

Kentucky
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AMERICA

250

★ KENTUCKY ★

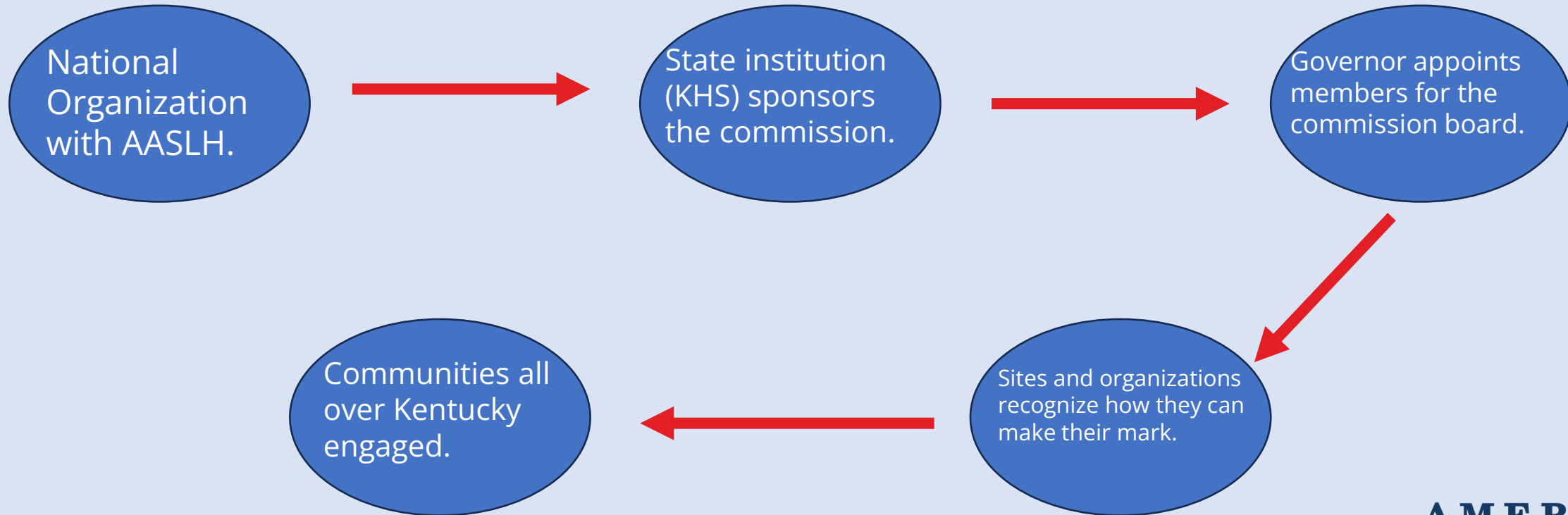
What is America 250?

In 2026 the United States celebrates 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. We are seeking to highlight a diverse and inclusive history about Kentucky's past that reflects on America at 250 years, not only the America of 1776. By reflecting on our growth and changes as a Commonwealth we aim to educate, engage, and unite our citizenry around a shared history. This is a celebration of the American spirit with Kentucky's role in shaping the values that led to the founding and growth of a nation.

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What Is A Commission?



