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## **Philadelphia Opens LGBTQ+-Dedicated ‘Philly Pride Visitor Center’ Ahead of 2026 Semiquincentennial Celebrations**

*New Visitor Center welcomes travelers and shares the stories of Philadelphia’s  
LGBTQ+ history*

**PHILADELPHIA (February 25, 2026)** – The [Philadelphia Visitor Center](#) (Visitor Center) and [Visit Philadelphia](#), in partnership with Visit PA and the Philadelphia Gay News, today celebrated the grand opening of the **Philly Pride Visitor Center**, a dedicated LGBTQ+ visitor center at the corner of 12th & Locust Streets in the heart of the city’s Gayborhood. Now open to the public, the Center will welcome travelers from around the globe and celebrate Philadelphia’s legacy as one of the nation’s most inclusive destinations as the city prepares for the 250th anniversary of the United States.

“The Philadelphia Visitor Center team is the city’s welcoming committee, and that means opening our doors wide open for both visitors and residents. We want to ensure every visitor feels an authentic sense of belonging from the moment they arrive,” said **Kathryn Ott Lovell, president and CEO of the Philadelphia Visitor Center**. “We are thrilled to open the Philly Pride Visitor Center as a dedicated starting point for LGBTQ+ visitors to celebrate who they are while getting visitor services, trusted resources, and inspiration to help them experience Philadelphia at its very best.”

Located in the heart of Philadelphia’s historic Gayborhood, the Philly Pride Visitor Center is a vibrant and welcoming gateway to LGBTQ+-friendly experiences across the Philadelphia region and the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Center offers comprehensive visitor services, including itinerary planning, attraction ticketing, and travel information, with a special focus on LGBTQ+-affirming destinations, businesses, and cultural institutions. Guests can also explore a thoughtfully curated gift shop featuring local art and souvenirs from Philly-area LGBTQ+ creators,

including Symone Salib, Nile Livingston, Laser Philly, and Kah Yangni, alongside merchandise from other LGBTQ+-owned businesses.

“The Philly Pride Visitor Center is more than a single destination—it’s a gateway to the LGBTQ+ experiences, communities, and attractions that exist across Pennsylvania,” said **Anne Ryan, Deputy Secretary of Tourism, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**. “We’re proud to partner with Visit Philadelphia to send a clear invitation to travelers: Come explore our Commonwealth and be unapologetically yourself. Pennsylvania is a place where belonging isn’t a slogan—it’s part of the journey.”

The investment in dedicated LGBTQ+ visitor infrastructure reflects both values and data. According to Community Marketing & Insights, 63% of LGBTQ+ travelers already view Philadelphia as a welcoming destination, and the community represents \$1.4 trillion in annual purchasing power.

Visit Philadelphia supported the opening of the nation's first LGBTQ+ visitor center within the National Park System, the Stonewall National Monument Visitor Center in New York City, recognizing Philadelphia's important connection to those historic events. The nation’s first LGBTQ+ sit-in took place in Philadelphia at Dewey’s restaurant in 1965, and the Annual Reminders at Independence Hall were among the earliest public demonstrations for gay rights in the United States. Now, Visit Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Visitor Center bring this concept home with the Philly Pride Visitor Center, continuing the story of LGBTQ+ history where so much of it began.

“Philadelphia’s LGBTQ+ history helped shape this country’s story, and the Philly Pride Visitor Center brings that legacy forward in a powerful and visible way,” said **Angela Val, president and CEO of Visit Philadelphia**. “As we prepare to welcome record numbers of visitors in 2026, this Center sends a clear message: you are welcome here. For more than two decades, we’ve turned our values into action, and this is another lasting investment in ensuring every traveler feels seen from the moment they arrive.”

The new Center also acts as a starting point to learn about the powerful and ongoing story of Philadelphia’s LGBTQ+ community. Historical content, curated with input from the community and led by Mark Segal, founder of Philadelphia Gay News, ensures an authentic and comprehensive representation of the city’s LGBTQ+ legacy.

“Philadelphia has always been a trailblazer in LGBTQ+ history, from the first Reminder Day marches in 1965 (four years before Stonewall) to the Dewey’s sit-in, where LGBTQ+ youth stood up to a restaurant’s refusal to serve them, the first statewide anti-discrimination order under Governor Milton Shapp, and the nation’s first LGBTQ+ senior housing,” said **Mark Segal, founder and publisher of Philadelphia Gay News**. “Our city helped launch the fight for representation in media, shaped national policy, and created safe, visible spaces for our community. Now, with the opening of the Philly Pride Visitor Center, Philadelphia proudly honors that legacy and reaffirms its commitment to those who call this community home.”

As a legacy project tied to the U.S. Semiquincentennial in 2026, the Philly Pride Visitor Center joins national efforts to commemorate the nation's founding by honoring the diverse communities that have shaped it. The Center reflects a long-term investment in inclusive tourism infrastructure that will serve visitors far beyond 2026.

Philadelphia expects record visitation in 2026 to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States, major sporting events including the FIFA World Cup, MLB All-Star Game, and PGA Championship, and cultural programming like the inaugural city-wide ArtPhilly festival.

***The Philly Pride Visitor Center will be Thursday through Monday, noon to 6 p.m. (closed Tuesday and Wednesday) at 1130 Locust Street, Philadelphia.***

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### **About the Philadelphia Visitor Center**

The Philadelphia Visitor Center connects visitors to memorable, authentic, and fun Philly experiences at our four visitor center locations: 6th and Market, City Hall, Love Park, and the Parkway. It facilitates the operation of the Independence Visitor Center, the primary point of orientation for Independence National Historical Park and the official visitor center of the Philadelphia region, including Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties. The Visitor Center also operates the Philly PHLASH seasonal public transit service, and The Liberty View, a private event space at The Independence Visitor Center overlooking the Liberty Bell and Independence Mall. For more information, please visit [www.phlvisitorcenter.com](http://www.phlvisitorcenter.com).

### **About Visit Philadelphia**

Visit Philadelphia® is our name and our mission. As the region's official tourism marketing agency, we build Greater Philadelphia's image, drive visitation and boost the economy.

For over two decades, Visit Philadelphia has been a national leader in LGBTQ+ tourism marketing, beginning with "Get Your History Straight and Your Nightlife Gay" in 2004 — the country's first LGBTQ+-specific tourism television commercial. This commitment continues through initiatives including "In Pursuit of a More Perfect Union: Drag Queen Story Time on Independence Mall," helping Philadelphia Gay News set the 2024 Guinness World Record for the largest drag story time reading, and installing the "In Plain Sight" TQ+ sculpture as a bold celebration of the trans and queer community in Philadelphia.

Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos and high-definition B-roll of Greater Philadelphia, visit the Photos & Video section of [visitphilly.com/mediacenter](http://visitphilly.com/mediacenter).