



ON THE EVE OF AMERICA'S 250TH

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

FREEDOM FOR THE NEXT 250

2024-2025
Annual Report

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Dear Friends of the Ashbrook Center,

On the eve of America’s 250th, the drumbeat that began in 1776 proclaiming all men are created free and equal is growing louder.

The drumbeat—steady, insistent—calls us to remember who we are as a people and reminds us that freedom in America is not guaranteed. Self-government is fragile and depends on educated citizens to preserve it.

In 2024-25, the Ashbrook Center worked with urgency and conviction—knowing that the work we do today will help shape the next 250 years of freedom. It was a remarkable year for Ashbrook—a successful year—filled with inspiring stories that testify to the power and effectiveness of our work in the freedom business: stories from students, teachers, and citizens who discovered a deeper understanding of what it truly means to be an American.

During the past academic year:

- More than 3,500 American history and civics teachers from across the country participated in one or more of our 243 educational programs. These teachers will reach more than 350,000 students this year alone. And they will influence the education of millions of students over the course of their careers. Our national network of educators grew to more than 40,000 Ashbrook teachers, who will reach more than 4,000,000 students annually.

- The American Idea podcast grew significantly with more than 430,000 total downloads and views.
- Our TeachingAmericanHistory.org website for teachers attracted over 3.5 million visits from 1.7 million distinct users.
- 185 high school students from 13 states participated in the Ashbrook High School Academy.
- The number of undergraduate students in the Ashbrook Scholar Program expanded to nearly 200, almost double the number of Ashbrook Scholars five years ago.
- We hosted our first ever Oktoberfest and auction for friends and supporters.
- And we successfully completed the first year of our campaign, Freedom. For the Next 250.

Thank you for helping make this one of our most successful years ever.

With your help, we’ve built real momentum. But we still have a lot to do. With America’s 250th anniversary in sight, we must make the drumbeat of liberty grow louder—reminding us of who we are and what is at stake. The Founders pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. May we rise to their example and work to preserve freedom in America with full-hearted dedication as if the next 250 years depend on it—because they do!

In Liberty,



Jeff Sikkenga
Executive Director



Mark Romanchuk
Ashbrook Board Chairman

The Ashbrook Way

First, Enduring, and Unmatched in Civic Education

In a time of deep division and lack of understanding of America's history and Founding principles, where can we find hope for the future of our country? As Americans begin to turn their attention to America's 250th anniversary, there is no shortage of organizations clamoring for the charitable generosity that emerges during these moments—moments so uniquely American. Yet as July 4, 2026 draws near, the cry for civic education, properly understood, risks being drowned out by promises of quick fixes, shortsighted solutions, and fleeting displays of remembrance.

Because we believe, as James Madison put it, in "the capacity of mankind for self-government," we know that we can sustain our experiment in liberty if we seize the moment. And this is Ashbrook's moment—the moment of greatest promise for reviving civic education in America.

More than forty years ago, President Ronald Reagan inaugurated the Ashbrook Center. From that day, Ashbrook has been devoted to its founding purpose: to educate this and future generations of students, teachers, and citizens in order to help sustain the dream proclaimed by Abraham Lincoln: "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the Earth."

From the beginning, Ashbrook has been working to help young people learn what it means to be American and why they ought to love and respect their country. Our methods are tried, tested, and true—proven to change the hearts and minds of America's youth. Every year, we are

reaching tens of thousands of teachers and millions of students around the country.

The beauty of The Ashbrook Way is that it meets teachers, students, and citizens where they are. Not through indoctrination. Not through rote memorization. Rather through lively conversations based on the documents and debates that have defined America—in classrooms, study halls, and around countless kitchen tables across the country. The Ashbrook Way of teaching and learning is ensuring that a new generation of informed patriots can again be hopeful about the promise of America. And the young people of this nation will save it!

This is Ashbrook's moment—the moment of greatest promise for reviving civic education in America.

Ashbrook has become the national leader in civic education. We are the only organization that combines university programs for students, professional development seminars

and graduate programs for teachers, and direct outreach to citizens—all sharing the same goal of educating our fellow Americans in the history and principles of our country. Ashbrook boasts the largest collection of primary documents freely accessible to teachers, students, and citizens outside of the Library of Congress. Ashbrook's programs have the farthest reach (40,000 teachers and counting!) of any educational program or organization seeking to correct the crisis in civic education. Ashbrook's Socratic approach—conversations based on original documents—is unique and inspires students to discover truth for themselves, with the knowledge that understanding and devotion will naturally follow.

Without our friends and supporters, Ashbrook would have never gotten off the ground over four decades ago. Today, The Ashbrook Way is unmatched in civic education—the gold standard by which teachers teach and students learn about America.

Together we will continue this revolutionary spirit for the next 250 years!



Ashbrook is the *only* civic education organization to receive an “A” rating for our teacher programs.

Recognized for excellence—equipping teachers to help students discover for themselves what it means to be an American.





Freedom. For the Next 250: *If We Can Teach It*

**On the Eve of America’s 250th:
Rising to the Challenge of
Shaping the Next 250 Years of
Freedom in America.**

The fight for freedom in America did not end in 1776. It’s a fight—and a responsibility—that every generation must take up. For our nation to endure, for freedom to endure, for our experiment in self-government to endure, young people need to become what Ronald Reagan called “informed patriots” who love America because they understand why it’s loveable. Students, teachers, and citizens of all ages need a fundamental understanding of our history and our Founding principles.

That’s why Ashbrook launched our milestone *Freedom250* campaign in July 2024. Through the campaign, we aim to raise \$20 million to expand our current programs by 50% and launch three new national initiatives.

- Establish the **Ashbrook School of Civic Education** to create an outstanding core of American history and civics teachers that will be a model for civic education across the country.
- Produce a groundbreaking and interactive **Digital Atlas** of primary sources to supplement or replace textbooks in the classroom that will be shared with teachers in every school district across the nation.
- Create a comprehensive **Blueprint for American History and Civics** that will outline best practices and be distributed across the country to all those who want to support outstanding civic education.

