

## | Getting to Know America 250-Ohio |

### ***What is America 250-Ohio?***

The Ohio General Assembly created the Ohio Commission for the U.S. Semiquincentennial in language (see [Ohio Revised Code Section 149.309](#)) enacted in 2021 and the Commission was announced on March 1, 2022 at the Ohio Statehouse. The Commission's work is generally referred to as America 250-Ohio. The Commission and its staff are responsible for preparing for Ohio's participation in the nation's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026.

### ***Since this is a national effort, are other states doing the same thing?***

Yes. Congress formed the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission/Foundation in recent years. The national America 250 Commission has encouraged all U.S. states and territories to form state commissions and to make this the largest and most inclusive celebration in our nation's history.

### ***Who is involved with Ohio's new Commission?***

The Ohio Commission for the U.S. Semiquincentennial consists of 30 members and a small staff. Todd Kleismit serves as the Commission's executive director. Jodie Engle serves as managing coordinator, Chris Hurtubise as communications director, and Sherry Heffner as executive assistant. Doug Preisse and Michael B. Coleman, both governor appointees, serve as Commission co-chairs. For a full list of Commission members, visit online: [ohiohistory.org/America250-OhioCommission](http://ohiohistory.org/America250-OhioCommission).



### ***Do you have to serve on the Commission to play a role?***

Absolutely not! America 250-Ohio wants to ensure that all Ohioans have an opportunity to participate in meaningful ways. Ohio's successful participation in the nation's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary depends upon strong local participation. The Commission is just getting started. We are at the beginning of a public engagement process with dozens of organizations and a diverse mix of Ohioans. Ten committees were formed in 2022 to

work alongside the Commission to prepare Ohio to make the most of this historic opportunity. More specific working groups are now preparing to implement some initiatives. What contributions can you and your organization(s) play at the state or local level? You should tell us.

### ***What kinds of things will the America 250-Ohio Commission do?***

The Commission and its staff produced a comprehensive report to state leaders by September 30, 2022. This report (available online) contains general recommendations for the state to consider adopting to make the most of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. These recommendations include both large and small activities, special programs, educational offerings, infrastructure improvements, community events, unique promotions as well as engaging Ohioans online. This report is an important first step in driving the activities and the budget of the Commission's work moving forward. We will not simply wait until 2026, but work to create fun, engaging events while also collaborating with local organizations that want to participate in the nation's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### ***What can I do to help?***

Perhaps the most important thing the America 250 and the new Ohio Commission can do is bring people together. We are often reminded that Americans today are polarized, too often at odds about various political and social issues. America 250-Ohio is striving to bring together diverse voices in unifying ways. We don't all have to agree about how to interpret American history or the founding fathers. In fact, we're far better off thinking critically, asking difficult questions and listening to the perspective of others. If you wish to be part of this journey toward July 4, 2026, with us, please start by visiting our webpage and contacting us at [ohiohistory.org/America250-OhioCommission](http://ohiohistory.org/America250-OhioCommission).