



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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Governor Shapiro Signs Executive Order to Improve Commonwealth Licensing, Permitting, and Certification Processes by Establishing Standard Response Times and Money-Back Guarantee

Pennsylvania workers and businesses often wait months to hear back after applying for a license, certificate, or permit. Governor Shapiro's Executive Order will begin the process of setting standard response times – and if agencies fail to meet those deadlines, applicants will get their money back.

HARRISBURG, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** signed an Executive Order to improve the Commonwealth's licensing, permitting, and certification processes, beginning a comprehensive review of how long it takes agencies to process applications and how workers and businesses apply online. This Executive Order will help to establish a date-certain for each license, permit, or certificate by which applicants will hear back – if applicants don't receive a response by that date, the agency responsible will refund their application fee.

The Shapiro Administration is committed to transforming Pennsylvania government to more effectively and efficiently serve Pennsylvanians. Last week, Governor Shapiro launched a new initiative to grow Pennsylvania's economy and provide faster, more efficient customer service to Pennsylvanians when he [created the Office of Transformation and Opportunity](#) – a one-stop-shop for businesses that want to grow in Pennsylvania. Today's Executive Order builds on Governor Shapiro's commitment to improving how government works and creating economic opportunity for all Pennsylvanians.

Pennsylvania workers often have to wait months and are forced to navigate inefficient digital systems to receive their professional license, permit, or certification – and Governor Shapiro

knows this is unacceptable. The Governor is directing all state agencies, boards, and commissions to compile a catalog of the licenses, certificates, and permits they issue – including the statutory authority governing the length of time they must process applications and the application fee charged by each agency. Commonwealth agencies will have 90 days to send this information to the Governor’s Office, which will then review, analyze, and establish efficient application processing times for all occupational permits or licenses based on agency recommendations. Once those recommendations are put in place, if an agency does not respond to an applicant before the date-certain, the agency will be required to refund the application fee.

Under this Executive Order, the Governor’s Office will also conduct a review of the existing digital services that Pennsylvanians use to apply for licenses, certificates, and permits and work to modernize those application platforms and services to better serve Pennsylvanians.

“State government’s top priority should be serving the people of our Commonwealth, but for far too long, Pennsylvanians have had to endure long wait times, outdated systems, and bureaucratic delays. They deserve a government that works efficiently and effectively to get them answers,” **said Governor Josh Shapiro**. “Under my Administration, Pennsylvanians will have certainty – they will know how long it will take for agencies to respond, and if an agency doesn’t live up to that promise, they deserve their money back. Pennsylvanians work hard to keep our economy moving, and the Commonwealth should work just as hard to process their applications.”

“Today, with this Executive Order, Governor Shapiro has launched Pennsylvania on a new path. This Administration is making the people of Pennsylvania and customer service our top priority,” **said Acting Secretary of the Commonwealth Al Schmidt**. “People shouldn’t have to suffer through long wait times to put their skills and knowledge to good use. Together, with the Governor’s Office, we will work to ensure Pennsylvanians can get to work in a timely fashion without having red tape hold them back.”

Unpredictability and long wait times for Commonwealth-issued licenses, certificates, and permits can create unnecessary barriers for Pennsylvania workers and businesses. For example, an NPR analysis from 2021 found that Pennsylvania [had some of the longest wait times](#) in the country for issuing nursing licenses. More than half of the nursing applicants who applied in Pennsylvania that year waited at least three months to hear back.

In addition to nursing licenses, the Commonwealth issues hundreds of licenses, certificates, and permits, from barber and salon licenses to teacher certifications to business permits. Under the direction of the Governor, the Administration will work expeditiously to ensure Pennsylvanians get responses in a timely manner – and the Shapiro Administration will have real skin in the game. Governor Shapiro is making clear his Administration will be customer-service oriented and that state government will work harder to get them a response, so that they can pursue their dreams.

Read Executive Order 2023-07, Building Efficiency in the Commonwealth’s Permitting and Licensing Processes, [here](#).

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