

INDEPENDENCE  
**VISITOR  
CENTER**  
CORPORATION



**2018**  
ANNUAL REPORT

Seventeen years ago, the Independence Visitor Center Corporation (IVCC) was established to operate and support the Independence Visitor Center, in partnership with the National Park Service, as the gateway to Independence National Historical Park and the Philadelphia region. As our partners in the tourism and hospitality sector continue to innovate and market Philadelphia as a top destination around the world, we effectively lead visitors to everything there is to see and do in the region when they get here. And, getting here they did with **2,522,204 visitors in 2018, the 4<sup>th</sup> highest visitation year since the Independence Visitor Center opened.**

When the IVCC embarked on our appropriately named *Visitor Experience Improvement Project* in 2016 our **goal was to provide our visitors with an informative, interactive, and 21st-Century orientation experience – transforming from a traditional visitor center to one that is cutting-edge and digitally-advanced – while maintaining the personal touch of excellent customer service and meeting heightened visitor expectations and demand.**

In 2018, the upgrades that were completed provided **newly constructed public restrooms, an expanded outdoor terrace for public and private events generously supported by Bank of America, new National Park Service Information desk and exhibit space, the installation of the brand-new Philadelphia Welcome Film generously supported by Independence Blue Cross, and the expansion and improvement of the Independence Gift Shop which realized a 29% sales increase over the same period in 2017.**

**We are committed to enhancing the visitor experience and building for the future.**

Renovations to the Independence Visitor Center continue into 2019 with the **final phase of the *Visitor Experience Improvement Project* which includes a newly constructed Philadelphia Visitor Information desk and installation of the Philly Welcome Wall, a 42ft. long immersive digital experience** that will engage visitors with motion-sensing technology and be completed by May 2019.

With a strong hospitality industry and steadfast growth in visitation throughout the region, the IVCC remains focused in our role of providing access to all the city has to offer and turning a visiting wish list into an unforgettable itinerary.



*Thomas A. Caramanico*

**Thomas A. Caramanico**  
Chair, IVCC Board of Directors



*James J. Cuorato*

**James J. Cuorato**  
President & CEO, IVCC

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# FISCAL YEAR '18

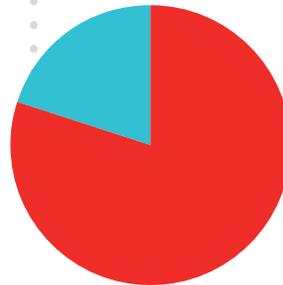
## EARNED REVENUE

The Independence Gift Shop, cafes, facility rentals, in-building advertising and ticket sales all contribute to the IVCC's earned revenue, which was **78%** of the IVCC's total operating revenue in fiscal year 2018.

### Total Operating Revenue

**22%**

National Park Service Funding



**78%**

Earned Revenue

### Earned Revenue Detail

**10%**

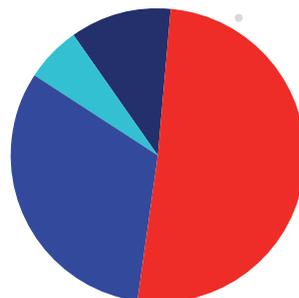
Ad Sales

**6%**

Facility Rentals

**34%**

Visitor Services  
(Ticket Sales)



**50%**

Concession Sales  
(Gift Shop & Cafes)

# STARTING HERE CAN LEAD ANYWHERE

The IVCC manages the Independence Visitor Center, the official visitor center for the Greater Philadelphia Region, in partnership with the National Park Service. Our Visitor Services Representatives provide customized experiences to our visitors with access to all the city has to offer: activities, tickets, reservations, and opportunities.

Extending our excellent visitor experience to as many people as possible, the IVCC also manages satellite locations: City Hall Visitor Center, Fairmount Park Welcome Center (temporarily closed for renovations), and Sister Cities Park Visitor Center (open seasonally); the visitor-friendly public transit service, Philly PHLASH® Downtown Loop; and the private event space and terrace, The Liberty View at the Independence Visitor Center.

## INDEPENDENCE VISITOR CENTER

Located at the corner of 6th and Market Streets, the Independence Visitor Center has served as the primary point of orientation for Independence National Historical Park (INHP) and the Philadelphia region for 17 years. The Independence Visitor Center welcomed a total of **2,522,204 visitors in 2018**, the **fourth highest visitation since opening in 2001**.



