



Heritage Village 50/America250 in Pinellas County
The Power of Place Oral History Initiative
Program Guidelines

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1. Introduction, Mission, and Vision

Heritage Village shall oversee the management and execution of The Power of Place Oral History Initiative, a legacy project associated with the 50th Anniversary of the founding of Heritage Village and the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the United States of America, aka the Heritage Village 50/America250 in Pinellas County commemoration. The Power of Place Oral History initiative aims to capture and preserve a rich tapestry of stories, experiences, and traditions by engaging with community partners to conduct oral history interviews with narrators across the County using Heritage Village's TheirStory™ Oral History subscription platform. Representatives from participating organizations in Pinellas County will receive training in a workshop format teaching them the art of oral history capture. These individuals will then train members of their respective organizations to ensure that these significant stories are recorded, transcribed and hosted within the TheirStory™ platform and uploaded for perpetual storage in the Heritage Village archives. When completed these stories will be shared with the general public using PastPerfect, Heritage Village's collections management system (CMS).¹

The Power of Place Oral History Initiative Overview:

Heritage Village will use the theme, *The Power of Place*, as set forth in the American Association for State and Local History's (AASLH) Fieldguide created for the USA Semiquincentennial. Using "Place" (e.g. the communities of Pinellas County) offers a powerful lens through which we can all view our past. It challenges us to think beyond modern political boundaries and to consider the full history of the space we call home. A deep engagement with place enables us to consider significant questions about our history: from a community's relationships with and use of land, waterways, and natural resources, to the profound question of "what does 'home' mean to me?" This theme encourages us to examine ideas about our natural and built environments and to reorient when and where we find our place and position in local history.

The Power of Place Oral History Initiative Mission:

To bring people together across Pinellas County—celebrating our unique identity, honoring our heritage, and engaging in our shared American journey.

1. Heritage Village maintains a subscription with TheirStory™ and through participation in this program, eligible entities will gain access to this all-in-one oral history software that streamlines the process to collect, preserve, and engage with the audiovisual stories of the individuals that make up their community.



2. Eligible Entities:

The following participants are eligible to apply:

- Pinellas County non-profit organizations
- Individual oral history practitioners and educators
- Municipal and county governments
- Universities and K-12 schools, both public and private
- Religious organizations²
- Legacy businesses³

3. TheirStory™ Oral History Platform, Interview Ownership, and Use:

TheirStory™ is an innovative all-in-one subscription service that streamlines the process for users to collect, preserve, and engage with the audiovisual stories of the individuals that make up their community.

Heritage Village maintains a subscription for this platform. Eligible entities selected for inclusion in the The Power of Place Oral History initiative will be granted access as a user under Heritage Village's TheirStory subscription. The platform facilitates remote and in-person audio and video recordings, and produces a 90% accurate transcription and index, in addition to serving as a project management tool for oral history projects.

Eligible entities selected to participate can record interviews during the commemoration period January 1, 2026 – January 1, 2028. However, the application process requires a description of the project and a list of potential narrators (see Section 6: Application Guidelines below).

Heritage Village envisions a range of creative and impactful projects for this initiative. Interviews recorded through this initiative will be held in the Heritage Village archives. Heritage Village will follow best practices for oral history capture and provide informed consent to narrators at each step of the oral history capture process. To encourage access and use, all interviews will be hosted via Heritage Village's archives and made publicly available via PastPerfect, Heritage Village's CMS.⁴ All selected participants and narrators can use the interviews for projects, exhibitions, and other needs with proper attribution.

² Religious organizations are those organizations that have a federal tax status as a religious organization

³ Legacy businesses are those businesses that have been operated in Pinellas County for 50 or more years.



4. Project Criteria and Participation Requirements:

Projects must align with the below criteria to be considered:

Project Significance and Relevance:

Projects must address the AASLH USA 250 theme, The Power of Place in some capacity, and the questions to be answered through the interviews should demonstrate relevance to Pinellas County history. Examples include but are not limited to:

- conversations about natural beauty and ecology;
- agricultural importance;
- cultural and ethnic heritage;
- arts and humanities;
- outdoor recreation and play;
- economic history and impact.

