

# 2025 Annual Report



Eastern  
State

Discover. Discuss. Share



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## **OUR MISSION**

**Eastern State preserves America's first penitentiary, advancing public understanding of the criminal justice system and its impact on the lives of those affected by it, to inspire a more just future.**

## **OUR VISION**

**Eastern State envisions a criminal justice system that treats everyone with fairness and dignity.**

Adopted by the Board of Directors, 2024

## **VALUES AND PRINCIPLES**

### **Place Matters**

We believe that Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site is the foundation of our authority and credibility in advancing discussion on the criminal justice system.

### **Lived Experience**

We believe the voices of individuals who have had lived experience with the criminal justice system are central to our work.

### **Preservation**

We believe in protecting and preserving the history of Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site through a multi-layered approach to preservation and interpretation.

### **Opportunity**

We believe that people who have been incarcerated should be given a fresh start with the tools and opportunity to lead productive lives.

### **Civic Engagement**

We believe we are all active participants in shaping our criminal justice system.

# A Letter from Our President & CEO

Dear Community,

2025 was a year of transformation, resilience, and purpose for Eastern State. Even as economic headwinds and global uncertainty challenged institutions across our sector, Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site moved boldly forward, launching a new brand, expanding our reach, deepening our educational programs, and strengthening the organizational foundation that will carry us into one of the most consequential chapters in our modern history.

This year, we took the courageous step of reintroducing Eastern State to the world. Our new brand and redesigned website signal not just a fresh visual identity, but a renewed and sharpened vision: we are both a premier historic site *and* a national center for justice education. Since our website launched in June 2025, it has attracted more than 2 million views and over 600,000 new users - people encountering Eastern State for the first time. A paid media campaign, combined with an earned media effort that generated more than 200 million impressions, sent a powerful signal to Philadelphia, the nation, and beyond that Eastern State is here, and our work matters now more than ever.

We welcomed over 220,000 visitors to our site and reached 4.6 million people across social platforms. Our Justice 101 programming grew 75% in attendance and we engaged more than 21,000 students through school programs and field trips, including our new, themed school workshops featuring the Hospital Block, Religion in Prison, and the Eighth Amendment. We reached 15,902 group visitors despite a significant decline in Canadian tour groups.

Behind the scenes, we built the infrastructure for long-term impact. We grew our Board by 35% with engaged and active leaders. We completed key hires in Workforce Development, Human Resources, and Finance, filling critical gaps in our leadership team. We launched Phase I of our synagogue preservation project. We secured more than \$1.5 million in contributed revenue, exceeding our fundraising goal, while continuing to build the pipeline for major capital projects, including the Welcome Center, Synagogue Refresh, and the Preservation Trades Center.

None of these accomplishments happened in isolation. They are the result of a staff that shows up with creativity and commitment every day, a board that provides visionary leadership, and a community of partners, donors, and visitors who believe in this institution and the questions we ask.

As I write this, Philadelphia is already welcoming the world. America's 250th anniversary, the Semiquincentennial, will bring unprecedented attention to our city and to the ideas that gave birth to this nation: liberty, justice, and the ongoing human effort to live up to those ideals. Our institution's powerful story fits perfectly into this national conversation - its story needs to be told.

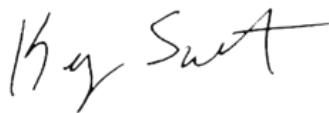
In 2026, we will debut a new audio tour and museum-wide signage upgrades that will deepen the visitor experience and invite engagement with new digital resources. We will redesign exhibits, including the new *Freedom Though Faith: Judaism at Eastern State and Beyond*. We will continue building toward our 200th anniversary in 2029: advancing capital projects, growing our donor base, and making Eastern State a destination for the nation's most important civic conversations.

Most of all, we will continue to do what Eastern State has always done: ask the hard questions. About fairness. About dignity. About what kind of justice system, and what kind of society, we want to build together.

As Philadelphia opens its doors to the world this year, we will be ready with open arms to share our powerful site and programs, and expand our global reach.

The future of Eastern State is bright. Thank you to our board, staff, donors, partners, and visitors for making it so.