## CITY HALL VISITOR CENTER

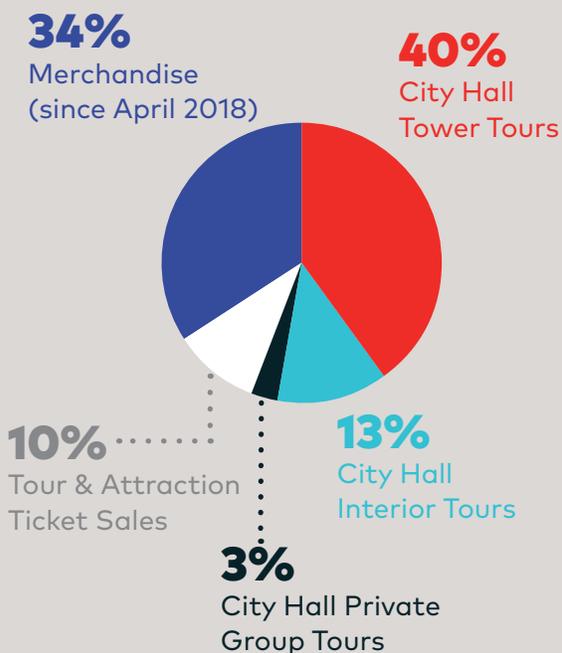
99,451 VISITORS  
IN 2018



City Hall Visitor Center welcomed more than 99,000 visitors in 2018. Compared to the Independence Visitor Center, visitation for the City Hall Visitor Center is primarily spread from March through August.

Managed by the IVCC since 2007, the City Hall Visitor Center provides the same expert service to visitors found at all IVCC locations, and offers interior tours of City Hall and visits to the top of the City Hall Tower, which is the city's only open-air observation deck. Visitors can also purchase City Hall and Philadelphia-themed souvenirs from the recently updated gift shop.

## CITY HALL SALES OVERVIEW BY TYPE



City Hall Visitor Center internalized its merchandise sales operations in April 2018 to increase earned revenue and streamline the visitor experience. A reconfiguration of the space to improve flow, along with updated signage and marketing materials significantly improved this location. Visitors can now obtain information, book tours, purchase attraction tickets, and pay for merchandise items in a single transaction from a bright and welcoming service counter that is visible from the entrance.

These operational and physical improvements have resulted in both increased sales and attendance at City Hall Visitor Center.

## SISTER CITIES PARK VISITOR CENTER

*18th Street & Benjamin Franklin Parkway*



The IVCC operates this visitor center location seasonally in cooperation with Center City District since opening in 2012.

## LOVE PARK / FAIRMOUNT PARK WELCOME CENTER

*16th Street & John F. Kennedy Boulevard*

The IVCC has operated the iconic visitor center location at LOVE Park in cooperation with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation since 2010. This satellite location was temporarily closed in 2018 due to renovations of LOVE Park.

### Looking Ahead



IVCC is excited to return to LOVE Park in 2019 with a new and innovative visitor center footprint at the highly-trafficked corner of 16th Street and John F. Kennedy Boulevard.

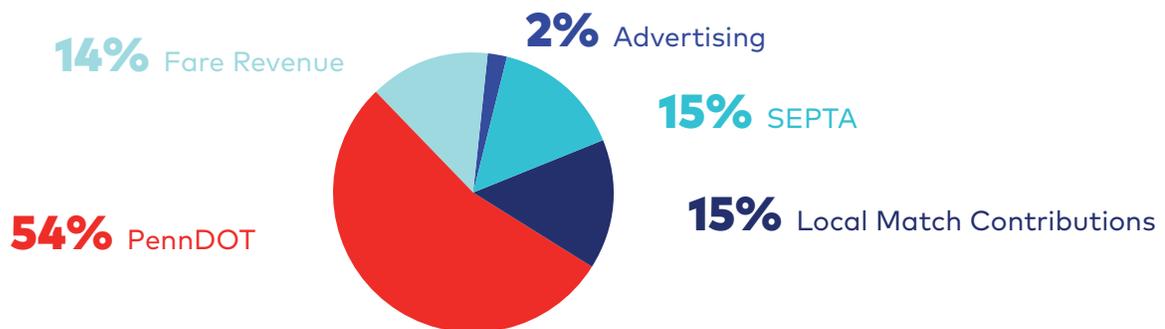
## PHILLY PHLASH DOWNTOWN LOOP

IVCC has managed PHLASH®, the visitor-friendly seasonal transit service, since 2012; with operations serviced by Krapf Group since 2014. 2018 marked PHLASH's largest ridership since the start of PHLASH® service in 1994 with 428,628 total riders, a 17% percent increase over 2017.



