

DfC activity related to United States – Northern Ireland 250

TO SHOWCASE NORTHERN IRELAND'S SHAPING OF THE UNITED STATES, AND BUILD EVEN STRONGER CONNECTIONS FOR THE NEXT 250 YEARS

This framework seeks to focus and amplify the work of the US-NI Cultural WG in terms of this specific strand of activity, with the following aims:

AIMS

- To explain and celebrate the role of people from Northern Ireland in founding and shaping the United States.
- To connect national collections in the United States and Northern Ireland more strongly.
- To support local communities, and individuals, to explore their links and their ancestry.
- To build connections that allow North Americans to visit places in Northern Ireland connected to their forebears.
- To leverage the America 250 opportunity across a broad range of cultural themes - music, literature, genealogy, history and heritage, etc. to promote NI as a visitor destination to the North American market.
- To provide a platform which enables North Americans to support the ongoing development of Northern Ireland's heritage, culture and creativity

ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND FUNDING

The work will be coordinated by a Steering Group drawn from the wider US-NI Cultural Working Group membership:

- Department for Communities
- National Museums NI
- Ulster-Scots Agency

- Historic Royal Palaces
- NI Bureau
- Tourism NI
- Tourism Ireland
- US Consulate Belfast

Each member organisation will lead on key elements of work, reporting into the Steering Group.

DfC will provide £250k funding (subject to business case) which will be focused on wider communications and wider impacts, including newsworthy activities. The US Consulate is currently reviewing whether it is able to make specific funding available. There will be links to other funding sources, including the Community Festivals Fund, also.

KEY ELEMENTS TO THE WORK

The aims above develop several interlocking components to the work, as shown in the schematic below:

National collections (National Museums, PRONI, Historic Royal Palaces/Hillsborough Castle)

Local links – shaped into a branded programme with a common template by Ulster-Scots Agency

Tourism promotion
(North Americans hearing stories in 2026 and visiting NI to explore in the following years)

National positioning and preparing the ground for philanthropy

NEXT STEPS

1. Agree revised vision, aims and components.
2. Establish the Steering Group to develop and deliver aims and activities within appropriate timeframes for each, including lead and follow through times to July 2026.
3. Agree blueprint for key activities in 2026 and respective leads.
4. Engage with key stakeholders on draft plans, refining them as appropriate in light of feedback. This to include a DfC paper to the Executive on plans.
5. Develop a proportionate resourcing plan.
6. Consider the key elements for relevant project plan document and business cases, building on work drafted in 2024.