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Redesigning Circulating Quarters, Half Dollars, and Dollar Coins: Current and Future Designs

In January 2021, the Circulating Collectible Coin Redesign Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-330) was enacted. The legislation authorizes the redesigns of the circulating quarter dollar, half dollar, and \$1 coins to be issued between 2022 and 2030.

Generally, coins are either circulating (i.e., sold by the U.S. Mint to the Federal Reserve for distribution to American financial institutions and used as money to exchange for goods and services) or commemorative (i.e., sold by the Mint to collectors to honor someone or something). The U.S. Mint also produces precious metal coins.

Quarter-Dollar Coins

In 1796, the U.S. Mint issued the first quarter dollar, depicting Lady Liberty on the (front) obverse and an eagle on the (back) reverse. Between 1932 and 2020, the quarter dollar was redesigned four times. These changes included placement of President Washington on the obverse (1932), the Bicentennial of the United States (1976), 50 state quarter program (1997), and the America the Beautiful national parks and historic sites in each state (2008).

The America the Beautiful quarter program concludes in 2021 with the issuance of the Tuskegee Airmen (Alabama) National Historic Site quarter (see **Figure 1**). With the program's conclusion, the U.S. Mint is to issue a new "standard" quarter dollar. It continues to feature President Washington on the obverse, but has a new image of General Washington Crossing the Delaware River prior to the Battle of Trenton on the reverse. The "Washington Crossing the Delaware" quarter (shown in **Figure 1**) is to first be issued in 2021, and then during any period when Congress does not mandate an alternative design.

Between 2022 and 2030, the quarter dollar will likely be redesigned three times pursuant to the Circulating Collectible Coin Redesign Act of 2020. These designs are to feature new images on the reverse related to prominent American women, the Semiquincentennial (250th anniversary of the United States), and youth sports. President Washington will remain on the obverse.

2022 to 2025—Prominent American Women

From 2022 to 2025, the Mint is authorized to redesign the quarter dollar's reverse to feature prominent American women who made a contribution to the United States in areas "including but not limited to suffrage, civil rights, abolition, government, humanities, science, space, and arts, and should honor women from ethnically, racially, and geographically diverse backgrounds." Each design will feature one woman, with five women celebrated each year (§2).

Figure 1. Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site and Washington Crossing the Delaware Quarters



Sources: U.S. Mint, "Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site Quarter," at <https://www.usmint.gov/coins/coin-medal-programs/america-the-beautiful-quarters/tuskegee-airmen-national-historic-site/>; and U.S. Mint, "General George Washington Crossing the Delaware Quarter," at <https://www.usmint.gov/coins/coin-medal-programs/circulating-coins/general-george-washington-crossing-the-delaware-quarter/>.

2026 Semiquincentennial

In 2026, to celebrate the Semiquincentennial of the United States, the U.S. Mint is authorized to redesign the quarter dollar "with up to five different designs emblematic of the United States Semiquincentennial." Further, at least "one of the ... designs must be emblematic of a woman's or women's contribution to the birth of the Nation or the Declaration of Independence or any other monumental moments" in American history (§3). The Semiquincentennial redesign continues a tradition of redesigning coinage for milestone anniversaries (1876, 1926, and 1976).

2027-2030—Youth Sports

Between 2027 and 2030, the U.S. Mint is authorized to redesign the quarter dollar's reverse with images "emblematic of sports played by American youth." Each design would feature a single sport, with up to five sports celebrated each year (§4).

Half-Dollar Coins

In 1792 (1 Stat. 246), Congress authorized the first half-dollar coin. Since 1964, the half dollar has featured President John F. Kennedy on the obverse and an eagle on

the reverse. The Mint has issued the Kennedy-Eagle half dollar annually, with the exception of 1976, when the reverse featured Independence Hall in Philadelphia, PA, for the United States Bicentennial. **Figure 2** shows the Bicentennial half dollar and the 2021 Kennedy half dollar.

Figure 2. Examples of Kennedy Half-Dollar Coins



Sources: U.S. Mint, “1976 Bicentennial Coins,” at <https://www.usmint.gov/learn/kids/library/bicentennial-coins>; and U.S. Mint, “Half Dollar,” at <https://www.usmint.gov/coins/coin-medal-programs/circulating-coins/half-dollar>.

2027-2030—Paralympic Sports

The Circulating Collectible Coin Redesign Act authorizes the redesign of the half dollar between 2027 and 2030 with images on the reverse “emblematic of a sport tailored to athletes with a range of disabilities, including physical impairment, vision impairment and intellectual impairment.” Each of the half dollars would feature a single Paralympic sport after consultation with U.S. Paralympics, with one sport featured each year (§4).

Dollar Coins

In 1792, Congress authorized the first dollar coin. In 1971, the U.S. Mint issued the first \$1 coin to feature a President (Eisenhower). In 1976, the Bicentennial \$1 coin featured President Dwight D. Eisenhower on the obverse and the Liberty Bell and moon on the reverse. Between 1979 and 1981 and in 1999, the Susan B. Anthony \$1 coin featured Susan B. Anthony on the obverse and an eagle on the reverse.

Currently, the U.S. Mint issues two \$1 coin series. The Native American \$1 coins feature Sacagawea on the obverse and a design that “bear[s] images celebrating the important contributions made by Indian Tribes and individual Native Americans to the development of the United States and the history of the United States” on the reverse (see **Figure 3**).

The American Innovation \$1 coins feature the Statue of Liberty on the obverse and a unique design emblematic of a significant innovation or innovator(s) from each state on the reverse (see **Figure 3**). The American Innovation \$1 coins are circulating numismatic coins—designed to circulating

standards (e.g., size, weight, color) but only manufactured in quantities to meet collector demand.

Figure 3. Examples of Native American and American Innovation \$1 Coins



Sources: U.S. Mint, “2021 Native American \$1 Coin,” at <https://www.usmint.gov/coins/coin-medal-programs/native-american-dollar-coins/2021-military-service>; and U.S. Mint, “American Innovation \$1 Coin Program,” at <https://www.usmint.gov/learn/coin-and-medal-programs/american-innovation-dollar-coins>.

Additionally, in 2020, a new presidential \$1 coin was authorized (P.L. 116-112) for President George H.W. Bush. Minted in 2020, it featured President George H.W. Bush on the obverse and the Statue of Liberty on the Reverse. The Bush Presidential \$1 coin was only minted in 2020.

2026 Semiquincentennial

For the 250th anniversary of the United States, the U.S. Mint is authorized to issue new \$1 coins “with designs emblematic of the United States semiquincentennial.” (§3) Any semiquincentennial \$1 coins issued would be in addition to the issuance of Native American and American Innovation \$1 coins (§3).

For more information on circulating coins, see CRS In Focus IF10533, *Congressional Involvement in the Design of Circulating Coins*; CRS In Focus IF11394, *Quarter and Half Dollar Coins: History and Current Status*; and CRS In Focus IF11190, *U.S. Dollar Coins: History and Current Status*.

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