



Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

PHILADELPHIA250's Declaration Station: An Ideas-to-Prototype Design Competition

[PHILADELPHIA250](#), the nonprofit leading and inspiring the city's commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 2026, seeks to create a Declaration Station – a civic engagement resource that is mobile, attention-grabbing, and interactive and playful. The Station will become a centerpiece of our public and civic engagement work starting in late 2023.

PHILADELPHIA250 envisions the 250th as a once-in-a-generation catalyst for change, and seeks to leverage this moment by creating opportunities that encourage people to tap into their creativity, find their civic voice and see themselves as agents of change. Our civic engagement activities focus on raising awareness of the 250th as a critical milestone for our city and its residents; offering everyone a way to directly connect and participate in the 250th; and inspiring greater civic participation and reflection.

The Declaration Station will be critical to our success. We imagine it as a mobile resource for our staff and volunteers to engage people throughout the city in dialogue – both to convey information and collect ideas about people's visions for 2026 and beyond.

PHILADELPHIA250 is seeking interdisciplinary creative teams to design and build prototypes for a Declaration Station through a two-stage process. We are first issuing an open call for teams to apply, presenting their credentials and expertise as well as a general vision for this project. From that group of applicants we will select a small number of teams who will each receive between \$10,000 to develop a prototype for testing. After the models have been tested, one or more teams will receive additional funding to produce a more permanent version that will be deployed across the city over the next few years.

The deadline for presenting team credentials and statements is July 10, 2023. Full submission information follows.



About PHILADELPHIA250

[PHILADELPHIA250](#) is leading and inspiring the city's celebration of the 250th anniversary of American independence in 2026. Working with and listening to the people of Philadelphia, we are co-designing a 250th that will stretch beyond the traditional historic tourist sites on Independence Mall so that the entire city, from stoops to stadiums, serves as a staging ground. The breadth and diversity of our people, the patchwork of neighborhoods, rich cultural and heritage assets, and vibrant open spaces will help deepen our understanding of Philadelphia's many histories. No other city in America will have a more inclusive and transformational 250th.

To achieve this goal, we have undertaken an extensive community outreach process to help guide equitable, inclusive, accessible and sustainable programming that celebrates our city's great diversity. In partnership with [#InvestBLK](#), we have already conducted outreach to more than 200 groups, meeting with 63 representatives from communities including LGBTQIA+, religious institutions, Black / African American, Indigenous, Hispanic, Asian / AAPI, Caucasian, Immigrant and neighborhood representatives. We will continue to engage communities across the city throughout 2023 and in future years leading up to the anniversary.

DEFINING SUCCESS

A successful 250th in Philadelphia will be defined by its reach and impact; specifically, the number of opportunities created for civic engagement and the degree to which those opportunities made all Philadelphians feel represented and included. We want Philadelphia to be remembered as a model for revolutionary civic participation that inspires others through our capacity to create positive and sustainable change—together.

LEADERSHIP

PHILADELPHIA250 is led by President and CEO Danielle DiLeo Kim, AIA; Board Chair, The Honorable Edward G. Rendell and a board of civic and community leaders. PHL250 also serves as the main point of contact between the City of Philadelphia and the state (America250-PA) and national (America250) 250th planning partners to ensure the success of their respective anniversary events in Philadelphia.

CONTACT

PHILADELPHIA250
230 South Broad St., 17th Fl.
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The Declaration Station Challenge

SCOPE

The Declaration Station is envisioned as a mobile resource that will serve as a key focal point for PHILADELPHIA250's in-person community and civic engagement throughout the city, beginning in 2024. It must include the following characteristics:

- **It should be able to move easily about the city**, showing up at block parties, street fairs, parks, schools, commercial corridors and other places where people gather, day or night.
 - Easy to set up/break down, move from place to place, store, and repair for PHL250 staff and volunteers
 - Have an independent power source for any components that require energy to function (lighting, digital elements, etc.)
- **It should be visually striking and memorable**
 - It must reflect PHILADELPHIA250's brand and be recognizable wherever it appears
- **It should be welcoming and accessible**
 - Text and audio should be customizable to a variety of languages and/or cultures; accessible to youth and adults of various educational levels
 - Interactive features should accommodate people with physical disabilities
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- **It should have space for storing materials**
 - Supplies will be needed for creative, facilitated activities taking place at the Station (see below)
- **It should include ways to collect people's responses to prompts and activities** run by trained facilitators (the prompts and activities would be created by PHL250 staff and advisors, see below)
- **It should be relatively easy to reproduce** so we could consider copies
 - Each Declaration Station would have the same core functions and attributes, but the design should allow for customization or variations.