PHLASH is a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDot) subsidized transit service which supports keeping the service affordable at \$5.00 all day, or \$2.00 per single ride to all that ride. SEPTA pass holders and senior citizens ride free. Local match contributions from attractions and partners along the PHLASH® route are a requirement to receiving the transit subsidy.

### PHLASH® OPERATING REVENUE



### PHLASH® provided special services for the following notable events in 2018:

- Philly Home Show
- Superbowl LII Champion Celebration Shuttle Service
- A Very Philly Christmas (Fairmount Park Conservancy)
- Philly Holiday Festival (Visit Philadelphia and Welcome America)

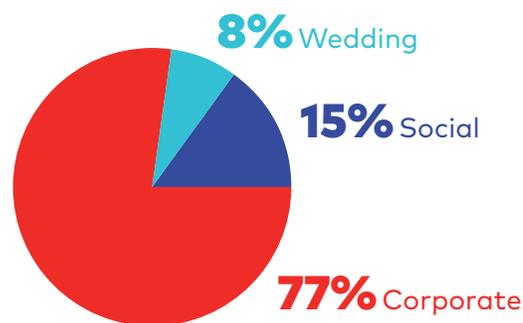
## LIBERTY VIEW MEETING & EVENT SPACE AT INDEPENDENCE VISITOR CENTER



The Liberty View hosted 142 private events in 2018. Its newly expanded terrace, generously supported by Bank of America, improved upon The Liberty View's extraordinary views of Independence Mall providing the perfect backdrop for all events, from press conferences and meetings to social gatherings and weddings.

