



# GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**In Lancaster County, Governor Shapiro and L&I Secretary Walker Highlight Summer Employment Program for Students with Disabilities and the Administration's Commitment to Expanding Opportunity for all Pennsylvanians**

*Governor Shapiro's [2025-26 budget proposal](#) calls for an additional \$5 million for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) — supporting OVR's work to help Pennsylvanians with disabilities find and keep employment, including through the MY Work program.*

*Since the start of the Shapiro Administration, 2,400 young Pennsylvanians have gained paid work experiences to help them become successfully employed following graduation.*

*This summer, OVR has set up more than 500 students with paid work experiences at 100 worksites across 57 counties.*







**Manheim Township, Pa.** – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** joined **Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) Secretary Nancy A. Walker**, the [Office of Vocational Rehabilitation \(OVR\)](#), local lawmakers, and community members at **Overlook Park in Lancaster County** to meet with students and supervisors participating in OVR's MY Work program.

The visit highlighted the **Shapiro Administration's** commitment to expanding opportunity for all Pennsylvanians and the life-changing impact of the MY Work summer employment program for high school students with disabilities. Since **Governor Shapiro** took office, the MY Work program has expanded significantly, supporting 2,400 young Pennsylvanians across the Commonwealth.

"One of the greatest privileges the First Lady and I have had is meeting those with disabilities who are out working, powering our economy, and putting smiles on people's faces — whether it's when we grab a coffee at Nour in Camp Hill or visit a beautiful park like the one here in Manheim Township," said **Governor Shapiro**. "People often underestimate what people with disabilities are capable of, but we're different here in Pennsylvania because we know that people with disabilities bring unique strengths to the work they do. Thanks to Lori's leadership, we're expanding OVR and initiatives like MY Work are connecting more young people than ever before with real-world experience and giving the confidence that comes from contributing to their communities."

While visiting Overlook Park, the Governor met with students as they worked on mulching around the bocce courts and reaffirmed his commitment to investing in workforce programs that expand opportunity for all Pennsylvanians. Through MY Work, high school students with disabilities are matched with paid jobs in their local communities — helping them gain valuable skills, build confidence, and prepare for independent adulthood and future employment.

In 2016, L&I's OVR team started the MY Work program in Allegheny County with just 50 students in its first year. In 2021, the program was expanded statewide, and since then has connected more than 2,500 high school students across Pennsylvania with paid employment opportunities. This summer alone, over 500 students are working at 100 worksites in 57 counties — all with wages fully covered by OVR at no cost to municipalities.

“It has been an incredibly rewarding experience to travel across the Commonwealth this summer and meet with the students taking part in the MY Work program. Whether in Trout Run, Sunbury, Philadelphia, or today in Manheim Township, these visits have touched my heart,” said **Secretary Walker**. “For many young adults, this is their first paid work experience. As I’ve learned from talking to these talented and kind students, make no mistake: MY Work is more than just a paycheck — it’s access to opportunity, and a chance to make a real difference in the communities they call home. MY Work is life-changing, and I’m proud to be part of an Administration that understands the value of investing in programs like this one.”

Students in Lancaster County have spent the summer working on landscaping and maintenance projects at public sites like Destination Playground at Overlook Park — mulching, edging, and cleaning — through a partnership between OVR and Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP®), a Harrisburg-based nonprofit that helps MY Work students while working at their respective sites.

“YAP® is proud to partner with OVR and Manheim Township Public Works to offer jobs to deserving young people who may have otherwise faced roadblocks,” said **YAP® Lancaster County Behavioral Health Program Director Stephen Santos**. “Through collaboration with MY Work, our youth are gaining insight into independence, building a strong work ethic, and learning about landscaping. All of these tools will help carry them into adulthood and other avenues of their lives.”

Services like MY Work help employers create more inclusive workplaces while opening up life-changing opportunities for Pennsylvanians with disabilities. Across its many services and programs, OVR serves approximately 50,000 Pennsylvanians each year, partnering with employers to match businesses with skilled, motivated workers.

At **First Lady Lori Shapiro's** encouragement, more employers are stepping up to partner with OVR — including Wawa, which recently began working with OVR to expand access to meaningful jobs. Sheetz has partnered with OVR for years, hiring workers with disabilities and supporting Special Olympics events, like the bocce tournament [held](#) at the Governor's Residence last month. Last year alone, OVR helped place 6,000 Pennsylvanians with disabilities into jobs at over 3,500 companies.

“In Lancaster, we believe in taking care of our neighbors,” said **Senator James Malone**. “There is perhaps no better way to care for our neighbors with disabilities than to empower them with skills and meaningful work opportunities through programs like MY Work. As a father of children with autism, I’m grateful for Governor Shapiro’s leadership and care for this population. I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting his proposed increase in funding for MY Work and other vital programs through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.”

“The work happening through OVR is making a real impact — not just here in Manheim Township, but across Lancaster County and the entire Commonwealth,” said **Representative Nikki Rivera**. “As a first-term legislator, it means so much to work with an administration that truly values every single Pennsylvanian. Hearing Derek share how this job makes him feel good about himself brought tears to my eyes — because everyone deserves to feel dignity and pride in their work. It’s clear that Governor Shapiro and Secretary Walker understand that, and I’m so grateful for their leadership and for the partnership OVR has built with our community.”

To ensure OVR can continue helping Pennsylvanians with disabilities find and retain employment, **Governor Shapiro’s [2025-26 proposed budget](#)** includes an additional **\$5 million** for OVR to expand MY Work and other essential services. OVR helps Pennsylvanians of all ages with disabilities find and keep employment through services like vocational counseling, training, job placement, and worksite support.

**Governor Shapiro’s** budget proposal reflects his broader vision to invest in Pennsylvania’s workforce and create real pathways to opportunity for every resident. In addition to the OVR investment, the budget proposes:

- **\$3.5 million** for the **Schools-to-Work Program** to help students transition into high-demand careers
- **\$5 million** to launch the **Nurse Shortage Assistance Program** to recruit and train the next generation of nurses
- **\$10 million** to expand **apprenticeship programs** and grow the skilled workforce through earn-and-learn opportunities
- **\$21 million** to raise wages, provide paid time off, and increase access to affordable insurance for approximately 8,500 direct care workers who support adults with physical disabilities and seniors

Read more about [Governor Shapiro’s 2025-26 budget proposal](#). Explore the Governor’s 2025-26 Budget in Brief [here](#), or visit [shapirobudget.pa.gov](http://shapirobudget.pa.gov) to learn more.

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