With gratitude and great excitement for what lies ahead,



**Dr. Kerry Sautner**  
President & CEO  
Eastern State

# 2025: A Banner Year

## THIS CALENDAR YEAR, WE...

- **Successfully launched our new brand**, receiving extremely positive stakeholder feedback...no small feat in Philadelphia!
- **Launched a new website**, improving accessibility, navigation, and digital engagement.
- **Revamped Wednesday Nights** with a different theme each week, offering immersive experiences, interactive events, and exclusive behind-the-scenes access to one of Philadelphia's most unique landmarks, providing a fun and meaningful night out—combining history, culture, and entertainment in a one-of-a-kind setting.
- **Launched Phase I of the Synagogue preservation project**, including HVAC installation and essential preservation repairs.
- **Welcomed eight new members** to our Board of Directors: Pauline Abernathy; Kiki Bolender; John H. Cluver; Conlan Crosley; Jordan Hyatt; Danielle Kreppel; Assata Thomas; Miao Woods
- **Hosted the East Coast Haunters Convention closing night party**, bringing in hundreds of haunted attraction industry professionals from across the country to go behind the scenes of Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site and Halloween Nights.
- Welcomed 1105 community members - **the largest turnout ever** - for our Family Fall Festival, a seasonal celebration that pairs historical interpretation with trick-or-treating, story time, hands-on activities, art making, music, and other family-friendly fun
- **Secured \$360,000 in funding** from the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage. This award, part of a set of grants designed to support the ideas and creative practices shaping Philadelphia's cultural landscape and civic life, was **the largest award in this grant cycle**.
- Engaged more than 500 educators and convened the Collaboratory for Justice Education for its first-ever in-person gathering at the historic site.

...and we're just getting started.

Read on to learn more about our 2025 accomplishments and our vision for the future.



Reentry Simulation with the Forum of Executive Women



Family Fall Festival



Civic engagement panel at Wednesday Nights

An aerial photograph of the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, showing its distinctive red brick buildings and high walls. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color. The text is positioned in the upper left and center of the image.

**VISITOR TESTIMONIAL:**

**“Our visit to Eastern State Penitentiary was profoundly moving. Even for a group of seasoned defense attorneys, social workers, investigators, and justice professionals, it was deeply meaningful and—quite honestly—painful. That’s a testament to the space itself, the stories it holds, and the thoughtful, respectful way your team shares them.**

**Thank you again for all you did to make our conference experience richer, more reflective, and smoothly coordinated.”**

Akin Adepoju, Defender Services Office  
July 2025

# Economic Impact

## 2025 BY THE NUMBERS

Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site is one of Pennsylvania’s premier visitor attractions, welcoming **225,000 visitors** in 2025. Out-of-state tourists made up the majority of our visitation and therefore contributed significant leisure dollars to the Philadelphia and Pennsylvania economies.

We supported **492 jobs in 2025** and generated an estimated **\$32 million in economic impact** within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

## LOCAL VISION, NATIONAL AMBITION

Our physical site roots us in Philadelphia’s rich history, while our national ambition compels us to brand outward - inspiring change for the better. In 2025, we reached beyond our walls to expand our impact nationally:

- Web Views: **2.4 million**
- Social Media Followers: **325,000**
- Virtual Program Attendance: **2,700 (+59%)**

**492**

Jobs Supported

**225k**

In-Person Visitors

**\$32m**

Economic Impact

**2.4m**

Web Views

**318k**

Social Followers

**59%**

Increase in Virtual Attendance

# Visitor Experience

## LEVERAGING THE POWER OF PLACE

Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site (ESPHS) is one of the most highly attended and highly rated attractions in Philadelphia. In 2025, we welcomed 225,000 visitors from all 50 states and dozens of countries around the world for thought-provoking, impactful experiences.

## INSPIRING CHANGE THROUGH PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Inspired by our legacy, our historic site stands as a symbol of our belief that we can stand for more.

Our vision extends outward, with greater impact and reach through a multidimensional focus.

Through discussion, art, architecture, and more, we challenge our in-person and virtual visitors to linger longer, discuss further, and walk away feeling more connected and engaged.

