

# 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.