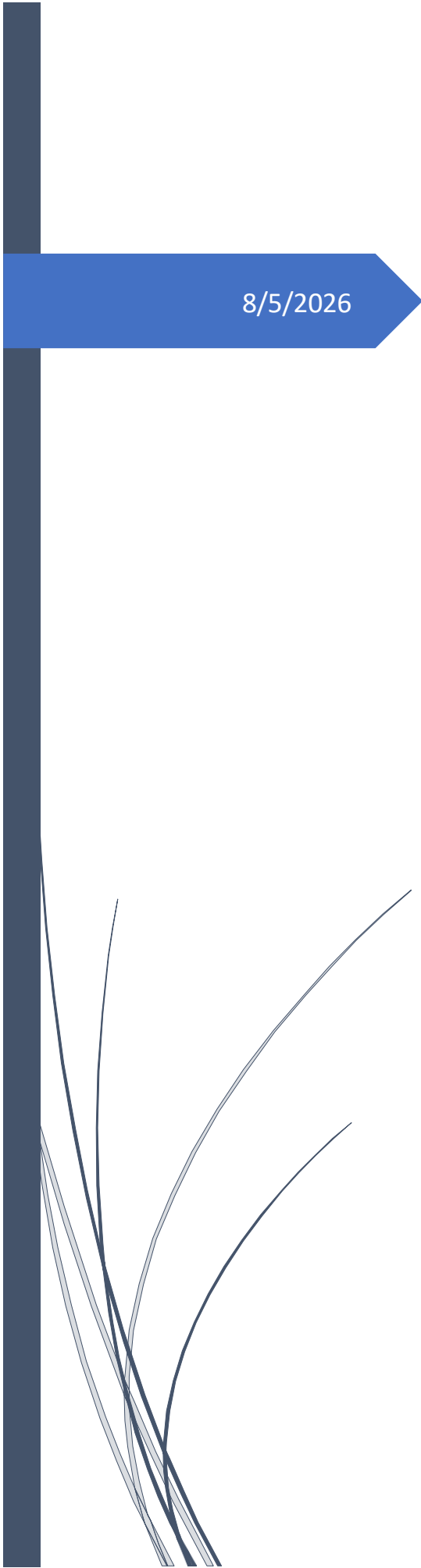




8/5/2026

Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board

2023 to 2026 Recommendation Summary
Updates

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May 2023

Industry Partnership Goals – Industry Partnership and Employer Engagement Committee

Recommendation: Industry Partnership Goals

1. Eliminate silos by aligning local, regional, and state education, workforce and economic development initiatives, including state and regional Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act plans
2. Increase learning and economic opportunities for all Pennsylvania residents (i.e. students, youth and workers) particularly those from underrepresented, under resourced, and underserved communities
3. Increase connections, collaboration, and communication between businesses
4. Explore and implement new approaches taking advantage of opportunities and industry specific solutions
5. Grow targeted industry sectors who could benefit from sector strategies approaches; include businesses that have traditionally been left out of these initiatives, including, but not limited to, small businesses, and minority- and women-owned businesses
6. Identify, develop, and act upon solutions supported by relevant data and information
7. Create a long-lasting system and make best use of available funds/resources
8. Create and implement a strong evaluation plan that meets partnership performance metrics following the PA Workforce Development Board's adopted evidence of effectiveness definition

Progress:

These goals have been incorporated into the Industry Partnership Notice of Grant Availability requirements, scoring priorities for review teams, and technical assistance to funded grant programs.

Employer Immunity for Hiring Returning Citizens – Reentry Ad Hoc Committee

Employer Immunity for Hiring Returning Citizens

The Governor, the Auditor General, the Secretary of Labor and Industry, and other leaders have noted that criminal history records impose significant adverse impacts on the breadth, depth and diversity of Pennsylvania's workforce and on the Commonwealth's efforts to make Pennsylvania's workforce globally competitive. Workforce development agencies across the Commonwealth report that it is difficult for well-qualified candidates to find employment appropriate for their skills, education and training simply because of their past history of involvement with the criminal justice system. "Ban the box" laws that punish employers for considering criminal record histories when they shouldn't, and tax incentives for hiring returning citizens, have proven to be ineffective. Employers report that they are reluctant to hire qualified candidates with a criminal history record due to a lack of clarity regarding the employer's risk of liability for such hire and the possibility of having to defend themselves in lawsuit for having made such hire.

