



**memorandum**

**Date** January 15, 2026

**To** Governor Tim Walz, Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan and Members of the Minnesota Legislature

**From** Co-Chairs Briana Joyner and Bill Von Bank

**Subject** Governor's Committee on Minnesota America 250 - Committee Report

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The Minnesota America 250 Committee respectfully submits its updated action plan to the Governor and the Legislature. This report builds upon the Committee's initial planning work and outlines current goals, mission priorities, and recommendations as preparations continue statewide.

The action plan includes the following sections for review:

- **Introduction**
- **Committee Membership**
- **Committee Meetings and Descriptions**
- **Activities for 2026**

Attached is a detailed version of our action plans for Minnesota America's 250 Committee Report.

We appreciate your continued guidance and support of this work for Minnesota and beyond.

Thank you,

Governor's Committee on Minnesota America 250

Briana Joyner (Co-chair)

Bill Von Bank (Co-chair)

Senator Steve Cwodzinski

Molly Huber

Elliot James

Jeffrey Kolnick

Carla Manzoni

Michael Minks

Wendy Petersen-Biorn

Emily Thabes

Dean Urdahl

Kirsten Wittman

**Annual Report of the Governor's Committee on Minnesota America 250**  
**January 15, 2026**

**Introduction**

The Governor's Committee on Minnesota America 250 was created by Governor Walz through Executive Order 23-11 in September, 2023.

Its purposes are to:

- Develop, encourage, and execute an inclusive celebration of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution and subsequent historic events in American history through civic, cultural, and historical education and programming for all Minnesotans.
- Encourage civic, historical, educational, business, and other organizations throughout Minnesota to organize and participate in activities to expand the understanding and appreciation of the American Revolution and subsequent historic events.
- Coordinate with the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission, as well as state and local commissions and private and public organizations and partners, in planning and carrying out this work.

**Committee Membership**

Appointing Authority	Appointee	Role
Governor	Briana Joyner	Co-Chair
Governor	William (Bill) Von Bank	Co-Chair
Governor	Molly Huber	Committee Member
Governor	Elliot James	Committee Member
Governor	Jeffrey Kolnick	Committee Member
Governor	Carla Manzoni	Committee Member
Governor	Wendy Petersen-Biorn	Committee Member
Governor	Emily Thabes	Committee Member
Governor	Michael Minks	Committee Member
Governor	Kirsten Wittman	Committee Member

Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC)	Vacant	Committee Member
House DFL	Vacant	Committee Member
House GOP	Rep. Dean Urdahl	Committee Member
Senate Majority	Senator Steve Cwodzinski	Committee Member
Senate Minority	Vacant	Committee Member

Support	
Organization   Role	Name
MNHS   Vice President for Public Policy and Government Relations	David Kelliher
MNHS   Vice President for Learning Initiatives	Kevin Maijala
MNHS   Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund Manager	Jennifer Gascoigne

The Committee currently has several vacancies, including appointments by the Legislature, and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council. The committee has worked to promote the vacancies to networks.

### **Committee Meetings**

During 2025, the full committee met monthly.

Subcommittees convened on an as-needed basis, consistent with the scope and timing of their respective work plans.

The MN America's 250th Committee has formed four sub-committees to collaborate on various parts of our collective work. Sub-committees are described below:

#### **1. Reports Sub-Committee**

The Reports sub-committee develops the annual report to the legislature/Governor's office and serves as spokespeople for the committee.

## **2. Finance Sub-Committee**

The Finance sub-committee develops budget needs and identifies potential funding sources for MN America's 250th Committee activities. The Committee's work during the current reporting period has been supported by limited funding. This includes \$10,000 in seed funding provided by the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission and an additional \$40,000 in Arts and Cultural Heritage / Legacy funding administered through the Minnesota Historical Society.

## **3. Partnerships and Outreach/Community Engagement Sub-Committee**

The Partnerships and Outreach/Community Engagement sub-committee connects and builds relationships with community partners to help shape Minnesota's commemoration of America 250. Work completed includes: development of the official Minnesota America 250 logo; creation of a dedicated microsite hosted by the Minnesota Historical Society featuring public resources and materials; and establishment of an online submission form to collect information on events and programs statewide.

## **4. Program Development and Strategy Sub-Committee**

The Program Development and Strategy sub-committee develops, gathers, and recommends program ideas that align to America's 250th themes: Unfinished Revolutions, Power of Place, We The People, American Experiment, and Doing History. Other possible themes relevant to the commemoration of America 250 are likely to emerge. Project work includes: Planning and coordination of a July 8, 2026 public reading of the Declaration of Independence at the Minnesota State Capitol, aligned with the historical anniversary of the document's first public reading.

### **Activities for 2026**

In 2026, committee members, with contracted support, will:

- Produce a Minnesota America 250 video. This video will serve as the primary public-facing communication piece for Minnesota's participation in America's 250th anniversary. It will provide a unifying, shareable way to showcase Minnesota's story within the broader American narrative, highlighting who we are, where we come from, and how we see our role in shaping the nation's future.
- Translate the United States Declaration of Independence into the most commonly spoken non-English languages in Minnesota, in addition to Ojibwe and Dakota, along with the production of accessible alternate-format editions.
- Attend and provide information to the Minnesota Council for the Social Studies (MCSS) Conference and the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums (MALHM) Conference.

- Continue to monitor activities of the national America 250 Commission and participate in their virtual and in-person briefings as funding allows.
- Continue to network with historical, cultural, educational, civic, and tourism organizations across the state to promote America 250 activities in Minnesota.
- Identify other opportunities as resources allow.