At the halfway point of the campaign, Ashbrook has raised more than \$10 million—thanks to the generosity of our friends and supporters who have partnered with us to help ensure America’s future.

As the national leader in civic education, Ashbrook is perfectly positioned to safeguard the Founders’ vision and revolutionize American history and civic education across the country.



Why It Matters

Our Founders built a system of government that has made America the freest and most prosperous country in the history of the world. But self-government is fragile and depends on educated and responsible citizens to preserve it. Too many young people today do not have a fundamental understanding of our history or their rights and duties as citizens.

Our Vision

Imagine a country where every young person is equipped with a solid understanding of America’s history and Founding principles. At Ashbrook, we envision a future where informed patriots shape America’s destiny.

Matching Gift Challenge

Thanks to a few generous supporters, every dollar given in support of Ashbrook’s *Freedom250* campaign will be matched up to \$5 million.



A Republic, If We Can Teach It

Written by Jeff Sikkenga and David Davenport

In response to America's growing crisis in civic education, Ashbrook's Executive Director, Jeff Sikkenga, and David Davenport, former President of Pepperdine University and research fellow emeritus at the Hoover Institution, co-authored a timely and important new book—*A Republic, If We Can Teach It: Fixing America's Civic Education Crisis*.

One reviewer declared that Jeff and David “have provided a wonderful service to the country through their important and timely book,” and called the book “a must-read for educators, policymakers, and any citizen who wishes to join” the campaign for better civic education.

In the book, Jeff and David confront the seriousness of the crisis threatening the future of freedom in America,

grounding the argument in compelling data. Too many Americans, and especially young Americans, lack knowledge of our nation's history and Founding principles. Too many young people today lack any meaningful connection to the American story and to our principles and institutions.

According to the Nation's Report Card (NAEP), only 24% of 8th graders scored proficient or better on civics and only 15% on U.S. history. Consider that. More than 3/4 of young people are not proficient in their knowledge of American history and civics. In a recent poll by Gallup, only **18% of young people say they are extremely proud to be American.** Those two facts are connected. How can young people love America if they don't know why it is worthy of their love?

History and civics used to be the core of American education. In fact, the primary purpose of education early in our country's history was to take people from all over the world and cultivate informed American citizens. But over the last decades, we have done less civic education and often done it worse.

Teachers are facing difficult challenges. Many enter the classroom without having the opportunity to study the great primary documents of America in depth. Tackling civic issues has become ever more controversial. So

educators are too often forced to rely on textbooks that are boring or biased—or both. But here is the good news. **With knowledge comes confidence**—and the ability to engage students in a way that sparks their own desire to discover the truth about America.

Jeff and David make the case for why we need more and better history and civics education. They argue that we need to go back to the notion that civic education is fundamentally about cultivating informed patriots who can think for themselves about the important issues the country faces.

Civic education is fundamentally about cultivating informed patriots who can think for themselves.

How do we do that? According to the authors, **we need to root study in the primary documents that have defined our country.** They contend that we must read both sides of a debate and expose students to the good, the bad, and the ugly. Then ask them to decide for themselves. In other words, have a conversation that brings the story of America alive for students. In this kind of classroom, young people will learn to love America because they understand why it is loveable. They will become the kind of informed patriots we need to continue our precious experiment in self-government.

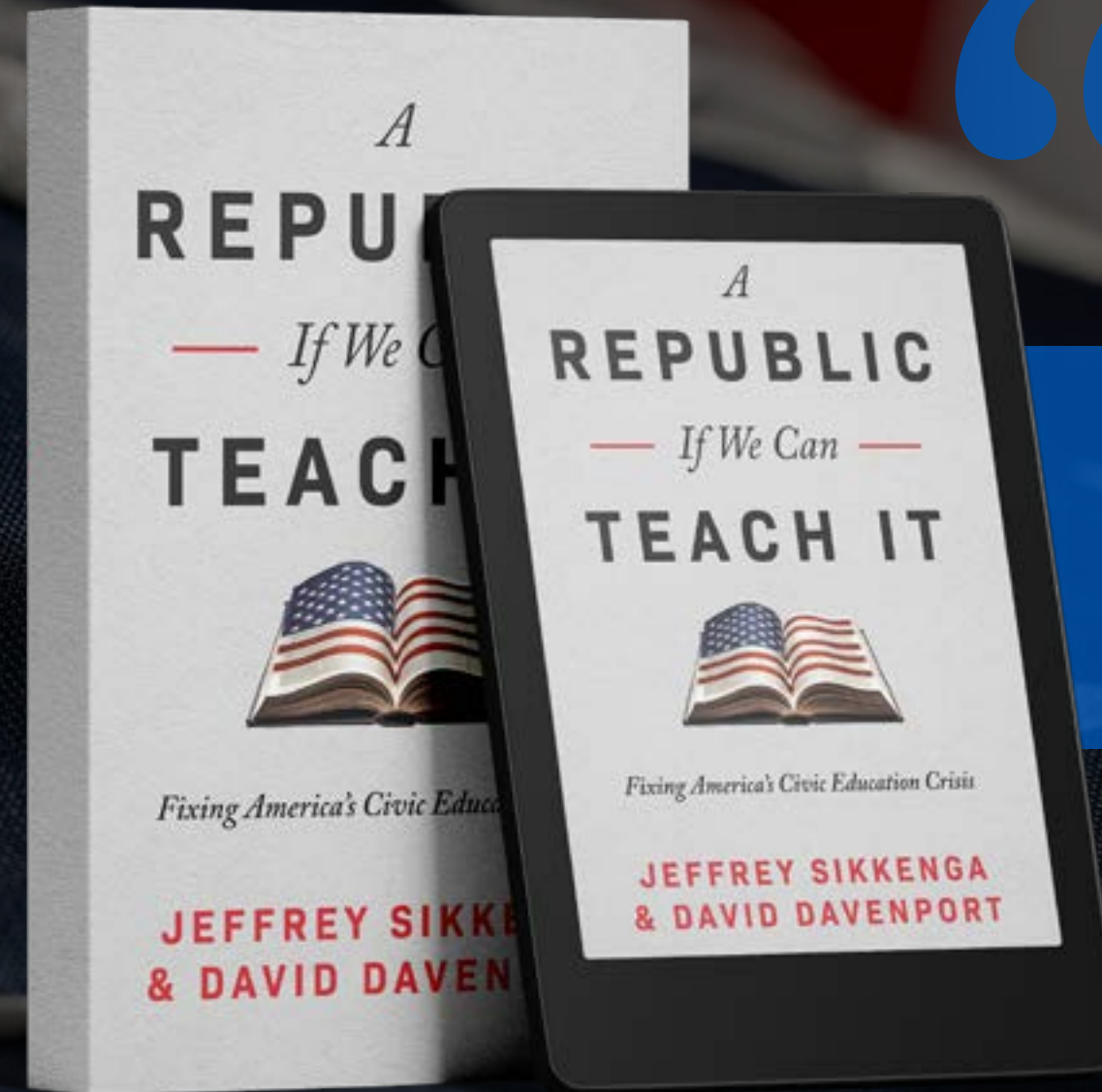
“A call to
action.”

