



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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Governor Shapiro Signs Executive Order Creating the PA Permit Fast Track Program to Speed Up Government, Drive Economic Growth, and Make Pennsylvania More Competitive

Pennsylvania is the first state to create a project-based permitting fast track program for complex and impactful economic development and infrastructure projects — building on Governor Shapiro's work to reduce wait times and improve processes across the Commonwealth's permitting, licensing, and certification processes



Philadelphia, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** signed **Executive Order [2024-04](#)**, creating the **Pennsylvania (PA) Permit Fast Track Program** to streamline the Commonwealth’s permitting process for key economic development and infrastructure projects, increase transparency, and accelerate timelines to ensure state government delivers results quickly and efficiently. PA Permit Fast Track builds on **Governor Shapiro’s** proven track record of improving the Commonwealth’s permitting processes, reducing wait times for businesses, workers, students, and the general public — making Pennsylvania more competitive by ensuring the Commonwealth is moving at the speed of business.

The Executive Order directs the **Office of Transformation & Opportunity (OTO)** to lead the PA Permit Fast Track Program (Fast Track). OTO will be responsible for developing, managing, and coordinating permitting for complex and impactful economic development and infrastructure projects across government agencies and private partners in order to get project sponsors answers in a timely manner. The office will also work closely with project sponsors and oversee updates to the **Fast Track dashboard**, a publicly accessible online tool designed to ensure accountability for both state agencies and project sponsors. You can view the dashboard [here](#).

“When I became Governor, I promised to make state government work efficiently and effectively for Pennsylvanians, breaking down barriers and creating real opportunity for the good people of our Commonwealth. By streamlining permitting processes and focusing on results, we’re not just creating jobs and driving economic growth — we’re getting stuff done for the people of Pennsylvania and putting points on the board,” said **Governor Shapiro**. “The PA Permit Fast Track Program is a game-changer that enhances coordination and communication between the project sponsor and state agencies to cut through red tape, streamline critical projects, and give businesses the confidence to invest and create jobs here in Pennsylvania. We’re proving that government can move at the speed of business and we’re building a stronger, more competitive Commonwealth where folks want to live, work, and build their future.”

“Governor Shapiro knows that to win the competition to attract and retain companies and jobs, we need a government that moves at the speed of business. That’s why he made responsive government a core goal of his economic development strategy,” said **OTO’s Chief Transformation Officer Ben Kirshner**. “The PA Permit Fast Track program is in line with the Governor’s vision and gives us a new tool to deliver coordination, accountability, and transparency for permitting big, complex projects here in the Commonwealth, increasing Pennsylvania’s competitiveness.”

How Fast Track Works

The Fast Track Program identifies key economic development projects and assists with permitting processes by organizing agency meetings, coordinating key parts of the project,

and enhancing transparency and accountability through a public-facing online dashboard. By leveraging interagency collaboration and streamlined processes, the program aims to:

- **Enhance Project Coordination:** OTO will oversee the program, working closely with project sponsors to manage timelines, milestones, and agency cooperation.
- **Support Critical Projects:** Eligible projects include key economic development and infrastructure projects aligned with the Governor's [Economic Development Strategy](#).
- **Create Transparency:** Modeled after the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council's FAST-41 Program, the [dashboard](#) tracks the progress of projects, permitting timelines, feedback from project sponsors, and provides accountability for both state agencies and project sponsors.

The Fast Track Program is designed to help project sponsors better understand and meet permitting requirements, reducing costly delays by coordinating meetings across state agencies and getting sponsors answers to their questions efficiently. Every permit submitted through Fast Track is still subject to the same rigorous review as every other application across the Commonwealth.

This year, OTO piloted Fast Track with three key economic development projects. **Governor Shapiro** signed the Executive Order while visiting one of those projects – the **Bellwether District in Philadelphia**, a 1,300-acre logistics and innovation campus on the former Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery site. This transformative development includes substantial remediation work and is projected to create 19,000 direct permanent jobs.

