



# America250 Federal & National Report

August 18, 2026 – HannaLore Hein, Idaho State Historian, Idaho State Historical Society

## Federal US Semiquincentennial Commission (America250 Commission)

### America250 Program Success Review and Continued National Engagement

On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, during the monthly State and Territories National Coordinating Meeting, Commission Chair Rosie Rios thanked state and territory planners for their leadership in establishing America250 commissions and advancing the nation's Semiquincentennial commemoration across all 56 states and territories. Chair Rios reflected on the success of the Commission's values-based programming, which has combined major shared "moments," including synchronized July 4th celebrations, with ongoing national "movements" such as America's Field Trip, America Gives, America Innovates, and Our American Story.



The Commission emphasized that the conclusion of the July 4th holiday period represents a transition rather than an endpoint. As America250 moves beyond its central Independence Day milestone, the Commission is working to sustain successful programming, extend public engagement, and establish succession plans that will allow selected initiatives to continue throughout 2026 and beyond through partnerships with other organizations.

### America250 Caucus

The America250 Congressional Caucus has grown to 428 members, representing 79 percent of Congress. The caucus includes 100 percent delegation representation in 23 states and territories, while 10 additional states are one member away from achieving full delegation participation. The caucus remains the largest bipartisan and bicameral caucus in congressional history, reflecting strong national support for the commemoration and for programs that promote civic engagement, historical understanding, service, and community connection.

### America's Field Trip

America's Field Trip winners are participating in field-trip experiences and national recognition opportunities through the end of August. The 2026 contest received artwork and writing submissions from all 56 states and territories, demonstrating broad national participation in the initiative.



Idaho was well represented in this initiative, submitting original writing and artwork that reflected their personal understandings of America, citizenship, freedom, service, community, and the nation's future. The program reached students from 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades and included participation from public, private, charter, virtual, homeschool, and alternative-learning settings.



Idaho had one first-place award and four second-place awards.

- First-place recipient Sofia Y., an eighth-grade homeschooled student from Boise, received a field trip to Washington, D.C., including visits to the White House and National Archives. Her winning entry reflected on placing wreaths at a veteran's cemetery and described how volunteer service and remembrance help young Americans understand the sacrifices connected to constitutional freedoms.
- Idaho's second-place recipients included Grace C. of Meridian, Madeleine G. of Hayden Lake, Lillie B. of Post Falls, and MaKadee S. of Jerome. Their work reflected the diversity of Idaho's communities while demonstrating shared themes of liberty, faith, gratitude, military service, rural life, hard work, perseverance, and responsibility to future generations.

A total of 205 Idaho students submitted as part of this contest, up from 63 submissions from the 2024-2025 school year. These submissions reveal a strong connection between national civic ideals and local experience. Students wrote about military families, service projects, farms and ranches, outdoor landscapes, immigration stories, adoption, community generosity, historic memory, and the freedoms that shape daily life. The students also represented communities from across the states, including Boise, Meridian, Eagle, Garden City, Emmett, Nampa, Rigby, Idaho Falls, Firth, Malad, Jerome, Twin Falls, Post Falls, Coeur d'Alene-area communities, Hayden Lake, Harrison, Pinehurst, Salmon-area communities, and other rural areas.

### Our American Story

America250's Our American Story oral and visual storytelling initiative continues to travel the country, recording personal stories that will become part of a permanent national historical collection. The program's Airstream recording studio previously visited Boise's Julia Davis Park on Memorial Day, where Idahoans contributed personal reflections and experiences to the national archive, and it





plans to revisit western states. The America250 in Idaho Task Force will continue to monitor future opportunities to bring the program back to Idaho alongside major public events, cultural programs, oral-history activities, and community celebrations. A summary of the interviews captured in Boise in May 2026 is currently hosted on YouTube and available to review via this QR code.



### America Gives

America Gives continues to advance a nationwide service movement that encourages Americans to record volunteerism, acts of service, and community engagement as part of the nation's 250th anniversary. More than 40 million service hours have been recorded through the program to date, and America250 plans to announce the milestone when participation reaches 50 million hours.

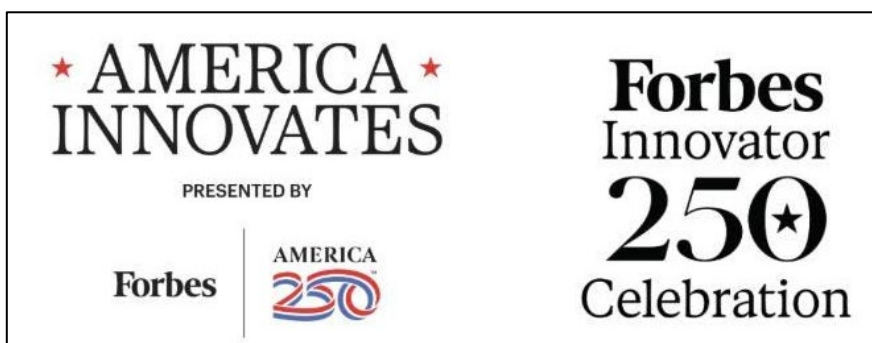
### 25th Anniversary of 9/11

The federal commission plans to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11 in a meaningful way and encourages states to coordinate efforts with national partners, including 9/11 Day and its national Unite for Good campaign. The initiative seeks to make September 11 the largest day of unity, service, and doing good in American history. The national initiative anticipates engaging 50,000 volunteers to pack 17 million meals through its meal-packing events. America250 is also considering coordinating a nationwide moment of silence at 9:11 a.m. on September 11. Additional commemorative activities will include a traveling Unite sculpture installation in New York and a documentary on the growth of 9/11 Day produced by Emmy Award-winning filmmakers Siskel and Jacobs.



### America Innovates and America's Startup

America250 will convene America Innovates in Washington, D.C., November 6–8, in partnership with Forbes. The event, first executed in spring 2026, will focus on the forthcoming Veterans250 and Builders250 networks, recognizing individuals whose leadership, service, innovation, and contributions reflect the aspirations of the nation's next 250 years. America250 will distribute additional information in the coming weeks and will seek recommendations for potential participants.



The Commission also announced the next round of America's Startup, a Shark Tank-style entrepreneurial program for college students, will launch in August, with pitch weekends planned for December. The program gives students a chance to develop original business



concepts, present their ideas to national audiences, and compete for support that can help move promising ventures forward. Idaho has already begun sharing information about this opportunity with Boise State University's Venture College and the university-based entrepreneurship and economic-development network.

### State Dish Project

America250 has announced a new partnership with Goldbelly to create an official State Dish Registry through <http://statedish.com>. The platform invites the public to vote for and comment on iconic dishes associated with each state, creating a national conversation about regional food traditions, local identity, agricultural heritage, and the community connections formed around food.

### Time Capsule Foundation

The National Time Capsule Foundation, based in Arizona, has invited all states and territories to contribute artifacts to the Time Capsule Foundation's America250 time capsule. The capsule will be sealed during a New Year's Eve 2026 gala and preserved at the Arizona Historical Society in Tempe until its planned opening on January 1, 2101. States and territories may submit one or more artifacts that represent their culture, values, achievements, landscapes, communities, or identity in the early twenty-first century. Participating states are allocated an approximate artifact space of four inches by four inches by five inches, while written documents may be submitted more flexibly because they will be digitally preserved and laser-etched onto a durable nickel "Mind File" disk. Each item should include a brief provenance statement explaining its historical significance and why it was selected. The submission deadline is September 15, 2026.

### State and Territory Partnership Agreement Reporting

America250 has asked the 48 states and territories that executed State and Territory Partnership Agreements to submit a final report using a provided template. These reports are due by the end of the calendar year.

## White House America250 Task Force & Freedom250

### Freedom Trucks

Freedom250 launched the Freedom Truck project in February. These trucks are available for events and other visits throughout 2026, and planners can request a visit via an online web portal. Six "mobile museum" trucks are traveling to all states in the continental US, and the truck visited Boise June 7-10.

Inside this 18-wheeler, interactive museum, you can:







- Walk through immersive exhibits that tell the story of how the 13 colonies fought for independence and forged a new nation;
- Explore interactive touchscreens and games that bring key battles, ideas, and turning points to life;
- Meet AI-powered “talking” portraits of the Founders and other figures from the Revolutionary era;
- Take the “Loyalist or Patriot?” quiz and digitally sign your name to the Declaration of Independence; and
- Spend time at a wall of American heroes that highlights the people who have defended and expanded our freedoms over 250 years.

## The Presidential 1776 Award

The US Department of Education reported that more than 8,000 students participated across all 50 states, six territories, and Washington, D.C. Twenty finalists competed in the national final. CBS broadcast the televised special, Presidential 1776 Award: The Ultimate Civics Showdown, on June 30 from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m. Eastern/Pacific, with Mario Lopez serving as host; it became available to stream on Paramount+ the following day. The top three recipients were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> - Miriam Washut of Wyoming
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - Summer Brondstetter of Washington
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - Rowan Kozminski of Michigan

The top three received a combined \$250,000 in scholarships. The Department reported that 1.63 million viewers watched the national final live on CBS.



## The Patriot Games

The Patriot Games, a three-day youth athletic competition, took place at SPIRE Academy in Geneva, Ohio, from August 9–11, 2026. The event brought together 120 high-school athletes, one male and one female, representing every state and U.S. territory. Freedom250 advertised the competition around high-intensity physical and team challenges testing strength, speed, agility, teamwork, resilience, and leadership. ESPN streamed





the competition through its app, and a one-hour highlights special aired on ABC on August 13 at 9:00 pm ET. The awards structure provided a \$250,000 scholarship pool.

### Freedom250 Grand Prix

The Freedom 250 Grand Prix of Washington, D.C. is an INDYCAR street-racing event scheduled for August 22–23, 2026, in the nation's capital near the National Mall. The White House announced the initiative in January through an executive order, presenting it as the first INDYCAR street race in



Washington, D.C., and a motorsports component of the 250th-anniversary celebration.

Reporting describes the course as a 1.7-mile, seven-turn street circuit using portions of Pennsylvania Avenue and Independence Avenue near the National Mall. President Trump hosted a Grand Prix Showcase at the White House on July 13<sup>th</sup>, featuring INDYCAR officials and drivers, including series leader Álex Palou.