

We the People



Culture Builds Community

**Liberty & Justice for ALL:
Juneteenth & America250 Chester County**



In 2026, America Celebrates the 250TH ANNIVERSARY of the Founding of Our Nation

Throughout 2026, the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence is a precious opportunity to inspire the American spirit. It's time to better understand our nation's founding principles, such as **equality, liberty, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly and due process of law.**

With the Community Foundation managing the day-to-day promotion, outreach and countywide heritage infrastructure fundraising, America 250 PA Chester County aims to help all people:

- encounter the many ways in which Chester County participated in and influenced our nation's past, and
- elevate everyone's understanding of our continuing journey to build a more perfect union.

The rich history of Chester County reflects as well as shapes our ongoing pursuit of happiness for all. Here,

- William Penn established a colony based on religious freedom and tolerance
- agricultural bounty and industrial innovation fueled our growth
- on Chester County land, blood was shed in battles of the American Revolution to win our independence from Great Britain
- a deep-rooted commitment to social justice led to a strong anti-slavery movement and women's right to vote.

The America 250 PA Chester County Commission invites everyone to join the year-long commemoration.

MAKE HISTORY ★ INSPIRE & ENGAGE ★ START NOW

www.america250chesco.org



JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

CULTURE BUILDS COMMUNITY

When the Founding Fathers signed the Declaration of Independence in July 1776, they knew there would be **unfinished business**. The second paragraph of the Declaration reads, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that **all men are created equal...**"

However, enslaved people and women had no voting rights and little to no property rights. **The unalienable Rights of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness were not self-evident for all.**

Nearly 100 years later, from 1861-1865 the **American Civil War** was fought, primarily over the long-standing disagreement over slavery. Although President Lincoln's January 1, 1863 **Emancipation Proclamation** was issued during the war, it had little to no impact on enslaved people's freedom in Southern states, as it **couldn't be enforced.**

Juneteenth, or June 19th, is the anniversary of the day that commemorates the end of slavery in the U.S., when General Granger arrived in Galveston TX and freed 250,000 enslaved Black Americans: 2½ years after the Emancipation Proclamation and 2 months after the Civil War ended.

In 2021, President Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law establishing **Juneteenth as a federal holiday.** The Community Foundation fosters Juneteenth commemorations throughout the region. Juneteenth organizers from Coatesville, Kennett Square, Lincoln University, Phoenixville and West Chester convene monthly, to plan and coordinate events.

- Today, Juneteenth celebrates **community, unity, respect and understanding.**
- Juneteenth serves as a reminder that it's **up to all of us to be part of the solution.**
- There's still so much work to do.



www.culturechesco.org/juneteenth

Chester County Juneteenth Celebrations



June 19

www.culturechesco.org/juneteenth

ChesCo Juneteenth Aims & Goals

- ❖ **Enlighten, elevate and commemorate** the end of African American slavery.
- ❖ **Enrich and educate** the entire community on the significance of Juneteenth.
- ❖ Essential as we continue *Journeying Towards Freedom* and equity for all.



Juneteenth Contacts-2024

Coatesville

Donna Roland
Coatesville
NAACP

allgodschildren2@verizon.net



Kennett Square

Crystal Crampton
Kennett Underground
Railroad
crystal.crampton@yahoo.com



Phoenixville

Theresa Thornton
Black Light
Projects
blpphoenixville@gmail.com



West Chester

Alice Hammond & Rev. Dr.
Richelle Foreman Gunther
West Chester
NAACP
ahammond2naacp@yahoo.com
revchele53@comcast.net



www.culturechesco.org/juneteenth

Juneteenth Events Throughout Chester County

- African American History Heritage Tours
- African American Art Shows, Readings, Poetry, Choirs, Dance & Theatre
- Discovering Your Roots & Tracing Your Ancestry
- Freedom Festivals
- NAACP Juneteenth Flag Raising Ceremonies
- Journeying Towards Freedom & Equity for All Keynote Speakers
- Journeying Towards Freedom & Equity for All Religious Services



How Will JUNETEENTH BE COMMEMORATED THROUGHOUT CHESTER COUNTY IN 2025, THIS YEAR? IN 2026, SEMIQ YEAR?



<https://www.culturechesco.org/>

<https://www.vuproject.org/juneteenth>

250 is Coming! 250 is Coming!

1776
+ 250
2026



+

250

=

2026



National



State



County

Friends of America250PA Chester County
28 W. Market St. - West Chester PA 19382
610.696.8211
cc250@chescofc.org <https://america250chesco.org/>

America250PA Chester County is an initiative of Chester County Government,
with the Community Foundation serving as project manager.

