

United States Semiquincentennial (America250)

The **United States Semiquincentennial**—also known as **America250** or the **Quarter Millennium**—marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The multi-year commemoration culminates on **July 4, 2026**, with nationwide festivities honoring the events of 1776 and the subsequent two and a half centuries of American history.

Organization and Governance

The celebration is coordinated primarily through two federal entities:

- **The U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission:** A non-partisan body established by Congress in 2016 to lead the national planning effort.
- **The White House Task Force on Celebrating America's 250th Birthday:** An executive branch initiative established in 2025 to support and promote anniversary events across federal agencies.

Educational initiatives are led by the **America 250 Civics Education Coalition**, a partnership of over 40 organizations providing programming focused on American history and civic engagement under the oversight of the Department of Education.

National Activities and Observances

Federal legislation, including the **Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016**, directs the government to issue commemorative items and host events in locations of historical significance.

- **Commemorative Coinage:** Under the **Circulating Collectible Coin Redesign Act of 2020**, the U.S. Mint is releasing a series of redesigned coins. This includes quarters honoring women's contributions to American independence and a variety of designs reflecting the nation's heritage.
- **The Sestercentennial Bell:** A new public bell is being cast to lead nationwide ringing tributes, specifically honoring 250 years of contributions by women to the American story.
- **International Fleet Review:** The U.S. Navy will host a massive maritime gathering in New York Harbor on July 4, 2026, featuring approximately 60 ships from 30 different countries.

Leading Cities and Regional Highlights

The commission has designated several "leading cities" due to their central roles in the American Revolution:

City	Key Highlights
Boston	A \$25 million restoration of the Dorchester Heights Monument and a city-wide storytelling project involving a 4-mile "rope of cloth."
Philadelphia	The burial of a time capsule at Independence Hall (to be opened in 2276) and the planting of 76 commemorative trees.
New York	A special countdown event in Times Square on July 3, 2026, leading into the midnight of the anniversary.
Charleston	Large-scale battle reenactments and festivities centered on South Carolina's role in the assertion of liberty.

National Monuments and Events

In Washington, D.C., several major projects and events are planned to mark the milestone:

- **Washington Monument Projections:** A multi-night projection show beginning December 31, 2025, illustrating the history of American independence.
- **National Mall Enhancements:** Proposals for a commemorative arch near the Arlington Memorial Bridge to welcome visitors to the capital's historic core.
- **Public Celebrations:** The White House South Lawn will host various events throughout 2026, including athletic exhibitions and cultural performances intended to bring the celebration to the "People's House."

Legacy and Planning

Planning for America250 has been a decade-long endeavor, spanning multiple presidential administrations. Since 2016, the commission has worked with non-profit partners, such as the **American Battlefield Trust**, to secure funding and develop a framework that honors the full scope of American history. Honorary co-chairs for the commission include former Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, alongside former First Ladies Laura Bush and Michelle Obama, signaling a unified national approach to the anniversary.