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**Philadelphia 2026 Partner Quote Sheet and Program Descriptions**

**PHILADELPHIA**, May 21, 2024 - Today, Visit Philadelphia was joined in partnership by multiple organizations to share a confirmed slate of events in celebration of the 250th anniversary of American independence, also known as the Semiquincentennial.

Below is a detailed list of events, exhibitions and activities, some starting as early as July 2024, along with quotes from organizational leaders.

**TED Democracy**

Lead Organization: Visit Philadelphia

Press Contact: Jenea Robinson, [jenea@visitphilly.com](mailto:jenea@visitphilly.com)

**Program Description:**

TED Democracy is a series focused on the future of democracy. It will be hosted in the city of brotherly love in partnership with Visit Philadelphia and sponsored by Bank of America, Comcast, and Highmark Blue Shield. Additionally, the program is supported by the Philadelphia hotel community and the Philadelphia Funder Collaborative for the Semiquincentennial. The series is comprised of three main components, including:

- **Fireside Chats, July 9, 2024 - November 2024:** A series of intimate events will be held in Philadelphia to discuss civic engagement and public sentiment ahead of the U.S. general election. These events will be hosted at key venues and live-streamed in public spaces, making them accessible to a wide audience. Each session will feature TED Talks from renowned speakers, followed by a moderated Q&A with the audience. The first event, featuring writer, comedian, and cultural critic Baratunde Thurston, is scheduled for July 9, 2024, at The Barnes Foundation, focusing on the theme "Living in a Democracy" and exploring how we can all be better citizens.

- **Speaker Series, January 2025 - December 2025:** A globally significant TED event series will bring the brightest minds from TED to Philadelphia throughout the year, culminating in the TED Democracy Flagship Event in 2026. Each event will feature three TED Talks by established speakers, tailored to address the evolving needs of our country and community following the 2024 election.
- **TED Democracy Flagship Event, February 2026:** A new, full-day program focused on the exploration of democracy and what it means to modern society. This event aims to celebrate democracy, affirm Philadelphia as a foundation for original thought leadership and the acceptance of differing opinions, showcase and accelerate innovative ideas and solutions, and inspire and inform TED's global audience.

**Quote:** *"Philadelphia has a long history of being a gathering place for new ideas—and in 1776, thought leaders came together to sign the Declaration of Independence, creating the foundation for the United States and modern democracy. Now, Philadelphia is teaming up with TED—another convener of ideas—to create a platform that could shape the next 250 years of democracy globally. This partnership is a testament to the impact we can create when we come together to focus on solutions and encourage action. The entire TED organization is looking forward to kicking off this impressive slate of events and digital launches alongside Visit Philadelphia."* – Jay Herratti, CEO, TED

### **Red, White, & Blue To-Do**

July 2, 2024 and every July 2nd onward

Lead Organization: Philadelphia Historic District

Press Contact: Cari Feiler Bender, [cari@reliefcomm.com](mailto:cari@reliefcomm.com)

**Program Description:** A partnership of cultural and historical institutions and Old City businesses, the Philadelphia Historic District has created a new event for 2024 and beyond. John Adams declared that July 2nd should be a day of "pomp and parade" from one end of the continent to the other. Philadelphia's Historic District will welcome the world to celebrate in the place where it all began. The Red, White, & Blue To-Do will take place throughout America's most historic square mile with the Red, White, & Blue To-Do Pomp & Parade, festooned decor, concerts, games, extended visitation hours at area historic attractions, restaurant specials, and much more. The Red, White, & Blue To-Do will debut on July 2, 2024, continuing to get bigger each July 2nd through 2026 and beyond. For more information, including a list of participating institutions and businesses, visit <https://www.phlvisitorcenter.com/red-white-blue-to-do-philadelphia-pa>.

