



Sharing the Spirit of America

Thank you for joining Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area, Annapolis 250 and MD Two-Fifty Commission in this nationwide reading of the Declaration of Independence.

There are now 25 locations across the City and the County that will join hundreds of citizens together in a moment of reflection and appreciation for our Country's founding principles. These words were aspirational at the time they were written and we hope you will reflect upon the idea that we all continue in pursuit of these ideals today. We believe this reading will bring together our local community and provide a refreshed commitment to this great American experiment we call the United States.

Below are some suggestions for hosting the reading, including a timeline & Emcee talking points. Please feel free to use some— all— or even none of this! We respect and honor that Life Liberty and The Pursuit of Happiness means something different and unique to each of us. So pick the elements that speak to your audience, to your experiences, and that respect your reading location— Or just use it as an inspirational guide as you host your Declaration reading on Wednesday!

WHY: Event Purpose

This community reading invites participants to gather in reflection, civic engagement, and shared public dialogue through a reading of the Declaration of Independence with voices of our colleagues, friends and neighbors.

The timeline below is designed to ensure the Declaration reading begins precisely at **6:00 PM** as part of a coordinated NATIONWIDE shared moment. We encourage each site to tailor this timeline guided by their unique reading site. Each reading site will have its own character and logistics, so please modify this suggested “run of show” to accommodate your participants and audience.

Before the Event

- As the site organizer, you have secured a location— Good Job!
 - Now make sure you invite all of your friends-
 - Identify the core readers for your location. Will it be one, three, 13, or 25?
 - Print off enough copies of the Declaration to ensure all of them have their own reader copies.
 - If there are many readers, consider printing out each “part” on a single piece of paper to guide them through the reading.
 - Consider bringing an extra pair or two of reading glasses~ (Just In CASE!!)
 - Will your site present any challenges for the group you anticipate attending?. Consider accessibility— and if the spoken voice can cover the area where you plan to read.
 - If you anticipate the gathering might be large enough to warrant a supplemental sound system, consider securing a bull horn or speaker.
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Day-of Event Timeline

This is a suggested schedule for an extended run of show (5:00 PM – 7:00 PM)

You can modify and condense your event flow as needed.

Between 5:00 PM – 5:45 PM | Arrive and Site Setup/ Orientation

- Arrive at your location and assemble your readers
- Set up and test sound system if you have elected to use one
- Confirm your readers “order of go”
- Review timing cues with volunteers and speakers
- Ensure printed scripts are available

5:20 PM – 5:35 PM | Volunteer & Reader Briefing

- Quick walk-through of the program
- Assign a timekeeper so the event kicks off right at 6!
- Confirm photography/video coverage

5:35 PM – 5:50 PM | Audience Arrival

5:50 PM – 5:58 PM | Opening Remarks

- Emcee begins promptly.
- Suggested flow:
 - Welcome
 - PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR LOCAL ORGANIZER OF THE EVENT:
 - CHESAPEAKE CROSSROADS HERITAGE AREA!
 - Purpose of the gathering
 - Brief historical context
 - Accessibility and housekeeping notes
 - Consider offering a land acknowledgment statement

5:58 PM – 6:00 PM | Transition to Reading

- Introduce readers
- Invite audience attention and participation
- Pause briefly to prepare for the synchronized reading

6:00 PM SHARP | Declaration Reading Begins

6:00 PM – 6:20 PM | Community Reading (The host should help maintain pacing and focus.)

6:20 PM – 6:35 PM | Optional Reflection & Community Voices

Possible additions should maintain a respectful, nonpartisan tone, but encourage thoughtful reflection and participation. Organizers or the audience might offer short historical reflections, encourage student remarks, present human rights or civic excerpts, express the moment in poetry or music, or offer the audience a moment of silent reflection.

6:35 PM – 6:45 PM | Closing Remarks & Community Gathering & Fellowship

- Thank readers, volunteers, and attendees
- Recognize Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area and encourage the audience to share video or photos with us on social media #chesapeakecrossroads
- Invite continued civic engagement
- Encourage photos and community connection