



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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In Bethlehem, Governor Shapiro Hosts Ceremonial Bill Signing for Bipartisan Budget that Includes Major Investments to Create Jobs, Spur Economic Development, and Create More Shovel-Ready Sites

Since day one, Governor Shapiro and his Administration have worked aggressively to make Pennsylvania a leader in economic development – securing nearly \$2 billion in private sector investments to create economic opportunity for all Pennsylvanians.

Included in the budget, Governor Shapiro secured major economic development priorities – \$500 million for site development, including \$400 million for the PA SITES program to make Pennsylvania more competitive on a national scale, attract more businesses, and create good-paying jobs.



Bethlehem, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** and Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) **Secretary Rick Siger** joined Lehigh Valley legislators

and local economic development leaders at a major redevelopment site in Bethlehem – the Bethlehem Steel General Office (SGO) Building – for a ceremonial bill signing of the new bipartisan budget that Governor Shapiro signed into law last week. The 2024-25 budget delivers on the Governor’s key priorities to make Pennsylvania more competitive economically, grow the Commonwealth’s economy, and create good-paying jobs.

Included in the budget, Governor Shapiro secured \$500 million for site development, including \$400 million for the PA SITES (Pennsylvania Strategic Investments to Enhance Sites) program, which could build on the work being done at the Bethlehem Steel General Office (SGO) Building.

The [bipartisan budget](#) also includes \$20 million for the Main Street Matters program, to support small businesses and commercial corridors that are the backbone of communities across our Commonwealth, \$20 million in state funding for small minority-owned businesses in Pennsylvania, and \$15 million for tourism marketing to boost our economy, attract more visitors, and support good-paying jobs – building on the Governor’s launch of the Great American Getaway brand to encourage tens of millions within a few hours’ drive to visit Pennsylvania.

“Since day one, I’ve been laser-focused on creating jobs, growing our economy, and ensuring every Pennsylvanian has real opportunity in this economy – and this bipartisan budget gives us new tools to compete economically and win,” **said Governor Josh Shapiro.** “Pennsylvania has the only divided legislature in the nation, but we were able to come together to deliver the largest downpayment in site development in our history while also investing in our main streets, supporting our small businesses, and cutting taxes. Under my Administration, Pennsylvania is open for business, and we’re competing once again on a national scale.”

Governor Shapiro and his Administration have worked aggressively to make Pennsylvania a leader in economic development – securing nearly \$2 billion in private sector investments to create economic opportunity for all Pennsylvanians. To continue to build on this progress, Governor Shapiro and Secretary Siger unveiled the Commonwealth’s first comprehensive [Economic Development Strategy](#) in nearly two decades.

Site development is a key part of that strategy, and in May, Governor Shapiro and Secretary Siger [traveled to the Lehigh Valley](#) for the PA SITES pilot program, including \$1.1 million to the Allentown Commercial and Industrial Development Authority to develop a vacant site. DCED received 102 applications requesting more than \$236 million in funding – far outweighing the existing \$10 million in funding from the 2023-24 budget and demonstrating the need for more state investments to make sites more competitive for prospective businesses through better transportation access, utility extensions, or grading of pad-ready sites. The bipartisan budget Governor Shapiro signed last week delivers that sorely needed funding.

“Thanks to the bipartisan support for Governor Shapiro’s budget, we now have \$500 million to invest in site preparation, which will benefit all regions of the Commonwealth to attract and retain business and industry. That means more companies can create family-sustaining jobs for Pennsylvanians,” said **DCED Secretary Rick Siger**.

“Combined with the other key economic investments in our Main Streets and tourism efforts, we’re making Pennsylvania a better place to do business, a better place to live, and a great place to visit.”

A [bipartisan](#) group of legislators, including Senator Nick Miller who championed this initiative in the senate, introduced legislation to create the PA SITES program and authorize up to \$500 million in new funding to invest in site development, preparation, and readiness across the Commonwealth. The legislation, House Bill 2425 and Senate Bill 16, matched the plan put forward by Governor Shapiro and Secretary Siger to help sites across the Commonwealth become “shovel ready.”

“We’re in the heart of the fastest growing region in the Commonwealth and investments like this from our Governor and our General Assembly, they pay off,” said **Senator Nick Miller**. “Just last week, we secured some phenomenal budget wins and Governor Shapiro delivered – whether an economic development or education. When we talk about bigger investments like PA SITES, and you have the full global picture tying that together with our business leaders and our community members – it’s a phenomenal effort and it shows we can deliver on some big stuff.”

“For over a decade, Pennsylvania has sat on the sidelines and let other states pass us by on sound economic development, policy and investing in our future. Governor Shapiro wanted to change that, and he got started right away. Only two years into office, we have an amazing budget and we’re getting Pennsylvania back into the economic development game,” said **Senator Lisa Boscola**. “Today, we’re here to let everyone know that Pennsylvania is open for business and ready to invest when government works in collaboration with the business community. It results in a better tomorrow for all our communities, and Bethlehem is proof of that.”

“This year’s budget was a huge win for economic development. The economic development strategy that the Governor announced in January that has now been enacted into law is going to have benefits for our state for our region for decades to come,” said **Representative Steve Samuelson**. “In Pennsylvania, we preserve our history, and we also plan for the future, and we develop so we have a lot of economic success. That economic success is now on high speed with Governor Shapiro’s plan that is now in law. The \$500 million for site selection is huge, and we will see those benefits for years to come.”

“Today marks a significant first step to increase Pennsylvania’s competitiveness by investing in site development to establish shovel ready locations across the Commonwealth,” said **Representative Kyle Donahue**. “This significant investment will turn dirt into jobs, accelerate business development and create economic opportunity throughout the Commonwealth.”

“Getting PA Sites done in this year’s budget isn’t just a gamechanger for Northeast Pennsylvania but for the Commonwealth as a whole,” said **Representative Aaron Kaufer**. “Our investment in this year’s budget sets us on a trajectory for long term success and budget stability by generating billions of dollars in recurring tax revenue annually while simultaneously showing that Pennsylvania is open for business.”

Last year, Governor Shapiro and Secretary Siger invited a group of leading site selectors from across the country to the Capitol and asked for their honest feedback – and they shared that while Pennsylvania is home to a highly-skilled workforce, bountiful natural resources, and a strategic location, the Commonwealth does not have enough sites readily available, making it harder to attract businesses to Pennsylvania or expand existing operations here. As a result of these conversations, Governor Shapiro and DCED launched the PA SITES pilot program.

“Secretary Siger and Governor Shapiro invited me along with seven other global site location consulting firms to come to Harrisburg and talk about in a very candid open discussion what does the Commonwealth need to do to become globally competitive in the economic development environment. What impressed me – because I don’t see this very often – the Governor and his team listened, they acted, and now they are implementing, and that is absolutely huge,” said **Jay Garner, President and Founder of Garner Economics**. “I happen to think that the Lehigh Valley is the shining star for economic development in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. So Governor, congratulations to you and your team. You’ve done a magnificent job now the onus is on me and my counterparts to bring the business to the state because now you’re creating the framework, the environment to make it happen.”

The SGO Building has been empty since 1995 and served as the original headquarters for the former Bethlehem Steel Corp. Peron Development has made a proposal to transform the space into a modern office building for 600 people.

You can read Pennsylvania’s first economic development strategy in 20 years [here](#). For more information on the PA SITES program, visit [DCED’s website](#). You can read more about how the Governor’s budget will create economic opportunity for all Pennsylvanians [here](#).

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