



Vermont 250th Exhibits for the Local History Gallery at the Vermont History Museum

The Vermont Historical Society has dedicated an exhibit gallery at the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier to the presentation and celebration of local history. Working with local historical societies and museums to create and present changing exhibitions that showcase collections and stories that cover the width and breadth of Vermont's diverse historic landscape. Exhibiting in the Gallery provides organizations with an opportunity to get their local stories in front of a larger audience and helps VHS expand the narratives for museum visitors to enjoy.

In conjunction with America's 250th, we would like to feature exhibits in the Gallery in 2026 that explore themes related to the commemoration. The selected themes from the American Association of State & Local History (AASLH) are:

- Unfinished Revolution
- Power of Place
- We the People
- American Experiment
- Doing History

You can find detailed information on these themes and interpreting them for your exhibit at: <https://aaslh.org/programs/250th/> We encourage you to think broadly and inclusively about these themes, what they might mean for the history of your community, and how you can showcase that in an exhibit.

250th Local History Gallery Exhibit Details

- Exhibits will run in calendar year 2026. Exhibit slots will be 4 months long: January-April, May-August, and September-December.
- Organizations are welcome to collaborate on an exhibit together, though one primary organization should be identified for contact purposes.
- Primary organizations must be nonprofit or municipal groups.

The Exhibit Space

The Gallery is a rotating exhibit space in the center of our award-winning *Freedom and Unity* exhibition at the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier. It has:

- Approximately 500sqft of open space
- Approximately 75' of fixed wall space for hanging works, with a rail hanging system.
- A variety of display cases with Plexiglas bonnets, as well as platforms/pedestals may also be available
- Flexible track lighting system utilizing LED bulbs

A basic floorplan is available upon request. We encourage you to discuss exhibit furniture, layout and space needs with VHS early in your design process to help determine what will or will not work best for your exhibit.

Selection Process & Application

We anticipate multiple requests to exhibit during this special time. Potential criteria for selection may include:

- Geographic diversity
- Current/ongoing original exhibit design & creation at the organization
- Topical diversity & relevance

There is no set deadline for applying for the 2026 exhibit slots, but we generally recommend applying at least 8 months prior to exhibit installation, and we will plan to choose exhibitors at least 6 months prior to installation date. You do not have to apply for only one exhibit slot.

The Fine Print

A few details to keep in mind when planning and committing to an exhibit:

- All costs related to the creation, installation and transportation of the exhibit are the responsibility of the exhibiting organization, unless otherwise agreed upon.
- Objects or other exhibit items need to be in good condition and able to withstand being on display for four months.
- Organizations will be required to sign a loan agreement with VHS and provide an inventory and basic insurance valuation on their collections. VHS will provide on-site insurance coverage for the exhibit while on premises.
- Size & weight limits: Items must be able to fit safely through a 36" wide by 7' tall doorframe. Items weighing more than 125 lbs are discouraged.
- While VHS will make every effort to provide a safe and secure exhibit space, the room is not continuously monitored by staff/docents, and many (sometimes large) school groups go through the exhibit.
- VHS Staff will have final approval for label copy, exhibit layout, objects and any associated programming.
- VHS and the exhibitor will work together to publicize the exhibit via normally utilized media channels. Exhibitors may be asked to provide publicity materials to VHS before or during the exhibit.
- VHS will provide the space, time and basic refreshments for an exhibit opening event/reception. Additional reception or programming expenses will be borne by the exhibitor.
- The exhibit will be open to the public during regular museum hours (normally Tuesday-Saturday from 10:00am-4:00pm).
- There is an admission charge for the museum, which includes the Local History Gallery. VHS will work with exhibitors as desired to welcome members, special groups or visitors to view the exhibit, and a limited number of complimentary passes will be available upon request.

Let's Collaborate!

We want to make this a collaborative and successful process for everyone, so please let us know if you have any questions, need clarification on any aspect of the program, or need assistance with potential exhibit development. For more details or further questions, please contact Director of Service & Outreach, Eileen Corcoran, director.outreach@vermonthistory.org, (802) 479-8522.