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## **Shapiro Administration Celebrates Earn-As-You-Learn Success Stories at First Awards Ceremony for Registered Apprenticeships**





**Pittsburgh, PA – Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) Secretary Nancy A. Walker** joined Pittsburgh labor and workforce development leaders today to recognize four outstanding organizations and individuals who have embraced the earn-as-you-learn model of registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship to create economic opportunity for Pennsylvania communities and families. This inaugural awards ceremony was hosted by L&I's Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) to celebrate outstanding Pennsylvania program sponsors and apprentices.

"Apprenticeships are essential to meet the demand for skilled workers to support industry needs," said **Secretary Walker**. "The organizations and individuals we recognized today exemplify some of the best in the apprenticeship space here in Pennsylvania, and they should stand as a model for other organizations looking to start their own registered program."

Since the start of his Administration, **Governor Josh Shapiro** has been focused on creating real opportunities for people to obtain good-paying jobs. That's why Governor Shapiro's 2024-25 budget proposal builds on the 2023-24 budget with bipartisan support for investments in workforce development, including **\$6 million for apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs**.

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 880 unduplicated program sponsors, 117 registered pre-apprenticeship programs, and 1,553 occupation-specific registered apprenticeship programs across the Commonwealth, with more than 16,442 registered apprentices currently active.

The event was held at the **Carpenters' Training Center in Pittsburgh** and co-hosted by **Partner4Work**, a leading workforce development organization in Allegheny County.

Four organizations/individuals were recognized in the following categories:

- **Outstanding Registered Apprentice Award:** *Presented in recognition of leadership qualities, problem-solving, motivation, and willingness to learn skills in completing a Pennsylvania registered apprenticeship program and achieving journey worker status.*

- **Winner: Sierra Peebles, of Erie**, who completed a child development specialist apprenticeship in 2023 through determination and perseverance to overcome obstacles.
- **Outstanding Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor Award:** *Presented in recognition of a successful Pennsylvania registered apprenticeship program. The registered program chosen has exemplified embracing partnerships, apprenticeship ecosystem building and training successful journey workers.*
  - **Winner: German American Chamber of Commerce, Pittsburgh Chapter**, which sponsors four programs involving more than 40 employers, four community colleges and nearly 50 high schools and career and technical education centers.
- **Outstanding Registered Pre-Apprentice Award:** *Presented in recognition of a successful completion of a registered pre-apprenticeship program. The person chosen is an integral part of the apprenticeship ecosystem and valued in assisting pre-apprentices achieve success.*
  - **Winner: Brandon Wolfe, of Pittsburgh**, who completed a carpentry pre-apprenticeship and is currently a carpentry apprentice.
- **Outstanding Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Sponsor Award:** *Presented in recognition of a successful Pennsylvania registered pre-apprenticeship program. The program chosen is an integral part of the apprenticeship ecosystem and valued in assisting pre-apprentices achieve success.*
  - **Winner: Breaking the Chains of Poverty in Pittsburgh**, which has produced a successful pre-apprenticeship program through its commitment to increase diversity in the trades and prioritize inclusion of minority, underemployed, previously incarcerated, and low-income populations.

The Shapiro Administration is committed to skills-based hiring, where every career path is treated with respect, regardless of whether it requires a college degree or not. That's why **Governor Shapiro** signed an Executive Order on his first day in office announcing 92% of state government jobs no longer require a four-year college degree – and it's why his Administration has made historic investments in workforce apprenticeship programs.

For example, under Governor Shapiro's leadership, [L&I has partnered with the Department of Agriculture to create more apprenticeship opportunities and training programs](#) within Pennsylvania's agriculture industry. This work builds on Governor Shapiro's investment in organic agriculture through the Center for Organic Excellence, created in the 2023-24 budget.

Last month, [the Shapiro Administration announced \\$4.2 million in Industry Partnership grants](#) for projects statewide that will prepare Pennsylvania workers for family-sustaining jobs in the Commonwealth's most dynamic industries – including multiple projects to create or expand registered apprenticeship opportunities.

In January, the [Shapiro Administration announced a \\$379,000 grant to Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit](#) to develop an apprenticeship program for teachers -- a first-of-its-kind effort to address staffing shortages in Pennsylvania schools and create earn-as-you-learn opportunities for individuals interested in careers as certified elementary and secondary teachers.

**Governor Shapiro's** proposed 2024-25 budget continues to invest in career and technical and vo-tech education, apprenticeship programs, and on-the-job training.

Governor Shapiro is proposing to:

- Build on last year's investment in Career and Technical Education with a **\$2.4 million** increase and continuation of **\$7 million** in support of dual enrollment;
- Increase the Commonwealth's investment in Industry Partnerships by **\$2.2 million** to support the workforce development and workforce needs of Pennsylvania's workers and businesses;
- Invest **\$2 million** to build a digital one-stop-shop for career pathways serving all Pennsylvanians, regardless of their age or educational level;
- Invest **\$2 million** to help businesses transition to skills-based hiring practices, to ensure that more Pennsylvanians who have the skills and experience but not a college degree – or the “right” degree – can find quality jobs that pay family-sustaining wages;
- Protect workers and law-abiding employers by adding 12 investigators to L&I's Bureau of Labor Law Compliance; and,
- Expand and improve the Military Occupational Crosswalk resource for military families with a \$500,000 investment to develop a user-friendly web portal.

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