Hugh Bleemer, Ajené Livingston, Stephenie Stevens, Outreach Officers
Angela Scully, Jason Arbacheski, Connie Carter, Resource Outreach Officers
Heather Reiffer, 250 Senior Coordinator
Karen Simmons, 250 Project Director, karen@chescofc.org

MAKE HISTORY  INSPIRE & ENGAGE
START NOW

We Invite You to Get Involved

Spread the Word

250 is Coming!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGTN3Udo5Zg&t=46s>

<https://america250chesco.org/>





In 2026, America celebrates the 250th anniversary of the founding of our nation

We ask you to join us as we journey - together - to 2026

With a national goal of being the largest, most inclusive celebration in U.S. history, 250 Commissions are active at the **national**, **state** and **county** levels.

We need your help to enhance and showcase Chester County as we encourage municipalities, institutions, businesses, nonprofits, neighborhoods and residents to join in the **year-long commemoration and celebration of the 250th anniversary of the nation's declaration of independence on July 4, 2026.**

Your support is crucial.

Let's inspire and engage all our communities,
connecting Chester County's stories to the nation's past, present and future



MAKE HISTORY  INSPIRE & ENGAGE
START NOW



- ❖ In Chester County and across the nation, the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence is a unique opportunity to **commemorate historic achievements**, **renew our commitment to democratic ideas**, and **inspire the American spirit**.
- ❖ It's time to better understand our nation's founding principles of **Life, Liberty**, and the **Pursuit of Happiness** which were enshrined in the **United States Constitution**.
- ❖ The rich history of Chester County embodies our pursuit of those **Revolutionary ideals**:
 - Here, William Penn established a colony based on **religious freedom** and **tolerance**.
 - **Agricultural bounty** and **industrial innovation** fueled ours and the nation's growth.
 - Chester County was the site of **decisive military actions** that led to **ultimate victory**.
 - A deep-rooted commitment to **equality for all** supported strong **anti-slavery** and **women's rights** movements.

