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In Luzerne County, Governor Shapiro Visits IBEW Local 163 Training Center to Highlight His Administration's Focus on Expanding Pennsylvania's Workforce to Create Jobs and Grow the Economy

Under the Governor's leadership, Pennsylvania has significantly expanded workforce development – increasing funding for vo-tech programs, career and technical education (CTE), and apprenticeships by nearly \$65 million, a 50 percent boost – so every Pennsylvanian has the freedom to chart their own course and the opportunity to succeed.

That focus on workforce development has helped the Shapiro Administration secure more than \$25.2 billion in private investment, creating over 11,200 jobs across the Commonwealth.



Nanticoke, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** visited the **IBEW Local 163 JATC Electrical Training Center** in Luzerne County to highlight his Administration’s historic investments in workforce development that have helped the Commonwealth’s economy grow. Under the Governor’s leadership, the Commonwealth has significantly increased funding for vo-tech, career and technical education (CTE), and apprenticeships — opening more pathways for Pennsylvanians to gain in-demand skills, secure good-paying jobs, and help businesses grow.

These investments are helping Pennsylvania workers prepare for new opportunities created by historic private sector investments – and helping the Commonwealth win record-breaking deals. Since taking office, the **Shapiro Administration** has secured more than **\$25.2 billion** in private investment, creating over **11,200 jobs** across the Commonwealth. This includes an initial \$20 billion commitment from Amazon Web Services — the [largest single private investment](#) in Pennsylvania history — to build high-tech cloud computing and artificial intelligence campuses in multiple locations, including Salem Township in Luzerne County. The project will create thousands of high-

paying tech, construction, and supplier jobs and establish Pennsylvania as a national leader in AI and next-generation technology.

To support this growth, the Commonwealth is investing an initial **\$10 million** to expand workforce training, vo-tech, and CTE statewide — ensuring Pennsylvania workers have the skills to succeed in the jobs of the future. Reflecting that leadership, Code for America recently [ranked](#) Pennsylvania among the top three states for AI readiness in its July 2025 Government AI Landscape Assessment.

“There are many paths to success — whether it’s college, the military, an apprenticeship, or going straight into a job — and in Pennsylvania, we’re making sure every one of those paths is open and accessible,” said **Governor Shapiro**. “We’ve increased our investments in vo-tech, CTE, and apprenticeships by 50 percent so that more Pennsylvanians have the freedom to chart their own course and the opportunity to succeed. By expanding apprenticeships and partnering with our unions, we’re building a highly-skilled workforce that will grow our economy and creating real opportunity for Pennsylvanians in communities across the Commonwealth.”

Since taking office, **Governor Shapiro** has increased the Commonwealth’s investment in vo-tech, CTE, and apprenticeships by nearly **\$65 million** – a 50 percent boost compared to the day he took office. These investments have created **165 new pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs** and trained more than **34,000 apprentices** in industries from construction and manufacturing to transportation and agriculture.

Founded in 1901, IBEW Local 163 represents more than 500 electrical workers across Bradford, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Sullivan, and Wyoming counties. The union currently has 116 apprentices enrolled in its five-year training program, which includes 900 hours of classroom instruction and 8,000 hours of on-the-job training. Since 2022, the union has received over **\$1.34 million** in support from the Commonwealth to expand apprenticeship opportunities, build an advanced technology center, and launch a new electrical journeyman program. Under the **Shapiro Administration**, Local 163 also received a \$200,000 grant in 2025 to help more Pennsylvanians access careers in the building and construction trades.

“Governor Shapiro, your leadership has helped shine a spotlight on the importance of union apprenticeship programs like ours, allowing us to double in size in just the last two years,” said **John Olejnik, Business Manager, IBEW Local 163**. “You understand that investing in workforce development isn’t just good policy—it’s a smart investment in our state’s future. At the JATC, we train the next generation of highly skilled electricians to build and maintain the infrastructure our communities depend on. Your support for union labor, registered apprenticeships, and fair wages sends a clear message: hard work and quality training matter. We’re proud of what we do, and proud to have you in our corner. Thank you, Governor Shapiro, for your commitment to our mission and our future.”