Clear Objectives and Methodology:

Projects should have a defined scope and should demonstrate a clear methodology for collecting oral histories, including an understanding of ethical/moral considerations, interview techniques, and research and documentation strategies.

Track Record or Experience:

Projects should indicate that the applicant or someone on the project team will be available to participate in the Heritage Village training workshops in oral history.

Deliverables:

The eligible entities selected for participation are responsible for completing and delivering the following work to the Heritage Village archives upon completion.

- Oral History Recordings;
- Images and videos;
- Transcripts of recordings;
- Legal releases for interviews;

5. Timeline and Participation Criteria

The timeline details the application, selection, reporting, and project completion deadlines.



Timeline	
Announce initiative and launch of webpage	10/1/2025
Application opens	12/1/2025
Application closes	1/30/2026
Application selected/applicants notified	2/15/2026
Oral History Workshops	3/2026-4/2026
Workshop participants granted access to TheirStory	5/1/2026
Mid-project progress report and guidance	Subject to Project
Final project deliverables delivered Heritage Village	5/1/2027-7/1/2028
Final attestation and evaluations due by	8/1/2028
Oral history Product launch	Subject to Project

Participant Reporting Requirements:

Selected participants must complete a mid-project progress report, final project attestation report, (templates provided), capture launch, and deliver completed interviews, transcripts, and associated documentation to Heritage Village by the published deadlines.

Participation Fee:

There is no participation fee; however, at least one representative from eligible organizations will be required to attend all training workshops developed by Heritage Village that cover:

- Interview skills and techniques
- Ethics and legal considerations
- Recording and technical skills
- Community engagement & storytelling

6. Application Guidelines

Eligible entities must complete an application describing their proposed oral history project and submit it within the application period to be considered for inclusion in the initiative. Heritage Village will make the final selection based on the pre-determined criteria. All participants must complete their proposed oral history projects, including transcriptions, within the project timeline as published.

Please be concise and specific in your application. Heritage Village will only use the information submitted in your application to make its selection. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Complete applications must include the following.



Application Requirements:

1. Application Narrative (2-page limit, plus at least two letters of recommendation/support)

Part 1: Project Scope/Description and Timeline

1. Describe the oral history project, including the interviewees you anticipate interviewing and the overall scope of the project.

Part 2: Project Criteria and Project Promotion

2. Explain how the project will address the initiative criteria listed under Section 1, demonstrate how the project aligns with the theme The Power of Place, and how you will promote it as part of Heritage Village 50/America250 initiative.

Part 3: Project Team:

3. Demonstrate the project team's ability to successfully complete and manage the project. Identify a project manager for the team as well as a person or persons who will be responsible for participating in the training workshops provided by Heritage Village. List your project team members and include each person's role and responsibilities for the project and their interest in carrying out the project. (2-page limit)

7. Review and Evaluation

Heritage Village will evaluate and select participants based on the criteria listed under the application narrative. Evaluation will be based upon the following criteria. Projects selected will be eligible for promotion and marketing under the Heritage Village 50/America250 brand.



Project Selection Criteria:

Applicant name:				
The applicant is eligible, and the application includes all required components. Incomplete applications will not be considered.	(yes/no) Notes:			
	High	Medium	Low	Total Points
Project Scope and Timeline (40 points): - Clarity and comprehensiveness of project scope and description. - Realistic and well-defined project timeline. - List of potential narrators and explanation of outreach done to build this list.	Notes:	Notes:	Notes:	
Project Criteria and Project Promotion (35 points): - Primary Criteria #1: - Demonstrate how the project aligns with the theme The Power of Place - Effective strategies outlined for project promotion.	Notes:	Notes:	Notes:	
Project Team (15 points): - Evidence of the project team's ability/willingness to complete the training workshops. - Description of relevant past projects or grants managed by the applicant.	Notes:	Notes:	Notes:	



Clear delineation of roles and responsibilities of each team member.				
Overall Clarity and Compliance (10 points): - Clarity, organization, and coherence of the entire application. - Compliance with all application requirements and guidelines.	Notes:	Notes:	Notes:	
Total points given:	/100			