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Editors' Choice Award: America's 10 Best Wedding Destinations for History Aficionados



By: Amber Brooks | Updated: February 5, 2019



Brides and grooms have to make a myriad of decisions, plans, compromises, and last-minute improvisations to get a perfect wedding underway. The first question they must answer is pretty simple: Where are you going to get married?

Churches used to be the go-to wedding venues, but nowadays more couples are going the secular route. In 2016, **only 26% of couples tied the knot in a church**. Modern couples prefer to think outside the church, as it were, and plan celebrations based on love rather than religion. In this new era of wedding events, the nation's historical locations have gained traction and become popular venues among couples with a passion for the past.

Our dating experts have reviewed hundreds of wedding destinations from coast to coast to bring our readers an all-star ranking of the 10 best historically significant wedding venues in the U.S. We hand-selected these destinations to help couples take their wedding plans up a notch and check at least one thing off their to-do lists.

5. The Liberty View — Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

[The Liberty View](#) at the Independence Visitor Center offers people a remarkable events venue in the heart of Philadelphia. The ballroom, terrace, and other rental spaces are perfect for a private wedding surrounded by historical sites.

You can find the Liberty View just steps away from the Liberty Bell and Independence

Hall at the junction of Sixth and Market Streets in Independence National Historical Park aka the most historical square mile in the U.S.



Liberty View invites couples to get married in one of the nation's most historically significant neighborhoods.

As a facility rental company, the Liberty View welcomes couples seeking a more perfect union in the Birthplace of America. It can arrange for [a rooftop proposal](#) on the open-air observation deck or [an indoor or outdoor wedding](#) draped in elegance. The ballroom can hold up to 180 seated guests and up to 150 dancing guests. The Grand Hall can host a cocktail party for up to 1,000 people or a seated dinner for up to 500 people.

The Liberty View has partnered with local caterers and other exclusive vendors to bring its guests the best of the best. Rental fees start at \$3,200 for a five-hour rental on Friday or Sunday evening (typically from 6 p.m. until 11 p.m.) This fee includes tables, chairs, setup, and breakdown fees. It costs an additional \$300 for a 30-minute onsite

wedding ceremony. [Contact Liberty View's event staff](#) for more details.

[Reviews on the Wedding Wire](#) have given the Liberty View 5 out of 5 stars in terms of quality service, professionalism, flexibility, value, and responsiveness.

"Liberty View is the best! Recently renovated and even more stunning outdoor space added, this venue was perfect for our ceremony spot," said Kim, who said not even pouring rain could put a damper on her special day at Liberty View. "We also got great family photos from the new outdoor side terrace with the Independence Mall and Independence Hall behind us!"



What the government shutdown means for Independence Mall

By Peter Crimmins December 18, 2018



Shown is Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2017. (Matt Rourke/AP Photo)

Updated: Dec. 22, 2018, 12:00 p.m.

America's elected leaders have partially closed down the federal government over their inability to compromise on money for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. [Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell center are closed](#) to the public, but the Independence Visitor Center remains open.

While city services are unaffected, the Independence National Historic Park in Philadelphia is a microcosm of the confusion that could unfold if a partial shutdown happens. Certain historic sites on the mall are operated by the National Park Service, others are run privately.

For example, Independence Hall would likely shut down, but the Museum of the American Revolution would remain open. The National Constitution Center will be open; the Liberty Bell pavilion will likely be closed. The open-air, multi-media President's House will be accessible; the open-air "ghost house" of the Ben Franklin Museum will likely be closed.

If a shutdown happens it would be the second this year. In January 2018, a skeletal force of park rangers was on-site at Independence Hall for security. Otherwise, the park was unstaffed, its building shuttered. In January, tourists determined to see the sites lined up outside the Liberty Bell pavilion, patiently taking turns pressing their faces against the glass window to get a glimpse of the fabled crack.

The Visitor's Center on Independence Mall is run collaboratively between a private corporation and the Park Service. James Cuorato, the CEO of Independence Visitor's Center Corporation, is confident the visitor's center will be allowed to stay open, but the staff will be redirecting people to other attractions outside the park.

"It can be a little bit confusing. We live this every day down here, so we're used to explaining it to people," said Cuorato. "It will require an additional level of explanation on different attractions."

What, exactly will be open and not open will likely be determined once a shutdown is announced. A Park Service spokesperson would not say if a plan for a possible government shutdown exists yet.



How Philadelphia is affected by the government shutdown



Photo courtesy of The Office of Gov. Tom Wolf

By [Maria Murray, FOX 29](#)

Posted Dec 22 2018 02:22PM EST Updated Dec 22 2018 02:28PM EST

PHILADELPHIA (WTFX) - A partial **federal** shutdown began early Saturday after lawmakers refused to meet President Donald Trump's demands for \$5 billion to erect a border wall with Mexico. The shutdown, which affects more than 800,000 **federal employees**, marks a hectic footnote in the remaining days of the Republican-led Congress.

Here's a closer look at how Philadelphia, specifically, is affected by the shutdown.

WHAT'S OPEN AND WHAT'S CLOSED

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER: **OPEN**

The National Constitution **Center** will remain open, as the nonprofit that does not rely on federal funding. The Center will operate under its regularly scheduled hours. All museum events will continue as scheduled.

INDEPENDENCE VISITOR CENTER: OPEN

Independence Visitor Center will remain open for normal business operations. Although the building is federal property, the Center has the opportunity to remain open for visitors because its operations are managed by the Independence Visitor Center Corporation (IVCC), a Pennsylvania nonprofit; however, there will be no National Park Service staff at the Center.

