



A Birthday Letter to America
July 4, 2026

This year, the United States of America turns 250.

Milestones like this invite more than celebration. They call for reflection on where we've been, what has endured, and discussion and alignment around where to go next.

From the perspective of business, America's story has always been tied to possibility—the ability to create, to grow, to contribute, and to lead with purpose. A soon-to-be-released 250-year retrospective, created by Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose® (CECP) in partnership with Blackbaud, explores how, across generations, companies have helped drive progress and expand opportunity.

In 1954, the GE Foundation launched the first corporate matching-gift program, providing a 1:1 match to employees' donations. By 2024, 93% of companies offered these kinds of programs, and corporate social investments in the United States reached \$44.4 billion. According to CECP's 2024 *Giving in Numbers*® data, the median total community investment per company was \$21.5 million, reflecting how deeply embedded these commitments have become across leading businesses. Alongside monetary investment, companies have advanced workplace standards, strengthened support for employees, and mobilized resources to drive tangible impacts in the communities they serve.

At key points in time—moments that call for leadership beyond business as usual—this role becomes even more critical. Today is one of those moments.

Across the CECP network, we see how companies are redefining what purpose-driven leadership looks like: strengthening commitments to employees, deepening partnerships with communities, and working to build trust with stakeholders. These are not add-ons. They are essential to how strong, enduring businesses operate, and how they earn the right to lead.

Anniversaries like this also call for honesty. The American story is not static, and it is not without challenges. What has carried the country forward is a shared belief that progress is possible and that every sector, including business, has a role to play in shaping it.

Looking ahead, the next chapter will depend on how we show up now.

For business leaders, that means leading with purpose consistently and tangibly. It means listening—to employees, to communities, and to one another—and using that insight to build stronger, more inclusive and engaged organizations. It means grounding decisions in long-term value and staying anchored in core values, something that is most important when it is also most challenging. Finally, it means recognizing that the success of companies is intrinsically connected to the success of the society around them.

Two hundred and fifty years in, the question is not just what America has been, but what we choose to build together next.

At CECP, we believe business is at its best when it contributes to a stronger, more resilient society. This moment is an opportunity to affirm that commitment and to act on it.

Sincerely,

Daryl Brewster
CEO
Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose