



**1776 to 2026 - America250**



## **Invitation to Apply**

**For participation in the**

# **32<sup>nd</sup> Chester County Town Tours & Village Walks**

### **“13 Tours for 13 Colonies”**

***Celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and  
Chester County’s History over the past 250 years.***

Dear Municipal Historical Commission or HARB, Heritage Site, or Historical Society:

For the 250<sup>th</sup>, this 32<sup>nd</sup> year of the popular **Chester County Town Tours & Village Walks** program will have an expanded schedule in the Spring, Summer, and Fall of 2026. The 2026 tour season theme is **“13 Tours for 13 Colonies”**, which will celebrate the rich and diverse history of Chester County by focusing on the *prominent heritage themes* in our region.

America 250<sup>th</sup> and Chester County 250<sup>th</sup> aim to celebrate the breadth of our nation's history and our County’s role in that history. This means that while 2026 is the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, your local history tour does NOT have to focus on the year 1776 or colonial era. The 2027 Town Tours & Village Walks season will feature that era and the American Revolution & Philadelphia Campaign of 1777 heritage theme.

America250 celebrations will be held throughout the nation next year, and we can proudly claim that Chester County holds many significant events, places, sites, and people who contributed to our nation’s founding and thereafter. Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC) encourages your organization to apply to host a **Town Tour & Village Walk** during the extended 2026 season where we will commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and Chester County history over the past 250 years!

Prominent heritage themes in Chester County supported by the Chester County Commissioner’s recent Heritage Tourism Plan will be highlighted in certain months:

May	Iron & Steel, Industry, Technology
June	Turning Points/Evolving Values: Underground Railroad/Path to Freedom, Women’s Suffrage, African American history, Native Peoples, Mason-Dixon Line/Arc Corner
July	Declaration of Independence and American Revolution
August	Arts, Artists, Architecture, Creative Expression
Sept	Agriculture & Milling

\*Natural Landscapes/Natural World heritage theme can be interwoven throughout tours\*

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The 2026 season's tours will be scheduled on Thursdays from approximately 5:30-7:30 p.m., beginning with the **kick-off on Thursday, April 30, 2026, in West Chester Borough** and continuing through mid-October. To provide flexibility, the season includes 13 walking tours plus three additional "armchair" lecture "tours".

**A change to the program** that we hope will enhance each host site's planning and preparation, accelerate idea-sharing, collaboration, and collegueship, and present the entire 2026 program as a unified season, is to **ask each host site to participate in:**

- An online group planning meeting on Thursday, March 12, 2026 at 3 pm; and
- Attend the kick-off season event on Thursday, April 30 to represent your tour. This event can offer a "sneak peek" of your tour through a presentation board or a slide in the main event overview presentation.

**Please complete the attached application by Friday, January 23, 2026, with:**

- a. Your 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choice tour date preferences and your heritage theme
- b. An approximately 75-word description of the tour you are planning and whether it is a walking tour or an "armchair" lecture "tour"
- c. Send your application by email to [ccplanning@chesco.org](mailto:ccplanning@chesco.org) or by using the **submit** option
- d. **Application Deadline: Friday, January 23, 2026**
- e. Host site selection: Friday, February 13, 2026

For over 30 years, Chester County citizens and visitors have enthusiastically attended Town Tours & Village Walks given by local historical commissions and heritage organizations. CCPC is focused on making the 2026 season one that showcases Chester County history, stories, and treasures, and highlights connections to our nation's history.

Please reach out if you have any questions, by emailing [ccplanning@chesco.org](mailto:ccplanning@chesco.org) or calling 610-344-6285. CCPC looks forward to this 2026 season and working with you! Thank you.