RELATED COMPONENTS

The Declaration Station will connect to and/or help exhibit the content of PHILADELPHIA250's civic engagement work. These elements will be created separately and provided to the design teams so they can be incorporated, where appropriate, into the prototype. They include:



- One or more prompts (questions, images, etc.) that will be used to generate responses and reactions from the public
- A suite of informational and educational materials related to civic engagement that take place in and around the Station
- A digital platform that provides a virtual Declaration Station experience, incorporating design elements and content from the Station and associated activities
- A back-end content management system that stores the public's responses and reactions that we can turn into open-source data

THE PROCESS

The competition is organized in two stages:

1. In the first stage, teams will submit their qualifications and a general statement about their inspiration and vision for the project. A selection panel will review the applications and select up to three teams to develop prototypes.
2. During the second stage, the selected teams will receive \$10,000 to create a prototype, or a significant component of the prototype, for testing in the fall at various public events. The teams will be supported by PHILADELPHIA250 staff and consultants throughout the summer to ensure fidelity to the parameters for design and use.

Our goal is to pilot the Declaration Station prototypes and associated guided activities with members of the public during [PARK\(ing\) Day](#) this fall, as well as at other public events such as Design Philadelphia and PHILADELPHIA250's annual end-of-year event, the Countdown to the 250th.

After this pilot period, PHILADELPHIA250 and its advisory panel will review the feedback collected from this experience and consider how the prototypes should be revised or enhanced. This may result in a contract with one or more teams, or a combination of teams, to create an upgraded version (and copies) that will be rolled out at events across the city in 2024 and beyond.

PROJECT TIMELINE

- **May 25, 2023:** Ideas-to-Prototype Design Competition Request for Qualifications (RFQ) announced through an open call
- July 10, 2023: Deadline for responses
- July 24, 2023: Selected teams announced
- September to December 2023: Prototypes piloted at Parking Day, DesignPhiladelphia, and PHILADELPHIA250's annual Countdown to the 250th in December 2023

Timing of subsequent steps will be determined based on the results of the pilot tests.



The Request for Qualifications Application Process

Who We Are Looking For

Successful teams must demonstrate the qualifications and capabilities listed here. These are the criteria by which each application will be evaluated by the selection committee.

- **Design** – to envision the physical product and how it will be built
- **Community Engagement** – to envision how people will interact with the Declaration Station
- **Cultural Competency** – to understand how the Declaration Station will be received in Philadelphia’s diverse communities and solve for challenges around accessibility
- **Fabrication** – to know how to build things and to produce (or coordinate the production of) a prototype

Teams should draw their members from a variety of fields, and could include (among others) architects, artists, environmental graphic designers, environmental psychologists, exhibition designers, fabricators, industrial designers, interaction designers, and community and civic engagement specialists.

Crucially, the team composition should reflect the diversity of the people who live in Philadelphia.

What to Submit

Responding teams should submit the qualifying materials listed below. Your materials should demonstrate how your team meets the required qualifications outlined above. The submission should also identify the team member who will be PHILADELPHIA250’s primary point of contact.

- A letter of introduction, providing an overview of the team members and your collective approach to the project.
- Materials – written, visual or other media – that demonstrate and/or describe in greater detail the team’s inspiration and vision for the project.
- Examples of past work that highlights your individual and collective expertise and shows your capability to undertake this project.
- Biographies and/or resumes of team members.

How to Submit

Please send submissions digitally to Jane Grabias, Director of Programs, PHILADELPHIA250, at jane@philadelphia250.us.



Questions

For questions, please email jane Grabias, Director of Programs, PHILADELPHIA250, at: jane@philadelphia250.us

Questions and answers will be posted periodically at: <https://www.philadelphia250.us/>

A Note on Contracts, Insurance and Intellectual Property

Each selected team will be asked to enter into contract to design and produce the first prototype iteration of a Declaration Station. PHILADELPHIA250 reserves the right to engage, or not engage, with any of the teams and their members on subsequent phases of design.

Team members will need to carry General Commercial Liability insurance, and/or sign waivers of liability with PHILADELPHIA250.

PHILADELPHIA250 reserves the right to use any and all portions of the designs and prototypes.