## Quotes:

*"Red, White, & Blue To-Do highlights the significance of Philadelphia's historical landmarks and institutions. All of the partners in Philadelphia's Historic District are coming together to celebrate and welcome everyone for a memorable day and night." – Vince Stango, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the National Constitution Center*

*"The Red, White, & Blue To-Do will debut this summer and continue to get bigger and more joyful each July 2 through 2026 and beyond, creating memories for residents and visitors. In addition, the 52 Weeks of Firsts, to run from January - December 2026, will highlight the amazing ingenuity of Philadelphians and shine a spotlight on our diverse history." – Amy Needle, President and CEO of Historic Philadelphia, Inc.*

## Young People's Continental Congress

July 15 - 19, 2024 & July 2025

Lead Organization: Carpenters' Hall

Press Contact: Michael Norris, [michaelnorris@carpentershall.org](mailto:michaelnorris@carpentershall.org)

**Program Description:** Inspired by the colonial Continental Congress, which first met in Carpenters' Hall in 1774, the Young People's Continental Congress will host students and teachers from across the country in Philadelphia for an immersive week-long program of history and civics education. From July 15-19, 2024, delegates from the 13 original colonies will participate. In July 2025, delegates from all 56 states and jurisdictions will attend. A Philadelphia-based team will also participate in both years.

**Quote:** *"Carpenters' Hall is proud to launch the city's schedule of Semiquincentennial programming. Just as the First Continental Congress in 1774 laid the foundation for the Declaration of Independence, the Young People's Continental Congress will provide an exciting and inspiring opening act for Philadelphia's 2026 commemorations." – Michael Norris, Executive Director, Carpenters' Hall*

## The Declaration's Journey

October 18, 2025 - January 3, 2027

Lead Organization: Museum of the American Revolution

Press Contact: Beth Ann Downey, [badowney@amrevmuseum.org](mailto:badowney@amrevmuseum.org)

**Program Description:** To celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States, the Museum of the American Revolution will host "The Declaration's Journey" from October 18, 2025, to January 3, 2027. This major exhibition explores the Declaration of Independence's enduring global influence, highlighting its role in over 200 nations' independence movements. For the first time, it will bring together crucial documents, art, and artifacts from around the world that trace the Declaration's complex 250-year legacy. The exhibit aligns with the Museum's mission to share stories of America's foundational struggles for liberty, equality, and self-government. It will also feature extensive public programming, educational resources, and a broadcast series with WHY?Y, enhancing its national impact.

**Quote:** *"The United States Declaration of Independence is Philadelphia's best-known export. Our nation's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary is the perfect time to offer a fresh, nuanced, and inspiring exploration of our founding document and the many political and social movements that it has inspired. In a year when the eyes of the world will be on Philadelphia, a World Heritage City, The Declaration's Journey will share one of the greatest stories never told."*

*"We hope that The Declaration's Journey will inspire visitors to reflect on the meaning of our nation's founding document, its far-reaching influence and its ongoing legacy. Through this world-class special exhibition as well as our core exhibition, digital initiatives and educational programs, the Museum will continue to pursue its mission of sharing compelling stories about the diverse people and complex events that continue to shape the modern world." – Dr. R. Scott Stephenson, President and CEO of the Museum of the American Revolution*

## **250th Birthday of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps**

October 2025

Lead Organization: U.S. Navy and Marine Corps

Press Contact: CAPT Dave Hecht, APR+M, Director of Public Affairs and Outreach, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, [Richard.d.hecht.mil@us.navy.mil](mailto:Richard.d.hecht.mil@us.navy.mil)

**Quote:** *"In addition to the American 250 celebration planned for 2026, Homecoming 250 is working with the Navy and Marine Corps to celebrate their 250th birthday in 2025 here in Philadelphia, the birthplace of both services. More details on that celebration will be announced in the coming months." – Vice Admiral John Gumbleton, Deputy Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command*

## **52 Weeks of Firsts**

January - December 2026

Lead Organization: Philadelphia Historic District

Press Contact: Cari Feiler Bender, [cari@reliefcomm.com](mailto:cari@reliefcomm.com)

**Program Description:** The 52 Weeks of Firsts Celebration, hosted by the Philadelphia Historic District, is a yearlong city-wide event honoring Philadelphia's 250 years of pioneering achievements. Each week from January to December 2026, the celebration will spotlight a different historic "first" — from inventions like bifocals and pencils with erasers to significant locations such as the first hospital and the AME Church, to cultural milestones like the Mother's Day and Thanksgiving Day parades. Events will take place at the original locations of these firsts and will feature speakers, a prominent #1 sculpture, and a Once Upon A Nation story that delves into the history of each innovation. Additionally, a special calendar will guide participants through the celebrations, and a city-wide scavenger hunt will encourage exploration of the #1 sculptures.

