

THE PROBLEM

As America's 250th anniversary approached, there was a growing sense that it was arriving without the kind of shared civic feeling such a milestone might once have inspired. But that wasn't a surprise—the institutions, habits, and experiences that once drew Americans together into a common civic fabric had changed. We noticed that Americans increasingly experience public life through separate cultural, political, and digital communities rather than through shared national ones.

In September 2025, we launched [*Our Story Continues*](#), a decade-long civic engagement campaign spanning from the semiquincentennial of the Declaration of Independence in 2026 through the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution in 2037, inviting Americans to explore the principles and ideas that shape our nation and to reflect on how we, the people, will write the next chapter.

That led us to two questions:

1. Would museum visitors struggle to see themselves as a part of the *Our Story Continues* campaign? Because of our mission and content, we are a museum that every American should be able to feel a part of. How do we make visitors feel they are a part of the “our” in “Our Story Continues”?
2. We have an abundance of curated content for visitors experience, but no way for them to reflect on it as a part of the museum experience. How do we guide visitors to participate in social storytelling as a form of reflection to help them remember their visit?



Visitors engage with an interactive in an exhibit at the National Constitution Center.



Visitors examine the Declaration of Independence, on display in a gallery at the National Constitution Center.



THE IDEA

In January 2026, the concept of the [*Civic Spark Studio*](#) was born out of a need to address these questions.

A **Civic Spark** is a moment or experience that connects someone to the ideas that shape our communities and our country. It might be a visit to a national park, a lesson in school, military service, a meaningful conversation with a family member, or a moment that inspired them to learn more about the world around them.

By sharing our stories and listening to others , we can see how individual experiences become part of something larger, helping to inspire new conversations, new perspectives, and new Civic Sparks.

Together, these stories remind us that history is still being written, and that ***our story continues***.

We knew we needed a physical studio space where visitors could create Civic Spark recordings in the museum, but we were not sure how to overcome concerns of audio and video quality. How could we ensure that visitors would be able to record meaningful stories in a loud, crowded museum space? How would we make sure that the studio and technology was accessible to visitors of a wide range of needs, abilities, and ages? How could the project be sustainable for the long term and able to withstand regular use by thousands of visitors for the duration of a decade-long storytelling activation?

After researching options for prebuilt video booths, we realized the solution we were looking for would need to be built from scratch. We then found a partner in [**Post Pop Studios**](#), a company who connects brands and people through interactive content experiences. We worked with them to build a custom video testimonial booth to bring our virtual campaign to visitors in the museum.



THE SOLUTION

The base of the Civic Spark Studio is a modular office pod purchased from the company ROOM. For us, it was key that the studio have acoustic panels allowing for near silence in an otherwise loud space outside of our core galleries. The studio also needed to be wheelchair accessible, and able to fit families and groups who may want to record their stories together.

To suit the needs of this specific project, we worked with the team from Post Pop to install a tablet and ring light in the pod, turning the space into a recording studio.

Post Pop used their software to build us an interface where visitors could record themselves, without the need for staff assistance, allowing for privacy in the storytelling process if they desired it. You can watch a walk through of the recording process [here](#).

We worked with our design team to create inviting visuals to attract visitors to the booth, and clear instruction signage to explain the concept of Civic Sparks.

The pod space is equipped with a lightweight, moveable bench, which visitors can rearrange themselves or with staff assistance. This ensures visitors can engage with the studio in a way that is most comfortable for them.

Each recording is up to 90 seconds long, with an option to end the recording process early. Visitors can choose to download their video through a QR code. They are encouraged to share the video with friends and family, or on social media tagging #CivicSpark and @ConstitutionCtr. For those who opt in to allow us to share their stories, the videos are also stored in a private gallery that our team has access to. In addition to developing an archive, we can use these videos to represent the project on our website and our social media channels, using these videos together in a campaign to represent the wide range of Civic Sparks that are all a piece of our nation's larger story.

THE RESULTS



A young visitor records a Civic Spark story in the Civic Spark Studio.

On June 13, 2026, just six months after the project was first conceptualized, we opened the physical studio to our visitors. Now, visitors are sharing their Civic Sparks with us every day the museum is open.

The studio isn't just capturing Civic Sparks, it is also sparking conversation. Visitors and staff are discussing their stories, inspired by the prompts offered in the studio.