Eastern State is a hub - forging connections, promoting dialogue, and inspiring action.

And our public engagement programs make a real impact - our visitors leave more informed, compelled to discuss the justice system with friends and relatives, and inspired to take action in their own communities.

## THE REVIEWS ARE IN:

Nearly every one of our survey respondents would recommend visiting ESPHS to a friend or relative. Many visitors also recommend it to the general public, writing favorable reviews and encouraging others to take the time to visit us. In fact, we have one of the highest visitor satisfaction ratings of any museum or historic site in the area:

- Google: 4.7 stars
- Yelp: 4.6 stars
- GetYourGuide: 4.6 stars
- TripAdvisor: 4.6 stars, ranked **#1 top attraction in Philadelphia, #4 thing to do in Philadelphia**, and a 2025 **Traveler's Choice** award winner.

“A legendary prison in American culture, a must-see if you're ever in Philadelphia. This surprising place offers a glimpse into the history of prison life in the USA. The restoration work by the association dedicated to preserving this iconic institution is truly impressive.”

- *Get Your Guide review by Godallier, December 2025*

## 2025 Visitor Survey Stats:

# 99%

### Would Recommend

# 93%

### Would Return

# 92%

### Learned Something New About the Justice System

# 99%

### Rated Overall Experience Excellent or Good



# Visitor Engagement

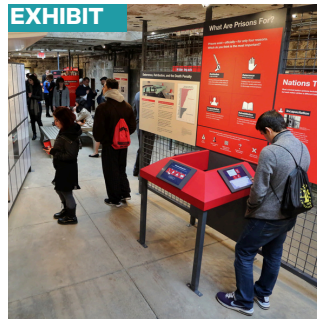
Visitors from around the world engage with Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site's array of on-site experiences to learn more about the prison's history and the American justice system today.



TOUR

## VOICES OF EASTERN STATE AUDIO TOUR

This soundscape mixes dozens of voices – including three former wardens and 25 former guards and prisoners – creating an intimate walking tour of ESPHS's cellblocks and yards. The main route includes 10 audio stops and lasts about 35 minutes. Additional stops provide visitors with more than two hours of content, including Death Row, the restored synagogue, and Al Capone's Cell.



EXHIBIT

## PRISONS TODAY: QUESTIONS IN THE AGE OF MASS INCARCERATION

The United States has one of the highest rates of incarceration in the world, with 2.2 million individuals in prison or jail. This phenomenon has generally been driven by changes in laws, policing, and sentencing, not by changes in behavior. This interactive exhibit sheds light on these issues. It elicits personal connections, encourages reflection, supports dialogue, and suggests steps that visitors can take to help shape the evolution of the American criminal justice system moving forward.



TOUR

## MINI TOURS

These short tours take place throughout the penitentiary, each lasting from five to 20 minutes. An Eastern State educator engages visitors by leading an activity, exploring a special topic, or sharing a space not otherwise open to the public. In 2025, experiences included Soup Alley, the Hospital Block, and the Catholic Chaplain's Office murals.



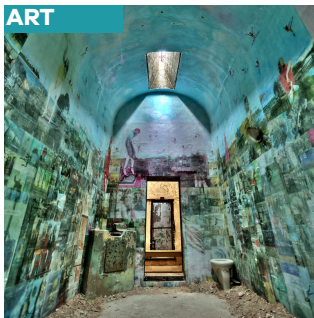
EXHIBIT

## ALFRED W. FLEISHER MEMORIAL SYNAGOGUE

Eastern State's synagogue was almost certainly the first built in an American prison. Completed around 1924 and used continuously until the penitentiary closed in 1971, the space had fallen into near total ruin after the penitentiary's abandonment. The synagogue marks the first truly restored space at ESPHS, faithfully returned to its 1959 appearance. A set of former prison workshop spaces adjacent to the synagogue has been converted into The William Portner Memorial Exhibit on Jewish Life, which visitors can also explore.

# Visitor Engagement, continued...

## ART



### ART INSTALLATIONS

ESPHS exhibits more than a dozen site-specific, commissioned artist installations. Artists are chosen for their ability to address Eastern State's primary themes – including issues of crime and justice, architectural history, and the site's fascinating past – with a memorable, thought-provoking approach.