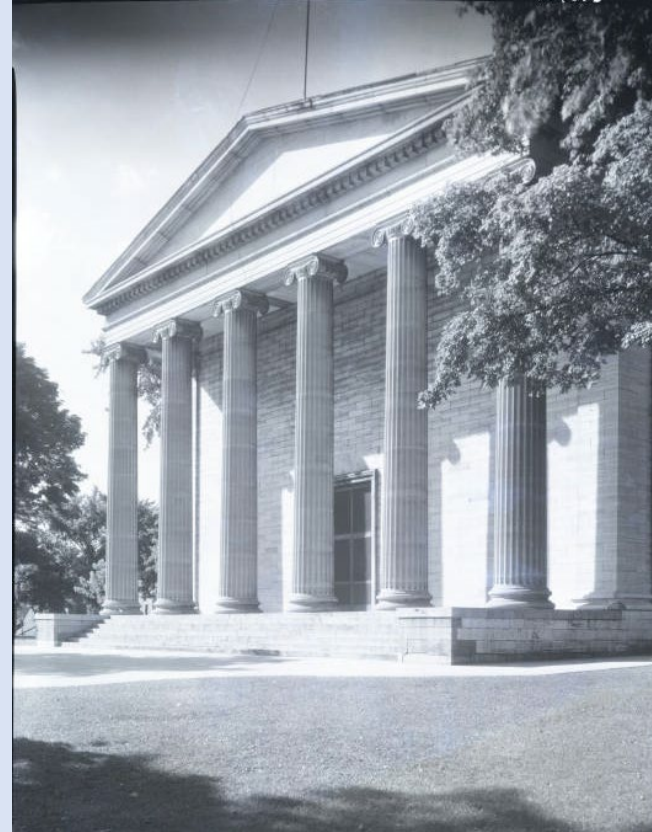
Themes to Guide America250KY

These themes are influenced by the five content areas laid out in the American Association for State and Local History's publication *The Field Guide to the Centennial: Making History at 250*. This guide offers broader program information, while our Kentucky-centric themes can be used as a jumping off point based around commonalities of what it means to be a Kentuckian.



Testbed of Democracy

Granted statehood in 1792, just sixteen years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Kentucky grew with the fledgling United States. From statehood to today, Kentuckians have contended with historic events, legislation, and social movements that have foreshadowed what the rest of the nation would experience.



Photograph taken of the Old State Capitol in Frankfort, KY by Robert W. Tebbs in 1927.
Accession Num. Graphic27_Box3_FF74



Programming Considerations



Photograph of a voting booth in Benham, KY on election day in 1915.

Accession Num. Graphic5.Box1.289

How has Kentucky responded to social, political, and economic changes through legislations?

How might our perspectives of different movements or groups reflect upon our state motto of United We Stand, Divided We Fall?

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I, too, am a Kentuckian

From the time of tribal boundaries through the 21st century, what it means to be a Kentuckian has changed. Across multiple eras in our state's history, people from many backgrounds have sought to find their place in the Commonwealth. From the past to the present, how have people identified and affirmed their role within the Bluegrass State?



Photograph of the cornerstone of Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia in 1900.

Accession Num. Graphic5_Box13_252



Programming Considerations



Portrait of Diadamia Doram (nee Taylor) a prominent, black woman who resided in Danville, KY circa 1839.

Catalog Number 2000.29.2

What does it mean or take to be considered a Kentuckian and who gets to decide?

How have diverse groups of people contributed to the formation of our Commonwealth?

Across Geographies

From small towns to thriving cities, rural landscapes to urban neighborhoods, communities across the Commonwealth identify with our state in different ways. Although our experiences, perspectives, and accents may differ from region to region, our shared history unites us. It also allows us to draw similarities between seemingly disconnected places that help us better understand the past.



Photograph of a two-story ferry at a dock. Smoke is rising from the chimneys. In the distance is a bridge over the Ohio River. Jefferson County.

Accession Num. Graphic26_Box2_222



Programming Considerations



What are the social and cultural moments or symbols that relate one area to another of the state?

What are ways we can share our perspectives and commonalities with others around the state?

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Children topping tobacco in
1916 photographed by Lewis
Wickes Hine in Winchester,
KY.
Accession Num. SC1854_FF1_006

Amplified Influence

Since 1776, Kentucky has stood at the crossroads of multiple historic movements, from westward expansion, the Trail of Tears, the Underground Railroad, the Great Migration, and more. Kentucky's political and cultural output has expanded far beyond the state, influencing our nation's history and broader social trends.



