



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

In 2026, Heritage Village will mark its 50th anniversary alongside America's 250th birthday. To celebrate, Heritage Village will launch our signature program, ***The Power of Place Oral History Initiative***. This project seeks to capture and preserve the stories of the Pinellas County community through partnerships with local organizations. By honoring the past and amplifying diverse voices, the initiative helps ensure that every story becomes part of America's shared narrative—building understanding, connection, and legacy for generations to come.

The Power of Place invites Pinellas County residents to record stories about the places that matter most—neighborhoods, parks, shorelines, workplaces, schools, faith communities, and the everyday sites where life unfolds. Each story becomes part of a growing community archive at Heritage Village, connecting personal memory to public history.

The Power of Place Oral History Initiative seeks to capture and preserve a rich tapestry of community stories using Heritage Village's TheirStory™ Oral History platform. Representatives from participating Pinellas County organizations will receive training in the art of oral history collection, empowering them to guide their own members in recording meaningful narratives. Each story will be documented, transcribed, and securely stored within the TheirStory™ platform, with permanent archival copies maintained in the Heritage Village Archives. Upon completion, these collected stories will be shared with participating organizations and made publicly accessible through PastPerfect, Heritage Village's collections management system (CMS).

The Power of Place Oral History Initiative Overview:

Heritage Village will use the theme, *The Power of Place*, set forth in the American Association for State and Local History's (AASLH) 250 Field Guide 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.

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 **May 1, 2026 – January 1, 2028**. The application process requires a description of the project, a designated project liaison, and a list of potential interviewees.

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 interviewees 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 collections management system. 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 Project Idea

Projects should demonstrate a clear project idea including potential interviewees, a list of interviewers, an project liaison who will work with Heritage Village staff.

Workshops

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;

Terms and Conditions:

By participating in The Power of Place Oral History Initiative conducted by Heritage Village, participants agree to the following terms and conditions. These terms are designed to ensure



the integrity of the project and the respectful treatment of all individuals involved. Continued participation is dependent upon adhering to these conditions.

- Quality Control: All organizations will incorporate pre-determined questions provided by Heritage Village Staff to ask interviewees before embarking on organizational questions.
- Return of Deliverables: All interviews must be delivered to Heritage Village within 24 hours of completion of the interview.
- Informed Consent: Participants will be provided with detailed information about the project, including its purpose, methods, and expected outcomes. Participants must provide written consent before their involvement begins. Organizations and participants have the right to remove their consent at any time during or after the project.
- Ownership of Content: While Pinellas County Historical Society holds the rights to use the content, the intellectual property of the oral history remains with the participant.
- Attribution: Whenever possible, Heritage Village will acknowledge participants who choose to have their names associated with their contributions. Participants and organizations have the option to remain anonymous or use an alias during the duration of the project.
- Limitation of Liability: Heritage Village is not liable for any indirect or consequential damages arising from participation in the project.
- Right to Use: By agreeing to use, contributors grant Heritage Village the right to use, reproduce, and share the recorded interviews for educational, research, and archival purposes. Participants have the right to redact, remove, or restrict interviews conducted during the project.

For any questions or concerns regarding these terms and conditions, please contact The Power of Place project coordinator at Heritage Village.

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	Open continuously
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, 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.

Application Requirements:

1. Application Narrative (max 2-page limit)

Part 1: Project Scope/Description and Timeline

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



Part 2: Project Criteria and Project Promotion

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.

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.

7. Application submission

Applications should be submitted to heritagevillage@pinellas.gov with the subject line "The Power of Place Application."



HERITAGE VILLAGE

Pinellas County Museum & Park