**YOY REVENUE INCREASE OF 39% IN 2018.**

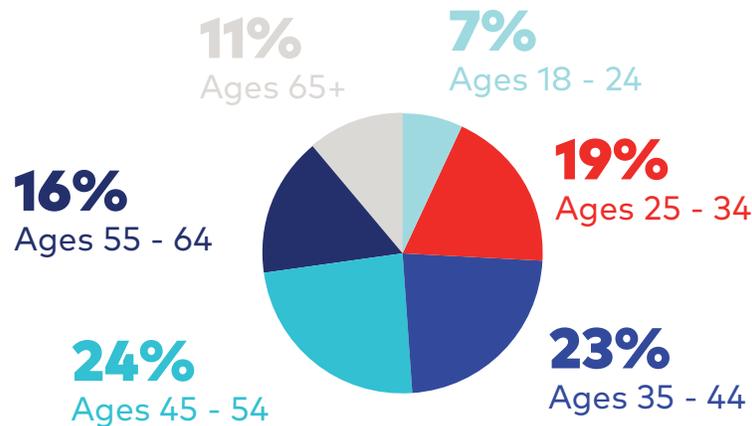
**142 EVENTS  
BOOKED  
IN 2018**



# VISITOR DEMOGRAPHICS\*

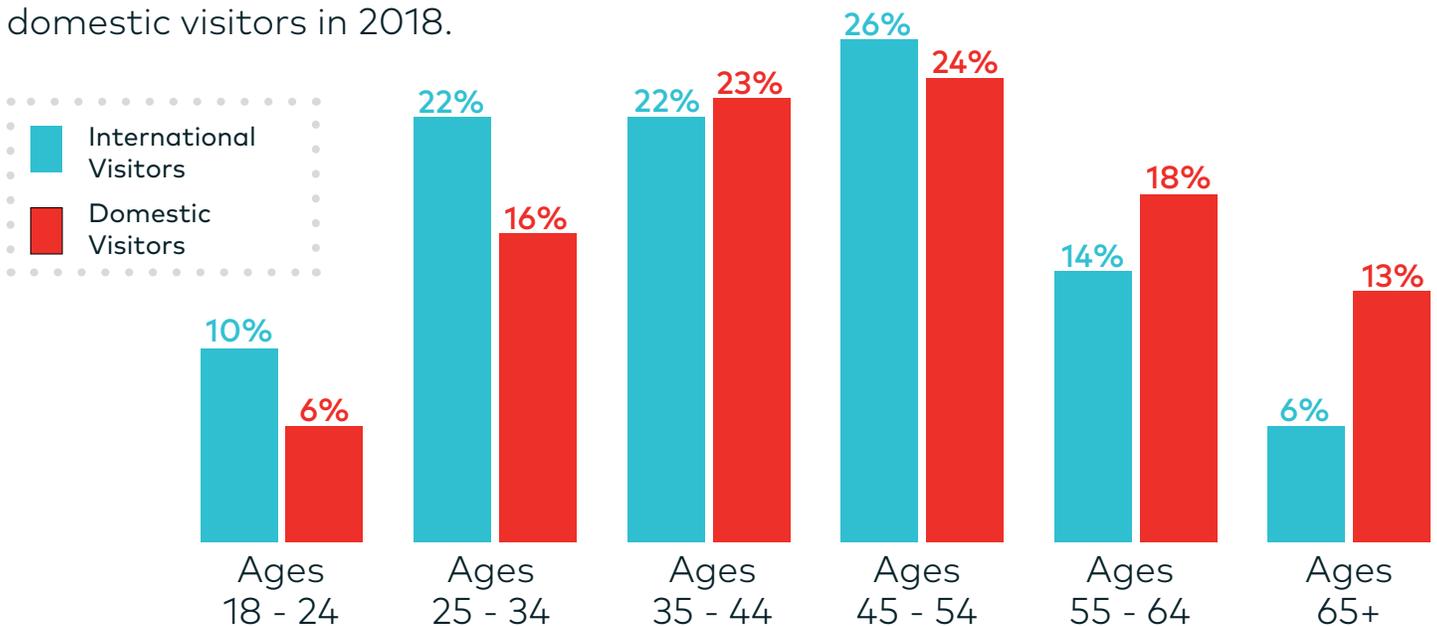
## VISITOR AGES: OVERALL

Majority of visitors were between the ages of 35 - 54.



## VISITOR AGES: INTERNATIONAL VS. DOMESTIC VISITORS

There were 10% more international visitors between the ages of 18 - 34 than domestic visitors in 2018.



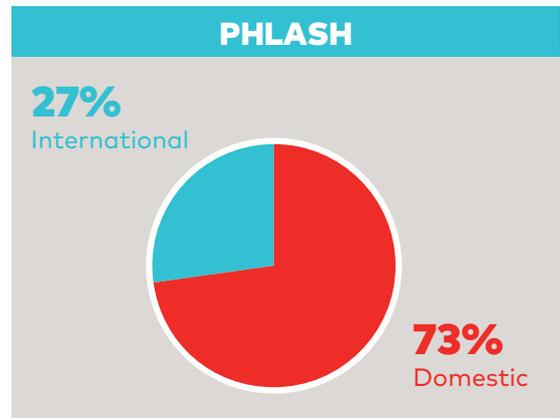
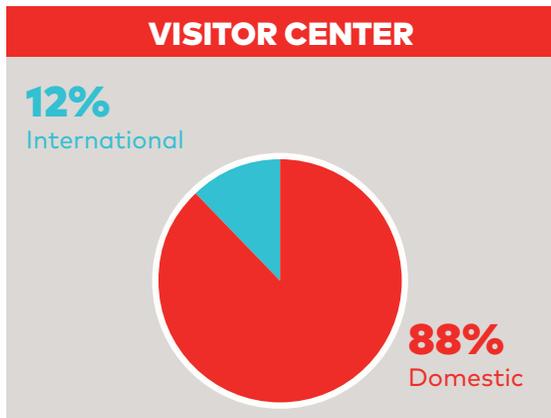
**41% OF DOMESTIC VISITORS TRAVELED WITH CHILDREN (0 - 18) VS. 26% OF INTERNATIONAL VISITORS**

\*Survey data collected by Econsult Solutions.

