

# EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY

A photograph of the Eastern State Penitentiary courtyard. The scene is captured in a blue-tinted, semi-transparent style. In the foreground, several people are seated at wooden picnic tables on a grassy area. Some are engaged in conversation, while others are looking towards the background. A white canopy tent is visible in the middle ground. The background features the large, multi-story stone walls of the penitentiary, with a prominent watchtower in the center. String lights are strung across the top of the image, and the sky is filled with soft, white clouds.

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

# About Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site

Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site (ESPHS) provides comprehensive education about the history of—and modern debates around—the U.S. criminal justice system, engaging leading scholars and first-person storytelling. We increase attention and knowledge of the criminal justice reform movement and its impact on our society.

Opened in 1829, Philadelphia's Eastern State Penitentiary was internationally renowned for innovations in prison reform and architecture. It was the world's first "penitentiary," designed to inspire penitence, or genuine regret. Closed in 1970, it sat abandoned for nearly two decades until a dedicated team began to stabilize the ruined site. In 1994, the penitentiary reopened for tours; today hundreds of thousands of annual visitors learn its history and consider its lessons.

This site, which was the birthplace of criminal justice reform in young America, still calls to all of its citizens today - asking us again, have we established a fair and just society?

Our work is oriented in building a stronger community understanding and respect for fundamental human dignity and to effect positive change within the country's justice system. In order to fully realize this work, ESPHS strives for local and national reach.

## Mission

Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site interprets the legacy of American criminal justice reform, from the nation's founding through to the present day, within the long-abandoned cellblocks of the nation's most historic prison.

## Vision

Eastern State Penitentiary's innovative preservation, interpretation, and public programs will move visitors to engage in dialogue and deepen the national conversation about criminal justice.



# A Letter from the CEO

Opened in 1829, Eastern State Penitentiary (ESP) is the world's first true penitentiary, symbolizing the American transition from physical, public punishments to a rehabilitative system. This first prison to use solitary confinement on a large scale was a symbol of order, justice, accountability, and redemption. ESP was tied directly to fundamental questions posed at the nation's founding: As the U.S. sought a new understanding of liberty and justice, we grappled with how to fairly treat citizens when taking away their liberty. As the revolutionary period explored ideas of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, we also launched a new democratic government expanding the body politic to more people than ever before. Very quickly these principles of liberty and freedom were thwarted by revised penal systems disguising violence as humanitarianism and replacing slavery by putting property rights of few at odds with the human rights of many. This period saw an explosion of punishment based on crime but also based on race, gender, class, and social norms. They wrestled with questions like: how does this young country offer the promise of life and liberty while denying others that hope? If the social contract with new citizens in our democracy promises security, then how are those who break these principles to be punished in a way that establishes a fair and just system? The Framers of the U.S. Constitution explored and began to define the bedrock

principles of a legitimate criminal justice system to be one where the following attributes are met:

1. People have the right to be treated with dignity;
2. Government has an obligation to be fair;
3. Communities deserve to thrive;
4. People deserve second chances or, more accurately, a fresh start.

Eastern State is the physical manifestation of this founding philosophy, the Quaker-inspired belief that everyone was inherently good and deserved a second chance to reform or become "penitent." ESP embodied a criminal justice reform movement posing one of the greatest questions regarding incarceration: what are the purposes of punishment and prison? We must examine the founding of our criminal justice system in America while contending with the issue of how one system could have competing aims, including reform, deterrence, punishment, retribution, justice, and profit. There is no place in America better to teach this than in Philadelphia at Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site (ESPHS). Understanding how our founding principles defined a vision characterized by a quest for individual liberty can frame today's dialogue: Have we built a fair and just society? Have we established justice? People have certain inalienable rights, but how do we respect these rights and establish a just system based on rule of law? ESP was the genesis of addressing these questions we still struggle with today.

## A Letter from the CEO continued...

Preparing for the U.S. Semiquincentennial is a unique opportunity to consider past successes in reform as well as failures, and what impacts they have had on our communities today. Philadelphia's place in the history of American criminal justice and its current struggle with crime and mass incarceration makes it particularly suited to explore the topic of justice in America.

