



# GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Governor's Press Office, [ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov](mailto:ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov)

## **Welcoming the World to Pennsylvania: Governor Shapiro Launches “Visit PA Playmakers” as the Commonwealth’s Official 2026 Welcome Committee**

*Pennsylvania’s tourism office – Visit PA – introduces its new people-powered initiative, activating at major 2026 events across the Commonwealth to shine a light on PA culture, creativity, and community for visitors.*

*Since day one of his Administration, Governor Josh Shapiro has invested in the Commonwealth’s \$83.9 billion tourism industry to support high-quality jobs for Pennsylvanians, grow our economy, and attract more visitors.*

*Pennsylvania is poised to become the center of America’s biggest moments in 2026, hosting world-class events spanning sports, culture, and national celebration including the NFL Draft, the PGA Championship, the FIFA World Cup, America250PA, and the MLB All-Star Game.*

**Philadelphia, PA** – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** and [Visit PA](#) launched the **Visit PA Playmakers**, Pennsylvania’s official 2026 welcome committee that’s ready to meet visitors from around the world at some of the Commonwealth’s biggest moments this year. Pennsylvania is primed to once again be in the national spotlight in 2026 as we

celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia and host major events throughout the Commonwealth.

By leveraging global sporting and cultural moments, including the *NFL Draft*, the *PGA Championship*, the *FIFA World Cup*, *America250PA*, and the *MLB All-Star Game*, this people-powered initiative by Visit PA will turn major events into immersive experiences to drive interest in Pennsylvania, encourage visitors to come back for future trips, and spur statewide economic impact.

These events will be huge tourism and economic development opportunities for the Commonwealth, as millions of people will visit Pennsylvania. Over the last three years, **Governor Shapiro** has rebranded Pennsylvania as the “Great American Getaway” and increased funding for Visit PA to nearly \$60 million.

“The world is coming and Pennsylvania is ready to host the biggest party ever,” said **Governor Shapiro**. “As we celebrate this country’s 250th anniversary in the birthplace of American democracy, an unprecedented lineup of world-class sporting events will bring millions of visitors and billions of dollars in economic impact to the Commonwealth. Pennsylvania has long been a destination for unforgettable experiences, and the Visit PA Playmakers will be there to show visitors why Pennsylvania is the place to celebrate 2026 – and why you’ll want to return for years to come.”

Under the Shapiro Administration’s leadership, Pennsylvania’s tourism industry has grown by \$7 billion and 30,000 jobs. In 2024, tourism brought in \$84 billion to Pennsylvania’s economy and supported more than half a million jobs. To build on that momentum and prepare for America250, the Shapiro Administration secured **\$57.5 million in the last two budgets** specifically for the 2026 celebration. The Governor’s [2026-2027 proposed budget](#) continues to fully fund the Tourism Office to ensure that Pennsylvania obtains the maximum benefit from the events celebrating America’s 250th anniversary.

“Pennsylvania in 2026 means more than sports and history,” said **Anne Ryan, Deputy Secretary of Pennsylvania Tourism**. “This is a cultural moment where Pennsylvania gets the chance to put our pride and energy on a global stage that may not happen again in our lifetime. At major 2026 moments, the Playmakers will stop you in your tracks, make you feel — and experience — the culture of Pennsylvania, inspire deeper exploration across the Commonwealth, and spark pride in being a part of the moment.”

“Philadelphia is proud and ready to help lead Pennsylvania into this historic moment. In 2026, our neighborhoods, our businesses, and our people will welcome the world for America’s 250th birthday, the FIFA World Cup, MLB All-Star Week, and more. This city has always shown what energy, grit, and heart look like. With the Visit PA Playmakers, we’re not just opening our doors, we’re inviting everyone to experience the true spirit of Philadelphia and the best of Pennsylvania. This is our moment, and we’re ready to shine,” said **City of Philadelphia Mayor Cherelle L. Parker**.

With Pennsylvania at the epicenter of international attention, including a headliner year for sports, the Visit PA Playmakers will be ready to welcome visitors while bringing energy, excitement, and unforgettable experiences to some of the Commonwealth's biggest 2026 moments. The rotating group of cultural connectors and fun creators are a people-powered initiative designed to bring Pennsylvania culture, creativity, and community to life during one of the most extraordinary years for Pennsylvania tourism in its history. These real people and recognizable characters will share in their own voices what they love about their communities across Pennsylvania, interacting with fans and visitors throughout this once-in-a-lifetime year.

