



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Gov. Wolf Calls on General Assembly to Provide Immediate Support to Small Businesses**

**Philadelphia** – Today, Governor Tom Wolf was joined by Representative Joseph Hohenstein, Senator Tina Tartaglione and local business leaders to call on Pennsylvania’s Republican-led General Assembly to immediately use \$1.7 billion in unspent American Rescue Plan Act dollars to help Pennsylvania families and small businesses that are hurting right now from inflation and rising prices.

“Families and businesses all across Pennsylvania are facing economic challenges as inflation goes up and prices rise right along with it. People all across Pennsylvania are hurting, but we have the money to help, and we need to spend it now,” said Gov. Wolf. “I am calling on the General Assembly to use Pennsylvania’s unspent American Rescue Plan Act dollars to help Pennsylvanians get back on their feet.”

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.

The governor’s plan calls for \$225 million to support small businesses across the commonwealth by recapitalizing the successful COVID-19 Relief Statewide Small Business Assistance Program.

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.

In addition to support for small businesses, 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 money to workers and families to help cover costs related to childcare, education and workforce training, housing assistance or repair, transportation-related costs, and more - all leading to a better quality of life.

### **Increased Property Relief for Low-Income Renters & Homeowners, \$204 million**

To provide direct property tax relief to Pennsylvanians, Gov. Wolf wants to invest an additional \$204 million into the existing Property Tax Rent Rebate program for a one-time bonus rebate to current program users. This investment would double existing rebates. An estimated 466,000 Pennsylvanians would receive an additional average rebate of \$475.

### **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.

Gov. Wolf was joined by Rep. Hohenstein, Sen. Tartaglione, Philadelphia City Councilmember Allan Domb and co-owner of local restaurant Nemi Jesus Garcia to call for immediate action by the General Assembly to get money out to the Pennsylvanians who are hurting right now.

"For my neighbors in Philadelphia who have to put together a budget, whether it's for their own business or for their own household, it has been raining for more than two years," said Rep. Hohenstein. "The Governor's proposal to increase funding to the Small Business Assistance Program, the PA Opportunity Program, and other funding for low-income families addresses the fact that so many of us are under water and need a working-class bailout. I am supporting Governor Wolf's efforts to take \$1.7 billion of PA's American Rescue Plan Act funds and put them to work for us and our local economies right now."

"Our Commonwealth's economic recovery cannot come at the expense of small businesses, instead it must be led by them," said Sen. Tartaglione. "Small businesses are the economic drivers of our communities, from small corner stores to hair salons and local restaurants. If we

want to ensure we are putting Pennsylvania on the strongest footing possible, we need to support the true economic backbone of our commonwealth.”

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