

FOI Request DFC/2026 – 0121 - NI Delegation Visit to USA

I would like to request the following information relating to the Department for Communities' involvement in the Northern Ireland delegation visit to the United States in March 2026.

1. The total cost incurred by the Department for Communities in relation to the Minister's participation in this visit.
2. A detailed breakdown of these costs, including:
 - Flights
 - Accommodation
 - Subsistence
 - Transport
 - Event or engagement-related costs
 - Costs relating to any accompanying officials
3. The number and roles of individuals (including the Minister and any officials) whose costs were met in full or in part by the Department.
4. Details of any external funding, sponsorship, or in-kind support associated with the Minister's participation, including:
 - The source of such support
 - The nature of the support provided
 - Any estimated value, where held
5. Clarification as to whether any costs associated with the Minister's participation were met by third parties, including but not limited to host organisations, businesses, or event sponsors.
6. A list of official meetings and engagements undertaken by the Minister and accompanying officials during the visit, including:
 - The names of organisations, companies, or bodies met
 - The date of each meeting or engagement
 - The general purpose of each meeting

Information Disclosed

Response to FOI Request DFC/2026-0121

1. The total cost incurred by the Department for Communities in relation to the Minister's participation in this visit.

Costs met by the Department	£27,285.17
Costs yet to be met by the Department	\$16,708.45

2. A detailed breakdown of these costs, including: Flights - £10,246.95

Accommodation - £12,157.71

Subsistence - £423.44

Transport - £896.30

Event or engagement-related costs - £3,560.77 met / \$16,708.45 to be met

Costs relating to any accompanying officials – £17,529.39 (included in above figures)

3. The number and roles of individuals (including the Minister and any officials) whose costs were met in full or in part by the Department.

6 Persons

- Minister
- Special Adviser
- Private Secretary
- PRONI Director
- Principal Information Officer
- Social Media Editor/Videographer

4. Details of any external funding, sponsorship, or in-kind support associated with the Minister's participation, including:

- The source of such support
- The nature of the support provided
- Any estimated value, where held

Source of Support	Nature of Support	Estimated Value
McConnells Whiskey	Reception Toast	Cost not held - in kind support
Hart Building Senate Room	Venue and AV equipment	Cost not held - in kind support

5. Clarification as to whether any costs associated with the Minister's participation were met by third parties, including but not limited to host organisations, businesses, or event sponsors.

Costs of the Reception were split 50/50 with the America250 Commission - \$16,708.45 represents 50% of the total Reception Bill to be covered by the Commission.

6. A list of official meetings and engagements undertaken by the Minister and accompanying officials during the visit, including:

- The names of organisations, companies, or bodies met
- The date of each meeting or engagement
- The general purpose of each meeting

15 engagements completed over the course of 5 days.

Sunday 15 March 2026	
Dinner and informal meeting with Patrick O'Donovan TD Savannah, Georgia.	2 Hours - Discussion on culture arts, A250 and sport issues.
Monday 16 March 2026	
Launch of Lecture Programme – 'Scots-Irish in the South and the Queensboro Settlement.' Georgia Southern University, Savannah.	4 Hours - Deliver keynote address to raise awareness of the influence the Ulster Scots community and their values had in the development of the region.
Ireland Funds Gala Dinner Washington, DC	2 Hours - Promote Executive priorities in the US and raise awareness of the influence the Ulster Scots pioneers had in the founding of the nation.
Tuesday 17 March	
NI Bureau Breakfast Washington, DC	2 Hours - Promote Executive and Bureaus priorities in the US and to raise awareness of the influence the Ulster Scots pioneers had in the founding of the nation.
Senator Kevin Cramer (North Dakota)	1 hour – Promote Executive priorities and the Ulster Scots connection
Friends of Ireland Luncheon	2 Hours - Represent the Executive and support its priorities in the US and raise awareness of the influence the Ulster Scots pioneers had in the founding of the nation.
White House Reception	2 Hours - Represent the Executive, support its priorities in the US and raise awareness

	of the influence the Ulster Scots pioneers had in the founding of the nation.
Wednesday 18 March	
St. Patricks Day Breakfast, British Embassy	1 ½ Hours - Represent the Executive and Northern Irelands interests and to raise a greater awareness of the influence of the Ulster Scots pioneers
Lunch with HRP Heritage Group / Kylemore Abbey	2 Hours – Deliver speech and promote partnership opportunities
DfC – A250 Commission Reception	3 Hours - Deliver keynote address at joint reception with A250 Commission on the role and influence that people from Ulster played in the foundation of the US and the Declaration of Independence
Thursday 19 March	
National Archives	1 Hour - Explore further collaboration with National Archives within the framework of the MoU with the A250 Commission
Library of Congress	1 Hour - Explore further collaboration with Library of Congress in promoting its archives with links to Ulster within the framework of the MoU with the A250 Commission.
Wreath Laying at Sir John Dill Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery	1 Hour – Commemorative event with links to Ulster.
Meeting with Jen Condon	1 Hour - Meeting Executive Vice President of America250 to explore further partnership opportunities
Irish Network DC Event	2 Hours - Networking event with key influencers with an interest in and connection to Ireland and Northern Ireland