VALLEY FORGE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK: PARTIALLY OPEN

Park roads, lookouts, trails and open-air memorials at Valley Forge National Historical Park will remain accessible to visitors.

Emergency and rescue services will be limited, however, and most park buildings will be closed.

There will be no National Parks Service-provided visitor services at Valley Forge National Historical Park, including public information, most restrooms, trash collection, and facilities and roads maintenance.

All park programs have also been canceled due to the shutdown.

LIBERTY BELL / INDEPENDENCE HALL: CLOSED

National Park Service buildings, including the Liberty Bell Center and Independence Hall, will not be open as long as there is a lapse in federal funding.

For information on what is closed and what is open on a national level, see [here](#).

Mummers Parade 2019: Your ultimate guide

by [Bethany Ao](#), Updated: December 27, 2018



STEVEN FALK

As 2019 approaches, so does Philadelphia's most bedazzled, sequined spectacle: the Mummers Parade. Not much is changing this year, but here's everything you need to know to partake in the 118-year-old New Year's Day tradition. The forecast calls for temperatures nearing the 50s, so you might get away with leaving the hand warmers at home.

This year's parade will follow the same route as last year, starting off at 9 a.m. from the judging area at 15th and Market Streets and ending at the intersection of Broad and Washington Streets.

In addition to the judging area, the string bands also will perform in front of the Union League at Broad and Sansom Streets, and by the High School for Creative and Performing Arts at Broad and Carpenter Streets. The comics, wenches, and fancy brigades will perform at the judging area, as well as at Broad and Pine Streets, and Broad and Carpenter.

You can purchase bleacher seating at the Independence Visitor Center for \$20 (call 800-537-7676 for tickets), but all other areas along the parade route are free. Crowds get smaller as you move farther south, so if you don't want to be stuck in a sea of people, consider hanging out at the last performance stop.

PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

Travel & Tourism

Independence Visitor Center remains open during shutdown but Park Service dollars decrease daily



Located in Historic Philadelphia's Old City neighborhood, the Independence Visitor Center serves as a clearinghouse of information for city visitors. It's also the spot to ask experts for trip suggestions, grab a bite to eat, purchase souvenirs and pick up free timed tickets for Independence Hall.

By [Kenneth Hilario – Reporter,](#)
[Philadelphia Business Journal](#) Jan 7, 2019, 1:55pm EST

The Independence Visitor Center is among Philadelphia attractions that's remained opened since the partial government shutdown began in late December. While that means people are still visiting, it also means financial assistance is taking a hit every day.

The partial government shutdown began Dec. 22 and is now in its third week with seemingly no end in sight — President [Donald J. Trump last week said the shutdown could last "months or years" over the U.S.-Mexico border](#). If it were to continue, this week would mark the first time the 800,000 public employees — on furlough or working without pay — would miss what would be their first paycheck during the shutdown.

Among the agencies impacted by the shutdown is the National Park Service, thereby affecting Philadelphia's Independence National Historical Park, which houses famous landmarks Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell Center and the Independence Visitor Center, among others.

Although the park still remains largely closed, Visit Philadelphia in December donated \$32,000 to the Park Service to keep Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell Center open Dec. 28-30, the park's second-busiest weekend of the year behind July 4th.

Visitors, prior to the weekend and since Dec. 22, had not been able to visit Independence Hall, a World Heritage Site, and the Liberty Bell, save for photos of the bell through the windows.

The official count for the weekend won't be available until the shutdown ends and Park Service employees return to work, but Visit Philadelphia estimates about 25,000 people were able to enter the Liberty Bell Center and Independence Hall with Park Service rangers on site. That figure, according to Visit Philadelphia officials, meets and is trending to exceeding expectations despite that Friday's rain.

The Independence Visitor Center, managed by the Independence Visitor Center Corp. nonprofit, has remained open during the shutdown.

For the three days Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell Center reopened, visitation at the Visitor Center was up 13 percent from the same timeframe in 2017, according to information given to the Business Journal by the corporation.

The partial government shutdown, however, has affected the Visitor Center's operations. Overall visitation since the shutdown on Dec. 22, however, is a 12 percent drop from the same timeframe in 2018, according to officials.

The Visitor Center is also taking a financial hit for the duration of the shutdown; the Park Service, officials said, will reduce financial assistance to the corporation on a pro-rated basis for each day the government is shut down and the facility remains open.

The Independence Visitor Center Corp. receives a standard contribution of \$850,000 a year from the Park Service that goes toward operating costs. To stay open, the corporation agreed the contribution would be reduced on a proportionate basis every day of the shutdown, officials said.

The per-day reduction in funding is about \$2,328, or \$850,000 divided by 365 days. That figure is then multiplied by the number of days the facility's remained open; it closed only on Christmas Day since Dec. 22.

Its operation is meaningful for Philadelphia. Not only do its employees point visitors to other attractions, restaurants and retailers, it's also a money generator itself.

