



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, January 22, 2026

MEDIA CONTACT:

Governor's Press Office: ra-qvgovpress@pa.gov

In Allegheny County, Governor Shapiro and Shapiro Administration Leaders Highlight \$3.3 Million Investment to Train Future Manufacturing Workers, Expand Skilled Workforce Across Pennsylvania

Governor Josh Shapiro is investing in the Commonwealth's workforce and developing a strong pipeline of skilled workers to help meet the needs of the Pennsylvania manufacturers — awarding 21 new grants totaling \$3.3 million in this latest round of funding.

Since taking office, the Shapiro Administration has invested more than \$15.1 million through the Manufacturing PA Training-to-Career Program to help over 3,300 Pennsylvanians get the industry skills they need for rewarding careers.

Since taking office, Governor Shapiro has worked to increase funding for vo-tech, CTE, and apprenticeships – and today, the Commonwealth spends 50% more on workforce development than the day the Governor took office.



Bridgeville, PA — Today, Governor Josh Shapiro, alongside Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Secretary Rick Siger and Department of Labor & Industry Secretary Nancy A. Walker, visited Junior Achievement of Western Pennsylvania (JAWPA) in Allegheny County to announce a **\$3.3 million investment** to strengthen and expand Pennsylvania's skilled trades workforce and support one of the Commonwealth's most critical industries.

Through **21 new awards** under the [**Manufacturing PA Training-to-Career \(MTTC\) Program**](#), the Shapiro Administration will help schools, training providers, and organizations like JAWPA expose students to careers in the skilled trades and

manufacturing, provide hands-on training opportunities, and equip Pennsylvanians with the skills needed to secure good-paying, in-demand jobs.

Since taking office, Governor Shapiro has made workforce development a top priority — investing **more than \$15.1 million through the MTTC program since 2023** to help train **over 3,300 Pennsylvanians** for careers in manufacturing and the skilled trades. Funding secured in the [2025–26 budget](#) ensures these efforts continue, giving students the freedom to chart their own course and opportunity to succeed while helping employers meet growing workforce needs.

“My Administration is investing in our workforce to support private sector businesses, attract new investment to Pennsylvania, and create real opportunity for our young people,” said **Governor Shapiro**. “By exposing students to careers in the trades and equipping them with the manufacturing skills they need to launch successful careers here in our Commonwealth, we’re both filling critical positions and building a strong economic future for years to come.— Every Pennsylvania deserves the freedom to chart their own course and the opportunity to succeed – and my Administration will continue to invest, and respect, all paths to success.”

Governor Shapiro and his Administration are committed to investing in **classroom-to-career pathways and apprenticeship programs** that provide skill-building opportunities for Pennsylvanians while delivering a strong, reliable workforce for employers. These investments create pathways to **family-sustaining wages** and help build vibrant communities across Pennsylvania.

“The Shapiro Administration understands that investing in career training programs builds the workforce of tomorrow, further strengthening Pennsylvania’s manufacturing industry — one of the key industries in our 10-year Economic Development Strategy,” said **Secretary Siger**. “MTTC grants ensure we have skilled, trained workers ready to fill manufacturers’ open positions and support our economy. We’ll continue making smart investments in our workforce to expand opportunity for all Pennsylvanians.”

During the visit, Governor Shapiro and his Administration highlighted one of the award recipients — [JAWPA](#), which is receiving a **\$100,000 MTTC grant** to support its **Careers in Skilled Trades initiative**. The program delivers immersive, hands-on learning experiences that introduce middle and high school students to manufacturing and trade careers across Beaver, Crawford, and Erie counties. A [complete list of this round of MTTC awards](#) can be found on the DCED website.

“Under Governor Shapiro’s leadership, we’re making strategic investments that are keeping Pennsylvania on the rise, connecting workers of all ages to opportunity, and keeping our economy competitive,” said **Secretary Walker**. “Manufacturing and the skilled trades are essential to our Commonwealth, and we’re grateful for organizations like Junior Achievement of Western Pennsylvania that are helping expose young people to real-world career pathways, giving them the tools and confidence to pursue in-demand, good-paying jobs that ultimately strengthen Pennsylvania’s economy.”

Through the initiative, students participate in **JA BizTown**, virtual reality-based career exploration, and in-person industry experiences. Beginning in **Fall 2026**, high school students in Erie will also take part in **JA Career Train**, touring multiple manufacturing

facilities to gain firsthand exposure to careers in the industry. JAWPA estimates the program will reach **more than 6,500 students** through this round of funding.

“By introducing students to manufacturing and skilled trades early, we’re helping them see the many paths available to success,” said **Patrice Matamoros**, President of Junior Achievement of Western Pennsylvania. “We’re grateful for the Shapiro Administration’s continued investment in hands-on career exploration that prepares young people for the workforce of tomorrow.”

Founded in 1939, **Junior Achievement of Western Pennsylvania** prepares students for success through hands-on education in work readiness, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship. Serving 56 counties across western Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia, JAWPA is the only organization in Pennsylvania offering in-depth career exploration in manufacturing and the skilled trades beginning as early as 4th grade.

“Like Governor Shapiro, I’ve always believed that college isn’t for everyone — but that doesn’t mean fewer opportunities. What matters is that every young person in Pennsylvania has a real path to a good, family-sustaining career,” said **Greg Bernarding**, Business Manager of Pittsburgh Regional Building Trades Council.

“Investments like this expand access to hands-on training that prepare workers for in-demand jobs, strengthen our workforce, and help employers grow. Organized labor is proud to stand with Governor Shapiro in building the skilled workforce Pennsylvania needs.”

“I want to thank the Governor for investing in the programs that support our education and make opportunities like this possible for students,” said **Alayna Kamerer**, an electrical occupations student at Junior Achievement of Western Pennsylvania. “Junior Achievement has taught me skills that go beyond job training and they have played a big role in preparing me for what comes next.”

“When I was 16 years old, Junior Achievement recognized my potential and has played a critical role in shaping both my leadership and the growth of Lulu’s Free Store — I’m proud to be an alum,” said **Grace Reid-Vensel**, founder of Lulu’s Free Store and a current partner with Junior Achievement of Western Pennsylvania. “These students are building essential skills and will form the foundation of our future economy.”

Governor Shapiro’s Workforce and Economic Development Record

Since taking office, **Governor Shapiro has made workforce development and economic competitiveness top priorities**, investing in classroom-to-career pipelines that connect Pennsylvanians to good-paying, in-demand jobs. His Administration has awarded **93 Manufacturing PA Training-to-Career (MTTC) grants totaling more than \$15.1 million**, helping train over **3,300 Pennsylvanians** for manufacturing and skilled trades careers.

The Governor has also **expanded apprenticeships statewide**, registering **231 new apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs** and enrolling nearly **18,000 apprentices**, while increasing funding for vo-tech, career and technical education (CTE), and apprenticeships by nearly **50 percent** — from \$118 million to \$183 million — and sustaining that investment in the 2025–26 budget.

On his first full day in office, Governor Shapiro removed four-year degree requirements for **92 percent of state government jobs**, opening doors for workers with skills, training, and experience. His Administration has secured **\$35.9 billion in private-sector investment**, creating more than **18,800 jobs**, and launched the

Commonwealth's **first comprehensive [economic development strategy](#)** in **nearly two decades**, focused on high-growth industries including manufacturing. As a result, Pennsylvania's economy is now earning national recognition — [ranking](#) as the **only Northeastern state with a growing economy**, earning top business climate rankings from [Area Development](#) and [Site Selection Magazine](#), and [leading](#) the region in long-term new business survival. Learn more about the **Shapiro Administration's** efforts to support Pennsylvania's workers and businesses by [building a competitive workforce](#) and [spurring economic growth](#) — and how the Administration is creating opportunity to build a stronger, more competitive economy for all Pennsylvanians.

#