America faces a crisis in civic education that imperils the long-term health of our country. Too many Americans—especially young people—do not have the knowledge of our history and Founding principles necessary to sustain our republic. We must revive civic education to preserve freedom in America before it's too late.



Scan to get your copy of
A Republic, If We Can Teach It.

“It is universally admitted that a well-instructed people alone can be permanently a free people.” - James Madison



Programs for Students

Ashbrook Scholar Program

From Students to Statesmen: Principled Leaders for America’s Next 250 Years

The Ashbrook Scholar Program transforms the lives of students by inviting them into a true liberal arts education—an education for freedom. Students in the Ashbrook Scholar Program learn the defining principles of America. They study the best that has been thought and done in the hope of understanding what is good and noble and just. The Ashbrook Scholar Program cultivates the knowledge, character, and judgment necessary for good leadership in a constitutional republic.

We need these kinds of leaders because, as Thomas Jefferson said, it is essential for preserving freedom “that those persons, whom nature hath endowed with genius and virtue, should be rendered by liberal education worthy to receive, and able to guard the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens, and that they should be called to that charge without regard to wealth, birth or other accidental condition or circumstance.”

In 2024-25, the Ashbrook Scholar Program welcomed nearly 60 new students. With that entering class, the number of students in the Ashbrook Scholar Program almost doubled from several years ago to nearly 200.

The young people entering as Ashbrook Scholars become part of a rigorous and top-rated academic program for undergraduate students pursuing an education in history, political science, or political economy. They study with some of the finest faculty in the nation.

The education of every Ashbrook Scholar begins with a set of core principles: that the United States is worthy of serious study; that good citizenship is necessary in a free society; and that to be a good leader, one must know and understand the principles and history of the country.

Ashbrook Scholars graduate not only with a deep knowledge of the history and principles of America but also as better thinkers, readers, writers, speakers, and listeners. They become influential leaders in their local, state, and national communities.

That’s why it’s no surprise the Ashbrook Scholar Program has achieved a national reputation as one of the finest programs in politics and history for undergraduate students. The American Council of Trustees and Alumni has declared, for example, that the Ashbrook Scholar Program is an “Oasis of Excellence” in higher education. Ashbrook Scholar graduates become exactly the kind of citizens and statesmen that Jefferson knew we needed if we are going to sustain the principles of freedom on which America was founded.



“ I am an alum of the Ashbrook Center, and here is where I learned what books to read, how to read those books carefully, how to write well, how to understand my own thoughts, how to articulate them, and have conversations necessary for self-governance.”

- *Rebecca Heinrichs*



Rebecca Heinrichs
Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute
& Ashbrook Board Member

The Ashbrook High School Academy

Serious Study. Lifelong Citizenship: Preparing young Americans to become thoughtful citizens.

The Ashbrook High School Academy is an intensive summer program for high school students who share a deep interest in American history, government, economics, literature, and religion. The Academy invites young people to consider the American experiment in self-government as a triumph that warrants grateful celebration but also demands serious study.

In 2024-25, 185 high school students representing 13 different states traveled to Ashland, Ohio, to study in one of 11 courses offered, which included:

- **Telling America’s Story**
- **Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War**
- **Capitalism vs. Socialism**
- **The Supreme Court and the Constitution**
- **Politics and Literature**
- **The Bible and the Human Condition**
- **World War II**

As participants in the Ashbrook Academy, students are immersed in the study of the biggest challenges that have faced us as human beings and citizens. Rather than lecturing, our professors encourage conversation by asking questions like: “What does it mean to be an American?”; “What makes a great statesman?”; “What principles animate our Constitution?”; “How can free enterprise create prosperity?”; and, “What can the Bible and literature teach us about the human condition?”

Students are challenged to find the answers in primary documents and great texts, including the defining documents of American history such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Being challenged to find their own answers to such questions sparks wonder in students and inspires them to discover even more for themselves. And engaging in thoughtful conversations with fellow students about the words and deeds of great statesmen and historical figures not only helps them learn to think seriously but also prepares



Abraham Lincoln Portrait, Library of Congress

them to carry on a distinctly American conversation for the good of the country.

Students leave the Academy with a deeper sense of what it means to be a free human being and citizen.

Students begin to take ownership of their education. They pursue it not simply for a grade but because they recognize that it is good. And they are pulled toward it.