Pennsylvania has enacted "Good Samaritan laws" in a variety of settings to protect from lawsuits and liability individuals who volunteer to help others in times of need. In particular, the General Assembly has provided immunity for any organization or individual that is involved in supervising or administering any restitution or community service program approved by the court of common pleas or the Department of Corrections (42 Pa.C.S. § 8340), and for any employer who discloses information about a current or former employee's job performance to a prospective employer of the current or former employee, upon request of the prospective employer or the current or former employee (42 Pa.C.S. § 8340.1). This same immunity should be extended to any employer providing economic opportunity to someone with a criminal record who is qualified for the work.

Recommendation 1:

The Workforce Development Board urges the Governor to consider supporting legislation providing immunity from civil liability for any claim or adverse inference arising out of the decision by an employer to train, employ, promote, contract with, or otherwise engages in its work an individual with a criminal history record, so long as that those activities are not specifically prohibited by a condition of parole, probation, release, regulation, or contract. Calling on the Department of State to Rethink and Rewrite Proposed Regulations Implementing Act 53 of 2020 IRRC No. 3361 ~ 16A-66 (Consideration of Criminal Convictions)

Recommendation 2:

The Workforce Development Board, being on record since November 2021 as supporting pardons for those who have fully completed their sentences for non-violent crimes and have been arrest-free since then for at least five years, calls on the Department of State to rewrite its proposed regulations implementing Act 53 of 2020 so that, for such individuals, the presumption (rebuttable) is that their criminal histories are not "directly related" to any occupational license for which they are applying. The Workforce Development Board recommends that the rebuttable presumption be that criminal histories are not directly related to the occupational license, unless the conviction was within 7 years.

Rational

Criminal records keep people from better jobs, licenses, careers, and incomes long after they have fully served the sentence imposed on them by a judge. In 2020, the General Assembly adopted, and the Governor signed Act 53, which substantially reformed the criteria by which occupational licenses could be denied, by eliminating vague criteria like “good moral character” and requiring that criminal convictions be “directly related” to the work. The Department of State has now issued proposed regulations that would create “a rebuttable presumption that licensure of the individual would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the individual’s patients or clients or a significant risk of further criminal convictions” regardless of how many years ago the crime occurred or whether the individual had fully “repaid their debt to society” by completing the sentence imposed by the judge.

This is not only contrary to past recommendations of this Board but violates what the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 1973 found to be the deeply ingrained public policy of this State to avoid unwarranted stigmatization of and unreasonable restrictions upon former offenders. This State in recent years has been unalterably committed to rehabilitation of those persons who have been convicted of criminal offenses. To forever foreclose a permissible means of gainful employment because of an improvident act in the distant past completely loses sight of any concept of forgiveness for prior errant behavior and adds yet another stumbling block along the difficult road of rehabilitation. *Secy. of Revenue v. John's Vending Corp.*, 453 Pa. 488, 494-5 (Pa. 1973).

The Workforce Development Board joins with others in opposing the creation of a presumption against state occupational licensure simply due to a past conviction, and instead urges the adoption of a presumption that a past conviction is not directly related to a state-licensed job if the conviction was not for a crime of violence and the applicant completed their sentence at least five years ago and has not been arrested since then. The seven-year bright line is drawn from the 2018 Commonwealth Court held that a school district could not reasonably or rationally use a seven-year-old criminal conviction to terminate an employee’s job, and upheld the individual’s claim that doing so violated his constitutional rights. *Megraw v. School District of Cheltenham Township*, 2018 WL 2012130 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2018).

Progress:

Act 53 Of 2020 was revised 10/19/24 with many of our previous recommendations. An updated guide can be found here:

<https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/professional-licensing/act%2053%20best%20practices%20guide%20final.pdf>.

Progress Update: July 2026

PA WDB Staff have been in contact with the PA Department of Corrections to discuss the issues raised in this recommendation. While there does not appear to be a significant risk to civil liability for employers, we are working to develop a more formal and robust response to this recommendation.