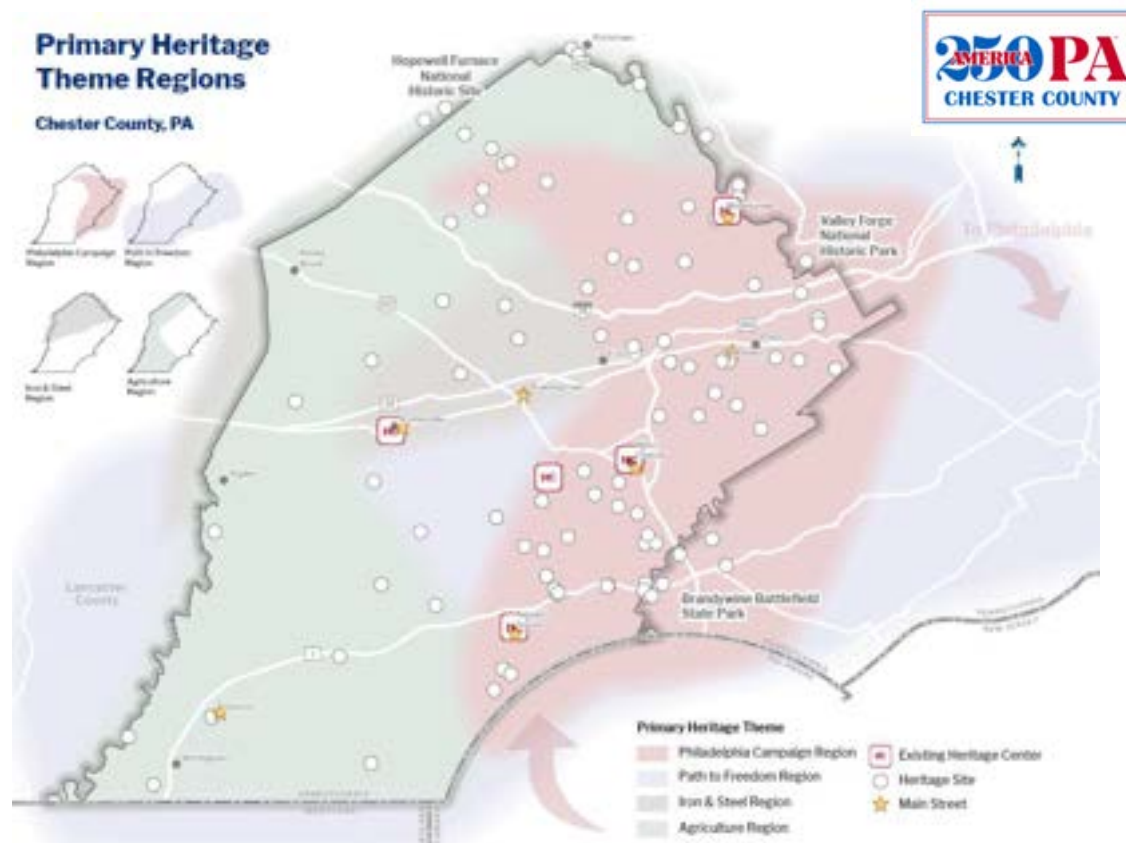


PURPOSE

CC250 aims to promote interactive, inclusive, compelling experiences to commemorate and celebrate the 250th anniversary of the nation's declaration of independence.

We need your involvement to help all people:

- encounter the many ways in which Chester County participated in and influenced our nation's founding and
- elevate everyone's understanding of our continuing journey to build a more perfect union.



Themes & infrastructure drawn from
Chester County Heritage Tourism Plan,
2024
<https://www.chescoplanning.org/Historic/HeritageTourism.cfm>



Heritage Tourism Themes Unique to Chester County / Overlay with 250

AGRICULTURAL BOUNTY/NATURAL LANDSCAPE

Chester County's abundant agricultural resources shape our past, present & future development.

IRON, STEEL & INDUSTRY

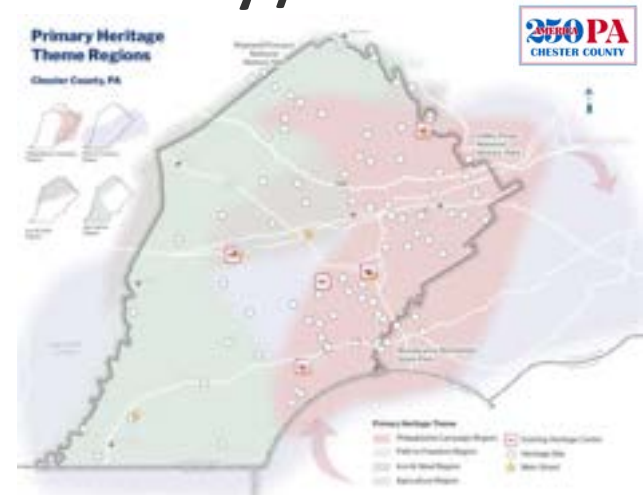
Early iron furnaces & forges flourished in the region, birthing PA's industrial prominence and forging our nation's independence.

PHILADELPHIA CAMPAIGN

From Brandywine to Valley Forge, the Philadelphia Campaign was a turning point in the American Revolution.

PATH TO FREEDOM

The combination of our geographic location and diverse social values shaped our social conscience in ways that continue to influence Chester County today. This includes the Underground Railroad, Women's Suffrage, and Civil Rights, among others.



We the People

CC250's mission is to inspire and engage all our communities in commemoration of America's founding, connecting Chester County's stories to the nation's past, present, and future.
CC250 aims to promote interactive, inclusive, compelling experiences that focus on:
-encountering the many ways in which Chester County participated in and influenced our nation's past
-elevating our understanding of our continuing journey to build a more perfect union.



CC250 urges all to draw upon Chester County's unique array of Heritage **Sites**, combined with Community **Events** and compelling History and Civics **Outreach & Education** initiatives, drawing from:

- **The Power of Our Place**
Agricultural Bounty
Iron, Steel & Industry
Philadelphia Campaign
Pathway to Freedom
- **The American Experiment and Unfinished Revolutions**
by and for **We the People**
Examine our continuing journey of evolving values and creative expression

Themes drawn from Chester County Heritage Tourism Plan, 2024
<https://www.chescoplanning.org/Historic/HeritageTourism.cfm>





US Citizenship Rights

- ✓ Freedom to express yourself.
- ✓ Freedom to worship as you wish.
- ✓ Right to a prompt, fair trial by jury.
- ✓ Right to vote in elections for public officials.
- ✓ Right to apply for federal employment requiring U.S. citizenship.
- ✓ Right to run for elected office.
- ✓ Freedom to pursue “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

We the People

US Citizenship Responsibilities

- ✓ Support and defend the Constitution.
- ✓ Stay informed of the issues affecting your community.
- ✓ Participate in the democratic process.
- ✓ Respect and obey federal, state, and local laws.
- ✓ Respect the rights, beliefs, and opinions of others.
- ✓ Participate in your local community.
- ✓ Pay income and other taxes honestly, and on time, to federal, state, and local authorities.
- ✓ Serve on a jury when called upon.
- ✓ Defend the country if the need should arise.

