



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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Governor Shapiro Shares Plans to Make Communities Safer, Highlights Investments in Fire and EMS Services in Visit to Altoona Fire Department

Governor Shapiro's commonsense budget proposal includes \$36 million for equipment and training for firefighters and EMS providers and over \$50 million for 9-1-1 services.



Altoona, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** highlighted his plans to create safer communities by investing in Pennsylvania's 9-1-1 emergency communications system and firefighters, and emergency medical services (EMS) providers during a visit to the Altoona Fire Department. Governor Shapiro's budget proposes investments of \$36 million for equipment, training, and staffing needs for firefighters and EMS providers and more than \$50 million in county 9-1-1 emergency communications systems.

Governor Shapiro's first [budget](#) – a commonsense set of solutions to the most pressing issues Pennsylvanians face – makes critical investments in creating safer communities and supporting firefighters and first responders, who are on the frontlines of keeping Pennsylvanians safe.

During his visit, Governor Shapiro met with firefighters to hear firsthand about the challenges they face and learn more about the support they need from the Commonwealth.

"When Pennsylvanians are in need of help, we need to ensure help is on the way – and that is why investing in our emergency operations centers and personnel is a top priority for my Administration," **said Governor Josh Shapiro**. "My budget invests \$36 million in new money for firefighters' equipment, training, and salaries to support and grow their ranks and over \$50 million for 9-1-1 services – because creating safer communities means supporting our firefighters and first responders. Our first responders are on the frontlines of keeping us safe, and they always have our backs – it's time to deliver the investments and support they deserve."

"Governor Shapiro's investment in public safety across the Commonwealth will directly impact the budget and staffing shortfalls that so many public safety agencies face," **said Altoona Fire Chief Adam Free**. "This investment will ensure every public safety agency has the proper resources to provide the essential services necessary to keep our citizens safe and secure. Without this necessary funding, the safety and security of our citizens could be in jeopardy. I would like to thank Governor Shapiro for his commitment to public safety and for understanding our difficulties."

"Within days of taking office, Governor Shapiro and his team met with the Pennsylvania Professional Fire Fighters Association (PPFFA) in Harrisburg, asking what needed to be done to improve the fire and EMS services in Pennsylvania. He understood the need for increased staffing, the risks of staffing cuts, new apparatus and the tools necessary to keep not only the community safe, but the fire and EMS personnel on the streets," **said City of Altoona Fire Fighter & Western Vice President, Pennsylvania Professional Fire Fighters Association Pat Miller**. "The members of International Association of Fire Fighters Local 299 and the PPFFA want to thank Governor Shapiro for the continued support, understanding our needs and concerns, and working to improve emergency services across this great Commonwealth."

Local communities and counties across the Commonwealth are currently facing shortages among the critical frontline workers and first responders who keep our communities safe. In 2018, there were 22,000 fewer volunteer firefighters than Pennsylvania had in the early 2000s and at least 6,000 fewer emergency medical technicians compared to 2012, while 20 percent of full-time 9-1-1 dispatch jobs are currently unfilled.

Governor Shapiro recognizes that these vacancies strain the departments and workers Pennsylvanians rely on, and his budget proposal makes vital investments to support our frontline workers. The Governor's budget includes more than **\$50 million** for 9-1-1 emergency communications systems – and ties that funding to the cost of living so it keeps up with rising

costs – and a **\$36 million** increase for EMS and fire services, including equipment, training, and salaries to support them and grow our ranks of first responders.

Governor Shapiro knows firsthand the struggles that counties face at the local level, and his budget commits **\$1.5 million** – a **266 percent** increase – in the Municipal Assistance Program to support local governments and help counties share resources to implement emergency support services and lead community revitalization efforts.

Making communities across the Commonwealth safer is a top priority for the Shapiro Administration. Through the creation of the **Public Safety and Protection Fund**, the Governor's budget proposal will sustainably fund the Pennsylvania State Police to recruit and retain well-staffed, well-funded, and well-trained officers and provides a tax credit of up to **\$2,500** for new officers to help communities hire police officers at every level.

Learn more about Governor Shapiro's comprehensive approach to building safer communities here: <http://shapirobudget.pa.gov>.