherings.
- **Statewide Digital Toolkit:** Provide cities and counties with Freedom 250 logos, templates, and social media graphics.
- **Website Badging:** Add a Freedom 250 badge to state, city, tourism, and education websites.
- **Social Media Moments:** Coordinate statewide “Freedom 250 Days” with shared hashtags and profile overlays.
- **Public Service Announcements:** Short video or audio PSAs featuring local leaders and students alongside the Freedom 250 mark.
- **Airport & Welcome Centers:** Feature Freedom 250 branding at arrivals, visitor centers, and rest stops.
- **Utility Bills & Inserts:** Include a Freedom 250 message or logo on utility bills or mailed notices.
- **Chambers of Commerce and Tourism Boards:** Co-brand economic development materials, tourism ties, and local business events.
- **State-Specific Storytelling:** Pair the Freedom 250 logo with local history—tribal heritage, frontier stories, industrial milestones, or civil rights achievements.

[Freedom 250 Logos + Brand Guidelines](#)

Issue a Gubernatorial Proclamation



America's 250th birthday in 2026 is a once-in-a-generation milestone—an opportunity to honor our nation's founding ideals, celebrate the people and stories that shaped our state, and inspire civic pride in the next generation.

By issuing a Gubernatorial Proclamation recognizing the Semiquincentennial, governors can encourage statewide participation by schools, veterans' organizations, civic groups, and cultural institutions. Several states—including Alabama, Iowa, and North Dakota—have already issued formal recognitions, helping ensure their citizens are active participants in this historic national celebration.



Civic Participation + Education

Inspiring the next generation to understand, honor, and carry forward the American story

Education is one of the most enduring legacies of the Semiquincentennial. These initiatives focus on engaging students, educators, and families in ways that are meaningful, participatory, and aligned with existing curricula.



1776 Presidential Award History Competition (Department of Education)

A new national civics competition for U.S. high school students, testing knowledge of American founding principles with significant scholarship prizes (up to \$150,000), featuring online qualifying rounds and in-person regional/national finals in Washington.

[Link to Website](#)



American Heroes Student Art Contest (Freedom 250 & National Endowment for the Humanities)

The Student Art Contest invites students in grades 3–12 to explore America's history by creating original artwork inspired by the people and ideas that have shaped our nation as we celebrate America's 250th anniversary. State and territory winners will receive a trip to the Great American State Fair.

[Link to Website](#)



My America 2026 (The Rendon Group)

My America is a nationwide, youth-driven art and civic engagement campaign.

Young people across all 50 states will create a large mosaic of an American flag made up of thousands of individual tiles with messages, drawings, poems.

[Link to Website](#)



America's Field Trip (America 250)

Students in grades three through twelve can participate in this essay, poetry, or art contest to win an educational visit to historic and cultural sites in celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary.

[Link to Website](#)

Civic Participation + Education

(continued)

Making America's 250th visible, unmistakable, and unforgettable

Engage students, educators, and families in ways that feel meaningful and hands-on.

Need more ideas? Here are a few below:

- **Founding Documents Day:** readings of foundational texts and an opportunity for students to sign a replica of the Declaration of Independence!
- **Patriotic Assemblies:** Collaborate with local historical societies, reenactors, storytellers, or veterans organizations to put together a 250-themed assembly
- **Freedom 250 Hallway Exhibits:** Rotating student-created displays (posters, timelines, artwork) focused on themes like freedom, innovation, service, or unity.
- **Field Trips:** virtual or in-person visits to local historic sites, museums, or libraries
- **Freedom 250 Service Day:** Students participate in age-appropriate community service projects connected to themes of citizenship, responsibility, and service.
- **Veterans & First Responders Appreciation Assemblies:** Student-led events honoring those who serve, including interviews or letters of gratitude.
- **Morning Announcement Series:** student-led segments highlighting “this day in history”, historical facts, quotes, or stories.
- **Freedom 250 Reading Challenge:** Age-tiered reading lists, a weekly reading time for smaller children in your local libraries (history themed kids books), or a history book club!
- **Pledge to say the Pledge!:** Classroom flag or pledge discussions explaining meaning and history
- **Create Your own contest!** Provide a prompt and present certificates to the winners!

The Founders Museum



Hosting the White House Founders Museum is simple and flexible. It can be installed in state capitols, schools, libraries, or civic centers—bringing America's founding story directly into local communities.

All that's required is a printer and wall space (frames optional). The exhibit features key figures from America's founding, each paired with QR codes that allow visitors to hear these founders tell their own stories—bringing history to life in an engaging, modern way.