Since the 1990s, ESPHS – a stabilized ruin turned thriving cultural institution – has welcomed millions of visitors to learn this history, discuss its implications for criminal justice today, and consider the future of reform through dialogue and reflection. We employ this utterly compelling site to gather communities, families, and individuals from throughout the city and the region. We prioritize bringing together the many constituencies involved and impacted by mass incarceration in our city, our state and our nation to seek common ground and solutions for the future.

At our core, ESPHS interprets the legacy of American criminal justice reform, from the nation's founding through to the present day, within the long-abandoned cellblocks of the nation's most historic prison. As codified in the current strategic plan, Eastern State - a Site of Conscience - seeks to leverage the power of history and historic places to inform current-day issues and explore contemporary criminal

justice issues with honesty and respect for multiple perspectives.

By exploring our rich history and values in the birthplace of American democracy and juxtaposing them to the lived experience of those incarcerated throughout our history, educators will have the opportunity to reach beyond the common narrative of incarceration, through a humanistic approach, rooted in respect for all people, compassion for their dignity and welfare, and a conviction that positive change requires human intervention. Together, we will explore ways to understand our past and develop opportunities to build a better future for justice in America today.



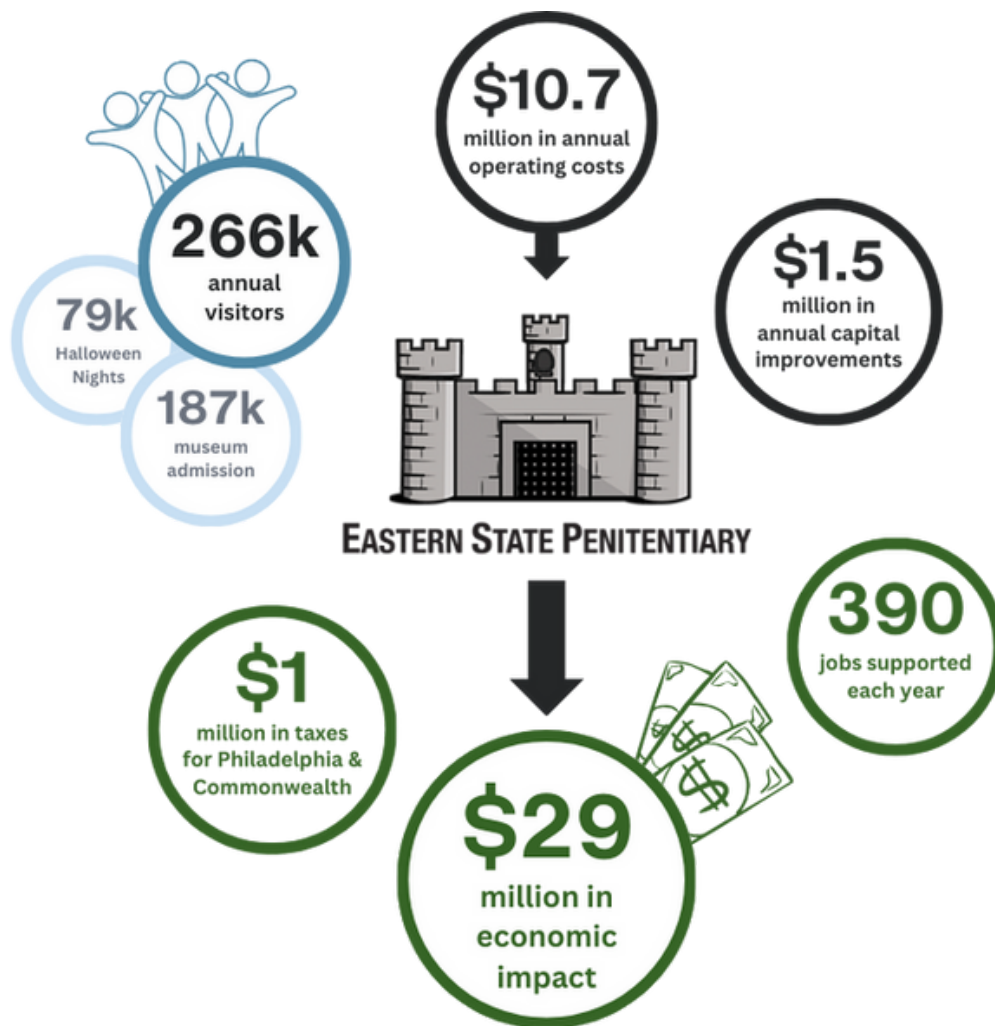
Sincerely,

Dr. Kerry Sautner  
President & CEO  
Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site

# 2023 Impact

## By the Numbers

An economic impact study shows that Eastern State Penitentiary supported 390 jobs in 2023 and generated \$29 million in economic impact within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.



Plus...

**12**

Free Neighbor Days

**4**

Scout Day Programs

**4**

Workforce Development Leadership Academies

**1**

NEW Virtual Educational Program Prototype

**7**

Community Programs

**17**

ASL Tours & Sensory-Friendly Touch Tours

**14**

Members-Only Events

# 2023 Impact Visitor Experience

In 2023, we welcomed 266,000 visitors from all 50 states and dozens of countries around the world for thought-provoking, impactful experiences. Here's a sampling of visitor feedback:

"We wanted to write and thank you for the opportunity to share ESP with the group from Unlocked. They were really impressed by the facility, especially since one of the group is the governor (aka superintendent) of a Victorian prison, built in 1844, that is still operational. The new exhibits provided some important context to what they saw at the various SCIs and really helped to contextualize American incarceration."

Jordan H., Unlocked Graduates, Aug. 2023

"It's important history even if it's sobering. We all need to know this."

Terry C., Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, Oct. 2023

"This was such a great experience for the students."

Andrew B., Pottstown High School, May 2023

"It was an incredible experience and everything was planned perfectly. Our team will absolutely recommend this tour to our future guests and clients."

Emily B., Four Seasons Hotel Philadelphia, Nov. 2023

"I am writing to say a big thank you for hosting us at your site last weekend. We had a grand time, and we learned a lot. It is our hope that we will continue to collaborate on the important topics of historical imprisonment and the current reality of mass incarceration. We will see you next spring (if we can hold out that long)."

Andjela K., Penn State Lehigh Valley, April 2023

Survey Says:

97%

Would Recommend

96%

Would Return

92%

Learned Something  
New About the U.S.  
Justice System

99%

Rated Overall  
Experience  
"Excellent" or "Good"

Online Reviews:

Google: 4.7

Yelp: 4.6

GetYourGuide: 4.7

TripAdvisor: 4.5,  
ranked #3 of 746  
things to do in  
Philadelphia



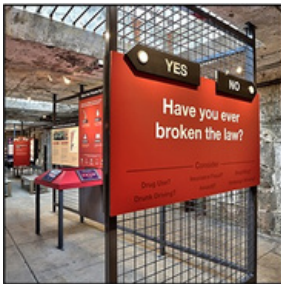
# Museum Experiences

Visitors from around the world engage with Eastern State’s array of on-site experiences to learn more about the penitentiary’s history as well as criminal justice reform.



## THE 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 Eastern State’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.



## 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.



## HANDS-ON HISTORY

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 2023, experiences included “Soup Alley,” “Hospital,” and “Catholic Chaplain’s Office.”



## ARTIST INSTALLATIONS

Eastern State Penitentiary 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.



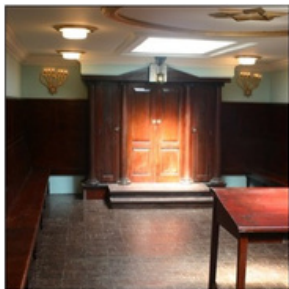
## AL CAPONE'S CELL

Al Capone got his first taste of prison life 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 at Eastern State.



## 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.



## 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 Eastern State, faithfully returned to its 1959 appearance. A set of former prison workshop spaces adjacent to the synagogue have been converted into The William Portner Memorial Exhibit on Jewish Life, which visitors can also explore.



# Workforce Development Leadership Academies

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. ESPHS has developed two workforce development programs – the Preservation Trades Center (PTC) and Lived Experience Activating Dialogue (LEAD) Fellowship – that reflect both our mission and our deep commitment to criminal justice reform issues and principles of restorative justice.



## PRESERVATION TRADES CENTER

the PTC engages people historically underrepresented in the building trades, particularly returning citizens, women, and people of color, in paid, hands-on training opportunities in masonry and carpentry, with a pipeline to sustainable living-wage careers in the skilled trades and long-term construction. **In 2023, we completed two programs - one Masonry Academy and one Carpentry Academy - with 16 total program graduates.**



## 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 museum world. It helps break the cycle of recidivism, fosters individual growth, and contributes to building a more inclusive and productive museum field. **In 2023, we completed two Fellowship cycles with 9 total program graduates.**

# Halloween Nights

*Halloween Nights* is a massive Halloween festival that contains five haunted houses, as well as historic tours, themed bars, live entertainment and more, and occupies all ten acres of Eastern State Penitentiary's abandoned cellblocks and yards. It draws visitors from around the world and has become synonymous with Halloween in Philadelphia.

*Halloween Nights* is Eastern State's largest fundraiser. All proceeds benefit the preservation and interpretation of this National Historic Landmark.

## WHY WE LOVE HALLOWEEN:

For more than 30 years, Eastern State Penitentiary has brought high-quality, fun, fall entertainment to generations of people in Philadelphia and all around the country, and has served as the primary fundraiser for this nonprofit historic site.

*Halloween Nights* incorporates our most popular and engaging educational experiences into the Halloween festival, opening the door for dialogue about how our nation can move toward a more equitable and effective criminal justice system.

And it's not just exhibits and tours that bring our mission to Halloween audiences. By partnering with Fair Chance vendors such as Triple Bottom Brewing Company, Down North Pizza, and others, and through our own Fair Chance hiring practices, *Halloween Nights* supports living-wage jobs for people with lived experience of incarceration.

Finally, revenue from *Halloween Nights* continues to support our most critical projects, including historic preservation, innovative new exhibits, and workforce development programs.

*Halloween Nights* remains one of the premier Halloween attractions in America, all while planting the seeds for deeper conversations about justice reform for tens of thousands of people every fall.

**EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY HISTORIC SITE**  
**2023 ANNUAL REPORT**



## HN by the Numbers

**285**

Seasonal Staff Members

**4**

Mission-Aligned Vendors

**32**

Festival Nights Operated

**79k**

Visitors

# ESP in the News

## 2023 Media Highlights

In 2023, we dominated the headlines with stories about our new CEO, our innovative public programs, and more.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

BUSINESS > TOURISM

### Eastern State Penitentiary names Constitution Center's Kerry Sautner as new CEO

Sautner will be only the second director in the museum's 29-year history. She currently is in charge of educational programming at the Constitution Center.

EBONY

ENTERTAINMENT STYLE CULTURE LIFE VIDEOS EBONY TV

SENSORY SOIRÉE FASHION FALL/WINTER '24 2023 BEAUTY & GROOMING AWARDS



CULTURE

8 MLK DAY CELEBRATIONS TO CHECK OUT THIS WEEKEND

Images: John Goodwin/Getty Images

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

By Savannah M. Taylor | January 13, 2023

AWARDS // TRAVEL



### This Halloween season, visit the 10 best haunted houses in the US

Be afraid

Best Haunted House / Attraction (2023)

SEPTEMBER 29, 2023

AD

LIFESTYLE

### 9 abandoned prisons around the world you can actually visit

From the infamous Alcatraz to the Cellular Jail in the Andamans, these are the creepiest abandoned prisons that are open to visitors.

