

Arizona America250 Commission

Civic Engagement, Education & Community Service Subcommittee

Virtually via Zoom

Meeting Minutes of April 27, 2026

1. Call to order and roll call.

Chair Tighe called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

Subcommittee Voting Members Present:

Paul Tighe, Chair	KaRa Lyn Thrasher	Andy Price
Hannah Rude	Megan Hammond	Colleen Coons
Tara Bartlett	Troy Campbell	

Subcommittee Voting and Non-Voting Members Not Present:

Tracey Benson	Shannon Roberts	Shawnte Rothschild
Tim Carter	Sharon Doyle	Leah Landrum Taylor
Christina Spicer	Glenn Carson	Dawn Wallace

2. Consideration of Meeting Minutes from February 23, 2026

A motion was made to approve the minutes from February 23, 2026, and March 30, 2026. No discussion or objections were raised. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Updates, discussion and possible action on projects and initiatives related to civics engagement, education, and community service in honor of the Semiquincentennial.

a. Read250.

Committee Member Megan Hammond reported that there were no major updates since the previous meeting. She noted that the vendor will now provide usage statistics on a quarterly basis. Libraries across the state continue to actively participate in the program, and additional outreach materials are being distributed. Most recently, approximately \$5,000 worth of stickers and bookmarks were delivered to the Maricopa County Library District. Overall, the program continues to show steady engagement and progress.

b. Fall 2026 essay contest.

Executive Director Laura Terech shared that there are no significant updates at this time regarding the Fall 2026 essay contest. She has scheduled time in early June to begin developing the program, which will be modeled after a similar civic

engagement essay initiative conducted in Missouri. The contest will focus on encouraging student participation in civic topics, with opportunities for recognition at multiple levels.

c. “Dear America, Love Arizona” postcard campaign.

An update was provided on the postcard campaign, noting that submissions have begun arriving from schools and through the traveling museum. The response has been strong, with volunteers spending several hours sorting the postcards, though the process is only about 40% complete. Additional sorting sessions are scheduled, and members were invited to participate as their schedules allow. The postcards have been described as highly meaningful and engaging, offering personal reflections similar to “letters to Santa Claus.” Distribution efforts are underway, with postcards being displayed at locations such as the Arizona Capitol Museum, the Phippen Gallery in Prescott, Pinal County sites, and various State Parks. Members were encouraged to request curated sets of completed postcards for display at their respective institutions.

d. Arizona America250 and America250 logos for high school diplomas.

Committee Member Hannah Rude reported that both the national America250 Commission and the Arizona Commission have approved the use of logos for placement on high school diplomas. These materials have been shared with educators, including superintendents, principals, and other school leaders. While some districts have already printed their diplomas and are exploring alternative options such as stickers, there has been strong interest in participation. Even limited adoption is considered a meaningful success, as the initiative provides students with a lasting commemorative element tied to the Semiquincentennial. Positive feedback has also been received from students and educators.

e. America’s Potluck and America Gives.

An update was provided on the America’s Potluck and America Gives initiatives, both of which aim to increase civic engagement and volunteerism leading into 2026. America’s Potluck encourages communities to host neighborhood gatherings on July 5, while America Gives seeks to make 2026 a record-setting year for volunteer service. Plans are underway to support these efforts through social media campaigns, toolkits, and partnerships with community organizations and sponsors. Ideas such as donating 250 items or \$250 to local causes are being promoted. Additionally, a statewide Week of Service is being organized from July 5 through July 11, featuring volunteer opportunities at food banks and other community sites. America’s Test Kitchen is also supporting the initiative by highlighting a recipe for each state, with Arizona represented by the Sonoran hot dog. Toolkits and additional materials are expected to be released soon.

f. TheirStory activations for oral history collection.

Executive Director Laura Terech provided an overview of the TheirStory platform, which is an oral history tool available through national partnerships. While the platform is considered a valuable resource, it has not been identified as a primary initiative for Arizona at this time. Participation within the state is currently limited, though efforts are underway to increase engagement. The platform allows individuals to record reflections through a guided, interview-style format. Flyers with QR codes, available in both English and Spanish, have been distributed, and members were encouraged to share these materials within their networks and consider contributing their own stories.

g. Volunteer recognition.

An initial discussion was held regarding volunteer recognition efforts planned for Fall 2026. The goal is to acknowledge the many individuals who have contributed their time and efforts to the Semiquincentennial initiatives. At this stage, the discussion is focused on gathering ideas and identifying potential formats for recognition. Members were invited to provide input and participate in planning as the effort develops.

h. Share out from subcommittee members on additional events for possible promotion and co-branding.

Members shared updates on additional initiatives and opportunities for collaboration. Efforts are underway to engage students through civics-focused programming, including partnerships with Interact clubs and increased awareness of diploma recognition opportunities. KaRa Lyn provided an update on a Gen Z-focused event supported by a \$500 Youth250 microgrant. The event is tentatively scheduled for June 26 at the Arizona State Capitol Museum and will target individuals ages 18 to 30. Planned activities include civic engagement exercises, storytelling, and content creation, with a connection to National Youth Takeover Day on June 27. Due to space limitations, attendance will be managed through targeted invitations. Members were encouraged to share contacts and support outreach efforts.

4. Discussion, possible action, and report from the Executive Director.

a. Arizona initiatives.

b. National initiatives.

Executive Director Laura Terech provided a general update on both Arizona and national initiatives. She noted that the subcommittee is transitioning from the planning phase into active implementation, which has resulted in shorter meetings but increased activity across projects. One key upcoming event is the rededication ceremony for the Arizona Bell, which is expected to return to the State Capitol grounds. Tentative dates for the

ceremony include June 16, June 17, or July 8, and the format will likely mirror the Statehood Day event, with indoor programming followed by an outdoor ribbon-cutting ceremony. At the national level, efforts continue to focus on initiatives such as America Gives and America's Potluck, along with new programs like an "America soundtrack." The My America tile campaign is also gaining traction, with increased demand for participation kits. Members were encouraged to regularly check the website for updates and resources.

5. Call to the Public.

The Chair opened the floor for public comment; however, no members of the public came forward to speak.

6. Adjournment.

Chair Tighe adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.