## **NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament and MLB All-Star Game**

Lead Organization: PHLCVB

Press Contact: Joe Heller, [j.heller@discoverphl.com](mailto:j.heller@discoverphl.com)

### **Program Description:**

- **NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament:** March Madness comes to Philadelphia in 2026 when the city will host first and second round tournament play at the Wells Fargo Center.
- **2026 Major League Baseball All-Star Game:** In mid-July 2026, Citizens Bank Park will host this multi-day event honoring baseball's best and celebrating America's favorite past-time in the city where America was born.

**Quote:** *"We are thrilled to invite visitors to Philadelphia throughout 2026 as our city will showcase an extraordinary array of celebratory events, premier international sporting events, impactful conventions and more that promise not only to boost our local tourism economy but also captivate and inspire visitors from around the globe. Thanks to our collaboration efforts, we've crafted a dynamic lineup that is as unique as Philadelphia's place in history."* – Gregg Caren, President & CEO, Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau

## **ArtPhilly *What Now***

May 2026

**Lead Organization:** ArtPhilly

Press Contact: Bill Adair, [bill@artphilly.org](mailto:bill@artphilly.org)

**Program Description:** *ArtPhilly What Now* will be a major collaborative moment in our city, placing artists, neighborhoods and arts organizations at the center of critical civic dialogue on the country's past, present, and— most importantly— future. In May 2026, ArtPhilly will present *What Now*, a 10-day, multidisciplinary festival featuring people, performances, and projects which embody the nature of living, being, and creating in Philadelphia.

**Quote:** *“Artists are the best interpreters of history. ArtPhilly is excited to meet the moment in 2026 to discover possibilities and awaken creative curiosities with the simple but infinite festival theme of What Now. We're ready to emphasize the significance and power of Philadelphia's art community through the perspective of our best storytellers, our artists.”* – Bill Adair, Executive Director, ArtPhilly

## **FIFA World Cup 26™**

June 11 – July 19, 2026

**Lead Organization:** Philadelphia Soccer 2026

Press Contact: Melissa Ferdinand, [mferdinand@philadelphia2026.com](mailto:mferdinand@philadelphia2026.com)

**Program Description:** Join us in Philadelphia for an electrifying celebration of soccer as we proudly host six thrilling FIFA World Cup matches during the 2026 tournament running from June 11 – July 19. Philadelphia's matches culminate in a knock-out round showdown on July 4th, coinciding with the semiquincentennial anniversary of our great nation. Experience the passion and excitement of the world's most prestigious soccer tournament right here in the heart of the City of Brotherly Love. But the excitement doesn't stop there! As part of the festivities, Philadelphia welcomes all to the FIFA FanFestival™, a 40-day extravaganza of entertainment, food, and drink, free for residents, fans, and visitors alike. Immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere as we come together to celebrate the beautiful game and create unforgettable memories that will resonate for years to come.

**Quote:** *“Philadelphia Soccer 2026 is thrilled to be spearheading the monumental task of hosting six FIFA World Cup matches in our vibrant city. The world's largest sporting event isn't just about showcasing world-class soccer; it's about bringing communities together, fostering cultural exchange, and leaving a lasting legacy for Philadelphia. We're dedicated to delivering an unforgettable experience for fans, visitors and residents alike. Together with Visit Philadelphia and our partners, we're committed to making 2026 a*

*year to remember, showcasing the very best of Philadelphia to the world.” – Allison Grove, Senior Advisor to the Host City, Executive and Director, Strategic Partnerships*

## **Printmaking by the People: Citywide Voices of 2026**

Fall 2024 - 2026

Lead Organization: Mural Arts

Press Contact: Kaitlyn Haney, [khaney@signature57.com](mailto:khaney@signature57.com)

- **Program Description:** Starting Fall 2024 through 2026, Mural Arts Philadelphia will engage the community in a citywide printmaking and mural project entitled *Printmaking by the People* to explore the meaning of the semiquincentennial, shared values, and desired changes. Through artist-led conversations and workshops, participants will create prints and posters, culminating in a major community-dedicated mural that will be a lasting testament to this period of time in our country and city.
- **Quote:** *"Printmaking by the People is an inspiring initiative that invites Philadelphians to shape the narrative of our city's future as we approach the semiquincentennial. This project celebrates the power of art to amplify voices and spark vital conversations, creating a legacy of unity, creativity, and shared values that will resonate for generations to come."* – Jane Golden, Executive Director of Mural Arts Philadelphia.