## EXHIBIT



### AL CAPONE'S CELL

Al Capone's first stint of incarceration took place at Eastern State Penitentiary. In May 1929, he was arrested outside a movie theater in Philadelphia for carrying a concealed, unlicensed .38 caliber revolver. He spent eight months of his one-year sentence at Eastern State. Visitors today can see his recreated cell, designed to reflect how it likely appeared when Capone was incarcerated here.

## EXHIBIT



### THE BIG GRAPH

The United States' rate of incarceration is among the highest in the world. Built to the scale of Eastern State's walls, this massive, three-dimensional bar graph sculpture illustrates the unprecedented growth in the United States' incarceration rates since 1970. It also shows the racial breakdown of the American prison population in 1970 and today.

## TOUR



### GUIDE-LED TOUR AND DISCUSSION

This 45-minute, in-depth, guide-led tour explores Eastern State Penitentiary's complex history, its ongoing relevance to contemporary social issues, and sets the stage for conversation about justice and the role of prisons in society.

Once a month, an Eastern State educator leads this tour in partnership with an ASL (American Sign Language) interpreter from Hands UP Productions.

# Festivals & Public Programs

## MAJOR STRIDES IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 2025, we developed new educational programs, made improvements to some returning favorites, and expanded a series of festivals related to civic holidays like Juneteenth, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Veteran's Day, making justice education more accessible to diverse audiences across a spectrum of age, content knowledge, and learning preferences.

## 2025 CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

- Dr. Martin Luther King Day (January 20)
- 12 ASL Guide-Led Tours (monthly)
- 11 Justice 101 Programs:
  - The Long Revolt: Reinterpreting Dissent, Prison Uprisings, and Black Radicalism (January 28)
  - Free Speech Behind Bars – The First Amendment and Prison Radio (February 25)
  - The History and Legacy of Women in Prison (March 27)
  - Official Book Launch – The Prison Industry: How It Works and Who Profits (April 10)
  - Reentry Simulation (April 26)
  - The History of Solitary Confinement in America (May 14)
  - Freedom Behind Bars: The First Amendment and Incarceration in America (September 17)
  - Restorative Justice: A Closer Look at Alternatives (November 19)
  - State of the Union: Excessive Punishment The 8th Amendment and the Justice System (December 3)
  - Bill of Rights: Trial Amendments and the Rights of the Accused (December 10)
  - Songs of Redemption: Stories, Music, and the Struggle for Justice (December 18)
- Spring Break: Sports and Recreation (April 11 - 20)
- 3 Scout Days (June 1, November 15, December 7)
- Memorial Day Weekend (May 23 through 26)
- Wawa Welcome America: Pay-What-You-Wish Night (June 30)
- 9 Wednesday Nights (May 7 through July 2)
- Juneteenth (June 19)
- CollegeFest (September 21)
- Democracy for All Week (September 17 - 21)
- Halloween Nights (32 nights, Sept - Nov)
- Family Fall Festival (October 26)
- Veteran's Day Weekend (November 7 - 11)
- Thanksgiving Weekend (November 28 - 30)
- Shared Light: Winter Celebrations (December 20 - 31)



**VISITOR TESTIMONIAL:**

**"I just wanted to let you know I had such a great time visiting this Wednesday night. It was eye-opening and I cannot believe how well you're doing [educating] the public on prison reform. I can tell you from someone who is skeptical that I believe you are on the forefront of advocacy for reform in the city. I cannot point out many more institutions or companies that are doing the work you are, so good job."**

Ryan Moser, Freelance Journalist  
June 2025

# More Than a New Look

## 2025 REBRAND

We are thrilled to share an exciting development in the ongoing story of Eastern State: the unveiling of our new brand. This is a bold, new chapter for Eastern State, and this evolution reflects our enduring commitment to preserving this profound historic site, fostering critical dialogue, and building out our community both locally and nationally.