By Prachi Joshi

26 December 2023

metro PHILADELPHIA

Affordable Housing

Things to Do

Power Lists

Fairmount

### Eastern State Penitentiary's installation shows ripple effect of crime

By Molly Given

Posted on May 12, 2023

EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY HISTORIC SITE  
2023 ANNUAL REPORT

# Thank You!

## Your Support Makes Our Work Possible

### **2023 DONORS**

*(Donors listed gave \$1,000 or more in 2023.)*

#### **\$1,000,000 and above**

The Mellon Foundation

#### **\$50,000 and above**

Anonymous

Pennsylvania Department of  
Community and Economic  
Development

The Pew Center for Arts and Heritage

#### **\$10,000 and above**

Amy and Samuel Cohen

Sara Jane Elk

Independence Foundation

Meier Family Foundation

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum  
Commission

The Pew Charitable Trusts

#### **\$5,000 and above**

Jeffrey and Daphne Ewing

J&M Preservation Studio

Nancy Klaus and Jeffrey Cooper

National Trust for Historic  
Preservation

Joseph J. Shapiro

Barbara Sicalides and Michael Bowen

Superior Scaffold Services, Inc.

#### **\$2,000 and above**

David and Ann Brownlee

Barbara and Steve Gold

David Hollenberg and Linda Bantel

Donna Hunt and Chris Deephouse

Pamela Laucks and Kenneth Kring

Matt Lee and Elinor Haider

John McInerney and Brenda Defeo

Philadelphia Foundation

Stephen and Linda Schreiner

Mark and Janice Uehling

#### **\$1,000 and above**

Albarell Electric, Inc.

Anonymous

Debra Appel and Gene Schneyer

Atkin Olshin Schade Architects

Brett Bertolino and William Kocher

Peter Bloomfield

The Cameron Companies

V. Chapman-Smith and Robert Smith

Susan H. Edwards Ph.D.

Robert L. Freedman

Alison Harries

Joel T. Kelly

Janet S. Klein

Teresa Lignelli

Marcia Makadon

The Reichlin Family Foundation

Christopher Riano

Gail Seygal

Steven R. Shapiro

Laura Solomon and Associates

Mark and Janice Uehling

Joan and Dane Wells

# Leadership

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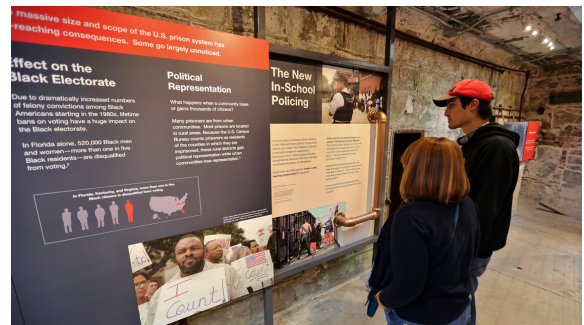
Commissioner of Public Property  
City of Philadelphia

# What's Ahead for Eastern State

## Strategic priorities for FY24 and beyond

Eastern State has a fascinating history and complicated narrative that can be catalyzed to engage a nation in the discussion of criminal justice reform. Even more essential, however, is the guiding question we must ask ourselves: what is the purpose of prison? This focus engages learners of all ages, drives a quest for understanding, and ignites a desire to create societal change. With this guiding question, the passionate and talented ESPHS team is ready to launch this unique organization into our next phase and onto a national stage.

While Eastern State is an essential thread in Philadelphia's historical and cultural fabric, it also speaks to national and international audiences about critical modern issues. When it opened as an active prison in 1829, Eastern State changed how the world viewed criminal justice reform through architecture intended to foster rehabilitation. **Nearly 200 years later, no other museum in the United States has our specific focus and mission, or asks visitors across the globe to consider whether we have created a fair and just system.**



We're ready to launch the organization into its next phase and onto a national stage.

# Three areas of focus will enhance our mission.

# 1

## **NATIONAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP**

We will establish ESPHS as a national leader in criminal justice education, speaking to the evolution of the prison system, including how and why it has changed over time. ESPHS will convene national dialogues to foster a greater understanding of America's prison system, bringing leading organizations and experts together to discuss critical issues in justice education and reform. Personal stories from those most deeply affected by the criminal justice system will illuminate necessary reforms and help chart a path towards greater human dignity.

