

National History Day Announces Expanded Rural and Urban Outreach Program Supported by the Bezos Family Foundation

September 15, 2025, College Park, Maryland—[National History Day](#)® (NHD) is proud to announce the second phase of its Rural and Urban Outreach Program, funded by a grant from the [Bezos Family Foundation](#). This initiative is a series of programs to provide teacher training in the areas of project-based learning, historical thinking skills, and engaging with local historic resources. The program aims to make participation more accessible to students and educators in these areas.

Following an initial pilot program from 2023 to 2025 in Alabama, Indiana, North Carolina, and Oklahoma, the next phase of this program will be led in California, Louisiana, Michigan, and Tennessee. In partnership with NHD affiliate programs, NHD will co-lead a series of professional development workshops to engage teachers and strengthen NHD programs in:

- Sonoma County, California (with the California Foundation for History Education)
- Baton Rouge, Louisiana (with The National World War II Museum)
- The Upper Peninsula of Michigan (with the Historical Society of Michigan™)
- Northeast Tennessee (with the Tennessee Historical Society)

“National History Day is proud to partner with the Bezos Family Foundation on this important initiative,” shares NHD Executive Director Dr. Cathy Gorn. “We are excited to build on our pilot program and collaborate with schools and teachers in these communities to engage more students in the process of historical research. Quality history education helps young people gain a deeper understanding of our shared history and encourages students to become involved and active citizens. By encouraging students to develop historical literacy, critical thinking, and digital literacy, NHD equips them with the tools to engage in their communities and shape the future. They are also empowered to bring missing narratives to light, investigating and sharing the historical experiences and contributions of people whose stories have not often been told.”

“National History Day remains a leading force in connecting historical understanding with inquiry, while deepening students’ engagement with primary sources and critical thinking,” said Marilyn López, Senior Program Officer of the Bezos Family Foundation. “We’re proud to support their continued geographic expansion and help ensure that more young people have access to meaningful, place-based historical learning.”

National History Day, in conjunction with its affiliate partners, will co-lead these programs, which will include five days of live professional development in these communities, paired with virtual mentoring and support as teachers implement a National History Day project in the classrooms during the 2026-2027 academic year.

###

About National History Day® (NHD)

NHD is a non-profit organization based in College Park, Maryland, that seeks to improve the teaching and learning of history. Established in 1974, NHD currently engages more than half a million students each year in conducting original research on historical topics of interest and supports teachers through professional development opportunities. Students present their research as a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website. Projects compete first at the local and affiliate levels, where the top entries are invited to the annual National Contest at the University of Maryland at College Park. NHD is sponsored in part by the Joyful Noise Charitable Foundation, The Better Angels Society, Bezos Family Foundation, Library of Congress, Dr. Scholl Foundation, Behring Global Educational Foundation, 400 Years of African American History Commission, and the National Park Service. For more information, visit nhd.org.

About the California Foundation for History Education (CFHE)

Founded in 2015, the California Foundation for History Education is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the teaching and learning of history across California. CFHE supports educators, students, and communities through high-quality programs, professional development, and educational resources that promote historical inquiry, critical thinking, and civic understanding. Based on the foundational pillars of critical thinking, questioning, research, and discourse, CFHE is working to ensure that students in California have the opportunity to engage in authentic historical inquiry and civic engagement. In 2022, CFHE partnered with National History Day - California to bring the Civic Summit to NHD-CA, fostering the power of youth voice through training in civil discourse.

About the National World War II Museum

On June 6, 2000, the National D-Day Museum opened in New Orleans on the 56th anniversary of the Normandy landings. In 2004, Congress designated the institution as America's national museum for World War II, and the institution officially adopted a new name and new mission to cover the entire war effort, the Home Front, and the war's lasting impacts. The National WWII Museum explores and honors the entire American experience in World War II—why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today—so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn. The National World War II Museum became the Louisiana Affiliate for National History Day in 2008 and is proud to support the historical research and inquiry of students within Louisiana. For more information, please visit nationalww2museum.org.

About the Historical Society of Michigan™

Established in 1828, the Historical Society of Michigan is Michigan's oldest cultural organization and helps connect Michigan's past to its residents and organizations. A non-governmental nonprofit, the Society focuses on publications, conferences, education, awards and recognition programming, and support for local history organizations to preserve and promote Michigan's rich history. The Society has been the state affiliate for National History Day since 1989. For more information, please visit hsmichigan.org.

About the Tennessee Historical Society

Founded in 1849, the Tennessee Historical Society is the oldest continually operating historical organization in Tennessee. Until the early 20th century, the THS focused on collecting documents and artifacts related to Tennessee's natural, Indigenous, and civil history. The artifact collection became the basis for the Tennessee State Museum, and the documents, which include manuscripts dating back to the colonial era, are now housed at the Tennessee State Library & Archives. The Tennessee Historical

Society has published the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, a peer-reviewed journal on Tennessee history, since 1942. The THS also edits the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* and publishes books and resources on Tennessee History. In 2009, the Tennessee Historical Society began sponsoring and producing Tennessee History Day, a statewide competition for students in grades six through twelve. Students who win at the state level go on to compete at National History Day in Washington, D.C. For more information about the THS, please visit www.tennesseehistory.org.