## WHY A REBRAND

Eastern State Penitentiary has stood as a powerful symbol of architectural innovation, the complexities of American criminal justice, and the human experience within its walls. Today, as our mission evolves, so too does our public presence. We are deepening our engagement with current issues in the criminal justice system, expanding our national reach into classrooms across the country to foster critical conversations about justice and fairness, and strengthening our role as a vital space for public dialogue at this National Historic Landmark—America’s first penitentiary.

Our new brand identity is designed to reflect this unique history and evolution, enhance accessibility and engagement, and provide a cohesive framework that unifies our diverse initiatives.

## WE HOPE YOU LOVE IT! HERE’S WHAT YOU’LL SEE:

Our new brand encompasses a refreshed logo, a refined color palette, updated typography, and a new visual language that will be integrated across all our platforms—from our website and social media to on-site signage and merchandise. While respecting the history of the site and the important mission of our institution, these elements aim to convey continuity, clarity, purpose, and connection.

Our newly established brand architecture supports these efforts. Our name—**Eastern State**—is the brand that stands for all that we do. While our team works toward the same big picture, with common goals and a shared vision, we’ve also established two sub-brands to more clearly articulate what we offer to different audiences:

- **Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site** is the place-based museum experience. As America's first penitentiary, we invite exploration of our revolutionary architecture, fascinating yet complex history and legacy, and dynamic visitor experiences.
- **The Eastern State Center for Justice Education** informs, challenges, and empowers people to think critically about America’s justice system. Through education, events, and workforce development programs, we inspire people to envision—and take action toward—a more just, equitable world.

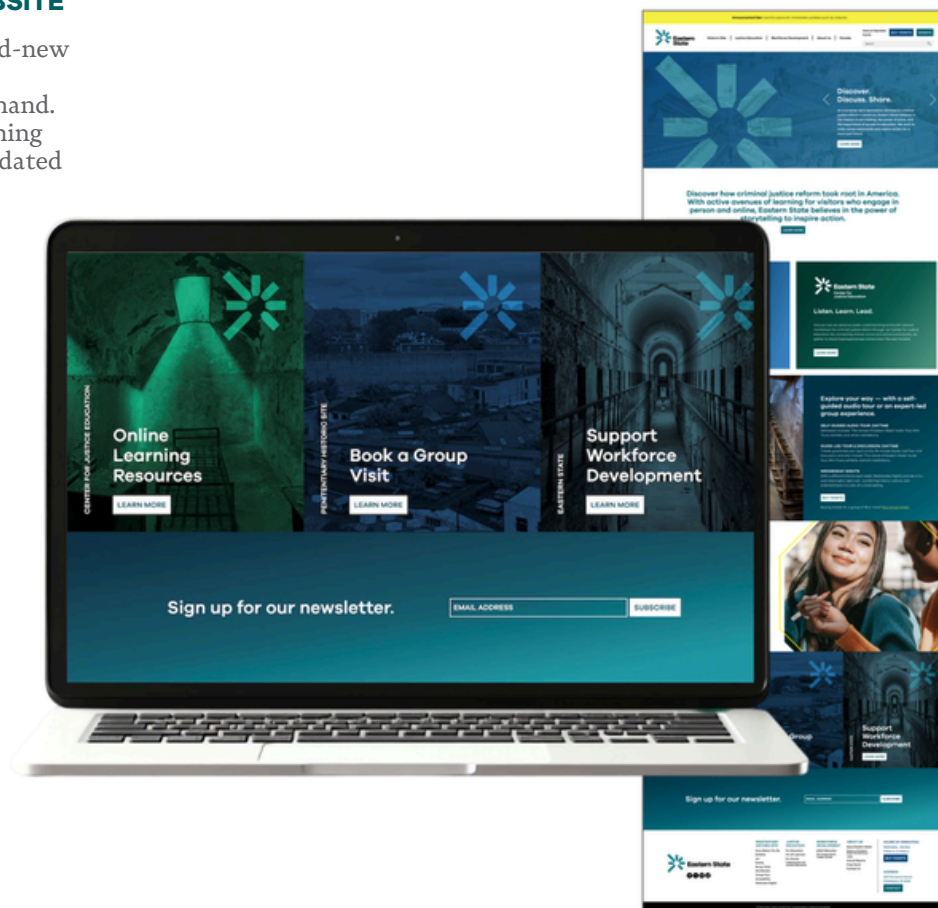
Eastern State is a dynamic and bold institution, preserving a powerful historic landmark while leveraging its complex past to inspire action toward a more just future rooted in human dignity, and our new brand identity is reflective of that.



