



**INDEPENDENCE VISITOR CENTER
OFFERS NEW SERVICES FOR HEARING IMPAIRED VISITORS**

October is Disabilities Awareness Month, and the Independence Visitor Center Corporation (IVCC) continues to set an example about the importance of valuing accessibility and welcoming all visitors of the Philadelphia region by providing special services for guests. The Visitor Center, located on Independence Mall in Independence National Historical Park, has many existing features and has recently made two new additions designed to provide a positive experience for our hearing-impaired visitors. These new additions include a portable loop system and a mobile application which will be available for download in American Sign Language.

Our hearing-impaired visitors now have the opportunity to utilize a portable loop system, available at the Concierge Desk, which is compatible with telecoil-equipped hearing aids, cochlear implants and induction loop receivers. Visitors who do not have a compatible hearing aid device may benefit from an individual receiver with headphones.

The Visitor Center will also launch Philadelphia History This Way, a mobile application that will guide visitors along Philadelphia's historic square mile. This interactive tour will feature 24 sites and will be available in six languages, including American Sign Language.

These recent additions are a direct result of an ongoing partnership with Art-Reach. The organization advises the Independence Visitor Center on programs and equipment that will further enhance the accessibility of its facility.

Since its opening in 2001, the entire Visitor Center has been wheelchair accessible, including the restrooms. Wheelchairs are available for rental year-round upon request. In addition, open captions have always been part of the two films shown in the Visitor Center's theaters.

“As the first stop for many visitors during their stay, the Independence Visitor Center plays a significant role in shaping first impressions of the Philadelphia region,” said James J. Cuorato, President & CEO of the Independence Visitor Center Corporation. “The guidance we have received from Art-Reach has contributed greatly to designing services that meet the needs of our visitors and improve their overall experience.”

“The Independence Visitor Center is one of the most important gateways to our region's rich array of cultural assets and they have demonstrated a real commitment to being welcoming to all guests,” stated Art-Reach Executive Director Michael Norris. “We are thrilled to be advising them on their accessibility enhancements.”

Additional information and details pertaining to services provided by the Independence Visitor Center can be found at: www.independencevisitorcenter.com/special-services. The Independence Visitor Center is Independence National Historical Park's and the region's welcome center for people from all over the nation and the world offering visitor amenities including trip planning service, easy onsite ticketing for area attractions, multilingual concierge staff, comprehensive daily listing of area events, attraction displays and regional maps, free, informative historical and orientation films, free wireless Internet access and much more. The Independence Visitor Center Corporation is a Pennsylvania non-profit, 501(c)3 organization which operates in cooperation with the efforts of the National Park Service, the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation, Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, the City of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Information regarding the accessibility of Independence Mall can be found at: www.nps.gov/inde/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm.

-By Tiffany Turner-Grundy
Independence Visitor Center Corporation