The Visitor Center, undergoing a multiphase **[\\$15 million expansion](#) and renovation project, attracts millions of people through its doors on an annual basis, generating between \$200 million and \$400 million in economic impact.**

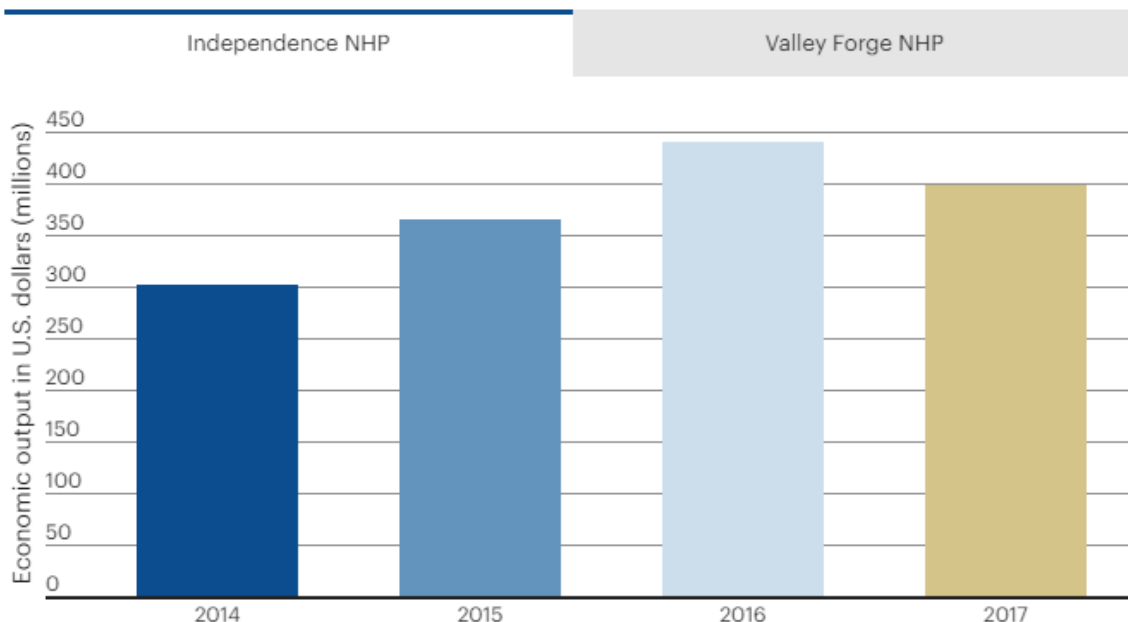
Since it first opened in 2001, it's had over 38 million people go through its doors; visitation has grown over 17 percent between 2013 and 2017. More than 2.7 million people visited in 2017, up 10 percent year over year, representing the building's second-highest visitation in its history.

Part of the renovation project included a larger gift shop — the center's largest source of funding.

GENERATING MILLIONS OVER THE YEARS



The Independence and Valley Forge national historical parks have generated millions of dollars in economic impact.



Source: National Park Service

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THE BUSINESS JOURNALS

About 4.8 million people visited the 55-acre Independence National Historical Park in 2017, spending \$274 million and generating nearly \$400 million in economic impact.

Pennsylvania parks, in total, had 10.3 million recreational visitors, who spent \$478 million and generated \$691 million in economic impact, according to the Park Service. Nationally, about 331 million people visited the National Park System, spending about \$18.2 billion and generating \$35.8 billion in economic impact.

The National Park Service on Sunday said it would use funds from entrance, camping, parking and other fees from park visitors that would "typically be used for future projects at parks" to keep operations going with limited basic services.

The Park Service will use the money to clean up trash, clean and maintain restrooms, bring additional law enforcement rangers into parks and restore accessibility to areas traditionally accessible.

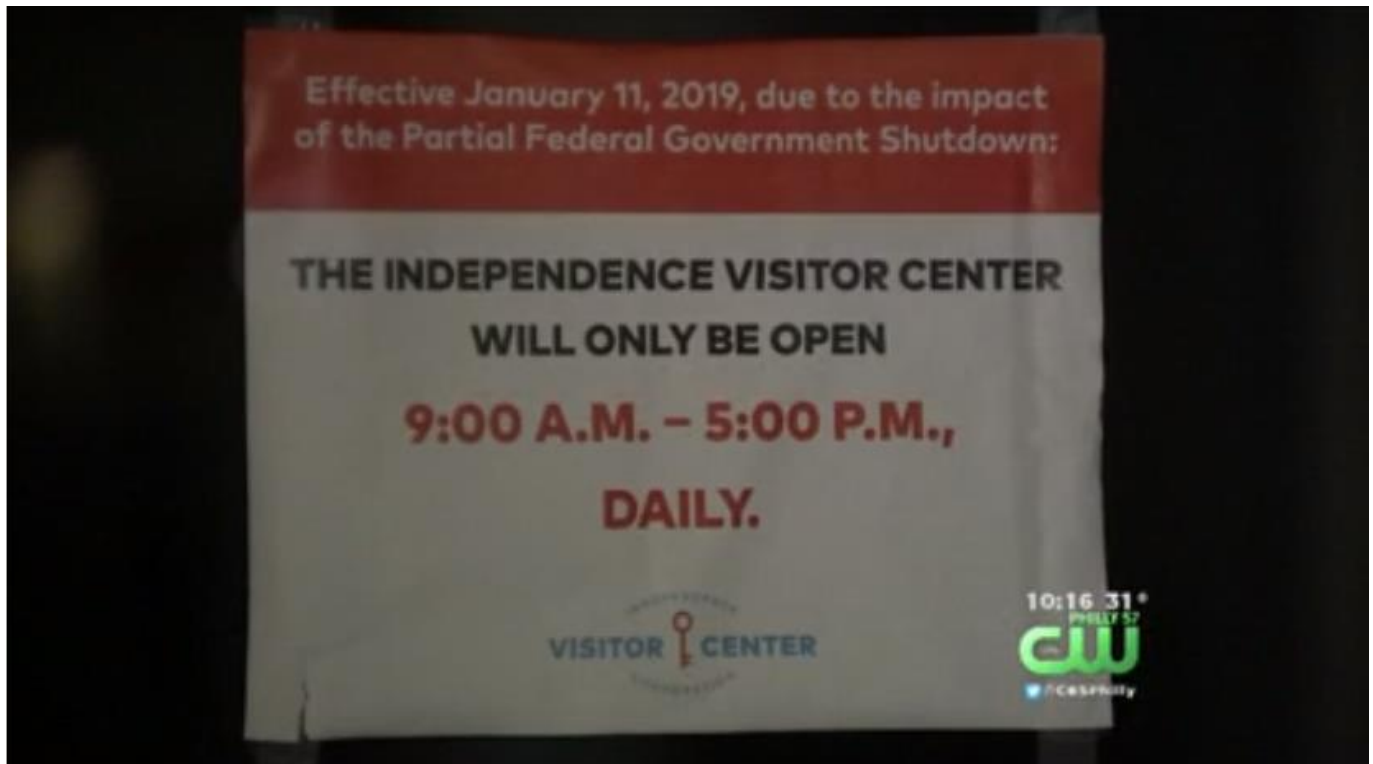
Parks will not be fully open, with many smaller sites still closed, but "utilizing these funds now will allow the American public to safely visit many of our nation's national parks while providing these iconic treasures the protection they deserve," officials said in a statement.