# More Than a New Look, continued...

## CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE

We invite you to visit our brand-new website at [EasternState.org](http://EasternState.org) to experience the new brand firsthand. You'll see it reflected in everything from the site's design to our updated program materials.



I am reaching out as a very happy wheelchair user. I just HAD to let you know that your accessibility information is the best I have ever seen. I use a wheelchair and I have wanted to visit the Penitentiary for a long time, but was worried I wouldn't be able to. The information on your accessibility page is second to none. I know exactly what will be possible during my visit and I feel so confident and relaxed that I will be able to enjoy it. This is a luxury wheelchair users are rarely afforded, so I had to thank you. I will be visiting very soon, as I did have to wait for the warm weather to pass! Sincerely, thank you for the effort and work that was put into the accessibility page. It does not go unnoticed.

- Kelly Seylaz, September 28, 2025

## DISCOVER. DISCUSS. SHARE.

Thank you for being a vital part of our community. We are on a journey to advance our impact, and you are incredibly important to bringing our vision to life. We look forward to continuing this important work with you under our new, unified identity.



**VISITOR TESTIMONIAL:**

**I've had the pleasure of visiting ESP a few times over the years and each time I come back I'm delighted to see the progress your team has made to make an already fantastically interpreted site even better. The treatment of the material and story of the site has always been done so respectfully to all parties without providing any injustice to the significance of the site itself or shying away from the ugly realities of it for the people it once housed. Thank you for treating your subject matter with such openness and care.**

Cari Campbell  
October 2025

# Workforce Development

## EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYSTEMS-IMPACTED PEOPLE

Workforce development programs tailored to, and built by, returning citizens have emerged as a powerful tool for addressing the challenges faced by individuals reentering society after incarceration, including limited employment opportunities, social stigma, and the weight of past experiences.

Eastern State's two workforce development programs – the Preservation Trades Center (PTC) and Lived Experience Activating Dialogue (LEAD) Fellowship – serve as a catalyst for economic mobility and reentry support for returning citizens, providing pathways to sustainable, fair-wage employment.



### Preservation Trades Center

The PTC engages Philadelphians historically underrepresented in the building trades, including returning citizens, in paid, hands-on training opportunities in masonry and carpentry, with a pipeline to sustainable living-wage careers in the skilled trades.

In 2025, we hosted three pre-apprenticeship programs - a Masonry Academy, Carpentry Academy, and Cement Masonry and Plastering Academy - with a 100% graduation rate.



### LEAD Fellowship

The LEAD Fellowship responds to a pressing need to support and empower returning citizens through a structured, paid program that both educates participants and shows how their voices and creativity can contribute to the world. It helps break the cycle of recidivism, fosters individual growth, and contributes to building more inclusive workplaces.

In 2025, we completed 2 Fellowship cycles with 16 total program graduates.

# Center for Justice Education

## DISCOVER. DISCUSS. SHARE.

The Eastern State Center for Justice Education was established in 2024 to become a nationally recognized voice in criminal justice education, serving as a catalyst for workforce development and a connection point that provides opportunities for engagement, dialogue, and impact.

This year, we expanded **Justice 101**, a discussion series examining the history of the American justice system at its impacts on society, citizens, and the world; created new educational videos for **Unlocking History**, a video series examining the intricacies of everyday life at Eastern State Penitentiary and in prisons today; and expanded on the work of the **Collaboratory for Justice Education**, a dynamic community passionate about justice education.



### Justice 101

A monthly speaker series examining the history of the American justice system and the impact it has on our society, citizens, and world. In 2025, we increased program offerings by **37%** and increased the average number of attendees per program by **43% year over year**.



### Unlocking History

A video series examining everyday life at Eastern State Penitentiary and in prisons today. In 2025, we increased video offerings by **67%** and amassed **2,500 views** on videos about the impact of the temperance movement at ESP, prison life for women, reentry, prison animals, and more.