February 2024

Commission Research on the State of Registered Apprenticeship and Registered Pre-Apprenticeship in Pennsylvania – Apprenticeship and Career & Technical Education Committee

Recommendation: Commission Research on the State of Registered Apprenticeship and Registered Pre-Apprenticeship in Pennsylvania

To continuously improve Pennsylvania's efforts to expand opportunities for individuals and companies to benefit from Registered Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs, and to expand those opportunities to a more diverse range of industries, occupations, and individuals, The Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board (Board) recommends that the Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) procure a vendor to evaluate the impact of investments made in Registered Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs in Pennsylvania. Such an evaluation should include, but is not limited to, an analysis of the effectiveness of state dollars on the following:

- Career outcomes (wages, employment retention, etc.) over time for individuals who participate in Registered Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship
- Representation of historically underserved populations participating in Registered Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs
- Expansion of Industries, Sectors, and Occupations that offer career pathways via Registered Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship
- Availability of Registered Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship by geographic area

The selected vendor should work with the Board's Apprenticeship & CTE Committee; the Pennsylvania Apprenticeship & Training Office at L&I; and the Bureau of Career and Technical Education and Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education at the Pennsylvania Department of Education to do the following:

1. Refine the scope of the research and evaluation,
2. Determine the data to use in conducting the evaluation, and
3. Identify gaps in available data that may exist.

In addition to the evaluation, the vendor should make recommendations on how to improve on the topics and areas analyzed in the evaluation.

Progress:

The Keystone Research Center finalized the report on the PA registered apprenticeship landscape, which the committee had reviewed, discussed, and provided feedback on. This report, commissioned by the Board, is now live on the [PA Workforce Development Board web page](#) under Additional Resources as "Apprenticeship in Pennsylvania Report – 2025."

Pennsylvania Longitudinal Data System Form Project Reflecting Utilization of Youth Programming and Outcomes – Youth Committee

Recommendation: The Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board urges the Pennsylvania Longitudinal Data System (PALDS) to form a project in their purview on Pennsylvanians that have utilized youth programming in the Commonwealth and the employment and education outcomes for those individuals during K12 and postsecondary. We encourage the PALDS to work with the Youth Committee to further refine the goals and outcome of this project.

Progress:

This is a project currently underway with the PALDS office. The PALDS team has been keeping the Youth Committee updated on progress as the project moves forward.

The agreements will allow outcomes and to be examined for youth program participants, including outcomes related to educational attainment, workforce outcomes, interactions with the criminal justice system, and utilization of public support programs. This will allow a more complete understanding of the holistic impacts of youth programming on participants in the short, medium, and long term.

Pre-release Identification County Agreement Toolkit Initiative and Pardon-related Initiative – Reentry Committee

Recommendation 1: In order to enter the workforce, it is essential to have a government issued ID or license. Reentrants face significant barriers to employment when they are released from prison without proper identification. In a report done by the Movement Advancement Project, it was found that lacking an ID limits access to housing, medical care, employment, banking, and even enrolling a child in school.¹ Additionally, it was found that acquiring a new driver's license, including the cost of the license and the time to apply for it, equates to about 4.1 hours of work time at minimum wage.² Other identifying documents such as birth certificates and social security cards can be even higher.³ Having the opportunity to receive these documents pre-release gives reentrants a vital key to many basic necessities. In some counties, it only takes about two weeks to receive an ID, and most individuals are able to leave county jail with their IDs. The Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board's Reentry Committee would like to acknowledge the following counties that have agreements with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and have worked to ensure reentrants have proper identification pre-release:

- York County
- Montgomery County
- Franklin County
- Lancaster County
- Adams County
- Chester County
- Union County
- Centre County

This Committee strongly encourages other counties to consider similar agreements with PennDOT and recommends that the Reentry Committee along with the Department of Corrections and PennDOT work together to develop a toolkit to assist counties in these efforts.

