



**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR
COOPERATION IN SUPPORT OF THE 250th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

BETWEEN

THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES (DfC)

AND

The U.S. SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMISSION

Date: 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) is entered into by and between the Department for Communities Northern Ireland (“DfC”) and the United States Semiquincentennial Commission (the “Commission”). Both hereafter will be referred to as “the Participants”.
- 1.2. The MOU has been developed following a meeting between the DfC Minister Gordon Lyons MLA and the Commission where it was agreed that Northern Ireland would receive special status in recognition of its unique contribution to the foundation of the United States of America.
- 1.3. This MOU outlines a framework for cooperation including cultural exchanges, educational programmes and events, both in Northern Ireland and the United States as part of the America250 initiative.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Department for Communities has strategic responsibility for equality, antipoverty, sports, arts and culture, languages, finding employment, historic environment, housing, regeneration, benefits and pensions, community and voluntary sector development, social legislation, public records and child support. In his role as Minister, Gordon Lyons MLA established a United States-Northern Ireland Cultural Working Group to promote the opportunities and cultural links that exist in the run up to the 250th celebrations in 2026.
- 2.2. The U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission was established by Congress in 2016 to plan and orchestrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the

Declaration of Independence. Appointed by the House and Senate leadership of both parties, the nonpartisan Commission is composed of 16 private citizens, 4 U.S. Representatives and 4 Senators, as well as 12 Ex Officio members from all three branches of the federal government and its independent agencies.

3. Remit

- 3.1. The MOU aims to establish the basis for a cooperative relationship to encourage bilateral cooperation to promote the Semiquincentennial of the United States both in the US and in Northern Ireland.
- 3.2. For the purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding 'culture' will be defined as including, but not restricted to, all performing and visual arts, museums and collections, public records (archives), literature, publishing, film, art and crafts, built heritage, music, software design, animation and gaming.
- 3.3. The Participants recognise that a nation's culture can add significant value to their educational, academic and business activities. Historical perspectives provide essential insights into understanding the issues of the future, helping to articulate their distinct national identity and enhancing mutual understanding between countries, creating an atmosphere of respect, trust and celebration. A nation's culture can help amplify existing connections as well as develop and build new and exciting opportunities for the future and plays a key role in supporting and stimulating sustainable economic growth.
- 3.4. There are opportunities for the Department for Communities to contribute to events leading to the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and linkages to Signatories, Presidents and those with ancestral roots to Northern Ireland and the wider province of Ulster. Those opportunities are further underpinned by the importance of the wider story of emigration from Ulster to North America over the past 250 years, and by a commitment to embedding legacy and how the spirit and resilience that contributed to building the USA

can continue to be supported in the future including marking other significant anniversaries.

3.5. The important role of ancestral connections between Ulster and the United States will be underpinned by a programme of engagement and activities organised by a number of cultural institutions including the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, National Museums Northern Ireland, Historic Royal Palaces/Hillsborough Castle, the Ulster-Scots Agency in Northern Ireland and the National Archives and Records (USA), the Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian Institution in the USA.

3.6. This MOU notes and welcomes the invite for the Department for Communities Minister to attend the international event at Mount Vernon on 11 June 2026. The MOU also welcomes and endorses an invite to members of the Commission to visit the Ulster American Folk Park in Omagh and any other cultural attraction with a link to the United States, eg Hillsborough Castle, Presidential Homesteads, and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

4. Meeting Arrangements

4.1. The Participants jointly agree to organize an annual meeting and – if deemed appropriate – invite other relevant stakeholders to discuss the progress of the bilateral cooperation.

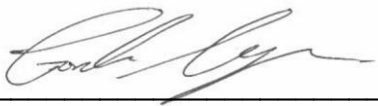
4.2. In addition, the Participants can set up additional meetings whenever deemed appropriate and are encouraged to maintain their relationship on multiple levels.

5. Memorandum Arrangements

5.1. This Memorandum of Understanding does not bind either Participant to any financial arrangements other than those separately accepted in writing.

- 5.2. This Memorandum of Understanding does not create any rights or obligations under international law.
- 5.3. This Memorandum of Understanding will come into effect upon signature.
- 5.4. This Memorandum of Understanding may be amended at any time by the mutual written consent of the Participants.
- 5.5. This Memorandum of Understanding may be terminated by either Participant, giving one month's written notice to the other Participant.
- 5.6. Any dispute between the participants related to the interpretation and implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding will be resolved amicably by means of consultation and negotiation between the Participants and will not be referred to any national or international tribunal or third party for settlement


6. FORMAL COMMITMENT TO MEMORANDUM

Signed  _____

Dated 19/6/2025

Gordon Lyons MLA Minister Department for Communities

Print Name: _____

Signed  _____
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Dated 6/4/2025 | 7:27 AM PDT

Rosie Rios, Chair of the US Semiquincentennial Commission

Print Name: _____