# VISITORS' HOME LOCATIONS



## INTERNATIONAL VS. DOMESTIC



## TOP 10 STATES



## TOP 10 COUNTRIES

- VISITOR CENTER**
1. Pennsylvania
  2. New York
  3. New Jersey
  4. Florida
  5. California
  6. Texas
  7. Virginia
  8. Maryland
  9. Ohio
  10. Illinois

- PHLASH**
1. Pennsylvania
  2. New York
  3. New Jersey
  4. Maryland
  5. California
  6. Texas
  7. Ohio
  8. North Carolina
  9. Florida
  10. Virginia

- VISITOR CENTER**
1. United Kingdom
  2. Canada
  3. Germany
  4. Australia
  5. France
  6. Italy
  7. India
  8. Mexico
  9. China
  10. Brazil

- PHLASH**
1. Canada
  2. United Kingdom
  3. Australia
  4. France
  5. Germany
  6. China
  7. Brazil
  8. Italy
  9. Netherlands
  10. India

# VISITOR BEHAVIORS

## REASON FOR VISITING PHILADELPHIA

68% of visitors say their primary reason for coming to Philadelphia is to see historic sites, like Independence Hall.

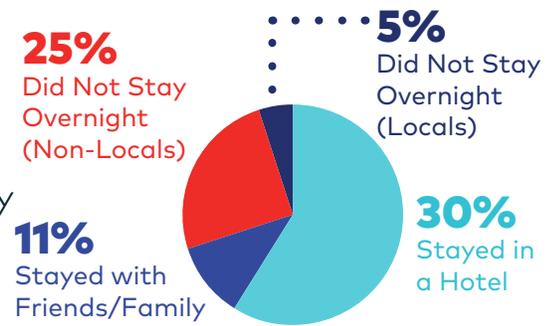
## LENGTH OF VISIT

Majority of visitors are in Philadelphia for only one full day (35% of responses). However, when comparing 2018 results to those from 2017, we saw an increase in visitors staying in Philadelphia for more than one day.



## ACCOMMODATIONS

The majority of visitors (59%) stayed in hotels while visiting Philadelphia. Of the 30% of visitors who did not stay overnight, 5% indicated that they lived locally, within the surrounding counties.

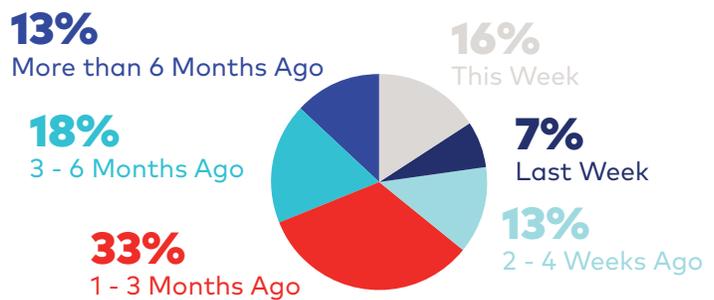


When comparing the responses of international and domestic visitors, international visitors stayed overnight and in hotels 10% more than domestic visitors.

**73% OF PHLASH RIDERS SAID THEY WOULD VISIT MORE ATTRACTIONS IF THEY HAD MORE TIME.**

## TRIP PLANNING

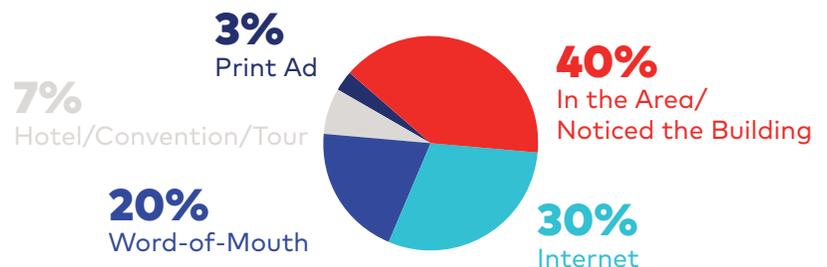
Most visitors decided to visit Philadelphia shortly before arriving with 36% of visitors deciding to visit less than one month prior to their trip.



## HOW ARE VISITORS HEARING ABOUT US?

While more visitors found out about the Independence Visitor Center through the internet than in past years, the majority are simply noticing the building while in the area.

Most of our visitors (46%) first obtained information about Philadelphia online, while 27% received their primary information by word-of-mouth. 35% of visitors who first obtained information online visited VisitPhilly.com.