Aerial view of Louisville with many large buildings and a church with its tall spire.
Postcard from Jefferson County, KY.

Accession Num. Graphic26_Box2_171



Programming Considerations



"Our Power is Our People" painted in 1984 by Michael DuVall Finnell.

Catalog Number 2017.141

Who are local figures that have contributed to regional and national movements?

How has Kentucky used movements to contribute to a sense of American identity?



The Past is Present...

What has happened during our past impacts us today. By examining our history, we can better understand the present and prepare for the future.



Quilt by Katie Garrard Wyatt circa 1885.
Collection Number 1992.16.2



Programming Considerations



Clinton Street High School class of 1909,
with their teachers and Professor Mayo.

Accession Num. 1995ph2.10AAFRA31

How has the history in your community or in movements changed over time?

What tools or events can be utilized to help young people take ownership over history?

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Anniversaries in Kentucky History Coming Up

- Choctaw Academy 200th in 2025
- Boone Trace 250th in 2025
- Logan's Station 250th in 2025
- Fort Boonesborough 250th in 2025
- Leestown, Kentucky 250th in 2025
- Thelma Stovall 50 years since elected as first female Lieutenant Governor in 2025
- Scopes Trial 100th in 2025
- Lynch Coal Town 100th in 2025
- Frontier Nursing Service 100th in 2025
- Construction of Kentucky's First Railway 200 Years in 2025
- Moneta J. Sleet Jr's 100th Birthday in 2026
- Ernest Reuben Crowder Jr. casted in Uncle Tom's Cabin with first Black cast 150 years ago in 2026



AmericaKY250 Grant Program

To help communities and history organizations commemorate and celebrate the 250th, the Kentucky Historical Society is proud to announce the America250KY grant program! The America250KY grants aim to improve the programming and sustainability of Kentucky's museums and historic sites as they commemorate the 250 years of American history since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Funding up to \$10,000, museums in Kentucky, local history organizations, public libraries, educational institutions, applicable government agencies, and 501(c)3 not-for-profit institutions are eligible for grant funds.



Examples of Eligible Projects Include

- Research
- Publications
- Exhibition implementation
- Interpretive signs
- Events and public programs
- Educational programs
- Production and implementation of tours
- Planning, including research, collections assessments, exhibition planning, event/programming planning Collections management planning, materials, or software
- Collections preservation, stewardship, or storage supplies and materials
- Digital history projects

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Projects That Are NOT Eligible Include

- Brick-and-mortar projects (i.e. window replacements, shingle repairs, etc.)
- Building maintenance, utilities, grounds keeping, insurance costs, interest or debt
- Payments, or other projects that KHS considers to fall under an organizations' day-to-day or administrative operations Personnel, payroll, or benefits
- Purchasing collections
- Artistic Projects (i.e. public murals, theatrical productions, etc,: Kentucky Arts Council already offers a grant for artistic projects related to America250KY)
- State historical markers
- Fundraising events
- Oral history projects (Kentucky Oral History Commission already offers a variety of grants for the preservation and creation of oral histories)



Application Scoring is Based on the Following

- Relevance of project to America250KY themes (30%)
- Demonstrated ability to complete project (30%)
- Outcomes and impact (25%)
- Originality and quality (10%)
- Budget (5%)



Fiscal Year 26 Application Information

Application Deadline: June 18, 2025

Award Notification: July 25, 2025

Maximum Amount: \$10,000

Cash Match or In-Kind Match Requirement: No



Fiscal Year 25 Grant Cycle

Grant funding totaling \$249,657 will be distributed to organizations statewide to support preparations for the upcoming America250 and enhance their operations. The grant review panel considered over 100 applications. Twenty-nine organizations across nineteen counties are receiving funds.