### **Additional Partners and Sponsor Quotes:**

#### **America250**

*"I am thrilled to see communities across the nation enthusiastically gearing up with programming and events to celebrate our country's 250th anniversary. These efforts are vital to bringing the 250th to life for every American. Philadelphia holds a unique and pivotal place in the founding of our country, and its contributions to our nation's history are immeasurable. We look forward to collaborating with the City of Philadelphia and its event organizers as we commemorate this significant milestone, ensuring that the rich stories, culture, and history of Philadelphians are shared with the entire nation."* – Rosie Rios, U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission Chair

#### **U.S. Congressman Dwight Evans**

*"This celebration honors Philadelphia's outsized role in American history, and in moments like these I'm reminded of what Benjamin Franklin said at the end of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. When asked what form of government we would have: 'a republic or a monarchy?' - he said, 'A republic, if you can keep it.' The 250th anniversary of American independence provides us an opportunity to do our part to keep and protect our democracy and hard-won voting rights for ourselves and the next generation."*

## **America250PA**

*“As we approach America’s 250th anniversary in 2026, America250PA is striving to commemorate Pennsylvania’s integral role in the founding of the United States and the impact of its people on the Nation’s past, present, and future. With Philadelphia being the birthplace of American democracy, the Semiquincentennial is a wonderful time to bring this history to the forefront, recognize and celebrate the contributions of Pennsylvanians, and inspire our next generation to continue learning about and preserving our Commonwealth’s history with the goal of an even brighter future. We encourage every Pennsylvanian from every county to join us in becoming a part of history and showcasing all the EPIC people, places, and things that make up the Keystone State.”* – Cassandra Coleman, Executive Director of America250PA.

## **Connelly Foundation**

Founding Member, The Philadelphia Funder Collaborative for the Semiquincentennial Funder, multiple 250th events

*“There’s a reason the nation looks to Philadelphia on its birthday. This is where it happened: this is where the United States was born. The Philadelphia Funder Collaborative for the Semiquincentennial is proud to support the programs that will make the 250th another chapter in the city’s proud history.”* – Tom Riley, president and chair of the Connelly Foundation

## **Bank of America**

Sponsor, TED Democracy

*“As the cradle of liberty, Philadelphia represents the beginning of America, and now this great city is working to lead the country into the future. Our shared history continues to play a pivotal role in shaping the ideals that contribute to meaningful dialogue, and Bank of America is thrilled to support TED Democracy for a series of meaningful conversations and events marking our country’s Semiquincentennial.”* – Jim Dever, President, Bank of America Greater Philadelphia.

## **Comcast NBCUniversal**

Sponsor, TED Democracy

*“Comcast is proud to partner with Visit Philadelphia to sponsor TED Democracy. As a city of many firsts, I cannot think of a better place to convene our foremost thought leaders to exchange ideas, advocate for ideals, and broker innovations that will advance our democracy.”* – Dalila Wilson-Scott, EVP & Chief Diversity Officer, Comcast Corporation and President, Comcast NBCUniversal Foundation

## **Highmark Blue Shield**

Sponsor, TED Democracy

*"There could be no better way to observe America's Semiquincentennial than by honoring the ideals of democracy and in the city synonymous with the birth of our nation. Highmark Blue Shield looks forward to being part of TED Democracy, alongside Visit Philadelphia, Comcast and Bank of America, as we explore the fundamental principles of our democracy, foster a deeper understanding of our civic duties, and encourage meaningful engagement and discussion within our community." – Ken Lawrence, Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs for Highmark Blue Shield in Southeastern Pennsylvania*