Draw upon Chester County’s unique array of Heritage **Sites**, combined with Community **Events** & History/Heritage/Civics **Outreach & Education** initiatives:

○ The Power of Our Place

Agricultural Bounty
Iron, Steel & Industry
Philadelphia Campaign
Path to Freedom

○ The American Experiment & Unfinished Revolutions

by and for **We the People**

Evolving Values (socio-cultural landscape)
Creative Expression

WHAT WILL YOU DO TO CELEBRATE & COMMEMORATE OUR 250TH?

We the People

BY THE PEOPLE – FOR ALL PEOPLE
Individuals – Families – Neighbors –
Groups – Businesses – Organizations ... EVERYONE

Decide what you want to do together.

Plan it.

Promote It.

Do It.

Tell CC250,
so CC250 can co-promote.
[https://america250chesco.org/
cc250@chescof.org](https://america250chesco.org/cc250@chescof.org)

★ WHAT DOES YOUR HERITAGE & YOUR FREEDOM MEAN TO YOU?

★ HOW DO YOU WANT TO SHOW IT/SHARE IT THROUGHOUT 2026?



CELEBRATE & COMMEMORATE! TIPS TO GET STARTED

- Recruit a diverse, creative **planning group**.
- Discuss **CC250 aims** as they relate to us (our family/community/site/organization):

We the People

Past: How did we participate in and influence our nation's founding?

Past-Present-Future: From 1776 to today: What linkages do we have to our nation's pursuit of liberty and justice for all, and to our continuing journey to build a more perfect union?

What messages & stories should be shared?
How can we do this?

- This is a time to be imaginative. Entertain many **program ideas to showcase our stories & aims:**

Tours	Freedom Treks	Freedom Scavenger Hunts	Freedom Walks, Runs, -thons
Book Groups	Lecture Series	Community Conversations	Heritage Trivia Games
Performances w/Talk-backs	Movie/Film Series	Theatre-Dance	Visual Art, Textile Art, Photography Shows
Concert Bands	Marching Bands	Choirs	Songs of Freedom & Independence
Food for Thought	Brews & Clues	Community Picnics	\$17.76 Community Meals
Dare to Declare: Read & Discuss Declaration of Independence	Declaration Station	Share Your Heritage Story	Share Your Freedom Story

- Focus on events, sites and stories that are **unique to our community**.
- Discuss how to **engage a variety of people**.
- Forge **partnerships**: consider libraries, arts & culture orgs, bands, community groups, service clubs, scouts, veteran orgs, schools, universities, businesses, hospitality industry, parks, sports clubs/teams, etc.
- Define a **timeline** for planning and implementing our Top Ideas.
- Outline **resources needed**, costs, and likely sponsors & donors.
- Onward! Get It Rolling! **Do It!**
- Remember to **tell CC250** about our events so CC250 can co-promote and spread the word!



Where do we see ourselves in the America 250 initiative? What might we consider doing for the 250th?



PAST:



How have we participated in and influenced our nation's founding?

- What events, sites and stories are **unique to our community**?
- What **messages and stories** should be shared? How can we do this?
- What kinds of programs would **engage a variety of people**?
- What **collaborative partners could help us?** (libraries, arts & culture groups, community groups, service clubs, scouts, schools, etc.)
- Next steps...



Where do we see ourselves in the America 250 initiative? What might we consider doing for the 250th?



PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE:



From 1776 to today: What linkages do we have to our nation's pursuit of liberty and justice for all, and to our continuing journey to build a more perfect union?

- What events, sites and stories are **unique to our community**?
- What **messages and stories** should be shared? How can we do this?
- What kinds of programs would **engage a variety of people**?
- What **collaborative partners could help us?** (libraries, arts & culture groups, community groups, service clubs, scouts, schools, etc.)
- Next steps...

