



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

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**Governor Shapiro Touts Investments in Pennsylvania's Workforce,
Apprenticeship Programs at Steamfitters Local 449 in Butler County**





Harmony, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** and Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) **Secretary Nancy A. Walker** visited Steamfitters Local Union No. 449 in Butler County to commemorate National Apprenticeship Week and highlight the Shapiro Administration’s historic investments in workforce development that help expand apprenticeship programs and create more opportunities for Pennsylvanians in the building and construction trades.

“It’s great to celebrate National Apprenticeship Week with instructors and apprentices from Steamfitters Local 449 today. Through registered apprenticeships like the ones here at the Steamfitters, thousands of Pennsylvanians have been given the freedom to chart their own course and the opportunity to succeed,” said **Governor Josh Shapiro**. “I believe we can connect the dots between our businesses, our schools, and labor – and through investments in programs like this one, my Administration will continue to be a strong partner in building the best, most highly-trained workforce in the country right here in Pennsylvania.”

Governor Shapiro has identified workforce development as a top priority for his Administration and has worked to expand job-training, career and technical education, and apprenticeship programs that give Pennsylvanians the freedom to chart their own course. This summer, Governor Shapiro signed a new budget into law that invests **\$23.8 million** to build partnerships between career and technical education and **\$6 million** to fund apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programming within emerging industries that are in critical need of workers.

These historic budget wins build on Governor Shapiro's [Executive Order](#) creating the [Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program](#) (CWTP), a first-in-the-nation job training program that provides workforce development grants for companies and organizations working on infrastructure projects funded by President Biden's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act or the Inflation Reduction Act to receive up to \$40,000 for each new worker they train. The CWTP is expected to support as many as 10,000 new jobs and invest up to \$400 million in workforce development, the largest investment in Pennsylvania history.

In August, the Shapiro Administration [awarded](#) \$90,000 in grant funding to Steamfitters Local Union No 449 to enhance its Heating, Piping and Air Conditioning registered apprenticeship program, promote systemic change, and implement a new diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy targeting workers in the plumbing and pipefitting industries.

"Our economic future depends on a well-educated and highly-trained workforce. To achieve this, we must continue investing in programs that help alleviate barriers and increase diversity and opportunities for all Pennsylvanians," said **Secretary Walker**. "Steamfitters Local Union No. 449 delivers on that promise by offering meaningful job training that allows workers to thrive without the burden of overwhelming debt."

During today's visit, Governor Shapiro toured the Steamfitters' state-of-the-art training facility, and met with apprentices in various classrooms during instruction. Currently, Local No. 449 has 450 apprentices and offers two unique registered apprenticeship programs.

Established in 1913, Steamfitters Local Union No. 449 offers distinct earn-and-learn career pathways for individuals who participate in its registered apprenticeship programs: **the building trades pathway** prepares apprentices for installation of commercial and industrial process piping systems, while the **HVAC-R Services pathway** prepares apprentices for residential, commercial and industrial mechanical equipment services. Both registered apprenticeship programs include union membership with UA Local 449.

"By getting grant funding through Labor & Industry, Steamfitters 449's apprenticeship program is able to train people on skills needed to achieve a middle-class way of life," said **Ken Broadbent, Business Manager for Steamfitters Local Union 449**. "We look forward to working with the Shapiro Administration to continue bringing people of all backgrounds into the building and construction trades using the earn-and-learn apprenticeship model."

In addition to expanding its registered apprenticeship programs, Steamfitters 449 used grant funding to hire a diversity recruiter at its facility to conduct outreach at local high schools and career and technical schools in the Butler County region. The union also

offers after-school classes for high school students from four local schools to familiarize young people with careers in plumbing and pipefitting, with a focus on air conditioning maintenance and services. The facility also offers free welding classes for non-union members. Steamfitters 449 has also been awarded \$4.5 million in Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant funding to help build the Butler County facility to better support its members.

Steamfitters Local Union No. 449 represents nearly 2,700 union-trained steamfitters and is affiliated with the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the United States and Canada. Members are highly trained craftsmen who fabricate, install and service piping systems.

To ensure Pennsylvania's workforce is representative of the people it serves, L&I established its *Increasing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Building and Construction Trades through Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships* initiative, which aims to create career pathways for under-represented populations, including women, people of color, veterans, re-entrants, individuals with disabilities, individuals who speak English as a second language, and individuals experiencing multiple barriers to employment.

Established in 2016, L&I's Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) is responsible for guiding and promoting the expansion and compliance of all registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs across the Commonwealth. The ATO currently supports 882 unduplicated program sponsors, 107 registered pre-apprenticeship programs, and 1,645 occupation-specific registered apprenticeship programs across the Commonwealth, with more than 17,000 registered apprentices currently active.

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