



Pennsylvania

Department of Labor & Industry

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Shapiro Administration Visits L&I's Summer Employment Program Providing Students with Disabilities Access to Meaningful Work Opportunities Across Pennsylvania

Governor Shapiro's 2025-26 budget proposal calls for an additional \$5 million for the Department of Labor & Industry's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, which helps people with disabilities find and keep employment.

OVR's MY Work summer employment program is officially underway, and this year has set up more than 500 students with paid work experiences at 100 worksites across 57 counties.



TROUT RUN, Pa. – Today, **Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) Secretary Nancy A. Walker** visited Rider Park in Lycoming County to spend time with students from Williamsport and Montgomery area high schools on the first day of their summer jobs. The students are employed through **MY Work**, a summer program for high school students with disabilities created by L&I's **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)** to match students with job opportunities and work experience in their local municipalities.

“It brings me such joy to visit MY Work locations each summer – from meeting the students to seeing all the fascinating projects they are working on over the course of the program – these visits are a great reminder of the incredible work our Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is doing across our Commonwealth,” said **Secretary Walker**. “These students are gaining invaluable skills they’ll be able to use throughout their careers, bettering their communities, and making memories that will surely last a lifetime. Along with the Governor and First Lady, I will always support programs that lift up Pennsylvanians living with a disability to ensure their rightful place both in society and in the halls of power.”

Governor Josh Shapiro’s [proposed 2025-26 budget](#) calls for an additional \$5 million investment in OVR, which helps people of all ages with disabilities find employment through personalized services such as vocational counseling and guidance, goal setting, training, and job placement. OVR also offers a variety of other supports that enable a person with a disability to be successful in the competitive labor market. The proposed investment would play a key role in helping OVR continue to offer the MY Work program, as well as many other crucial services.

Since program year 2016, more than 478,500 Pennsylvanians have received services from OVR, including vocational counseling, evaluations, medical diagnostic services, medical restoration services, employment training, placement services, and career support services.

Piloted in nine municipalities throughout Allegheny County in 2016, the MY Work initiative established a collaboration between OVR, local education agencies, local government, and non-profit organizations, providing paid work experiences for 50 high school students. In 2021, MY Work was expanded across the Commonwealth, providing more high school students with disabilities with paid work experiences to help them gain essential skills that allow them to become successfully employed in a competitive integrated environment following graduation.

This summer, OVR has set up more than 500 students with paid work experiences at 100 worksites across 57 counties. The students at the Rider Park MY Work site will spend four weeks working on a variety of projects, including park trail repairs, drainage improvements, trail marker maintenance, invasive plant management, and wet tread improvement. **Secretary Walker** also stopped by the City of Sunbury’s Parks & Recreation MY Work site Monday afternoon and plans to visit additional sites throughout the summer.

OVR covers the MY Work program’s wages for all student workers, with no cost to the municipality. Additionally, OVR has developed work readiness guidance that includes soft skills training and interview preparation to assist participants in a variety of fields, including beautification projects, children’s programming, and customer service.

MY Work also helps students build independent living skills and learn effective communication skills, managing a paycheck, and more. Worksite training and on-site

supports are provided to students by Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), which are funded by OVR.

Since day one, **Governor Shapiro** has been committed to investing in Pennsylvania's workforce and ensuring all Pennsylvanians have access to real opportunities. Looking to build upon his bold workforce investments, some key highlights of the Governor's 2025-26 budget proposal include:

- **\$3.5 million** for the **Schools-to-Work Program**, helping students transition into high-demand careers;
- **\$5 million** to create the **Nurse Shortage Assistance Program** to recruit, train, and retain the next generation of nursing professionals; and
- **\$10 million** to expand **apprenticeship programs**, offering more earn-as-you-learn opportunities to build a skilled workforce.

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