



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 24, 2022**

## **Gov. Wolf Calls on General Assembly to Invest in Older Pennsylvanians, Individuals with Disabilities Through Property Tax Relief Program**

**Bethlehem, PA** – Today, Governor Tom Wolf was joined by Representative Steve Samuelson to call on Pennsylvania's Republican-led General Assembly to immediately use \$1.7 billion in unspent American Rescue Plan Act dollars to help older Pennsylvanians and individuals with disabilities through property tax rebates to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We know that a lot of Pennsylvania households are still recovering financially from the pandemic, and that is especially true for low-income households," said Gov. Wolf. "Today, I am again asking the General Assembly to spend the federal funding that is still sitting, unused, to improve the lives of Pennsylvanians. By investing more money into the Property Tax/Rent Rebate program, older Pennsylvanians and individuals with disabilities can stay in their homes. That money is sitting around, not helping anyone right now and at a time when the people of this commonwealth are hurting, that's just wrong."

In February, [Gov. Wolf proposed](#) his \$1.7 billion action plan. Today, he continues to call on the legislature to take immediate action on the proposal to put money back in the pockets of Pennsylvanians and put the commonwealth on the path to prosperity. Rep. Samuelson [plans to introduce](#) the governor's plan as legislation in the House, alongside Senator Maria Collett in the Senate.

The governor's plan directs \$204 million to provide direct property tax relief to Pennsylvanians by investing in the existing [Property Tax Rent Rebate program](#) for a one-time bonus rebate to current program users. This investment would double existing rebates with an estimated 466,000 Pennsylvanians receiving an additional average rebate of \$475.

"The Property Tax / Rent Rebate program benefits seniors and people with disabilities with more than 400,000 people receiving rebates each year. My office alone helps about 800 people each year complete their rebate applications," said Rep. Samuelson. "I commend Governor Wolf for proposing to use American Rescue Plan funds to bring additional relief to homeowners and renters in 2022. My legislation, if enacted, will double Property Tax / Rent Rebate payments this year."

"As the cost of living continues to rise, lower-income residents, seniors, and disabled Pennsylvanians must not be left behind," Sen. Collett. "As the Democratic Chair of the Senate

Aging & Youth Committee, I am pleased to work with Governor Wolf to introduce legislation to bolster the already-popular Property Tax/Rent Rebate program and get more federal relief funds to the Pennsylvanians who need it most. “

In addition to support for older Pennsylvanians and individuals with disabilities the governor’s plan calls for:

**The PA Opportunity Program, \$500 million**

Pennsylvanians are resilient, yet many workers and families are still covering pandemic-related costs, stabilizing their budgets, and rebuilding their savings.

The PA Opportunity Program would provide much needed relief to workers and families from the high cost of childcare and household expenses and opportunities to complete a degree, credential, or license that will strengthen their skills and increase income—all leading to a better quality of life.

**Statewide Small Business Assistance Program, \$255 million**

The COVID-19 Relief Statewide Small Business Assistance Program would provide grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 to small businesses that have been economically impacted by the pandemic. Among other things, businesses can use these grants to cover operating expenses and access technical assistance, including training and guidance to stabilize and relaunch their businesses. The program would prioritize women- and minority-owned businesses and rural communities.

In 2020, more than \$192 million dollars in grants were distributed through this program to more than 10,000 small businesses all across Pennsylvania, more than half of which were historically disadvantaged small businesses. Recapitalizing the program now could help more than 11,000 small businesses and their communities.

**Support for Pennsylvania’s Healthcare System, \$325 million**

This investment would recognize healthcare workers for their heroic dedication and hard work throughout the pandemic and give healthcare providers resources to recruit and retain a skilled workforce:

\$250 million for long-term care recruitment and retention incentives and workforce development initiatives to grow the critical healthcare workforce;

\$40 million for the behavioral health workforce to expand county mental health programs; and,

\$35 million to expand the student loan forgiveness program at PHEAA to include additional critical healthcare workers.

**Investing in Conservation, Recreation & Preservation, \$450 million**

Pennsylvania must continue to invest in vital conservation, recreation, preservation, and community revitalization projects and address the threat of climate change. Gov. Wolf’s plan proposes new funding for the Growing Greener conservation and recreation program as well as for agriculture conservation programs, such as the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program and the existing Agriculture Conservation Excellence Grant Program.

After experiencing record-breaking rainfall and flooding events this past year, this program would make Pennsylvania more resilient in the face of more extreme and frequent weather events caused by climate change. It would support our economy, enhance our communities, and improve quality of life for all Pennsylvanians.

In addition to Rep. Samuelson, Gov. Wolf was joined by AARP State Director Bill Johnston-Walsh, and the Fred B. Rooney Building Property Manager Susan Phillips to call for immediate action by the General Assembly to get money out to the Pennsylvanians who are hurting right now.

“Everyone is paying more for nearly everything today – from prescription drugs to gas to housing but, the problem of inflation is hardest for those on fixed incomes,” said AARP Pennsylvania State Director Bill Johnston-Walsh. “The very purpose of the American Rescue Plan Act is to provide flexible, emergency funding for state and local governments to effectively respond to the negative economic impacts created by pandemic. AARP Pennsylvania is pleased to support this critical investment of American Rescue Plan Act dollars to support Property Tax Rent Rebate Program beneficiaries.”

“Older Pennsylvanians overwhelmingly want to age in in their homes and communities for as long as they are able. While the Department of Aging provides services and supports to help them achieve that, programs like the Department of Revenue’s Property Tax/Rent Rebate offers seniors an additional benefit,” said Secretary of Aging Robert Torres. “Many older adults live on fixed incomes and when it comes to their finances, paying their rent or mortgage is a top priority. Governor Wolf’s proposed one time increase in the rebate amount will help seniors to meet some of their needs during these difficult times.”

“The governor’s proposal is a simple plan to execute. Claimants won’t have to take any additional action to receive their one-time bonus rebates,” said Revenue Secretary Dan Hassell, who heads the agency that administers the Property Tax/Rent Rebate program. “Claimants should fill out their rebate applications as they normally do, and we will automatically calculate and distribute the additional rebates to them. If anyone needs help with their rebate application, filing assistance is available at the Department of Revenue’s district offices, local Area Agencies on Aging, senior centers and state legislators’ offices.”

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Elizabeth Rementer, [ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov](mailto:ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov), 717-783-1116