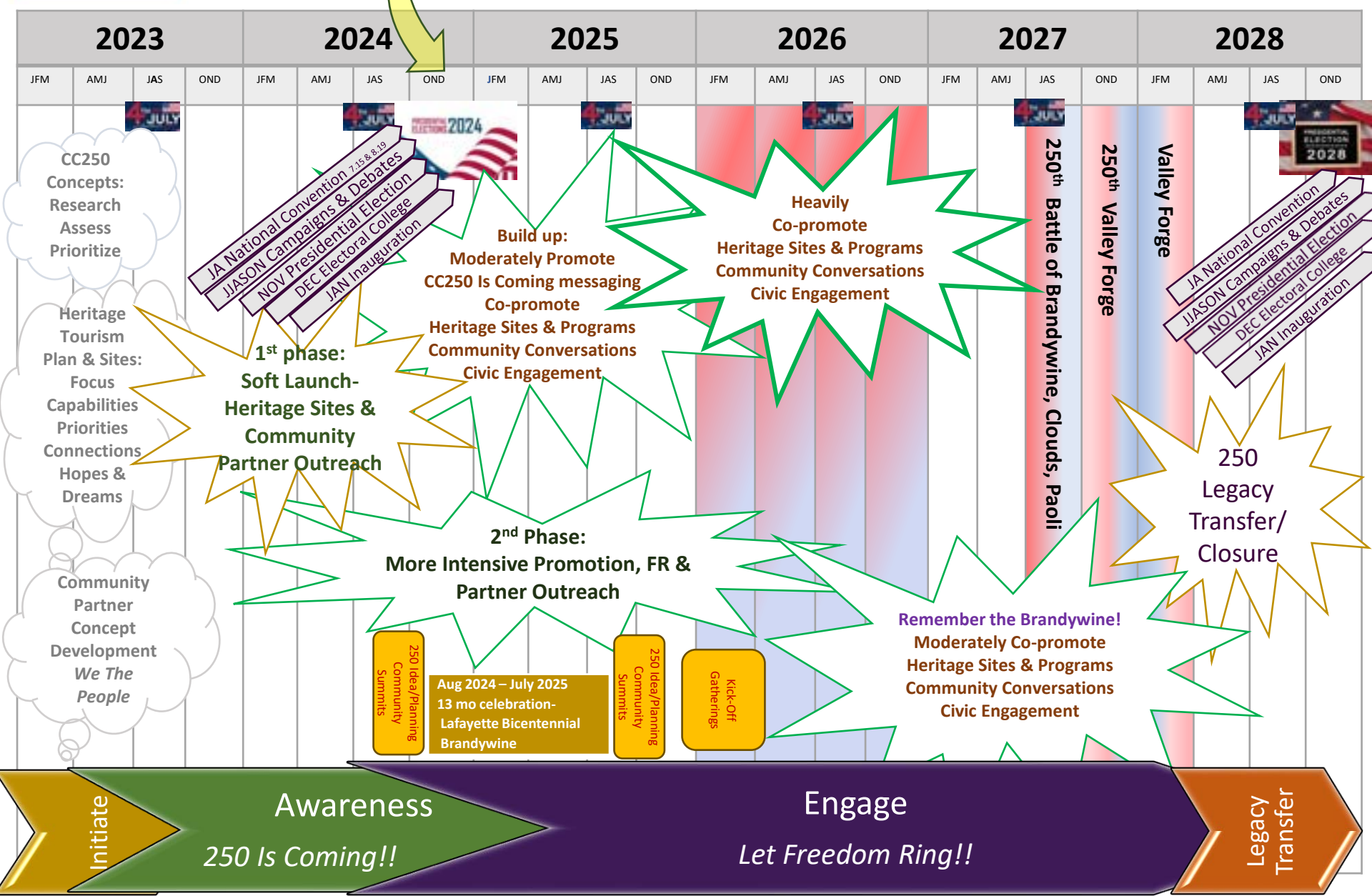
SHARE YOUR STORY – 2 MINUTE VIDEO Q&A

1. How did your family ancestors **participate in** and **influence** the founding of our nation?
2. From 1776 to today: What linkages do you have to our nation's continuing journey of **life, liberty, pursuit of happiness** and **justice for all**, as we build a more **perfect union**?
3. Please tell us about something **at your home** or **in your neighborhood** related to America's journey to **independence** and **freedom**.
4. What do these terms mean to you:
freedom - democracy - the American Experiment - the American Dream
5. Are you **proud to be an American**? Why or why not?
6. Do you believe **your vote matters**? **Every person's** vote matters? Why or why not?
7. What are your **hopes** for how celebrations and commemorations of the 250th anniversary of our nation's Declaration of Independence will **impact *We the People*** of this nation?





CC250: Timeline Amidst Overall U.S. Civic/History Focus



CC250 PARTNER OUTREACH: HELP

Make History **Inspire & Engage** **Start Now**
<https://america250chesco.org/>

PARTNER OUTREACH: LIBERTY & JUSTICE FOR ALL

Municipalities, Historical Commissions:

CC Assoc Township Officials, HARBS, CC Historic Preservation Network, Heritage Sites

Heritage Partner: Brandywine Battlefield /Phila Campaign

Heritage Partner: Path to Freedom (Harriet Tubman workgroup)

Heritage Partner: Iron & Steel

Heritage Partner: Agricultural History

Political & Elected Officials

Federal, State, Local, Mayors, Municipal focused on ChCo Heritage

Mayors & Main Street Programs: WC BID + Kennett Collaborative + Phoenixville+ Oxford Main Street + Coatesville 2nd Century Alliance w/Chambers of Commerce (7-9)