Current Libraries with an America250KY Grant

Casey County Public Library
Green County Public Library
Jackson County Public Library
Spencer County Public Library

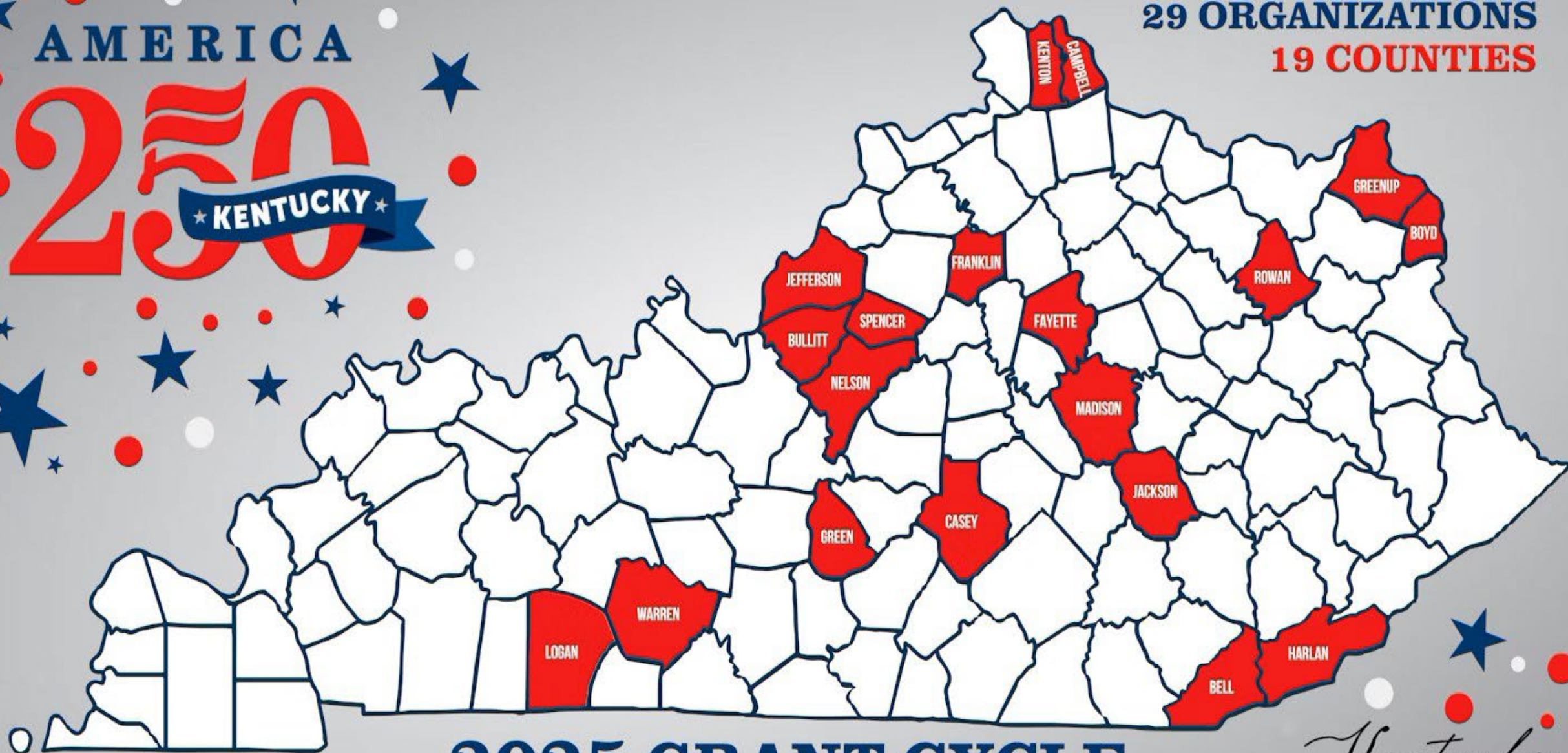


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29 ORGANIZATIONS
19 COUNTIES



2025 GRANT CYCLE
\$249,657 AWARDED

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