[Link to Website](#)



THE PRESIDENTIAL

1776

AWARD FOR CIVICS

CELEBRATE AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY

Learn from the Past & Test Your Knowledge

The Presidential 1776 Award

The U.S. Department of Education, led by Secretary Linda McMahon, has launched the history competition of a lifetime, supported by expertise and resources from the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation. The contest tests student knowledge of the road to independence, the American Revolutionary War, and the ideas that shaped our nation. Open to high schoolers, it includes a first-round online exam (The Impossible Civics Test), in-person regional semifinals, and a nationally-broadcast final in Washington, D.C.

Scholarships

\$150,000

GRAND PRIZE

\$75,000

SECOND PLACE

\$25,000

THIRD PLACE

Important Dates

Registration Window

February 1–21, 2026

Online Test Window

February 22–28, 2026

Sign Up Today!

Receive the contest newsletter and reminders about registration deadlines by scanning this QR code:



Digital Study Library

Available free of charge to help students prepare to compete:



Sponsors

The Presidential 1776 Award is a partnership among:



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JAMES MADISON
MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP
FOUNDATION



THE PRESIDENTIAL

1776

AWARD FOR CIVICS

HOST A TEST SESSION FOR THE **Presidential 1776 Award** IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

The Presidential 1776 Award

The U.S. Department of Education, led by Secretary Linda McMahon, has launched the history competition of a lifetime, supported by expertise and resources from the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation with a first-round online exam (The Impossible Civics Test), in-person regional semifinals, and a nationally-broadcast final in Washington, D.C.

Why Host a Test Session?

- Ensure students who need internet, devices, or a quiet room can participate.
- Provide proctors to support a fair, rule-aligned testing experience.
- Surround students with encouragement from schools, libraries, and local organizations.

How Do I Host a Test Session?

- Offer a 90-minute session(s) during the dedicated testing period.
- Provide in-class, after-school, or weekend sessions in study rooms.
- Ask history classes, community or faith groups, youth organizations, or local public libraries to open their spaces for students seeking a supportive environment.

Important Dates

Registration Window

February 1–21, 2026

Online Test Window

February 22–28, 2026

Test Day Basics

- **Format:** Three timed sections—Foundational, Intermediate, Advanced—30 minutes each (90 minutes total).
- **Breaks:** Up to 10 minutes between sections before the next section auto-starts.
- **Question Type:** Multiple-choice (4 options, 1 correct).
- **Rules:** No notes, books, or aids during the online test.
- **One Attempt:** Each student may take the test once during the window.

Sign Up Today!

Receive the contest newsletter and reminders about registration deadlines by scanning this QR code:



Sponsors

The Presidential 1776 Award is a partnership among:



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JAMES MADISON
MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP
FOUNDATION



Parks & Recreation

Bringing the celebration outdoors and into the heart of local communities

America's public spaces—parks, town squares, waterfronts, and historic sites—are natural gathering places for Semiquincentennial activities.

Park-focused Ideas

- Host State Field Days, celebrating American athleticism, teamwork, and civic pride, while expanding awareness of the Patriot Games.
- Set outdoor challenges linked to the number 250:
 - 250 hours spent outdoors in the year
 - 250 miles walked
 - 250-yard dashes in youth camps
- Activate state parks and historic sites with:
 - America-themed family days
 - Living history demonstrations
 - Ranger-led talks on local contributions to the American story
- Set up a day where you can target to get 250 volunteers giving back in your community through a day of volunteerism.



Candlelight (Electric) Concerts

The Eden Arts and Music Festival, for a small donation, will bring battery-operated candles to fill your park, along with musical performers that can range from a jazz trio to a full orchestra playing the American Songbook. Some performances are already underwritten by generous donors.

Inquire to find out more.

Contact Eden Arts and Music Festival Here



Arts, Culture & Community Life

Celebrating the American spirit through creativity and local expression

America's public spaces—parks, town squares, waterfronts, and historic sites—are natural gathering places for Semiquincentennial activities.

- Bring history to life on stage by partnering with community theaters for American-themed productions and readings (like a public reading of the Declaration of Independence), plus historical reenactments
- Turn spaces into Freedom 250 hubs by curating exhibits, talks, and lecture series that spotlight your state and local stories, unsung heroes, and pivotal moments.
- Host your own creative competitions such as running a one-act play festivals, poetry slams, photography contests, poster design challenges
- Create a community-made installation by inviting people to contribute to a shared piece that grows over time, like:
 - A “What Freedom Means to Me” statement wall
 - A patchwork quilt (fabric squares from families, schools, veterans groups, etc.)
 - A collaborative photo mosaic made from community-submitted images
- Encourage participation in the Great American Arts Competition and the Young Artists American Heroes Art Competition
- Feature Freedom 250–themed items in gift shops, and weave the Freedom 250 flag into this year's outbound touchpoints (member mailers, event flyers, e-newsletters, welcome packets, signage)
- Throw a colonial-style pub night by hosting an after-hours pub evening at a historic site with a colonial theme, period music, simple “tavern fare,” and mini reenactments or scripted readings that make it interactive (toasts, debates, “town crier” announcements).
- Build a community potluck: You provide the space + tables + chairs and the community brings the rest:
 - A dish to share + table settings
 - A short story or family tradition tied to “freedom” or local history for a casual share-out.