“Transforming a site of this scale and creating thousands of new jobs requires business, government, labor, and institutions to work together — along with a little imagination and a lot of grit. I firmly believe that together, we will show that in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we can innovate and accomplish big things,” said **Roberto Perez, CEO, HRP Group, developer for the Bellwether District**.

Two additional projects are underway: **Project Hazelnut in Luzerne County** — a 1,300-acre transformative technology campus featuring advanced infrastructure with server rooms, power distribution, cooling systems, and network connectivity for maximum redundancy and scalability — and **Martinsburg Community Digester in Blair County** — located at Metzler Farm, the community-scale anaerobic digester will convert manure from over 10 local dairy farms into biogas for UGI's pipeline.

"We proudly stand alongside Governor Shapiro and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in advancing economic growth and opportunity," said **Brian Stahl, Vice President of Development, NorthPoint Development**. "Today's Executive Order strengthens the critical partnership between economic development projects and permitting agencies, fostering a streamlined, transparent, and effective process. This collaboration accelerates

investments, creates meaningful jobs, generates vital tax revenue, and further strengthens the economy for all Pennsylvanians."

"The Fast Track Program provides businesses with the certainty and predictability they need to make strategic decisions and minimize potential risks," said **Chellie Cameron, President & CEO, The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia**. "When business leaders can rely on accurate forecasting, they can confidently pursue opportunities that create jobs and drive greater economic growth for Pennsylvania and the Greater Philadelphia region."

"Governor Shapiro knows that to create jobs and put the men and women of the Philadelphia building trades to work, we must make Pennsylvania a place where businesses want to invest," said **Ryan Boyer, Business Manager of the Philadelphia Building and Construction Trades Council**. "Meaningful permitting reform is long overdue, and Governor Shapiro is making it a reality—building on his track record of moving government at the speed of business and supporting an economy that provides good, family-sustaining jobs here in the Philadelphia region and beyond."

Governor Shapiro's Work to Improve Commonwealth Permitting

From day one, **Governor Shapiro** has taken significant steps to improve the delivery of government services, streamline the Commonwealth's permitting, licensing, and certification processes, and attract businesses to Pennsylvania. The **Shapiro Administration** has:

- **Established OTO** within two weeks of **Governor Shapiro** taking office and charged the office with **improving** the Commonwealth's permitting, licensing, and certification (PLC) processes.
- **Created first-ever catalogue** of more than 2,400 PLCs issued by the state, allowing the **Shapiro Administration** to identify and resolve bottlenecks in order to give Pennsylvanians more certainty and deliver answers more efficiently.
- **Launched PAYback.pa.gov**, a first-in-the-nation online money-back guarantee system, allowing residents, businesses, charities, and schools to hold state agencies accountable when processing PLCs.
- **Reduced processing time** for PLCs for teachers, nurses, realtors, barbers, hair stylists, cosmetologists, and more. For example, when **Governor Shapiro** took office, it took 8 weeks to get a business license. Now, it takes less than 3 days. It used to take nearly a month to get an initial physical therapist license. Now, it takes just 2 days. It used to take 12 weeks to get an initial teacher certification. Now, it takes less than 2 weeks.

- [Boosted Pennsylvania's competitiveness](#), making it more attractive than ever for businesses and workers. Since **Governor Shapiro took office**, corporate filing wait times have dropped from 8 weeks to 2 days, small business certification times are down by 33 percent, and cosmetology and barbershop licenses are now processed the same day instead of nearly 2 weeks. Additionally, the **Department of Human Services** cleared a backlog of 35,000 Medicaid provider enrollment applications, and the **Department of Environmental Protection** reduced its permit backlog by 67 percent, or nearly 1,300 permits.

With the launch of Fast Track, **Governor Shapiro** is furthering his commitment to making the Commonwealth a place where government works to create real opportunities — allowing Pennsylvanians the freedom to chart their own course and the opportunity to succeed.

Read more about **Executive Order 2024-04**, PA Permit Fast Track Program, [here](#).

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