Recommendation 2: Criminal backgrounds have the ability to negatively impact a person's ability to enter employment long after their involvement with the justice system. Receiving a pardon increases the opportunity for these individuals to find work and sustain themselves. In research done by the Economy League, it was found that pardons granted from 2008-2018 in Pennsylvania allowed individuals to earn roughly \$16 million in additional wages. Since 2019, it also has become even easier to get a hearing; more than 8 out of 10 people who apply, get a hearing.⁴

In an effort to increase the opportunity for individuals to pursue a pardon, the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board's Reentry Committee strongly recommends Local Workforce Development Boards to conduct one or more pardon-related initiatives over the next year. We recommend that Boards partner with community partners, including, but not limited to, local reentry councils and offices of probation and parole, to ensure these opportunities are available to as many individuals in the community as possible.

¹ <https://www.mapresearch.org/file/MAP-Identity-Documents-report-2022.pdf>

² <https://www.mapresearch.org/file/ID-info-formerly-incarcerated-people.pdf>

³ Ibid

⁴ <https://plsephilly.org/pardons/>

Rationale: These pardon-related initiatives have shown to be a useful tool in meeting individuals where they are at in their pardon journey. In Westmoreland County, the Pittsburgh Community Service Inc. held a pardon clinic where they received overwhelmingly positive feedback from event participants.⁵ Their event included expungement review from a legal services rep., a ten-table resource fair, ten-table job fair, and representatives to help those who qualified for a pardon begin writing their application. Berks County held one of the first viewings of “Pardon Me” at Reading Community College and had around 190 attendees⁶. From the event they were able to create their “Pardon Me Handbook” which includes copies of their social media posts, media releases, and Eventbrite page so that people across the state can easily replicate the event. In encouraging these initiatives to happen across the state, this committee is furthering its mission of elevating best practices for an inclusive workforce system.

Progress:

As of 9/26/24, nine (9) county jails work with PennDOT to get license pre-release. They are York, Montgomery, Franklin, Lancaster, Adams, Chester, Union, Centre, and Lehigh Counties. At that time, there were six (6) pending approval to start. They are Berks, Dauphin, Delaware, Bucks, Cumberland, and Potter Counties. Chrissy Klinger and Dorenda Hamarlund have created a one-pager for the jails that is being finalized.

Progress Update: July 2026

Committee member Chrissy Klinger and Dorenda Hamarlund with the Department of Corrections created a one-pager resource for county jails and submitted it for review/approval in 2024. To date, no updates have been provided in return.

As of 7/28/26 thirteen (13) county jails work with PennDOT to get a license pre-release. They are York, Adams, Centre, Franklin, Lancaster, Montgomery, Chester, Union, Lehigh, Berks, Bucks, Delaware, and Monroe. Four more counties were added since the last update and they are Berks, Bucks, Delaware, and Monroe.

⁵ <https://vimeo.com/824355883>

⁶ Ibid

Increase Language Accessibility in State Exams for Licensure and Credentialing – Agriculture Committee and Healthcare Committee

Recommendation: Increase Language Accessibility in State Exams for Licensure and Credentialing

As we look to increase workforce participation and opportunities, it is essential that we eliminate barriers at a state level for workers. The Workforce Development Board's Agriculture Committee and Healthcare Committee recommend that all state agencies work to increase language accessibility in all state exams for licensure and credentialing. Beginning this work is essential in eliminating the language barrier for all those who's native language is not English and expands the work opportunities that are available to them. It also directly benefits critical industries already dealing with workforce shortages.

Progress:

Still collecting update

Progress Update: July 2026

The Department of Agriculture (PDA) has provided continued support to Penn State Extension and other partners to provide Spanish language training sessions for PDA's Pesticide Applicator Exam. Penn State Extension has provided additional support for non-English speakers taking the exam by providing registration assistance and guidance.

[As of November 2025, the Pennsylvania Department of State began offering real estate sales and broker licensing exams in Spanish.](#) This change allows more applicants to take the exams in their native language, significantly improving accessibility and making Pennsylvania a more attractive place to work and build a career in real estate. Pearson VUE, which administers the four real estate sales and broker exams in the Commonwealth, partnered with an experienced Philadelphia-based firm to translate both the exams and their accompanying study guides into modern Spanish.