Businesses Small Medium & Large:

CCEDC + CCCBI + 7-9 Local Chambers

Arts, Culture & Heritage Sites

Cultural Alliance of ChesCo

Parks, Preserves, Open Space, Gardens, Environmental

Natural Lands, Longwood Gardens, Brandywine Conservancy

Social Justice & Diversity

IDEA Council of CCCF + Exton Chamber DEI + NAACP WC +NAACP Coatesville+ Black Women of CC in Action+ Latino Lunch Group + Casa Guanajuato + Alianzas de Phoenixville + Asian Amer Assoc + Lenape + LGBTQ + Accessibility

Women: Equality & Justice

W&Girls, Women's Commission, AAUW, Chamber Women's Networking groups, Black Women of CC in Action

Lenape Native Americans: Chief Dennis Coker, Chief Chuck Demund, Chief Adam Waterbear DePaul: Lenape Nation of PA +

Legal Profession: And Justice for All

CC Bar Foundation, CCEPC

Libraries: Chester County Library System

PARTNER OUTREACH: LIBERTY & JUSTICE FOR ALL

Funders & Philanthropy

ChesCo Funders Group at CCCF & Philanthropy Network

Service Clubs

Rotary + Lions + Kiwanis + Optimist + Newcomers

Scouting Groups

Scouts of America + Girl Scouts + 4H

Military & Veterans Service Organizations

CC Veterans Affairs, Veterans Admin, VFW & American Legions

Health & Medicine

CC Hosp + Paoli Hosp + Phnxv Hosp + Christiana Care + CC Med Jnl

Educational Institutions

Especially for volunteer service projects, media editors, forums, class projects, art shows, plays, music & dance concerts; marching bands. Photo & artwork contests. Share my history. Social media crowdsourcing & messaging on justice for all.

Colleges & Universities: Office of the President & Outreach

[Cheyney University of Pennsylvania](#)

[Delaware County Community College](#)

[Immaculata University](#)

[Lincoln University](#)

[Penn State Great Valley](#)

[University of Valley Forge](#)

[West Chester University of Pennsylvania](#)



PARTNER OUTREACH: LIBERTY & JUSTICE FOR ALL

Religious Institutions

Ministerial Alliances in WC, Coatesville, Kennett, Oxford, Phoenixville

Senior Living Communities

Kendal-Crosslands, Jenners Pond, tbd

Sports Teams & Venues

Sports Manager, CCCVB

Restaurants, Bars, Caterers, Food Trucks, Hotels, B&B's

PA Restaurant Association & CCCVB

Educational Institutions & Educational Foundations

especially for volunteer service projects, yearbook editors, school news editors, forums, PTO projects, & celebration events—proms, school art shows, plays, music & dance concerts; marching bands. Photo contests. Artwork contests. History stories.

Charter School & Independent Schools

ADVIS Assoc of DelVal Independent Schools www.advis.org

Charter schools

Achievement House Charter School grades 9–12, Exton

Avon Grove Charter School grades K-12, West Grove

CC Family Academy Charter School grades K-2, West Chester

[Collegium Charter School](#) grades K-12, Exton

PA Leadership Charter School K-12, West Chester

Renaissance Academy Charter School grades K-12, Phoenixville

Sankofa Academy Charter School grades 5–8, West Chester

21st Century Cyber Charter School grades 6–12, Downingtown

PARTNER OUTREACH: LIBERTY & JUSTICE FOR ALL

Independent schools

[Bishop Shanahan High School](#)

Center for Arts & Technology (CCIU)

[Church Farm School](#)

Delaware Valley Friends School

[Devon Preparatory School](#)

Fairville Friends School (Chadds Ford)

Goshen Friends School (West Chester)

Kimberton Waldorf School (Kimberton)

London Grove Friends K (Kennett Square)

[Malvern Preparatory School](#)

The Concept School (6-12th)

Upland Country Day School (K-9th)

[Villa Maria Academy \(Malvern\)](#)

[Villa Maria Academy Lower School](#)

[\(Immaculata\)](#)

[West-Mont Christian Academy](#)

[West Chester Friends School](#)

[West Fallowfield Christian School](#)

[Westtown School](#)

Windsor Christian Academy (K-6)