These young people come to the Ashbrook Academy to learn about a rich field of subjects. But they leave with something even more lasting: a deeper sense of what it means to be a free human being and citizen, one who can think for themselves and govern themselves. A person who understands that American citizenship is not just a privilege but a lifelong responsibility. As one student said at the end of his time at the Ashbrook Academy, “We’ve all become patriots now!”



Alumni Spotlight

A Conversation with Great Minds



Zack L. graduated from the Ashbrook Scholar Program in 2019. During a campus tour, he was introduced to the Ashbrook Scholar Program and was immediately intrigued by Dr. Chris Burkett’s “mesmerizing” description of Plato, Socrates, and the American Founders. Then during his admission interview, Dr. Peter Schramm mentioned that all students have “a conversation with great minds,” and he knew he was in the right place.

Today, Zack is a National Park Guide at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia. He spends his days talking with visitors about the great minds with whom he became well acquainted as an Ashbrook Scholar. Zack credits Ashbrook for teaching him “how to think about the Founding.”

Zack also credits Ashbrook for teaching him how to conduct historical research. “When I arrived for my freshman year, I knew very little about primary and secondary sources; I just knew I loved history. Ashbrook showed me that primary documents are the basis for how we view the past. I always go to those resources now whenever I am doing research.”

In his role with the National Park Service, Zack develops special programs to commemorate significant events. For the 250th anniversary of the Army in 2025, he brought attention to the lesser-known Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the American Revolution, located in the park where British forces buried American prisoners of war during their occupation of Philadelphia. Zack researched and wrote some 65 mini-biographies for American soldiers buried there and was honored to present them to the public at the tomb—a monument bearing the inscription: “Beneath this stone rests a soldier of Washington’s army who died to give you liberty.”



Zack L. with Ashbrook faculty and freshmen Ashbrook Scholars on a tour of Independence Hall during Freshman Freedom Experience.

“ At its core, the Ashbrook Scholar Program introduces students to the great American thinkers and great American statesmen through their original text and documents—affording them the opportunity to meet them directly, rise to their level as they come to understand them, and pursue the questions that engaged them.”

—Peter W. Schramm, former Executive Director of the Ashbrook Center

Ashbrook Alumni

During the 2024-25 academic year, we hosted alumni gatherings on campus during Homecoming, in Cleveland and Columbus, and in the nation’s capital. These events help alumni reconnect—with each other and with Ashbrook.

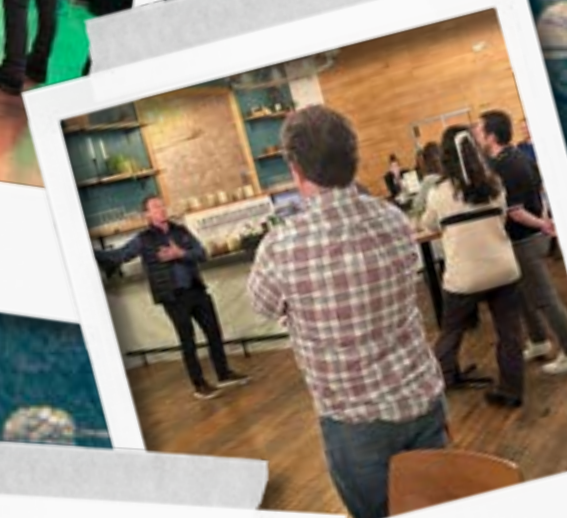


Photo: Ted Eytan - 2021.02.07 DC Street, Washington, DC USA 038 13205-Edit, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=99845141>

Programs for Teachers

**Equipping Teachers, Transforming Classrooms:
Awakening a new generation to the promise—and
responsibility—of being American.**

The Ashbrook Center’s educational programs and classroom resources for teachers are shaping the future of America by reaching the young through those who teach the young. As we approach America’s 250th birthday, the classroom is the front line.

Ashbrook programs equip teachers at all levels K-12 with the knowledge and confidence they need to help their students discover for themselves the true story of America. By learning directly from the words of those who lived and wrote our history rather than from textbooks that may be biased or boring, students are naturally drawn into the wonderfully interesting story of America. Engaging in thoughtful conversations about these words and ideas allows students to discover for themselves the truth of the American story. And to understand the truth of America’s story is to rediscover our respect for and devotion to America. The Ashbrook classroom prepares students for citizenship—and for freedom. It teaches them how to think, not what to think.

**Because this is how freedom is
passed down—not by accident,
but by “reflection and choice,” as
Alexander Hamilton put it in the very
first essay of *The Federalist*.**

During the 2024-25 academic year, Ashbrook offered 243 educational programs for American history, government, and civics teachers from across the nation. Specifically, these programs included 130 one-day seminars, 29 multi-day seminars, 9 webinars, and 75 graduate courses. Our Teaching American History programs reached more than 3,500 teacher participants. Nearly 2/3 of the teachers were participating in an Ashbrook program for the first time. The teachers participating in our 2024-25 educational programs will teach more than 350,000 students this year alone. And over the course of their careers, they will influence the education of millions of young people. Our national network of more than 40,000 Ashbrook teachers reaches more than 4,000,000 students annually.

Teachers who participate in Ashbrook’s programs deepen their understanding of the subject they teach and return to their classrooms better prepared to help their students—the next generation of Americans—learn the inspiring story of America.

One teacher from Wisconsin who attended a multi-day seminar on James Madison at his home, Montpelier, was so moved by her experience that she wanted to express her gratitude to all those who support our programs:

“I would love to pass on a thank you to your incredible donors for the opportunities they consistently give

teachers. I just attended the multi-day seminar at Montpelier. It was a wonderful opportunity to discuss James Madison’s beliefs from his actual words. Please share with your donors that I applied what I learned immediately to the classroom to share with over 100 students. Thank you for this amazing opportunity!”

– Nina G.

**At Ashbrook, we believe civic
education isn’t just another subject
in school. It’s the foundation of a free
society.**



One teacher can influence 5,000+ students throughout their career.

