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Shapiro Administration Celebrates 40 Years of the Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Highlights Continued Commitment to Expanding Opportunity for Pennsylvanians with Disabilities

*Governor Shapiro's [2026-27 budget plan](#) proposes a **\$1 million** increase in funding for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to expand access to assistive technology and support services for the DeafBlind community.*

CAMP HILL, Pa. – Today, the **Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I)** celebrated the **40th anniversary** of its **Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (ODHH)** at its annual Hearing Loss Expo at the Penn Harris Hotel in Cumberland County. The event brings together advocates, service providers, and community members, and highlights the [Shapiro Administration's continued commitment to expanding opportunity and access for Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind Pennsylvanians](#).

Supported by **L&I's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)**, ODHH helps Pennsylvanians with hearing loss through advocacy, information, and referrals. **Governor Josh Shapiro's [2026-27 budget plan](#)** increases state funding for OVR by **\$1 million** to expand access to services and assistive technology for individuals who are blind and to expand support services for the DeafBlind community.

“For 40 years, the Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing has helped Pennsylvanians access services, navigate challenges, and find support in systems that have not always been built with accessibility in mind,” said **L&I Secretary Nancy A. Walker**. “Under Governor Shapiro’s leadership, we are continuing to invest in the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation because access to opportunity matters. Every Pennsylvanian deserves the support to pursue independence, participate fully in their community, and build a future defined by possibility.”

Secretary Walker attended the expo on Tuesday and met with attendees, exhibitors, and ODHH staff. The two-day event featured assistive technology demonstrations, educational programming, and resource-sharing opportunities designed to support communication access, self-advocacy, independence, and community connection.

Over the past three years, **Governor Josh Shapiro** has made expanding opportunity for Pennsylvanians of all abilities a priority. Since the Governor took office, OVR has

supported 76,000 Pennsylvanians with disabilities and built strong partnerships with employers across Pennsylvania. That work has helped expand job placement services, pre-employment transition services for students, and on-the-job training opportunities that connect more Pennsylvanians to meaningful employment.

Those efforts are part of the Administration's broader commitment to building a workforce that is stronger, more inclusive, and more reflective of the talent that exists in every community across Pennsylvania.

In addition to the proposed \$1 million increase for OVR, Governor Shapiro's 2026-27 budget plan calls for:

- **\$18 million** for vo-tech, CTE, and apprenticeship programs;
- **\$7 million** for Schools-to-Work pathways; and
- **\$6.3 million** for Industry Partnership grants.

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

Video and photos available on [PAcast.com](#).

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