### Collaboratory for Justice Education

A group of educators from across the country with a shared passion for justice education. We convened our first in-person gathering at Eastern State in 2025. Members also worked to develop educational tools and represented ES at education conferences nationwide.



**VISITOR TESTIMONIAL:**

**“Hi! Just wanted to let you know our students had a great time visiting Halloween Nights on Friday. So much so they inquired about the history of the facility so I wanted to see about scheduling a group next month!”**

Dr. Margarita Olivencia

Rowan University Upward Bound

Attended Halloween Nights November 2025 and a Group Tour December 2025

# Thank You!

## YOUR SUPPORT MAKES OUR WORK POSSIBLE

### 2025 Donors

Donors listed gave \$1,000 or more in 2025

#### **\$350,000 & ABOVE**

The Pew Center for Arts and Heritage

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

#### **\$150,000 & ABOVE**

City of Philadelphia

#### **\$50,000 & ABOVE**

Philadelphia Funder Collaborative for the Semiquincentennial

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

Philadelphia Office of the District Attorney

The Reichlin and Tuck Families

#### **\$25,000 & ABOVE**

The Aileen K. and Brian L. Roberts Foundation

David and Ann Brownlee

#### **\$10,000 & ABOVE**

Fulton Forward Foundation

Matt Lee and Elinor Haider

Michele Schiavoni

Independence Foundation

Joseph J. Shapiro

Amy and Samuel Cohen

Sara Jane Elk

Robert L. Freedman

Meier Family Foundation

Robert H. and Janet S. Fleisher Foundation

#### **\$5,000 & ABOVE**

Philadelphia Activities Fund

The Jacob and Valeria Langeloth Foundation

Jeffrey and Daphne Ewing

#### **\$5,000 & ABOVE (cont.)**

Nancy Klaus and Jeffrey Cooper

Stephen and Linda Schreiner

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Craig Oliner and Alyson Owen

#### **\$2,500 & ABOVE**

Campus Philly and PHENND

Historic Preservation Education Foundation

Keith Reeves

David Hollenberg and Linda Bantel

Donna Hunt and Chris Deephouse

Pamela Laucks and Kenneth Kring

Matthew Ray

Pauline Abernathy

Anna V. Forrester and Mitchell Young

Rev. Betsy Ivey

Jonathan Loeb and Catherine Loh

#### **\$1,000 & ABOVE**

Christian R. & Mary F. Lindback Foundation

Stephen and Barbara Gold

Ellen and Ralph Rosen

Jack's Firehouse

Ama Addo

Albarell Electric, Inc.

Kiki Bolender and Charles Capaldi

Cara and Charles Schneider Bongiorno

Steven and Nancy Shapiro

Joan and Dane Wells

Debra Appel and Gene Schneyer

William and Vivian Gast

The Pennsylvania Abolition Society

Stanley Reichlin

The Shusterman Foundation

Miao Zhang

# Board Leadership

## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### **Matthew D. Lee, Board Chair**

Partner, White Collar Criminal Defense and Regulatory Compliance Practice Group  
Fox Rothschild LLP

### **Nancy Klaus, Board Vice Chair**

Principal  
Nancy Klaus LLC

### **Barbara T. Sicalides, Board Secretary**

Partner  
Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders LLP

### **Pauline Abernathy**

Executive Director  
Harvard Impact Labs

### **Kiki Bolender**

Principal  
Bolender Architects

### **Josephy Brasky**

Philadelphia City Council  
Department of Public Property

### **John H. Cluver**

Senior Partner  
Voith & Mactavish Architects

### **Conan Crosley**

Director of Development & Labor Relations  
Philadelphia City Councilman Young 5th District

### **Jeffrey Ewing**

Volunteer and Consultant

### **Jordan Hyatt**

Associate Professor of Criminology and Justice Studies Director  
Center for Public Policy, Drexel University