The Park Service has nearly 25,000 employees, over 3,200 of which are deemed essential. Over 21,300 are furloughed.



Independence Visitor Center Cutting Back Hours Due To Government Shutdown.

Categories: [News](#), [KYWTV](#)



Officials say the cost cutting move is necessary to keep the visitor center open to tourists during the shutdown.



Independence Visitor Center cuts hours due to shutdown

January 22, 2019



In this Dec. 26, 2018 file photo, a tourist to Independence National Historical Park takes a photograph through a window of the closed building housing the Liberty Bell, in Philadelphia. The building is closed due to the partial government shutdown. The Independence Visitor Center, located in the park, is reducing operations because of the ongoing partial federal government shutdown. The center is closed Tuesday, Jan. 22, 2019. When it reopens on Wednesday, it will operate from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday through Saturday. (AP Photo/Matt Slocum, File)

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The Independence Visitor Center in Philadelphia is reducing operations because of the ongoing partial federal government shutdown.

The center, which is located in Independence National Historical Park, is closed Tuesday. When it reopens on Wednesday, it will operate from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Saturday. It will be closed on Sunday and Monday and then reopen again next Tuesday.

The Independence Visitor Center Corporation says it's trying to offset expenses as a result of the partial government shutdown. The corporation has to cover all the operating costs during the shutdown because the National Park Service buildings are closed and its staff has been furloughed.

Independence National Historical Park is home to Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. They are closed because of the partial shutdown.

The New York Times

Independence Visitor Center Cuts Hours Due to Shutdown

By The Associated Press

Jan. 22, 2019



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The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

National

Independence Visitor Center cuts hours due to shutdown



By **Associated Press** January 22

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JANUARY 22, 2019

Independence Visitor Center reducing hours to offset expenses during government shutdown

BY **EMILY ROLEN** PHILLYVOICE STAFF

GOVERNMENT **Tourism**



THOM

CARROLL/PHILLYVOICE

The Independence Visitor Center is reducing its operational hours because of the ongoing federal government shutdown.

The center, which is part of the Independence Historic National Park, is trying to cut down on operating costs while the shutdown is ongoing. In the meantime, the center has had to front most of its operational expenses independent of the government since the shutdown began.

The nonprofit that works with federal staff, the Independence Visitor Center Corp., has been covering all operating costs since the impasse between Congress and President Trump started on Dec. 22.

All federal employees have been furloughed and special programming has been canceled, [the Associated Press reported](#).