Multiply by 40,000 Ashbrook teachers—that’s up to 200 million young people. That’s the multiplier effect!



Ashbrook supported teachers with more than 240 educational programs in 2024-25.

Programs are offered online, on campus, at our nation’s historic sites, and in communities across the country—meeting teachers where they live and work.



Ashbrook teachers foster informed patriotism and the habits of self-government in the next generation of voters.

Every generation of students who graduate believing that America’s history and principles are unfair, unjust, and cruel is another generation of voters willing to vote our country out of existence.

Classroom Resources

Primary Sources, Enduring Principles: America’s story told in the words of those who lived and wrote it.

Educating the youngest Americans in the principles, rights, and duties of citizenship is the most essential purpose of American education. Ashbrook supports teachers in the classroom by providing them with top-quality classroom resources they can use alongside Ashbrook’s approach to teaching and learning through document-based discussion. Teachers use our free classroom resources to supplement—or even replace—textbooks that are often biased or dull, helping students discover the exceptional story of America in all its richness.

“ I think most American history and government teachers want to use primary sources, but accessing quality materials is time consuming and difficult. Having materials easily accessible is a great help.”
—Adam B., North Carolina



TAH.org

TeachingAmericanHistory.org (TAH.org) is the leading online resource of primary historical documents that have been curated for teachers and their students. In 2024-25, TAH.org attracted over 3.5 million visits from 1.7 million distinct users.

- The site features:
- Core Documents Volumes
 - Concise History Volumes
 - American History Toolkits
 - Interactive Exhibits
 - Archived Webinars
 - Online Library of 3,600+ Primary Source Documents

Core Documents

Designed in consultation with teachers, the Core Documents volumes are unique in their quality, organization, breadth, flexibility, and usefulness to teachers and students. Each volume contains a collection of key documents and features short introductions and discussion questions. Ashbrook has finished 37 Core Documents volumes to date. When complete, the 46-volume series, available in hard copy and online, will be comprehensive and authoritative, presenting America’s story in the words of those who lived and wrote it.

Ashbrook also publishes Concise History volumes that complement the Core Documents volumes. Their interpretive frameworks provide students and teachers with context they need to better understand the core documents. Each volume includes maps and timelines in addition to the coordinating documents that provide a comprehensive account of American history and government.

Digital Atlas

The groundbreaking Digital Atlas is one of the key initiatives of our *Freedom250* campaign. This new classroom resource will bring American history to life for students using interactive digital animation to show key aspects of American history and government development through time. Much more than a map, the innovative Digital Atlas will reveal America’s exceptional story through the use of annotated photos, charts, graphs, maps, dynamic timelines, and links to video and audio excerpts of speeches, covering every major era in our history.

- The first five completed exhibits include:
- “The Constitutional Convention”
 - “The Cold War”
 - “Contested Elections”
 - “World War I and the 1920s”
 - “Slavery and Religion”

Teacher Spotlight

Confident teachers shape thoughtful citizens.

Ginny B. began her career as a social studies teacher at a high school in Virginia. Like many new teachers, her first experiences in the classroom were both exciting and, at times, a bit daunting. When one of her students would ask a good question, she'd often have to say: "I don't know. I'll check and get back to you." But there was little time for research!

Realizing that she needed more knowledge to answer some of the tough questions her students were asking, she began searching for a graduate program where she could pursue her master's degree while continuing to teach.

Ginny wanted a program to help her broaden her knowledge and understanding of the eras of history she'd never had a chance to study. She also wanted a program that paid careful attention to the American Founding and said that she was drawn to

Ashbrook's graduate program because of its emphasis on and very clear regard for the principles of the American Founding.

Today, when students have questions, she has answers.

“**As soon as I read about Ashbrook's program, I thought, This is designed for me! And it has been the best experience ever.**”

Before enrolling in Ashbrook's graduate program, Ginny only occasionally used primary source documents in her classroom. But as a student in the program, she discovered the Ashbrook approach to teaching and learning. "Ashbrook's graduate courses are discussions grounded in texts. The professor poses a question based on a document we have all read. Then we respond, with evidence from the text. If anyone offers an opinion based on their own experience or beliefs, the professor gently reminds us, 'where in the text do you find support for that?'"

Seminars conducted in this way teach "how to disagree with others respectfully." When everyone shares the

same text, the conversation doesn't devolve into arguments about unverifiable claims. By reading speeches, essays, and letters defending both sides of a political issue of the past, Ginny says, "we learn to think through the logic of each perspective together."

Before long, Ginny began to add more primary source documents to the classes she taught. And she knew which documents illuminated the themes in history she most wanted to teach.

For her, there are two important questions that all Americans need to consider: "What is the role of government? and, What is required to create—and then sustain—a free republican government?" These have become her "essential questions," she says, "whether I'm teaching 11th-grade American History, 12th-grade Government, or Modern World History."

"Everything we're asked to do in Ashbrook's graduate program can be transferred to my teaching," Ginny says. "It's demanding but doable for someone teaching full time! And I am grateful to have been able to take what I learned back to my students—the next generation of Americans."