Communities can mark America's 250th anniversary through performances, music, exhibitions, and educational programs rooted in local participation.

By drawing on local talent, culture, institutions, and traditions, communities can create programs that honor the nation's history, encourage civic participation, and bring people together in shared public spaces to reflect on the American story.

Arts, Culture & Community Life

(continued)

Celebrating the American spirit through creativity and local expression



Host a Colonial Flag Foundation Healing Field® / Field of Honor® display in your area

Turn a local space into a powerful sea of American flags that unites your community and honors heroes. This is an opportunity to celebrate America's diverse cultures and pay tribute to those who have sacrificed for our freedoms.

Setup as few or as many flags as you would like. Pricing is approximately \$26 per flag (250 flags = \$6,500)

[More Info Here](#)

Host a Freedom 250 Reflections of America Painting Party

Youth and adults are invited to help paint 3,000 floating buoy lanterns that will be installed in the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool this October.

To create this once-in-a-generation installation, the Portraits of Hope team is traveling to all 50 states—visiting schools, libraries, museums, retirement homes, and more. There is no cost to host.

To bring Portraits of Hope to your city, email a request to:

poh@portraitsofhope.org





Signature Freedom 250 Experiences

Turnkey opportunities available to states at little or no cost

These experiences are designed to give states and communities ways to take part in America’s 250th anniversary while highlighting local history, civic pride, and shared national values. Each experience is easy to host, adaptable to local needs, and designed to bring people together—allowing communities of all sizes to participate in a meaningful national moment that honors the nation’s history and enduring ideals.



The Patriot Games

One man and one woman from each U.S. state and territory are invited to compete in a four-day athletic competition. The winners will split \$250,000. More information to follow.



Satellite Participation in Rededicate 250:

Join a national prayer and reflection event on May 17, 2025, with locally organized gatherings and interfaith participation. Streaming provided to the location of your choice!

The Freedom Trucks



Freedom Trucks are no-cost, traveling mobile museums that bring an engaging overview of America’s last 250 years directly to your communities.

Governors and event organizers may request Freedom Trucks to visit State Capitols, Public schools, Parks, Festivals and fairs, and other celebrations.

These turnkey experiences are easy to host, designed for all ages, and integrate seamlessly into existing events—at no cost to your state.

[Request a Freedom Truck](#)

The Great American State Fair

Making America's 250th visible, unmistakable, and unforgettable

The Great American State Fair is a national event on the National Mall in Washington, DC, marking America 250, and it's also a wonderful way for States to showcase their best and future vision of our great nation.

To support this national celebration, states and territories may participate by presenting a pavilion that reflects their history, culture, and contributions to the nation. Pavilions will be designed to create a unified experience across the Mall, while allowing each state or territory to tell its own story.

Anchor pavilions will focus on national themes such as Arts & Culture, Innovation, American Workers, and Agriculture. Programming throughout the Fair will include performances, demonstrations, and showcases, along with traditional fair elements such as food, games, and interactive exhibits.

Location

National Mall, Washington, DC
(14th Street to 3rd Street)

Event Dates

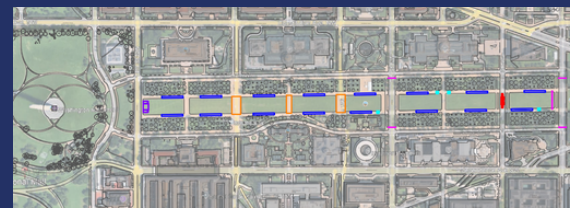
June 25 – July 10, 2026
Open daily

Hours of Operation

Sunday–Wednesday: 10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Thursday–Saturday: 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m.
The event will operate rain or shine.

Key Planning Dates

Pavilion Build-Out (Tentative): June 18–23, 2026
Pavilion Breakdown: Begins July 11, 2026





These ideas are merely a starting point.

Freedom 250 exists to support, amplify, and unify—not to prescribe. The most powerful Semiquincentennial celebrations will be those shaped by the people and places that bring America’s story to life every day.

We look forward to building this historic moment together.

For Additional Questions, reach out to Partnerships@freedom250.org