IVCC Press Clips, Dec. 2018 – Feb. 2019

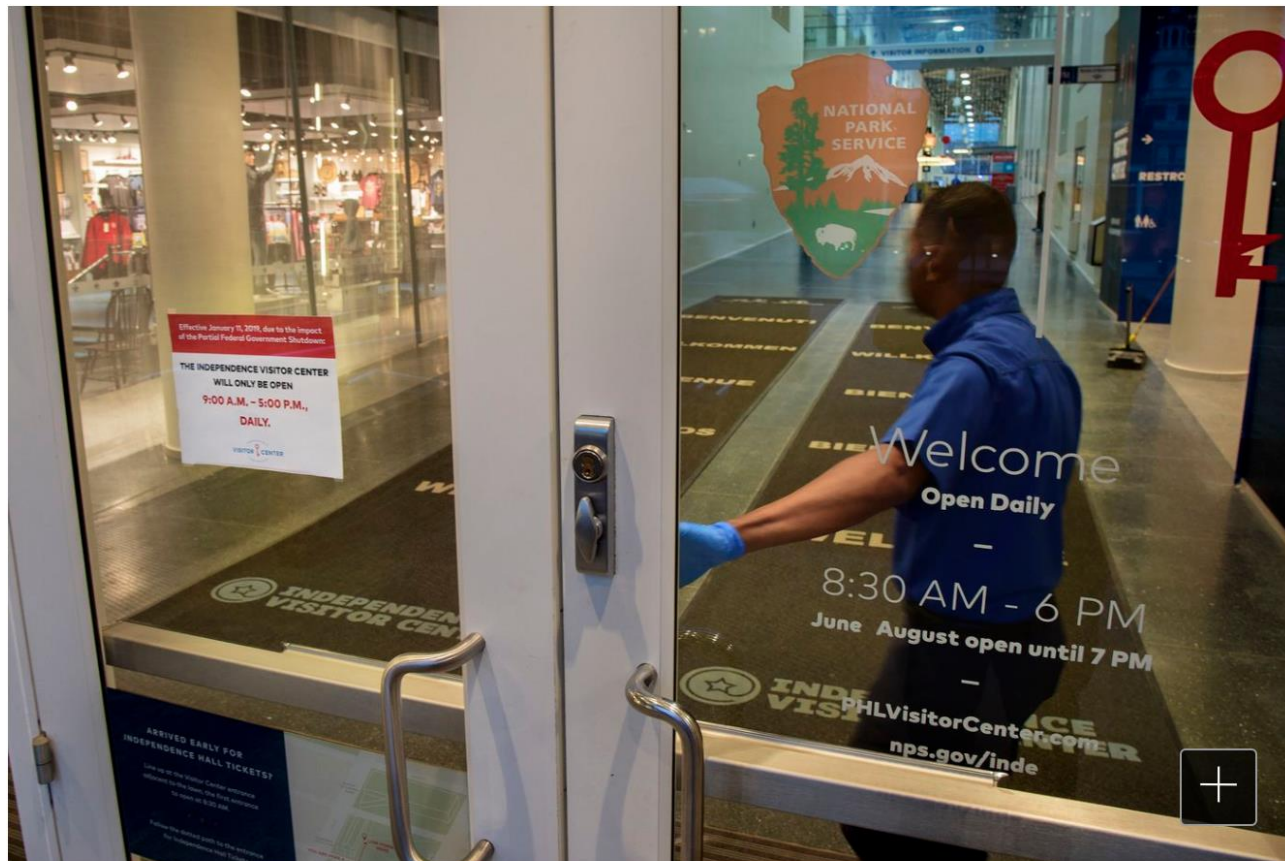
The center is closed this Tuesday and will reopen on Wednesday, Jan. 23 through Saturday, Jan. 26 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Starting next week, it will be closed on Sundays and Mondays.

Located at Sixth and Market streets, the visitor center is where tourists can pick up free tickets to tour Independence Hall and purchase other tickets to attractions, museums and historic tours.

The Liberty Bell and Independence Hall will remain entirely closed during the shutdown.

Independence Visitor Center cuts days due to government shutdown

by Joseph A. Gambardello, Updated: January 22, 2019



TOM GRALISH / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Independence Visitor Center is scaling back its days of operation while Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell [remain closed because of the partial government shutdown](#).

Starting Wednesday, the center at Sixth and Market Streets will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday, and closed Sunday and Monday.

Its usual hours were 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day except Thanksgiving and Christmas. It had scaled back its hours to 9 to 5 earlier during the shutdown.

The center is a federal building on federal land operated by the nonprofit Independence Visitor Center

Corp. in cooperation with the National Park Service, which contributes \$850,000 to its operations. The Park Service is [among the agencies closed by the partial shutdown](#).

The nonprofit has been covering the cost of keeping the building open daily since the shutdown began Dec. 22.

“We believe it is more important than ever that the Visitor Center remains open to provide visitors with information and encourage visitation to other attractions that remain open,” James J. Cuorato, the corporation’s president and CEO, said in a statement. “However, with the shutdown approaching one month, the IVCC cannot continue to support daily operations and maintain financial stability.”

Cuorato said the center had already instituted other cost-saving measures, including canceling special programming, reducing hours for part-time staff, and asking full-time employees to work without pay one day per week.

The center was closed Tuesday after having been open Monday for Martin Luther King Day, but will be open Tuesdays going forward.

The government shutdown is over — for now. So what happens next?

by [Michaelle Bond](#) and [Juliana Feliciano Reyes](#), Updated: January 26, 2019



MARGO REED

For the 800,000 federal employees who were forced to work without pay or furloughed, President Donald Trump's announcement Friday that he would temporarily end the longest government shutdown in U.S. history signaled a return to normality.

Trump promised that those workers would receive back pay "very quickly, or as soon as possible."

But when will their checks arrive? When will shuttered national park buildings reopen? What awaits furloughed employees who haven't worked since before Christmas? When will the nine affected agencies be able to resume full operation?

Alex Jay Berman, a union leader who works in customer service at the IRS, said he didn't have any answers yet for his more than 3,300 members.

"We don't know when we'll be back to work, and perhaps most importantly, we don't know when paychecks will come out," he said.

The Liberty Bell and Independence Hall opened Saturday at 10 a.m. while the Independence Visitor Center will return to its normal schedule Sunday, with hours from 8:30 a.m. until 6 p.m., spokesperson Nicole Woods said in an update Saturday morning.

The government will reopen until at least Feb. 15 under the bill the president signed authorizing the temporary reopening. The 35-day shutdown began on Dec. 22.

Katharine Young, an associate professor at Boston College Law School who studies comparative constitutional law and has written about government shutdowns, said the temporary nature of the reopening worries her, but like everyone else, she is waiting to see what will happen over the next three weeks.

"I think it's wonderful [the government] is reopening again and that the workers will be as effective as they can possibly be in getting things moving again," she said.

While everyone waits on answers from Washington, here's a look back at two past shutdowns and what happened after they ended.

1995-96 under the Clinton administration

In 1996, lawmakers approved a deal to temporarily end the 21-day shutdown — the previous record — on the first Friday of the year.

The Independence Visitor Center opened that Saturday, while Valley Forge National Historical Park was slower to fully reopen because workers were busy clearing snow from the grounds.