Windsor Christian Preschool

Regina Luminis Academy

PARTNER OUTREACH: LIBERTY & JUSTICE FOR ALL

Public Schools (14 Districts) via Superintendents, CCIU

Avon Grove School District

Coatesville Area School District

Downingtown Area School District

Great Valley School District

Kennett Consolidated School District

Octorara Area School District

Owen J. Roberts School District

Oxford Area School District

Phoenixville Area School District

Spring-Ford Area School District

Tredyffrin-Easttown School District

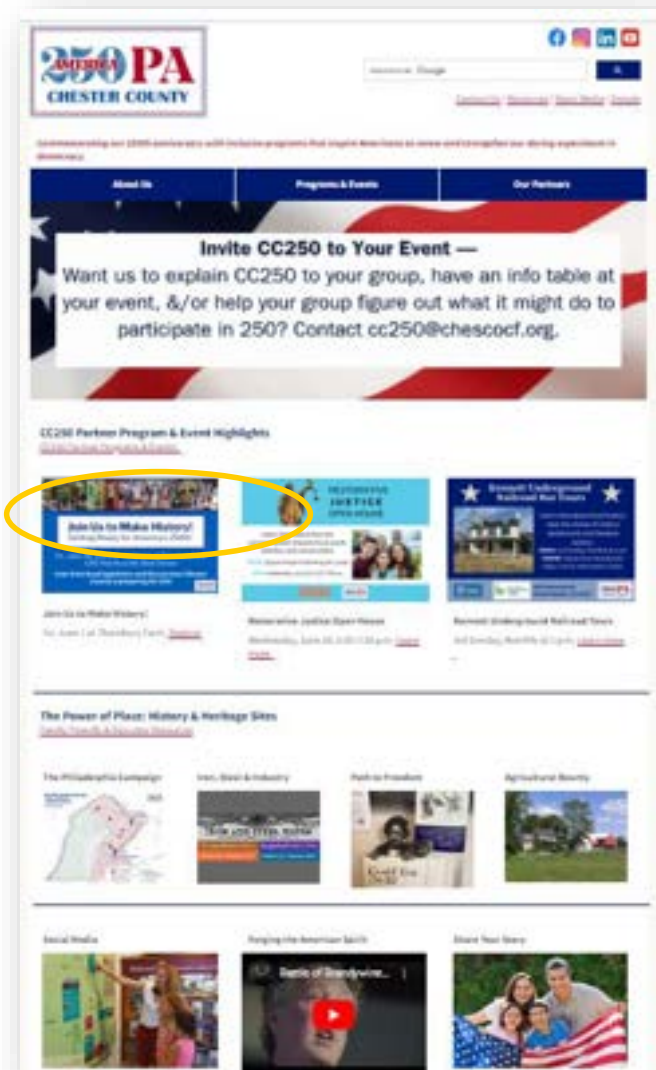
Twin Valley School District

Unionville-Chadds Ford School District

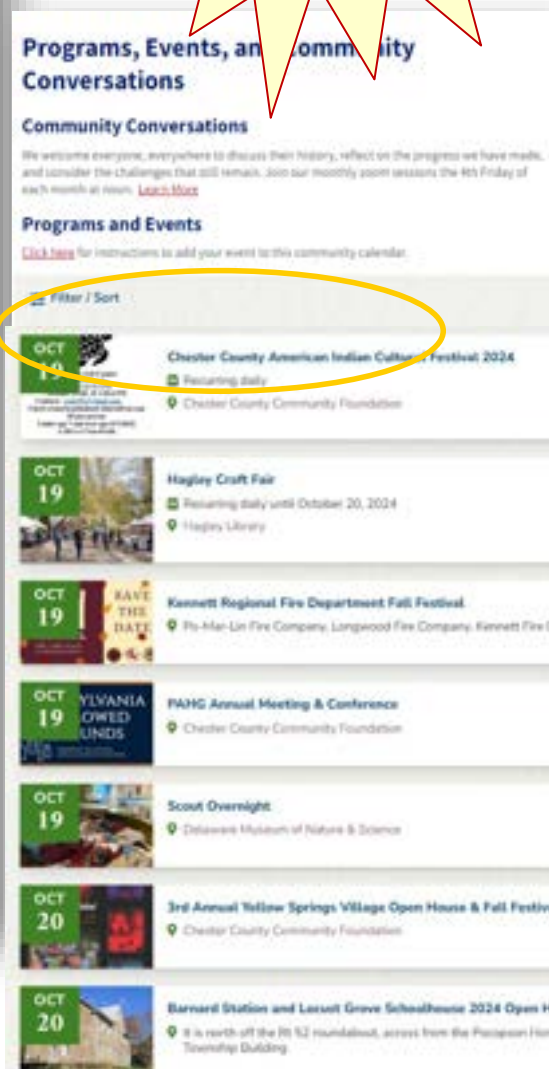
West Chester Area School District



<https://america250chesco.org/>



**CC250
Co-promotes
Your Events**



- If you prefer that CC250 enters your events onto the calendar, email cc250@chescof.org
Re: 250 partner event

Include these fields:

- Event Title
- Admission price
- Event description (100 words or less)
- Is your event one-time or ongoing? If ongoing, is it daily, weekly, etc.?
- Event contact info for questions
 - e-mail
 - website
 - phone number
- Host organization's name
- Event location
 - venue name
 - street address
 - city
 - zip code
- Start date & end date
- Start time & end time
- A photo or graphic that represents your event



Stay Informed and Spread the Word

Be a part of the CC250 community.