The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776
John Trumbull, Oil on canvas
Yale University Art Gallery
CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

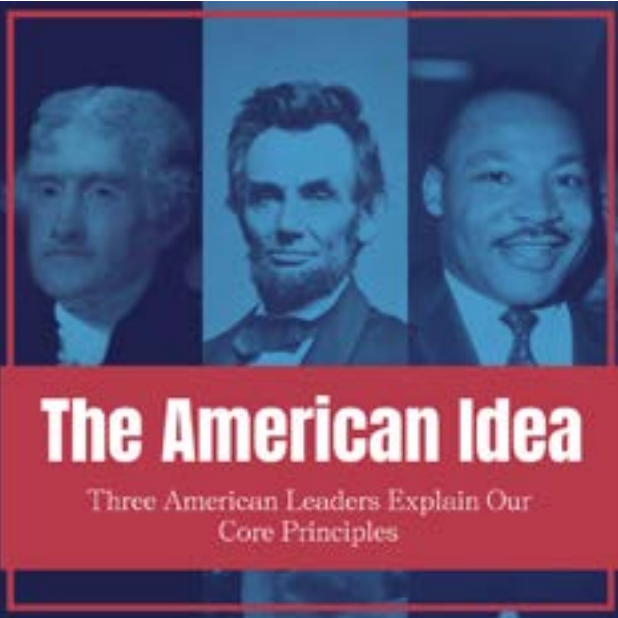
Programs for Citizens

Engaging the Public

The Sacred Oath of Every Citizen

Every citizen—native born or naturalized—bears the same solemn obligation. Immigrants take an oath to support and defend the Constitution, to bear arms if needed, and to serve their chosen country. Those born here are no less bound by the promise, even if it is never spoken aloud. The most essential duty of citizenship is to keep the country worthy, as Abraham Lincoln put it in the Gettysburg Address, of our “last full measure of devotion.”

That’s why Ashbrook offers educational programs and resources for all Americans—to help citizens think through



questions that have become ever more important in our country’s life: “What is the meaning of the American Founding?” “How have the principles of America’s Founding shaped our history?” “What do our Founding principles mean for today?”

We don’t tell citizens what to think about America and our history—we want to help them discover the truth for themselves. Ashbrook’s approach to helping Americans of all ages learn American history and government is driven by the conviction that at the heart of America’s story lies our shared struggle to live up to the self-evident truths of freedom proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence and embodied in the Constitution. It’s what we call “The American Idea.”

Online MasterClasses

Ashbrook’s free interactive online MasterClasses are an essential resource for all Americans. Each course explores important ideas, individuals, and moments in time through the words of those who lived and shaped the history of America and the world.

The American Idea course is structured around three familiar documents and three of the most significant eras in American history: the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech. These three documents illuminate three great epochs in American history:



Scan here to learn more about our MasterClasses.

- the birth and definition of self-government in the 18th century;
- the great crisis of the American experiment and the “new birth of freedom” in the 19th century;
- and the fulfillment of the American promise of freedom in the 20th century.

At the core of each is the most important American idea—the idea of freedom expressed in the most famous American words, declaring that “all men are created equal.”

The **Tear Down This Wall!** course focuses on Winston Churchill, Ronald Reagan, and Margaret Thatcher. Much can be learned about what it takes to be a leader in challenging times from these three great statesmen who stood up to tyranny abroad and bad ideas at home, who fought for what they believed, and trusted that liberty was the best way forward.



“Tear Down This Wall...”

The American Idea Podcast

Ashbrook’s weekly podcast explores America’s history and Founding principles and their effect on American government, economics, and society. With more than 430,000 total downloads and views, the podcast ranks in the top 5% most listened to podcasts worldwide in its category.



Listeners look forward to the lively and thoughtful conversations each week with renowned academics and public figures. *The American Idea* examines the history and political thought behind our country’s greatest documents and debates as well as American popular culture and political statesmanship.

The top five episodes from 2024-25 include:

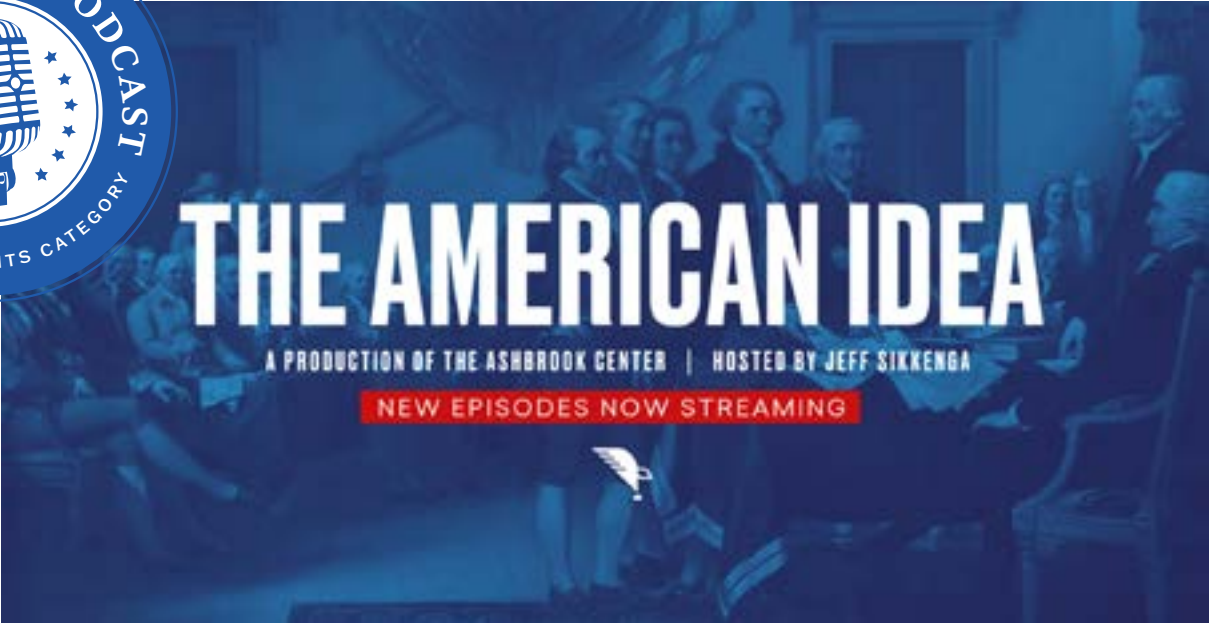
- **Presidential Scandals—Crimes of Moral Failures from the Founding to the Present**

- **2024 Supreme Court Decisions—Review and Analysis**
- **America First: FDR vs. Charles Lindbergh in the Shadow of War**
- ***Born American, But in the Wrong Place*—The Life of Peter W. Schramm**
- **Making the Presidency—John Adams and the Precedents that Forged the Republic**

AmericanFounding.org

AmericanFounding.org presents key documents, thoughtful commentary, interactive graphics, and even a virtual tour of historic Philadelphia—all designed to help citizens discover the miracle of the American Founding.

