Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is the sixth largest metropolitan area in the United States. First inhabited by the Lenni-Lenape tribes of Native Americans and then claimed by the Dutch until ousted by the English, the territory that became Philadelphia and the rest of Pennsylvania was granted by England’s King Charles to William Penn in exchange for a debt owed to Penn’s father. The original city comprised only the area situated between South and Vine Streets and the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers, which is currently referred to as Center City.

Historic Philadelphia includes the neighborhoods known as Old City, Independence Mall, and Society Hill. Independence Mall, with the Liberty Bell, and the brick Pennsylvania Statehouse where the Declaration of Independence was signed are located in this area. Other historic sites include Carpenter’s Hall, which hosted the First Continental Congress in 1774; Second Bank of the United States, which now houses a collection of portraits of the Founding Fathers, explorers, and scientists; the U.S. Custom House, which contains historical frescoes, murals, and mosaics; the Betsy Ross House; the Dolley Todd (Madison) House; and Christ Church.


Philadelphia also has a plethora of performing arts venues. The Kimmel Center is home to the Philadelphia Orchestra and Philly Pops. The Academy of Music (home to the Opera Company of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania Ballet), the Merriam Theater, and the Forrest Theatre host various music, dance, and theatrical performances. The Walnut Street Theatre is a performance venue and the oldest theater in the United States. Other musical venues include Prince Music Theater, Electric Theater, Theater of Living Arts, Union Transfer, Johnny Brenda’s, The Trocadero, First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, World Café Live, Tin Angel, International House Philadelphia, and Robin Hood Dell East and The Mann Center for the Performing Arts, which are amphitheaters. Additional venues for theatrical performances include Arden Theatre, Suzanne Roberts Theatre, The Wilma Theater, Plays & Players Theatre, Adrienne Theater, Society Hill Playhouse, Stagecrafters Theater, Allens Lane Arts Center Theater, Old Academy Players, and St. Stephen’s Theater.

The neighborhoods comprising Historic Philadelphia contain contemporary town houses that are interspersed with 17th- and 18th-century homes on tree-lined cobblestone streets. Several high-rise condominium buildings are also located in this area. These sections of the city contain a concentration of authentic Georgian and Federal architecture. Notable historic houses include the Powell House, Physick House, Todd House, and Shippens/Wistar House.

Northern Liberties is directly north of historically designated Philadelphia. The mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and open space—apparent in almost every block—results from the neighborhood’s artisan and industrial past, when laborers lived and worked in close proximity. Much of Northern Liberties’ real estate consists of row homes, although new apartment buildings are also available. Converted industrial buildings have become combined residential/gallery/studio space for local artists.

The Rittenhouse Square neighborhood encompasses the area surrounding the square itself. Since its development in the 1800s, Rittenhouse Square has been a desirable, upscale residential neighborhood, with houses and institutions designed by the major architects of the 19th and 20th centuries. Most of the area retains its original design, except for the area immediately surrounding the square, which has experienced redevelopment as high-rise apartments and condominiums have replaced the original houses. Many of the city’s arts and cultural institutions are located in this neighborhood.

Primarily a residential neighborhood, Fairmount includes apartment towers, historic industrial buildings converted into apartments and lofts, and row houses in a variety of styles. The Philadelphia Museum of Art is located in the Fairmount neighborhood.

Nestled along the banks of the Schuylkill River and the historic Manayunk Canal, Manayunk is designated a National Historic District. Residents of Manayunk can choose between a variety of housing types from single Victorians and early 20th-century row homes to contemporary town houses or loft apartments.

Although Germantown predated the Revolutionary War and was a battle site, both it and the Chestnut Hill neighborhood flourished during the mid-19th century as streetcar suburbs for middle-class families. Houses range from modest row houses to extensive mansions as well as architectural landmarks. Chestnut Hill is also home to the Woodmere Art Museum, the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, Chestnut Hill Hospital, and Chestnut Hill College. Historic homes in Germantown include the White House (Deshler-Morris House), which was once President George Washington’s residence; Cliveden; Grumblethorpe; Grange Estate; and Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion.