Tell us your ideas, share our mission with your friends, family and colleagues, roll up your sleeves, and start planning with your community group.

We need dreamers and do-ers. **We need YOU.**

☐ **Eager to Join Us Now? Dare to Declare!**

Join our email list: <https://america250chesco.org/ContactUs.html>

[Take the pledge online](#) to join our movement to 2026.

Prefer paper? [Here's your written invitation!](#) Print, fill out, and return to us.

☐ **Invite Us to Your Events** — CC250 can meet with your group to explain more. [Let us know.](#)

☐ **Follow, Like and Share** CC250 on [Social Media](#) — Please help us spread the word.

☐ Encourage people to [share their story](#) of heritage, freedom, liberty and justice for all.

☐ **Attend** CC250 Partner Events — [Learn what's happening, where, and when.](#)

☐ **Zoom** into Community Partnership forums, **4th Friday monthly at noon**. Compare ideas with groups throughout Chester County.

☐ Join our in-person **CC250 forums** to share ideas and learn what's going on regionally.

☐ **Freedom Isn't Free.** [Donate to Chester County's 250th Experience.](#)

We need your **ideas, observations and questions.**

Please contact us at CC250, 28 W. Market St., West Chester PA 19382

610.696.8211 cc250@chescof.org <https://america250chesco.org/>





ZOOM IN - JOIN US TO MAKE HISTORY

In 2026, America celebrates the 250th anniversary of the founding of our nation

Let's inspire and engage all our communities in commemoration of America's Declaration of Independence, connecting Chester County's stories to the nation's past, present and future

ZOOM IN TO MAKE HISTORY!

4th Friday monthly, noon-1:

2024: 8/23 – 9/27 – 10/25 – 11/22

2025: 1/24 – 2/28 – 3/28 – 4/25 – 5/16 – 6/27 – 7/25 ...



Register

What Is the Focus of CC250? How Can We Get Involved?
Ideas from Other Sites & Regions...Who's Doing What?

Register for free at

https://chester.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/list/event?event_date_id=2222



Info

ZOOM IN FOR 250 RESOURCE WORKSHOPS

3rd Friday monthly, noon-1:

10.18.24	Developing a Comprehensive Fundraising Plan
11.15.24	Fundraising: Individual Major Donors
01.17.25	Fundraising: Corporate Sponsors & Partners
02.21.25	Fundraising: Foundation Grants
03.21.25	Fundraising: Government Grants
04.18.25	Marketing & Promotion
05.30.25	Marketing: Tell Your Story
06.20.25	Social Media Tips
07.18.25	Recruiting & Retaining Younger, More Diverse Volunteers



Register

Register for free at

https://chester.fcsuite.com/erp/event/edit/eventdate?event_date_id=3046

MAKE HISTORY  INSPIRE & ENGAGE

START NOW

<https://america250chesco.org/> cc250@chescocf.org 610.696.8211

Handouts & recordings & on-line bulletin board at
<https://america250chesco.org/CommunityConversations.html>

America250PA Chester County
is an initiative of
Chester County Government
in partnership with the
Community Foundation

Sample Description to share in newsletters, website and social media

More in media kit at <https://america250chesco.org/News.html>

250 is Coming! 250 is Coming!

America 250 PA Chester County (CC250) commemorates our nation's 250th anniversary with interactive, inclusive experiences in our community throughout 2026.

We invite you to join us to explore Chester County's role in American history and consider how we can continue to build a more perfect union for all.

We encourage all to be involved, to make this a true celebration and commemoration by **We The People**.

For more info, to join forums and zoom sessions, sign up for e-mail notices, &/or to take the partnership pledge, visit <https://america250chesco.org/>

Questions? Ideas? Contact CC250, 28 W. Market St., West Chester PA 19382
610.696.8211 cc250@chescof.org <https://america250chesco.org/>



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<https://www.instagram.com/chesco250/>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/chesco250/>



<https://www.youtube.com/@Chesco250>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGTN3Udo5Zg&t=46s>