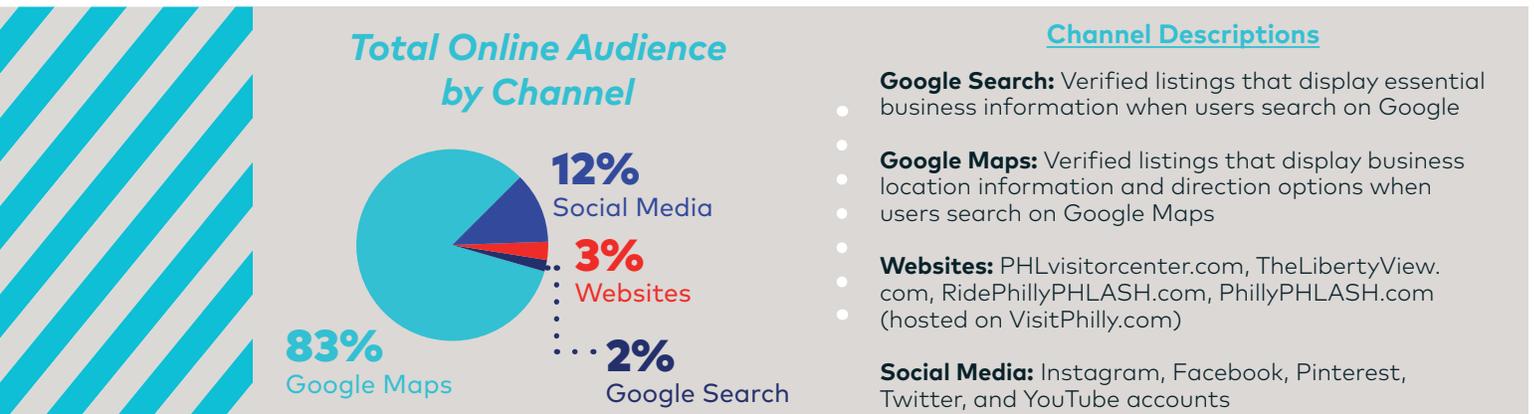
# ONLINE PRESENCE

With the number of visitors learning about us online growing more than any other source, and smart devices revolutionizing Internet behaviors, we have expanded our online presence to include all the channels visitors may look for us.

## ONLINE AUDIENCE

**Where visitors are finding us online.**

Our total online audience measured over 26.5 million in 2018. More than 22 million of our online audience found us through Google Maps.



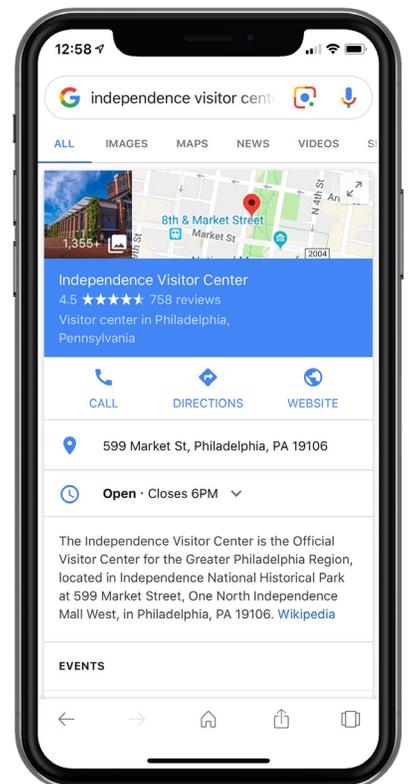
## ENGAGEMENTS AND INTERACTIONS

**Where visitors are interacting with us online.**

### Google MyBusiness

Online users performed actions on our Google MyBusiness listings that strongly correlate with intent to visit.

**2,428** PHONE CALLS  
**20,815** WEBSITE CLICKS  
**126,229** DIRECTIONS REQUESTED



### Google Destination Content Initiative

The IVCC presented as a successful case study in a series of educational workshops for local businesses hosted by Visit Philadelphia. With the goal of improving the region's online presence as a travel destination, Visit Philadelphia selected hotels, restaurants, and attractions to learn how to maximize their presence through Google's new Destination Content Initiative. The IVCC shared best practices for Google's verification process, and the impressive first-year impact from implementing for its locations.

### Social Media

9 accounts      

51,770 total fans/followers (8% increase from 2017)

27,307 engagements (likes, comments, shares, and retweets)

### User Review Sites

1259 reviews on Trip Advisor, Google, and Yelp in 2018

Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence recipients:

*Independence Visitor Center*

*Philly PHLASH*

*City Hall Visitor Center*: Also received "Hall of Fame" designation for receiving Certificate of Excellence for five consecutive years.