### **Rev. Betsy Ivey**

Director  
Philadelphia Fund for Black Sacred Spaces

### **Danielle Kreppel**

Global Compliance & Reporting Tax Senior Manager  
Ernst & Young

### **Pamela Laucks**

Principal  
Fiscal Strategies Group

### **Matthew Ray**

Co-Founder and Chief Creative Office  
Chatterblast

### **Keith Reeves**

Professor, Political Science and Faculty Director, Program on Urban Inequality and Incarceration  
Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility, Swarthmore College

### **Ellen Rosen**

Retired Lawyer and Business Executive

### **Michele A. Schiavoni**

Principal,  
Schiavoni Executive Consulting  
Senior Vice President,  
Blue Blaze Associates

### **Cara Schneider Bongiorno**

Founder  
Philly History Pop Ups

### **Steven R. Shapiro**

Former National Legal Director,  
American Civil Liberties Union  
Lecturer-in-Law,  
Columbia Law School and NYU School of Law

### **Assata Thomas**

Executive Director  
Division of Reentry, City of Philadelphia

### **Sara L. Woods, Esq.**

Co-President  
Heights Philadelphia

### **Miao Zhang**

Senior Manager  
Ernst & Young

# What's Ahead for Eastern State

## INTRODUCING A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

Eastern State Penitentiary has a fascinating history and complicated narrative that can be catalyzed to engage a nation in the discussion of criminal justice reform. We're in a pivotal moment for Eastern State, where we have a unique opportunity to build out our mission with new vigor and momentum to address key needs for our institution and society.

In spring 2023, we began a process of learning more about how our staff, Board, and stakeholders see us and how we see ourselves. The objective of this process of self-reflection was to seek a deeper understanding of the value we were providing our stakeholders and of how we might continue to evolve. What we learned has contributed significantly to a revision of our mission and vision as well as to the strategic priorities and goals that will guide our investment of time and resources for the next five years. We are proud to share the results of our lively discussions in this plan. The full version is available online; highlights are shared here in this report.

This strategic plan represents more than an outline of our goals; it's a plan to guide our journey forward into our next chapter of growth.



# Strategic Priorities

## 2025 - 2029 PRIORITIES

Starting in 2025 and continuing over the next four years, we will invest time and resources in the following areas where we have identified important opportunities for impact.

### 01

#### Reimagine the Visitor Experience

We will transform the visitor experience to be more cohesive, accessible, and engaging. By enhancing physical amenities, updating exhibits, and integrating digital and interactive elements that appeal to different ways of learning, we will offer a cohesive and enriched experience that invites diverse visitors to explore the site's history and mission in innovative and visitor-centered ways, both in-person and online.

### 02

#### Advance the Historic Preservation of ESPHS

We are committed to preserving and interpreting this historic site with care and integrity. Preservation efforts will honor the site's unique multilayered history, educating visitors on its historical, social, and architectural significance and reinforcing our mission to steward for future generations.

### 03

#### Expand our Workforce Development Initiatives

We will serve as a catalyst for economic mobility and reentry support for returning citizens, providing pathways to sustainable, fair-wage employment through programs like the Preservation Trades Center (PTC) and the LEAD Fellowship. We aim to be a model of fair-chance employment, workforce development, and community connections, expanding opportunities in the preservation and union trades, nonprofit, and corporate sectors.

# Strategic Priorities, continued...

## 04

### Support Learning through Justice Education

We will become a recognized voice in criminal justice education, exploring the evolution of the U.S. justice system and its impacts. Through innovative exhibits, public dialogues, educational programs and classroom tools, we will convene experts, justice-impacted individuals, youth, and the public to foster a deeper understanding of the evolution and impacts of the criminal justice system and criminal justice reform, with our focus always turned towards human dignity and justice.

## 05

### Enhance Organizational Capacity

Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site is a national treasure that preserves this powerful site of the nation's first penitentiary and presents the history and origins of the criminal justice reform movement as a vital part of the American experiment in democracy. Advancing organizational stability will allow us to preserve, grow, and strengthen the impact of this unique site.

### LEARN MORE

You can read our full strategic plan online at [EasternState.org](http://EasternState.org).

### SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Let us know what you think! We'd love your feedback. Send us an email at [ceo@easternstate.org](mailto:ceo@easternstate.org).



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