Since the booth's launch, **560** stories have been recorded. **364** have been shared, leading to a total reach of **26,572**.

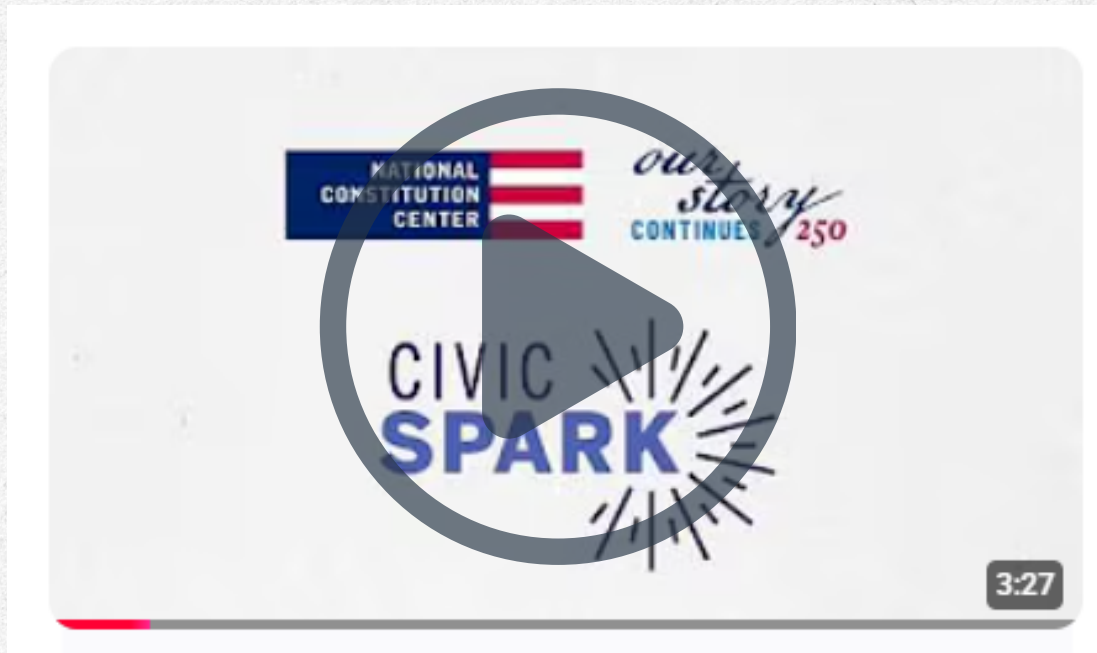
We've gathered stories from local visitors, national visitors, and even global visitors. And this is just the beginning, because ***our story continues***.

Storytelling inspires more stories. When stories are shared, they spark thinking that leads to more stories being shared. We're thrilled to facilitate an experience that is customizable to each visitor and allows them to feel a sense of ownership in our nation's story. Through the studio and the Civic Spark campaign, we are able to expand the ways we reach visitors, but also learn more about them. Their responses have been more authentic, thoughtful, and engaging than we could ever have imagined before launching the project. People have opened up, sharing not only their own pasts, but their hopes and dreams for the future of our nation. Visitors who enter the booth days apart, from vastly different parts of the country and the world, are all saying similar things, repeating themes and helping us notice patterns. Parents, educators, and civic institutions are most often cited as igniting sparks. There is a general sense that understanding and engaging with the past help shape a better civic future.

We look forward to seeing more patterns that unite our visitors and hearing more Civic Spark stories.

Access our [Civic Spark Studio web page](#) to learn more.

VIDEOS



[Civic Spark America at 250 Montage](#)

Run time: 3 mins, 27 seconds



[Civic Spark Back To School Montage](#)

Run time: 2 mins, 36 seconds

IMAGES



A line of visitors waiting to record their stories in the studio on July 4, 2026, America's 250th anniversary.



Two staff members discuss the Civic Spark prompts with a young visitor. In the background, another visitor is using the studio.



Reenactors dressed as Benjamin Franklin and Betsy Ross trying out the Civic Spark Studio, taking a moment to pose for a photo.



Three generations of a family recording their story in the studio together.



A visitor recording a story. Instruction signage is visible in the foreground.



Concept rendering for the studio.