Federal employees resumed work that Monday — except for those who were unable. There was a crippling East Coast blizzard that kept many employees out of the office for three days.

2013, under the Obama administration

The 2013 government shutdown ended in 16 days — about half the length of this one.

The [Senate voted the evening of Oct. 16 to end it](#), followed by the House a few hours later. Obama signed the bill in the early morning hours of Oct. 17.

[Independence Hall and Valley Forge Park](#) reopened to tourists later that day.

Furloughed workers in such federal agencies as the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Army Corps of Engineers also returned to work that day.



TRAVELS WITH AMY

Explore Philadelphia on the fantastic Philly Phlash

[Amy Bertrand](#) Feb 11, 2019

Philadelphia • I only had a couple of days to hit the fifth largest city in the U.S., the city that holds the most historic square miles in the country, the Cradle of Liberty that tells the story of America's birth like no other city. I was up to the task of cramming in everything I could in those days, and I had a secret weapon, though I didn't realize it at first: the Philly Phlash.

The Downtown Loop Philly Phlash trolley takes you to 18 stops, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (service resumes in March), each near a major attraction. The buses are clean, with big windows (think Disney shuttle, not public transportation) with drivers who are knowledgeable and helpful. Buses come every 15 minutes and you can download an app that tells you where they are. You can hop on and off all day for \$5. You can't come close to parking at just one destination for that price. (ridephillyplash.com)

I'll admit we only discovered it halfway through our trip, but the things we visited before are on the stops. So I'll present the major stops here as if we had started from our hotel, which was on Penn's Landing.



The Philly Phlash drops you off right in front of some of the city's biggest attractions. Photo courtesy Visit Philadelphia.

Stop 1: Penn's Landing



We stayed at the Hilton at Penn's Landing, the only hotel on the landing, which is a series of boardwalks and open spaces along the Delaware River. In warmer months, you'll find yoga classes and concerts; in the winter, there's an ice rink. There's also the [Independence Seaport Museum](#), which provides a glimpse into Philadelphia's seafaring heritage.

What caught our attention as we drove into the city was the fully restored [four-masted sailing ship](#) berthed on Penn's Landing. The 1904 ship has found new life as a restaurant. Moshulu serves steaks, seafood (try the octopus) and other American fare on the ship, which offers spectacular views of the city and the river. (moshulu.com)

Just a short walk from Penn's Landing is a bit of a hidden gem. Shane Confectionery is in the same Market Street location it has occupied since 1863, making it the oldest candy store in the United States. It's a rather unassuming storefront near the Ben Franklin Bridge. The handmade chocolates are everything you'd expect in this delightful store, but do yourself a favor and head to the back, where they make the best hot chocolate I've ever had, on a stove in front of you, melting the chocolate and milk as they whip and stir, whip and stir.



They make hot chocolate the old-fashioned way at Shane Confectionery in Philadelphia.

Photo by Amy Bertrand

Stop 2: Ben Franklin Museum, Christ Church Cathedral and Burial Ground and Elfreth's Alley

To say this city oozes with history is perhaps a cliché. But there are truths in clichés. We were just walking from our hotel to Independence Hall when I passed a small sign on an old brick storefront that said simply "Printing Office and Bindery" and another that read "B. Free Franklin Post Office." Could those be original places where Benjamin Franklin once worked? Or are they tourist attractions?

Turns out, both. The B. Free Franklin Post Office & Museum is the only Colonial-themed post office operated by the United States Postal Service. It's a working post office, frozen to the time Franklin worked there as postmaster general. There's a museum on the second floor with displays of postal history and memorabilia.

The B. Free Franklin Post Office & Museum is the only Colonial-themed post office operated by the United States Postal Service. It's also the only one that doesn't fly the U.S. flag, because there was not yet one in 1775 when Franklin was appointed Postmaster General. Photo by Amy Bertrand



We later came back to the area via an unobtrusive brick alley that makes you think you couldn't possibly be going the right way. But it headed straight to our destination: Franklin Court. The complex there features the below-ground Benjamin Franklin Museum, part of the National Park Service (\$5; [nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov)).

In an hour or two, and through a series of videos and interactive exhibits, you can learn a lot about the man (and about science and math, for that matter). The court itself holds a steel “ghost

structure” of archaeologists’ best guess of what Franklin’s home looked like when it stood there. Demolished in 1812, only foundations remain. Just beyond the steel structure, a small door leads to the Franklin Court Printing office, a highlight for the newspaper editor in me. It’s free, and workers dressed in period costume demonstrate on a reproduction 18th-century press how newspapers were made. Though we entered through the courtyard, we exited right onto Market Street, where I’d first seen the sign for the printing office.

Nearby, get a taste of history with Elfreth’s Alley, with gorgeous row houses built from 1730 to 1820 on either side.

At this stop on the Philly Phlash you can also take a short walk to the famed 320-year-old Christ Church and to its burial grounds a few blocks over. It’s a stunning cemetery where you will find the graves of five signers of the Declaration of Independence, including Franklin’s. It’s covered in pennies, presumably to honor his famous saying, “A penny saved is a penny earned.” (Donations accepted to tour church; \$3 for burial ground; [christchurchphila.org](https://www.christchurchphila.org))

Stop 3: Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell



Undoubtedly there are two must-visit places in Philly: Independence Hall and the building across the street that houses the Liberty Bell.

Crowds can get pretty busy in both, so plan ahead. Pick up timed entry tickets at the Independence Visitor Center in the same plaza. We got there about 8:30 and secured 9 a.m. tickets.