Featuring four online exhibits, the site chronicles the story of the American Founding in four chapters: The Case for Independence; the Constitutional Convention; the Ratification of the Constitution; and the Bill of Rights.



Ashbrook Events

Engaging Citizens: Refining and Enlarging the Public View, Preserving Freedom for the Next 250 Years

September 12, 2024
Constitution Day Lecture

The Guide Which We Must Never Abandon: Reflections on the U.S. Constitution

Jeff Sessions, Former U.S. Attorney General

September 26, 2024

Oktoberfest & Auction

Guests enjoyed an evening of good food, lively conversation, and a live auction of unique American items.

October 23, 2024

Major Issues Lecture Series

The Indispensable Right: Free Speech in an Age of Rage

Jonathan Turley, Legal Scholar and Fox News Contributor

January 29, 2025

Major Issues Lecture Series

It's a Dangerous World: Foreign Policy Challenges Facing the Trump Administration

Rebecca Heinrichs, Hudson Institute Senior Fellow

February 27, 2025

Major Issues Lecture Series

Unleashing American Enterprise: A Conversation on America's Economic Future

Angela Phillips, CEO of Phillips Tube Group, Inc.
Frank Sullivan, Chairman and CEO of RPM International, Inc.

Robert Sprague, Ohio's 49th Treasurer of State

April 12, 2025

37th John M. Ashbrook Memorial Dinner

Adventures through Fox News and the Rise of Donald Trump

Jesse Watters, Fox News Host and Bestselling Author



April 12, 2025

37th John M. Ashbrook Memorial Dinner Adventures through Fox News and the Rise of Donald Trump

Jesse Watters, Fox News Host and Bestselling Author





From left to right: Bob Archer, Jan Archer, and Marv Krinsky

Donor Spotlight: Bob and Jan Archer

Education. Pass it on.

America has always been a place where humble beginnings can give way to great things. Bob and Jan Archer’s story is one of hard work, perseverance, principle, and generosity. From the early days of their marriage when, as Jan puts it, “they were poor as church mice,” they worked, prospered, and built a life together that has benefited countless others.

Both Bob and Jan were valedictorians of their high school classes. In college, Bob pursued an undergraduate degree in engineering and a graduate degree in business management, determined to one day own his own company. Jan majored in music. Education was important to both Bob and Jan, yet their own education would not have been possible without scholarships. Bob recalls that “without the scholarships, I wouldn’t be here today.” Those opportunities not only made all the difference in their own lives but also inspired their conviction to give back.

In 1980, Bob purchased Kent Watersports in New London, Ohio. Under his leadership, the company grew from \$350,000 in annual sales into a \$300 million enterprise, today the world’s largest manufacturer of life jackets and water sports equipment. Jan’s career was equally rewarding

in community leadership positions and helping people—roles that reflected her deepest values.

For the Archers, helping to educate young people is a way of repaying a debt—giving forward to the next generation.

Bob and Jan have made education a priority in their philanthropy. For the Archers, helping to educate young people is a way of repaying a debt—giving forward to the next generation. Their support for the community and the Ashbrook Center is unparalleled, reflecting their commitment to investing in the future.

Bob now serves as a member of the Ashbrook Board. He believes deeply that America must teach the Constitution and its principles to the nation’s young people. That’s why he is committed to Ashbrook’s mission: as Bob says, “Ashbrook is teaching students about the Constitution, civics, and what a republic is.” Among his many other contributions as an Ashbrook Board member, he is especially proud of helping to bring Professor Adam Carrington back to Ashbrook from

Hillsdale College so that Professor Carrington can teach the Constitution to students and teachers at Ashbrook and around the country.

As we near the celebration of America’s 250th, Bob sees both promise and responsibility. He believes Ashbrook must continue to grow and that his and Jan’s investment in Ashbrook is essential to the future of the Republic.

We are deeply grateful to Bob and Jan for their full and generous support of Ashbrook and our work in the freedom business. In their devotion to education and to the cause of freedom, the Archers are doing their part to ensure that the flame of liberty, first lit in 1776, continues to shine brightly for the next 250 years.

Thank you, Bob and Jan.

As Bob says, “Ashbrook is teaching students about the Constitution, civics, and what a republic is.”

MAY 16-18, 2025

Director's Club Weekend



The Better Angels of Our Nature: Abraham Lincoln and the Outbreak of the Civil War

Charleston, South Carolina

Forty members of Ashbrook's Director's Club traveled to the vibrant and historically rich city of Charleston for "The Better Angels of Our Nature: Abraham Lincoln and the Outbreak of the Civil War." Our dedicated supporters enjoyed a weekend of learning and camaraderie. The weekend featured tours of Fort Sumter, Boone Hall Plantation, and downtown Charleston, an Ashbrook-style seminar, and a special panel discussion with Ashbrook teachers.



APRIL 24-26, 2026

Director's Club Weekend

Freedom 250: Thomas Jefferson and the Legacy of the Declaration of Independence

As we prepare to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Ashbrook is stepping back into history to learn more about the author of this vitally important document in our nation's history.

We invite our Director's Club members to join us in Charlottesville, Virginia, for a tour of Monticello—the home Thomas Jefferson designed, redesigned, built, and rebuilt over the course of more than 40 years. Guests will not only tour the dome but also have exclusive access to archival documents. Explore pieces from the Presidential Library Archives that are curated exclusively for our group by Dr. Cara Rogers Stevens, a 2025 George Washington Prize finalist for her recent book *Thomas Jefferson and the Fight Against Slavery*.