# 2

## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

We will expand our historic site's impact as a pathway to economic mobility for returning citizens, starting with the Preservation Trades Center, which provides training and connections to sustainable-wage-paying union jobs in masonry and carpentry. Additionally, the Lived Experience Activating Dialogue (LEAD) Fellowship supports people coming home from prison to explore career opportunities in the museum field.

# 3

## **VISITOR EXPERIENCE REIMAGINED**

We will provide innovative and interactive ways for Eastern State's visitors to engage with the space, increasing opportunities for dialogue; incorporating art installations, theater and film; providing educational experiences that encompass multimodal learning methods; and creating informative and entertaining events that entice people of all ages to visit and engage with Eastern State and the team. We will also embark upon a website refresh, which will create a platform for people to interact with Eastern State around the world.

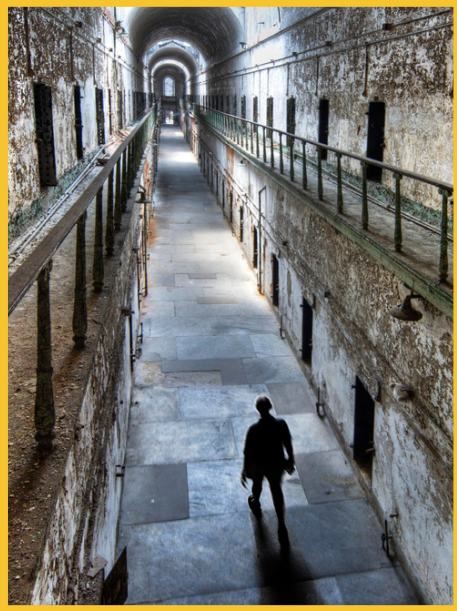
It is essential that all the work done by ESPHS comes with respect and dedication to the preservation work of this essential historic site, which grounds us in place in a way that no other institution can do in this field. The three areas of focus are supported by projects that will help to stabilize the organization, refresh the visitor experience, and build new areas of national focus. The foundation of all priorities is a laser focus on increasing revenues through fundraising and development. Becoming a leader in justice education will expand our revenue streams to bring ESPHS into the next tier of historical sites as both a testament to our past and a robust platform that engages the nation on current criminal justice education and programming. We can cultivate and increase funding by building a vision for the future and milestones with clear and measurable impact along the way. These priorities will be the foundation of our new strategic plan in development in 2024 and a refreshed vision for ESPHS, leading to the penitentiary's 200th anniversary in 2029.

**Our vision is to increase awareness, education, and understanding of the criminal justice reform movement and its impact today.** This work will help us build a more extensive community understanding and respect for fundamental human dignity to effect positive change in the justice system. Our priorities will inform our strategic planning process, provide achievable objectives and key performance indicators, and put us on a path to define and achieve our long-term goals.



Our vision is to  
increase  
awareness,  
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movement and  
its impact today.





# Stay Connected!



Visit our website, and sign up for our newsletter:

[EasternState.org](https://EasternState.org)



Follow us on social media:

[@EasternStatePen](https://twitter.com/EasternStatePen)

## Save the Date!

### 2024 Program Highlights



#### Justice 101

Virtual educational series.  
Monthly; dates vary.

**Learn more:** [EasternState.org/Justice101](https://EasternState.org/Justice101)



#### Scout Days

In-person and virtual options.  
Dates vary.

**Learn more:** [EasternState.org/ScoutDays](https://EasternState.org/ScoutDays)



#### Free Neighbor Days

For neighbors residing in 19130 and 19121.  
Every second Sunday.

**Learn more:** [EasternState.org/191free0](https://EasternState.org/191free0)



#### ...And More!

We host a variety of programs and festivals throughout the year.

**Learn more:** [EasternState.org/events](https://EasternState.org/events)