At Independence Hall, you wait for your timed entry in the rear courtyard, which, on our fall visit was teeming

with red, yellow and orange leaves and surrounded by building after building of historical significance. The hall is part of the National Park Service, so a park ranger begins the 20- to 30-minute tour by taking you to the courtroom where the Pennsylvania Supreme Court met. You'll also see the gallery and meeting rooms, but it's the Assembly Room you've come here for. It's the place where both the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution were debated and adopted. You can get chills thinking about George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams standing in that room.

Independence Hall once housed the famous bronzed Liberty Bell, which called people to hear the reading of the news. Today, it's across the street in Liberty Bell Center. Admission is free and there are no tickets, but lines can be long, so get there early. Another option: View it from windows on the outside. You won't get your selfie, but you'll get the idea.

On the other side of Liberty Bell Center, you'll find an outdoor exhibit called the President's House. President George Washington and then President John Adams lived and worked at a house on this spot. The house was demolished in 1832, but its foundations survived. You can walk around the site, which features panels and videos that examine everything from the slave trade to the work of the executive branch.

Stop 4: Reading Terminal Market and Chinatown

My son wasn't happy we were walking through Chinatown without stopping (it's usually one of his favorite places in a new city), but we were on a mission: the famous Reading Terminal Market. The moment we walked into this indoor market, he understood why.

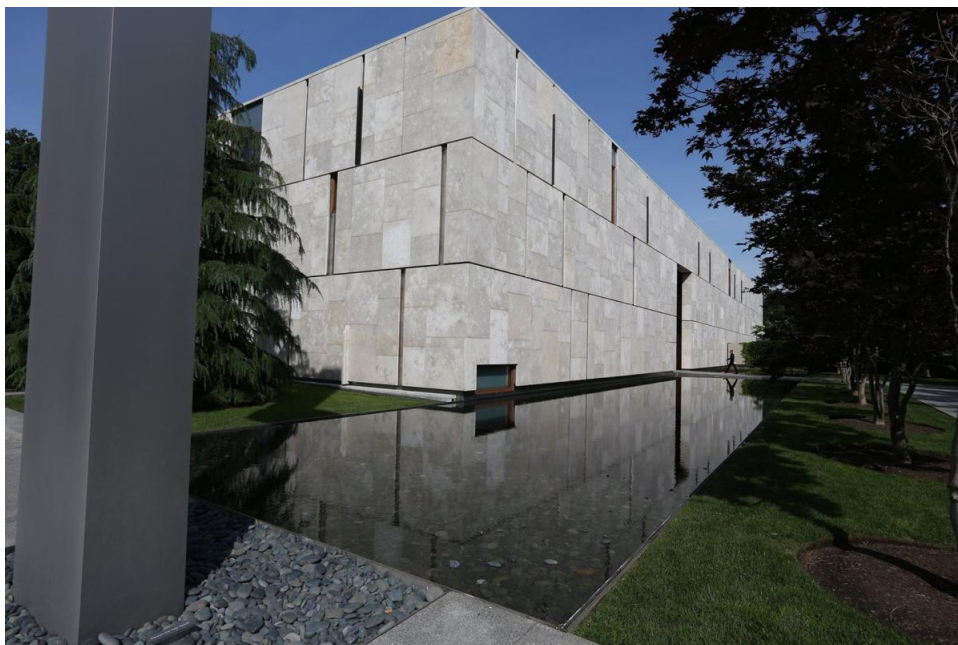


Around one corner, Philly cheesesteaks (of course), around another, giant jars of locally grown honey with honeycombs in them, and around another, rows and rows of spices. Chocolates at one shop; fresh produce at another. Housed since 1893 in Reading Terminal's former train shed (pronounced RED-ing, like in Monopoly), it's open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day.

Rick Nichols, a former Philadelphia Inquirer columnist, once wrote that the market "is the defiantly beating heart ... of old, original Philadelphia."

With about 100 vendors and chef demonstrations, it flourishes today as both a tourist destination and a place familiar to locals. Be sure to stop in at the Dutch Eating Place for a hot apple dumpling with fresh cream — after that cheesesteak, of course. (readingterminalmarket.org)

Stop 7: Barnes Foundation



As you approach this hulking, modern building, a number of fascinating fountains and water features catch your eye. In the sweeping grand hall, buzzing with patrons, you get an idea that there's something different to this art museum. Dr. Albert C. Barnes amassed his collection of impressionist, post-impressionist and early modernist paintings between 1912 and 1951.

Gallery after gallery feature the works of Renoir, Cezanne, Matisse, Picasso and more framed and with

just a small marker with those names on them. They are hung alongside everyday household objects — a ladle, a shovel, a candlestick. A small booklet in each room maps out the walls and tells you more about the works. There are more than 4,000 pieces here, including such famous works as Renoir's "Bathing Group," Van Gogh's "The Smoker" and Cezanne's "The Card Players." (\$30; barnesfoundation.org)

Stop 8: The Rodin Museum



Cheapskates may tell you to just walk around the outside of this building, where casts of some of Auguste Rodin's most famous sculptures fill a beautiful courtyard. You'll find "The Thinker" and "The Three Shades." The formal French garden and Beaux Arts building that opened in 1929 house some 150 bronzes, marbles and plasters. Located on Benjamin Franklin Parkway — which was intended to evoke the Avenue des Champs-Élysées in Paris — the museum fits right in. But pay the \$10 entrance fee to get a close look at "The Kiss," "Awakening" and my favorite, "Eternal

springtime."

