



Pennsylvania
Department of Labor & Industry



Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, November 13, 2025

Media contact:

Trevor J. Monk, L&I, dlipress@pa.gov

Brandon Cwalina, DHS, ra-pwdhspressoffice@pa.gov

Shapiro Administration Inspects More than 1,000 Stuffed Toys for Safety, Donates Record Number of Approved Toys to Kick off 2025 Holiday Season

The Shapiro Administration is spreading more holiday cheer than ever before with its annual stuffed toy donation to Pennsylvania families in need: L&I delivered more than 1,000 toys to DHS' Holiday Wish program – a record number of stuffed toys inspected!

Harrisburg, PA – The **Pennsylvania Departments of Labor & Industry (L&I)** and **Human Services (DHS)** today announced L&I's safety inspectors approved more than 1,000 stuffed toys for sale in Pennsylvania this year following routine safety inspections to ensure the toys are safe for children. The Departments marked the start of the 2025 holiday season Thursday with the annual donation of those stuffed toys, which will be distributed to Pennsylvania families through DHS' Holiday Wish program.

"This annual tradition reminds us of what public service is truly about: protecting people's safety while spreading hope and joy to families across Pennsylvania," said **L&I Secretary Nancy A. Walker**. "In times that can feel especially heavy, small acts of generosity can make a big difference. **The Shapiro Administration** is proud to support programs like Holiday Wish that bring light to our communities and remind us of the power of giving back."

Under state law, L&I's [Bureau of Occupational and Industrial Safety](#) must inspect all new stuffed toy samples for contents, choking hazards, and general safety. Toys that pass inspection get a registration number, which is on every stuffed toy sold in the Commonwealth. Through this process, L&I accumulates hundreds of toy samples each year.

On Thursday, L&I delivered **1,085 stuffed toys** to DHS for its Holiday Wish program – a 45 percent increase from last year's 749 donated stuffed toys and a new record. Of this year's donated toys, more than 50 are made of recycled materials. Last year, **Governor Josh Shapiro** signed [Act 30 of 2024](#) into law, which updated the Stuffed Toy Manufacturing Act. Act 30 eliminates a long-standing ban on using recycled materials in stuffed toys sold in the

Commonwealth and continues to protect children by ensuring stuffed toys are safe, properly labeled, and free from harmful substances.

Started in 1989 by DHS employees, the Holiday Wish program has grown to include hundreds of employees in various state agencies, allowing the program to reach thousands of individuals in need around Pennsylvania during the holiday season.

“The Department of Human Services works every day to make it possible for people to achieve a better life, whether that's through assistance in accessing essential basic needs like food and health care, or by giving back to families who may be in difficult circumstances through our Holiday Wish program. We understand that this month has been challenging for Pennsylvanians who rely on programs impacted by the federal shutdown and so we are proud to partner across state government to help make the holidays better and brighter for the families we serve,” said **DHS Executive Deputy Secretary Andrew Barnes**. “Every Pennsylvanian should know that DHS’ programs are here to help. If you are having trouble financially in any way, I encourage you to reach out to DHS to apply for assistance and see if we are able to help you ease your situation.”

As families or individuals visit local DHS [County Assistance Offices](#) (CAO) to apply for benefits, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Medical Assistance (Medicaid), CAO caseworkers identify families and older adults in need to take part in the Holiday Wish program. Holiday Wish participants then select a few gifts they need or would like to receive, and state employees sponsor a family or individual to ensure they receive special gifts during the holiday season. Commonwealth agencies and the Pennsylvania National Guard meet in December to distribute these gifts to hundreds of families across Pennsylvania.

Applications for public assistance programs can be submitted online through the [COMPASS](#) website. On-site CAO services are available if clients cannot access online services or need assistance that cannot be accessed through the COMPASS website, the myCOMPASS PA mobile app, or by calling the Customer Service Centers at 215-560-7226 for Philadelphia clients or 1-877-395-8930 for clients in all other counties.

For more information on the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, please visit the [website](#) or follow L&I on [Facebook](#), [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).