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PARKS AND RECREATION

Philadelphia’s Fairmount Park system consists of 63 regional and neighborhood parks. William Penn designated 5 open areas in his vision of Philadelphia: Center Square, at the center of the street grid, and Northwest, Southwest, Northeast, and Southeast in each of the outlying quadrants. Center Square, now known as Penn Square, is the home of Philadelphia’s City Hall, an ornate French Second Empire–style building that is topped by the famous statue of William Penn. Franklin Square is home to a carousel, a miniature golf course featuring notable Philadelphia landmarks, a state-of-the-art playground, a restored 1838 marble fountain, and the Living Flame Memorial, which honors Philadelphia police officers and firefighters who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. In the center of Logan Square is The Swann Memorial Fountain, also known as The Fountain of the Three Rivers, which features a central geyser that gushes more than 50 feet high. Gardens and sculptures, such as the Shakespeare Memorial, General Galusha Pennypacker Memorial, and Aero Memorial, are also located here. Many sculptures adorn Rittenhouse Square, including the Lion Crushing a Serpent, Duck Girl, and Billy, a 2-foot-high bronze billy goat. A plaza with a large planter bed, a reflecting pool, trees, gardens, and park benches complete the square, which is the site of annual flower markets and outdoor art exhibitions. In Washington Square, a walkway lined with the national flag and flags that represent the 13 original colonies leads to a memorial to Revolutionary War soldiers. At the feet of a life-size statue of George Washington, a memorial flame lights a sarcophagus that holds the remains of an unknown Revolutionary War soldier.

Beyond the original 5 squares, the East and West Fairmount Parks, which are divided by the Schuylkill River, offer paved paths for cycling, jogging, and walking; dirt trails for hiking and horseback riding; athletic fields; recreational facilities; tennis and basketball courts; and picnic areas. East Fairmount Park is also home to many museums, 8 historic mansions, Robin Hood Dell East, Boathouse Row’s 10 rowing club houses, Lloyd Hall (the park’s recreation center), and a private social club. West Fairmount Park is home to the Philadelphia Zoo, the Please Touch Museum, the Horticulture Center, the Japanese House and Gardens, the Mann Center for the Performing Arts, and several historic mansions. Professional sports teams include the Philadelphia Phillies (baseball), Philadelphia 76ers (basketball), Philadelphia Eagles (football), Philadelphia Flyers (hockey), Philadelphia Wings (lacrosse), and Philadelphia Union (soccer).

Two arboretums are located in the city. Trails at Awbury, the former Cope family estate, weave through 55 acres landscaped in the English romantic style, with open meadows, ponds, woods, and rolling hills. Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania is the official arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and is a historic public garden and educational institution that promotes an understanding of the relationship between plants, people, and places through programs that integrate science, art, and humanities.

EDUCATION

The School District of Philadelphia educates over 131,000 students in 149 elementary schools, 16 middle schools, and 49 high schools. More than 60,000 students attend 86 charter schools.

Philadelphia has many universities that are private, nonprofit, or public and offer undergraduate and graduate degree programs in multiple fields. Local options include Chestnut Hill College, Drexel University, Holy Family University, La Salle University, Philadelphia University, Saint Joseph’s University, Temple University, and University of Pennsylvania. Institutions that focus on the arts, sciences, or nontraditional programs include the Art Institute of Philadelphia, The Curtis Institute of Music, Hussian School of Art, Moore College of Art and Design, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, The Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College, Thomas Jefferson University, Peirce College, University of the Arts, and University of the Sciences in Philadelphia. Devry University, Center City, and Strayer University, Center City Campus, are for-profit universities.

The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine, and Westminster Theological Seminary offer specialized graduate studies.


Many other universities and colleges are located in the surrounding metropolitan area.

Five medical schools are located in the city: The Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University School of Medicine, Drexel University College of Medicine, Thomas Jefferson University Jefferson Medical College, and Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

HEALTH CARE

Philadelphia is served by 18 acute care hospitals with 6,000 licensed beds. The city has 3 dedicated pediatric hospitals with 770 beds. The city also has 5 inpatient behavioral health care service facilities, 3 physical rehabilitation facilities; and 3 long-term acute care facilities. The Philadelphia VA Medical Center supports 145 acute care beds and a 135-bed Community Living Center. Additional health care facilities are located in the surrounding metropolitan area.