Stop 9: Eastern State Penitentiary

Outside, it's a formidable fort in the middle of town. Inside, courtyards connect a wheel with spokes full of 1,000 prison cells. Once the most famous and feared prison in the world, today most of it stands in ruin, but you can tour that ruin to learn about the history of the American penal system. Most impressive are the headphones you use to hear actor Steve Buscemi tell the prison's story. You start outside, staring at stone walls that rise 30 feet. Then you walk through the skylit corridor as Buscemi explains how the first prisoners were treated. You can step inside a few of the cells they have re-created. You can poke your head into many others, some with tree trunks growing out of them. View Al Capone's cell, made to look as it did when he was there, see the infirmary, get a glimpse of death row, even run on the baseball field. For my son, this was the highlight of our trip. (\$14; easternstate.org)



Stop 12: Museum of Art and ‘Rocky’ steps

The Philadelphia Museum of Art houses more than 240,000 works from around the world and across dozens of centuries. It's one of the largest art museums in the country, with pieces by Picasso, Dali and Renoir and a sculpture garden to rival any I've seen. But it's probably most famously known as the site where Rocky climbs the steps during his training montage in "Rocky." So of course, thousands of people, with the theme "Gonna Fly Now" playing in their heads or on their headphones, run 72 steps to the top to raise their hands in the air, just as Sylvester Stallone did in the movie.



When I reached the top, a man offered to take our photo on two footprints embedded into the concrete, the place Stallone stood in that famous scene. He, of course, asked for a donation after, which I was happy to oblige. It was worth the picture. The fictional boxer Rocky Balboa was immortalized in bronze for "Rocky III" by artist A. Thomas Schomberg in 1980. It was then donated to the museum. You can pose with it, too. (\$20; philamuseum.org; it's free to run the steps)

Stop 14: Mutter Museum

If your stomach can handle it, get off at stop 14 and take a short walk to the Mutter Museum, College of Physicians of Philadelphia. You'll find a variety of specimens, skulls, body parts, medical implements and a plaster cast of the first conjoined twins. It's worth a stop if you are interested in medicine or historic medicine, but it could be the stuff of nightmares, too. (\$18; muttermuseum.org)



Philly renames parts of Market and Sixth Streets in honor of founding fathers, black history

by Jess Rohan, Updated: February 18, 2019



DAVID MAIALETTI / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Philadelphia's Market Street is home to some of American history's most iconic moments and figures.

Thomas Jefferson wrote a draft of the Declaration of Independence at Seventh and Market. Benjamin Franklin lived between Third and Fourth, and Quaker founders had their meeting house on Second. Five founding fathers lived along Market at some point, including James Madison.

Up at Sixth and Market is President's House, where both George Washington and John Adams ran the country's first executive branch. Today, the site hosts an exhibition focusing not on our first presidents, but on the slaves who worked there.

And so it seemed the appropriate intersection for the honorary naming Monday of stretches on two of the city's most traveled roads. Two dozen people gathered outside the Independence Visitor Center for a ceremony christening Market Street between Front Street and Eighth Street as "Avenue of Our Founders," in honor of the

country's founding fathers. At the same time Sixth between Race Street and Lombard Streets was renamed "Avenue of Freedom" to mark key sites of black American history.

City Council approved the changes in December after encouragement from the Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides, who are gaining national recognition among tour guides in recent years for their efforts to professionalize the trade.

The 10-year-old association was founded after some city guides were caught spreading historically inaccurate information — claiming, for example, that Washington and Lincoln walked Philly's streets at the same time.

"Today, over 200 people have been trained by us to give historically correct tours around the city," said Joe Becton, a former National Park Service ranger and one of the handful of tour guides who attended Monday's ceremony. "We've come from the point where everyone was smacking our hand to today putting up signs to identify our stories and identify our history."

Councilman Mark Squilla, who sponsored the naming resolution, presented two new street signs to Ed Mauger, a founder of the Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides. Another set of new signs were already installed at the intersection, with the new names on red backgrounds under the primary street names. Intersections throughout the designated area will see new honorary street signs as well.

"America is an invention," Mauger said. "America was invented in one generation, by the founding fathers, who occupied this street, and their colleagues." But they left out a race of people, Mauger said, calling historic black civil rights leaders "another group of founding fathers."

The signs are important, said Bob Skiba, president of tour guides association, because they highlight the area's forgotten and ignored histories.

"People come to Philadelphia, they look at the Liberty Bell, they look at Independence Hall, and they leave," he said. "But there's so many stories here. The more of those stories we can bring forward, the better."

A part of the President's House exhibition is dedicated to Ona Judge Staines, who [came](#) to Philadelphia from Mount Vernon as Martha Washington's personal maid. She was never kept in the city for more than six months at a time, to prevent her from becoming a permanent, freed resident. But Judge Staines eventually escaped on a boat to New Hampshire, where she evaded George Washington's attempts to recapture her, and where she learned to read and write, and lived with her family until her death.

Sixth Street is also the site of Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, a hub for the abolitionist movement, said Skiba. The church was founded by Richard Allen, a prominent black bishop, leader and abolitionist. Further north near Race Street was Pennsylvania Hall, the 19th-century abolitionist meeting place which was burned down by antiblack mobs three days after it was completed. The nation's first stock market was at Market and Front Street — and it also held slave auctions.

Squilla said Philadelphia's tour guides tell the true, and sometimes unpleasant, stories of the city. The new street signs commemorate "the freedom and liberty that so many people fought for, and that we're still fighting for today," he said.

"It's important to remember that we're not done fighting," he said, "and to remind people that we have to continue that fight."