“Governor Josh Shapiro, I want to thank you for your continued support in this local and for the progress in building the apprenticeship opportunities we have today,” said **Matt Atherton, an apprentice with IBEW Local 163**. “The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee have been life-changing influences in my personal life and professional journey. Through their commitment to high-quality training, I gained the technical skills to excel in the electrical trade, as well as the discipline, awareness, and confidence needed to be the best in a demanding trade. The JATC’s structured apprenticeship program has provided hands-on experience in the classroom and given me the opportunity to earn a living while working in the field alongside journeymen who have gone before me. Together, the IBEW and the JATC have empowered me to build a stable career, support my family, and take pride in being part of a brotherhood dedicated to excellence and service.”

Governor Shapiro has long recognized the vital role of union labor in Pennsylvania’s economy. Partnerships with unions like IBEW Local 163 ensure the Commonwealth has the skilled workforce necessary to meet growing demand from major private sector investments and create economic opportunity for all Pennsylvanians.

“Today has been an inspiring reminder of what’s possible when we work together to strengthen Pennsylvania’s workforce,” said **Lindsay Griffin-Boylan, President & CEO, Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber**. “We’ve heard from leaders, educators, skilled trades professionals, and apprentices who all share a commitment to building opportunity and growing our economy by empowering students and workers with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to fuel a robust regional talent pipeline. Our Chamber is a committed partner in ensuring we have a skilled workforce to meet our current needs and for the future and prosperity and success of Northeastern PA and our Commonwealth.”

Also in Luzerne County, the **Shapiro Administration** has invested **\$1 million** in Luzerne County Community College to help high school students explore careers in the trades and earn college credit while doing it — giving young people a head start on in-demand careers.

“Governor Shapiro’s commitment to investing in Pennsylvania’s workforce is creating real opportunities in our communities,” said **Holly Pilcavage, Vice President of Enrollment Management & Student Success at Luzerne Co. Community College**. “At Luzerne County Community College, we’ve been able to leverage that support to expand partnerships with business and industry, remove barriers for students, and prepare people for high-paying, in-demand careers. Together, we’re building a skilled workforce that will drive our region’s growth for years to come.”

Building on Two Years of Workforce Progress

From day one, **Governor Shapiro** has prioritized workforce development and removed unnecessary barriers to employment. On his first day in office, he signed an executive order opening 92 percent of state government jobs to applicants without a college degree. Today, nearly 60 percent of all new state hires do not have a four-year degree.

Pennsylvania now has **851 registered apprenticeship programs** with nearly **15,700 registered apprentices**. Since January 2023, the Shapiro Administration has created more than **165 new pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships** – and trained **more than 34,000 Pennsylvanians** in fields like welding, manufacturing, transportation, and agriculture.

Investing in the Future: Governor Shapiro's 2025-26 Proposed Budget

Governor Shapiro's [2025-26 budget proposal](#) builds on this progress with a strong focus on workforce development, ensuring Pennsylvania continues to close workforce gaps and prepare for the jobs of tomorrow. Key workforce initiatives in the proposed budget include:

- **\$12.5 million for the Workforce and Economic Development Network** – leveraging \$10 million in existing funds and \$2.5 million in new state funding to train additional workers.
- **\$5.5 million increase for CTE** – further expanding vocational training opportunities across the Commonwealth.
- **\$2 million for the Career Connect Program** – a statewide initiative to build internship opportunities at Pennsylvania companies, helping employers recruit and develop local talent.

Additionally, the Governor's budget proposal makes targeted investments to address workforce shortages in **child care, education, and health care**, ensuring Pennsylvania families and communities can access essential services they rely on. By **raising wages, expanding loan forgiveness, and investing in training**, this plan will attract, retain, and sustain a skilled workforce in these critical industries.

The **Shapiro Administration** has made workforce development a key component of its economic strategy, ensuring that Pennsylvanians from all backgrounds have access to high-quality job training and apprenticeship programs. The Governor's continued investments in these programs reinforces his commitment to expanding career pathways and creating economic opportunity for Pennsylvanians.

Learn more about the **Shapiro Administration's** efforts to invest in Pennsylvania's workforce and expand job training opportunities in the Governor's [2025-26 budget proposal](#) at shapirobudget.pa.gov and discover how the Administration is [building a competitive workforce](#) for the Commonwealth's future.

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