Maryland Humanities partners with the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) to bring high-quality traveling exhibitions to communities across the state. Museum on Main Street (MoMS) exhibitions are designed to start dialogue, facilitate connections, open doors to community history, culture, people, and build a sense of local pride.

**About the Exhibition**

When American revolutionaries waged a war for independence they took a leap of faith that sent ripple effects across generations. They embraced a radical idea of establishing a government that entrusted the power of the nation not in a monarchy, but in its citizens. That great leap sparked questions that continue to impact Americans: who has the right to vote, what are the freedoms and responsibilities of citizens, and whose voices will be heard? *Voices and Votes: Democracy in America* will be a springboard for discussions about those very questions and how they are reflected in local stories.

*Voices and Votes* is based on a major exhibition currently on display at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History. This Museum on Main Street adaptation will have many of the same dynamic features: historical and contemporary photos; educational and archival video; engaging multimedia interactives with short games and additional footage, photos, and information; and historical objects like campaign souvenirs, voter memorabilia, and protest material.

Our democracy demands action, reaction, vision, and revision as we continue to question how to form “a more perfect union.” How do you participate as a citizen? From the revolution and suffrage, to civil rights and casting ballots, everyone in every community is part of this ever-evolving story – the story of democracy in America.

**Raise your voice for Maryland’s next Smithsonian exhibition tour**

Apply to be one of five venues to host *Voices & Votes: Democracy in America* for our 2021–2022 Museum on Main Street tour!

Proposals due February 28, 2020. [Apply Online.](#)

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**Contact:** Theresa Worden, Program Officer, Traveling Exhibitions
[em] tworden@mdhumanities.org  [ph] 410.685.0303

![Image of "A woman living here has registered to vote" suffrage window sign, 1919. Courtesy of National Museum of American History](image-url)
About the Opportunity
Museum on Main Street brings high-quality Smithsonian traveling exhibitions to museums, historical societies, and other small-town cultural venues across the country. These exhibits boost civic pride, as residents young and old, from diverse backgrounds come together to share and celebrate their heritage. Host venues are selected through a competitive application and awarded to communities as a cohort that will work and train together over the next year, leading up to opening day at the first venue.

Hopeful. Participatory. Community-building.
Five Maryland communities will explore what it means to be a citizen and examine the context and main controversies behind America's democratic system as well as lead community discussions centering the right to vote, what are the freedoms and responsibilities of citizens, and whose voices will be heard? Through a year-long engagement before the Smithsonian exhibition arrives, communities will collaborate across sectors, create companion exhibits, develop programs, events, and storytelling projects that facilitate community-wide conversations in the community and throughout the state.

When will Voices and Votes be in Maryland?
The exhibition will tour Maryland from April 17, 2021 to January 22, 2022. In the application, you’ll be able to mark your top three choices for exhibition dates. If your host site is selected, Maryland Humanities will use the information to create the final exhibit tour schedule. The selection committee will strive to match host sites with their preferred dates. However, we cannot guarantee organizations will be assigned their top choices.

Exhibition schedule
April 17, 2021 – May 29, 2021
June 12, 2021 – July 24, 2021
August 14, 2021 – September 25, 2021
October 9, 2021 – November 20, 2021
December 4, 2021 – January 22, 2022

Eligibility
Eligible applicants will:
• Either be located in a community with a population below 20,000 or the have ability to demonstrate limited access to nationally recognized exhibitions
• Provide:
  • a minimum of 700 square feet of display space for the Smithsonian exhibition
  • a ceiling height of at least 9 feet
  • functional electrical outlets in the display space
  • enclosed shipping crate storage of 220 square feet
  • minimum standards of security during the exhibition’s stay
• Have convenient hours that are open to the public
• Tell a unique local story that ties in with the theme of Voices and Votes that will be the basis for a locally produced companion exhibition
• Demonstrate ideas for strong public humanities programming
• Develop partnerships among organizations in the community or region
Responsibilities

Sites selected to host the *Voices and Votes* exhibition will:

- Assign two project coordinators for the exhibition who will attend planning meetings and work together coordinate the project from beginning to end
- Implement publicity in your local community and region in cooperation with Maryland Humanities
- Produce a local companion exhibition and host public humanities programs
- Host a grand opening/ribbon cutting and invite public officials, media, legislators, congressional representatives, and others
- Provide a cost share report at the project’s conclusion tracking all staff and volunteer time, facility expenses, and other donated resources
- Provide a secure, dry space to store empty exhibition crates for the duration of the exhibition.
- Engage in cooperative publicity
- Contribute hard work and some out-of-pocket expenses

Voices and Votes Exhibition Content

The exhibition will explore historic events and pose questions for today in the following content areas:

**The Great Leap:** Examine the context and main controversies behind America's democratic system. Learn the stories of our famous founders and those who remain mostly unknown. What were the principles and events that inspired the writers of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution? Just how revolutionary was our new democracy led by the people? And who were “the people?”

**A Vote, A Voice:** We have a diverse body of voters today, but not every American has always had the right to vote. The fight for fair representation, suffrage, and a voice at the polls has meant struggle and changes to laws ever since our founding. Learn about these struggles, how voting was expanded, and continued challenges to voting.

**The Machinery of Democracy:** We participate in the political system through state and national parties, nomination conventions, and stumping for our candidate of choice. Learn about this machinery of democracy, how it calls us to be involved, but can also control how we get information about candidates and issues.

**Beyond the Ballot:** Americans fight against injustice. Men and women of every ethnicity, class, and state have shared in the revolutionary spirit of rising up and speaking out. The First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees this right to peaceably assembly and petition the government. See the different places and different motivations of diverse Americans to petition for their interests and concerns.

**Creating Citizens:** Who are “We the People?” What is the meaning of citizenship? Ever since the creation of the Constitution, Americans continue to interpret, expand, and shape the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen. Explore how those views of rights and responsibilities have shaped our national identity and our complex national story.

About Museum on Main Street

Museum on Main Street enables Marylanders to experience Smithsonian-produced exhibitions in their own communities. Furthermore, it gives local cultural organizations hosting the exhibition opportunities to enhance their roles in their regions, engage new audiences and volunteers, expand their knowledge and resource bases, and develop skills that can be applied toward future exhibits and programs. For many past host communities, this experience has been transformative. More information is on the Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street website: www.museumonmainstreet.org.