



April 19, 2023

Dear America250WI Commissioners,

Happy “Lexington & Concord” Day! For those of you that know me and know my love of historical things, I thought today would be an appropriate day to share a program coordination update. I’ve been involved in a few program-related conversations across the country in the last couple of weeks and wanted to share some updates from our colleagues in other states.

1. The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) has published a community guide.

This community guide was developed for state commissions to facilitate community grassroots commemoration interest and initiatives, and provides good inspiration for commissions to consider how best to formally work with local communities and municipalities. It may not be a one-size-fits-all document, but has good resources that the A250-WI Commission may want to consider. http://download.aaslh.org/AASLH_Technical_Leaflet_300.pdf

2. RevolutionNJ – New Jersey’s state commission launched a public awareness and engagement campaign.

Our colleagues in New Jersey have launched a campaign to promote community involvement and to emphasize that their commission’s approach will not be a top-down “this is how you should celebrate”, but rather act as a channel for resources from the national level to enable local community programs to lead the way. Below is a link to their website and the initial resources that they are starting to roll out, such as a draft local municipal resolution, etc. I recommend you check them out.

Their promotional message is:

The 250th Anniversary of the United States is coming in 2026! This once-in-a-generation opportunity allows New Jerseyans across the state to create a lasting legacy. We are asking counties and municipalities to join us in commemorating the 250th by facilitating new partnerships, programs, and events that will engage local businesses, non-profits, artists, scholars, schools, universities, and colleges, libraries, civic organizations, historic sites, community members, and visitors from all over.

Pass a resolution to become an official RevolutionNJ Community (see below for a draft resolution)! Once passed, let us know by filling out the following form <https://bit.ly/revnjcommunity> so we can feature you on our growing list of RevolutionNJ Communities. If you have any questions, please reach out to us at info@revnj.org.

RevolutionNJ Resources:

<https://www.revnj.org/communities>

[RevNJ Community Draft Resolution](#)

[RevNJ Community Brochure](#)

[RevolutionNJ Page on the Historical Commission Site](#)

3. Financial Commitments in Other States.

AASLH has started compiling data on each of the state commissions to find out more about the commission compositions, structures, etc., to help those states that have yet to develop a commission or are just starting to see what other commissions look like as more continue to develop. A frequent topic of discussion is **funding**. Some of the highest budgets that were shared were:

- a. New Jersey: the state committed to \$500,000 annual appropriation for program development, and recently signed a bill allocating \$25 million to promote heritage tourism at their state's Revolutionary War sites.
- b. South Carolina: \$9 million
- c. Virginia: \$7 million
- d. Colorado: \$180,000
- e. Vermont: \$25,000

These states may be the outliers, however, most states – especially those outside the 13 original colonies - have no built-in legislative funding or are in the middle of budget season and are waiting to hear the outcome. Additional data about other commissions will be shared with you when it becomes available.

4. Regional Coordinating Groups are organically forming.

Regional groups were created under the national America250 Commission Foundation, However, that support structure quickly dematerialized due to turnover in the National Foundation.

During and after the summit that was held in Williamsburg, which was organized by Virginia and AASLH, many state commissions' program staffers began forming regional coordinating groups to help support each other and share resources – a grassroots regional "[Committees of Correspondence](#)" you might say.

- a. Colorado convened a group for the western states.
- b. Southern states, such as Alabama, Arkansas, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Texas, have started to develop a "Southern Sister States" group.
- c. The Upper Midwest/Great Lakes region is assembling through the coordination of program staff for Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin. This region has only just started the process of communicating and exploring options for collaboration. The intent of this region is to expand to include Indiana, Illinois, and Minnesota. I will share more as our region develops.

5. Kevin's Fun History Facts:

Today marks the 248th anniversary of the battles of Lexington and Concord that started the American Revolution. You may not realize that there are several Wisconsin connections to that event! One connection is Rufus Carver, buried in Racine, Wisconsin. Rufus was a member of the Northfield, Massachusetts Minutemen Company. The "Lexington Alarm" – the famous call out for the militia started by Paul Revere and Rufus Dawes on the night of the 18th – reached Northfield about noon on the 20th of April 1775. The town's minutemen company was assembled to respond and marched to join the other militia units gathering outside Boston.

Sincerely,

Kevin Hampton
Wisconsin Veterans Museum