The weekend will also feature a private tour of Montpelier, the nearby estate of James Madison, 4th president of the United States and "Father of the Constitution," where we will get a glimpse into the lives of James Madison and First Lady, Dolley. We hope you will plan to join us for a weekend of fun, fellowship, and renewing our understanding of America's Founding principles.



Register today!



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Partners in Securing the Promise of America for the Next 250 Years

We extend our deepest gratitude to our patriotic, freedom-loving friends and supporters. As America's 250th anniversary approaches, we honor their dedication to ensuring that the American experiment in self-government continues. Freedom. For the Next 250!

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Benjamin Franklin Legacy Society

After the close of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, Benjamin Franklin was asked, “Well, Doctor, what have we got—a republic or a monarchy?” He famously answered: “A republic, if you can keep it.” Just two years later, Franklin added a codicil to his will, leaving a remarkable 200-year endowment to educate young citizens because, as he wrote, he wanted “to be useful” for years to come.

Today, with the 250th anniversary of America’s Founding drawing near, we invite you to become a member of the Ashbrook Center’s Benjamin Franklin Legacy Society. Named in Franklin’s honor, the Legacy Society recognizes those who have made a lasting commitment to the future of freedom in America.

We all leave a legacy. The question is how well it reflects the principles we believe in most deeply. By including the Ashbrook Center in your will or estate plans, you can leave a legacy of freedom—one that will help ensure the next generation understands what it means to be American. If you haven’t already, please consider becoming a member of the Benjamin Franklin Legacy Society and help shape the next 250 years of freedom in America.

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“ I wish to be useful even after my death, if possible, in forming and advancing other young men, that may be serviceable to their country.”
-Benjamin Franklin



Benjamin Franklin Portrait
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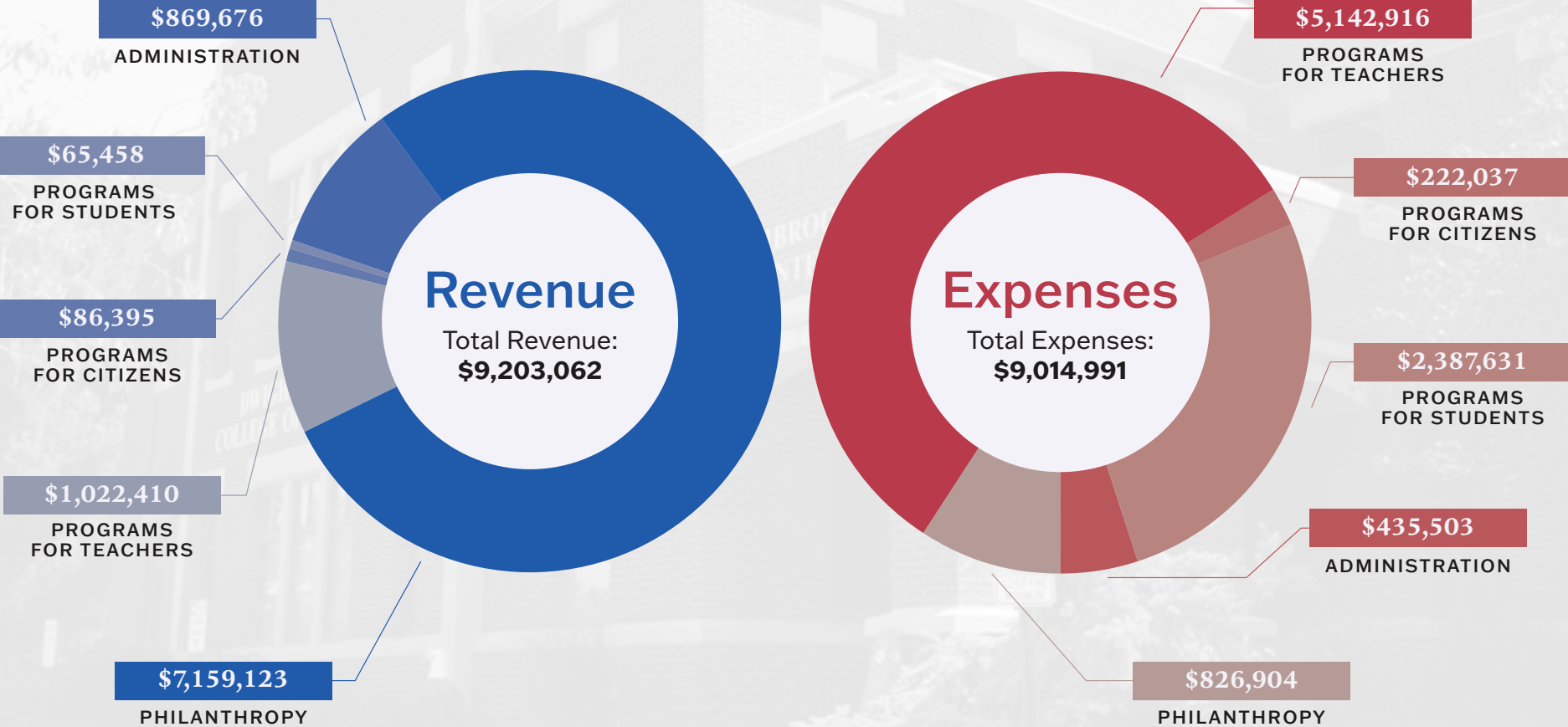
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Memorial Dinner



Dana Perino,
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We are pleased to announce Dana Perino, former White House Press Secretary and Fox News Host, will be the keynote speaker for the 38th John M. Ashbrook Memorial Dinner.

Friday, March 27, 2026

RESERVE YOUR TICKETS TODAY!

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The Ashbrook Center seeks to strengthen constitutional self-government by educating our fellow Americans—students, teachers, and citizens—in the history and Founding principles of our country and the habits of reflection and choice necessary to perpetuate our republic.

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