Living proof that Pennsylvania is the place to be in 2026 — and worth the trip for years to come — the PA Playmakers highlight the people, places, and passions that make the Commonwealth shine. From music and dancing to pop-up experiences, playful shenanigans, behind-the-scenes interactions, and heartfelt moments, the Playmakers will encourage visitors to extend their stay, discover new regions of the Commonwealth, and experience the full depth of Pennsylvania. At major 2026 events, the PA Playmakers will:

- Create surprise crowd moments, like parade-style entrances, drumlines, and pop-up performances.
- Lead special programming, like pep rallies and mascot races.
- Spotlight extraordinary Pennsylvanians and unsung community heroes.
- Serve as live correspondents and content creators, conducting interviews and amplifying Pennsylvania pride in real time.

Each activation is intentionally designed to inspire visitors to explore Pennsylvania's destinations, neighborhoods, and hidden gems, driving traffic to [visitpa.com](https://visitpa.com) and encouraging travel across regions beyond host cities. The program will roll out throughout 2026 in phases, beginning today at its official launch in Philadelphia, and alongside major 2026 event partners, including the City of Philadelphia; America250PA; the Pittsburgh Steelers and Visit Pittsburgh, hosts of the 2026 NFL Draft; 2026 PGA Championship; Philadelphia Soccer 2026, organizers of the FIFA World Cup in Philadelphia; and the Philadelphia Phillies, host of the 2026 MLB All-Star Game.

The program will continue to activate at major 2026 moments, including:

- 2026 NFL Draft in Pittsburgh, April 23–25
- 2026 PGA Championship at Aronimink Golf Club in Newtown Square, PA, May 11–17
- Commonwealth Concert Series across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, various dates May–June
- 2026 FIFA World Cup & Fan Fest in Philadelphia, June 14–July 19
- United States' 250th Anniversary Celebrations, July 4

- MLB All-Star Week in Philadelphia, July 11–14

"As we prepare to take the global spotlight for the 2026 NFL Draft, we aren't just hosting an event — we are inviting the world to experience the tireless determination and innovation that drive our region," said **Jim Britt, VP of Sports Events at VisitPITTSBURGH**. "Pittsburgh is a city of makers and forgers, defined by a culture of grit that has produced some of the greatest legends in football history. We are on the clock, and we can't wait to welcome fans from across the Commonwealth and beyond to the Steel City."

"Philadelphia and the surrounding region are known for their incredible passion for sports, and we're excited to welcome spectators to Aronimink for the 2026 PGA Championship," said **Jackie Endsley, 2026 PGA Championship Director**. "As Pennsylvania prepares to host a historic lineup of global events, programs like Visit PA Playmakers highlight the pride and energy of communities across the state, and we're proud to be part of a moment that will bring visitors from around the world."

"In 2026 Pennsylvania is at the epicenter of global and national celebrations, and that is no surprise," said **Meg Kane, Host City Executive/CEO, Philadelphia Soccer 2026**. "From America's 250th Anniversary to the NFL Draft to FIFA World Cup™ and so much more, this is a moment of unity and pride among Pennsylvanians as we share the best of who we are and all our beautiful Commonwealth has to offer to the world. Pennsylvania has been chosen – by the NFL, PGA, FIFA, and Major League Baseball – to star on this global stage; and we intend to maximize this generational opportunity, ensuring that incredible events continue to choose the Commonwealth well into the future."

"This is an exciting time as Pennsylvania takes the world stage through many historical events tied to America's 250th birthday," said **Michael Harris, Vice President, Marketing & Government Affairs, Philadelphia Phillies**. "As we celebrate this time in our nation's history, we are proud to welcome fans and visitors to Philadelphia for an amazing lineup of MLB All-Star Week festivities leading up to the Midsummer Classic at Citizens Bank Park. This undertaking requires a unified team effort and Visit PA Playmakers will be an integral partner in shining a spotlight on our state."

For more information about the Visit PA Playmakers program, visit [visitpa.com/2026/playmakers](https://visitpa.com/2026/playmakers).

**Learn more about the Shapiro Administration's** efforts to support Pennsylvania's tourism industry and its workers, spur the economy, and discover how the Administration is [creating economic opportunity](#) to build a stronger, more competitive economy for all Pennsylvanians.

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