### E-communications

5789 e-blasts opened by partners and visitors

## GROWTH TRENDS

**Notable areas of online growth.**

### Independence Visitor Center

58% increase in total e-tickets sold

### City Hall Visitor Center

28% increase in e-tickets sold for City Hall Tours

### PHLASH

111% increase in e-tickets sold for One-Day Passes

### The Liberty View

"Google Search" accounted for 42% of leads in 2018

118% increase in followers on The Liberty View Instagram account

## INNOVATIONS

*New technologies and platforms.*

### PHLvisitorcenter.com: Launched in May 2018

Part of the *Visitor Experience Improvement Project*, the new website uses a modern, streamlined design and cutting-edge technologies to provide an intuitive and delightful user experience.

The website, graphic display screens, and interactive digital wall (install in 2019) are powered by a shared content management system.

- • **@PHLvisitorcenter Instagram:**
- **Launched in September 2018**
- 
- 
- 

## HOLIDAY GIFT GRAB PROMOTION



The new Instagram account provides a versatile platform for cross-channel promotions, such as the “gift grab” contest to gain new followers and promote holiday shopping at the gift shop.

With a total budget of \$1,400, the contest:

- **Received media coverage** with a **publicity value of \$28,927**
- **Generated 80,410 impressions** on social media
- Correlated with a **37% increase in online gift shop sales**

## PHLvisitorcenter.com Features + Functionalities:

### Mobile and Responsive Design



### Google Maps Integration



### Focus on Accessibility

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Wheelchair Accessible      | Mother's Room               |
| Volume Control Telephone   | Closed Captioning           |
| Sign language interpreter  | Large Print                 |
| Telephone Typewriter (TTY) | Audio Description           |
| Sensory-Friendly           | Assistive Listening Systems |
| Service Animals Welcome    | Braille                     |

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

### ASSETS

Cash	\$	1,723,305
Accounts Receivable		1,057,386
Contributions Receivable		175,000
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets		72,705
Investments		6,860,191
Interest Rate Swap		31,602
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>9,920,189</b>

### LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$	2,516,975
Note Payable		2,843,485
Deferred Revenue		269,892
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>5,630,352</b>

### NET ASSETS

Unrestricted		1,543,208
Temporarily Restricted		746,629
Permanently Restricted - Endowment		2,000,000
<b>Total Net Assets</b>		<b>4,289,837</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>9,920,189</b>

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

### CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	\$	(5,473,928)
<b>Adjustments to Reconcile Change in Net Assets to Net Cash Used in Operating Activities:</b>		
Realized and Unrealized Gain on Investments		(309,149)
Unrealized Gain on Interest Rate Swap		(31,602)
(Increase) Decrease in:		
Accounts Receivable		(614,097)
Contributions Receivable		87,650
Prepaid Expenses and Other		35,962
Increase (Decrease) in:		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses		1,702,036
Deferred Revenue		58,857

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<b>Net Cash Used for Operating Activities</b>		(4,544,271)
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### CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES

Purchases of Investments		(4,936,076)
Proceeds from the Sales of Investments		7,828,129

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<b>Net Cash Provided by Investing Activities</b>		2,892,053
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### CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES

Repayment of Note Payable		(156,515)
Proceeds from Borrowings on Note Payable		1,750,000

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<b>Net Cash Provided by Financing Activities</b>		1,593,485
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<b>Net Decrease in Cash</b>		(58,733)
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### CASH

Beginning of Year		1,782,038
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<b>End of Year</b>	\$	1,723,305
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### SUPPLEMENTAL DISCLOSURE OF CASH FLOW INFORMATION

Interest Paid	\$	79,276
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# STARTING HERE CAN LEAD ANYWHERE

The **INDEPENDENCE VISITOR CENTER CORPORATION** (IVCC) is a Pennsylvania nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization, which operates in cooperation with the efforts of the National Park Service, Visit Philadelphia®, Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, the City of Philadelphia, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Independence Visitor Center is the primary point of orientation for Independence National Historical Park, the City of Philadelphia, the Southern New Jersey and Delaware River Waterfronts, as well as Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties in Pennsylvania.

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