May 2024

Evaluate Curriculum Standards to Align with Industry-related Training and Educational Programs – Construction Committee

Recommendation 1: In order for high school and middle school students to effectively participate in construction industry related training and educational programs, including preparatory programs that may be offered by or within the schools, it is essential that students have access to classes and curricula that align with the prerequisites for these programs and have practical relevance to construction and the building trades.

The PA Workforce Development Board’s Construction Workforce Committee recommends that the Administration and PA Department of Education, evaluate high school and middle school curricula standards with respect to alignment with construction industry-related training and educational programs, and where appropriate develop or adjust curricula standards to best support student participation in these programs.

As an active workforce partner and key member of the PA Workforce Development Board, the PA Department of Education seems well situated to collaborate with workforce development partners on programmatic needs, and to advise the Board and Committee on progress.

Progress:

While curricula standards are not generally aligned with a specific industry, PDE recommends local engagement between the construction industry and school districts to increase student awareness and participation in these programs. to provide innovative opportunities for alignment with construction companies and school districts. There are already some examples of innovative initiatives to increase engagement, including a manufacturing program at McDowell HS in Erie. The Manufacturing Academy is a fully operating business run completely by students, from design and production to sales, billing and marketing. The program works in partnership with the NW Industrial Resource Center. PDE has also been working with PennDOT to design a heavy construction trades initiative to support the workforce needs of the highway industry.

To further clarify curricula standards, all students in Pennsylvania are required to demonstrate knowledge and skills based on Pennsylvania’s State Academic Standards. Academic standards define what students should know and be able to do at specific grade levels - elementary, middle and high school. The State Board of Education develops academic standards for public education through state regulations.

Academic standards do not represent a particular curriculum or instructional methodology. Rather, they provide a foundation for the development of local curriculum and serve as guideposts to which curriculum should be aligned. Curriculum is what happens day to day and week to week in classrooms including teaching, learning, and assessment. School districts are responsible for developing and implementing curriculum that delivers instruction aligned to the academic standards. Pennsylvania is a locally controlled state, meaning that each school district or charter school determines the content that is provided within its curriculum.

Standards remain constant, but curriculum can be altered year-to-year or classroom-to-classroom to ensure students are meeting the learning goals.

There are multiple standards under which construction-related curriculum could be taught. These include:

- Construction-related experiences can be aligned to most of the standards for Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy & Sustainability (STEELS), and the Career Education and Work Standards. See [Pennsylvania's Academic Standards](#) for more information.
- Many middle and high school technology and engineering programs in Pennsylvania offer construction-related experiences for their students. An educator holding a valid Pennsylvania certificate for Technology Education, Industrial Arts/Technology or Industrial Arts is qualified to teach: Construction Technology, Production Industries Technology, portions of Communications Technology and portions of Engineering Technology.
- An example of one school that has successfully integrated a construction program is Juniata County School District. Its high school Building Trades Program teaches the fundamentals of residential Construction with carpentry, electric, plumbing, and masonry. [Building Trades | Juniata High School](#)

Specifically to Career and Technical Education programming, there are 11 Classification of Instruction Program (CIP) codes that fall in the Architecture and Construction cluster: (1) Architectural Drafting and Architectural CAD/CADD; (2) Mason/Masonry; (3) Carpentry/Carpenter; (4) Electrical and Power Transmission Installers; (5) Building/Property Maintenance; (6) Painting/Painter and Wall Coverer; (7) Plumbing Technology/Plumber; (8) Well Drilling/Driller; (9) Construction Trades; (10) Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation; and (11) Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/Technician.

In addition, seven of the 11 CIPs are part of the Students Occupationally and Academically Ready (SOAR) program. The CIPs in SOAR include (1) Mason/Masonry; (2) Carpentry/Carpenter; (3) Architectural Drafting; (4) Electrical Power and Transmission Installers; (5) Building/Property Maintenance; (6) Plumbing Technology/Plumber; and (7) Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation. Through articulation agreements with colleges and universities, these seven programs offer nine or more college credits for skill attainment and completion of the program.

Across the Commonwealth there are 295 offerings of the 11 CIP codes. There are 11,971 males and 4,153 females enrolled in these programs for a total of 16,124 students.

This process involves post-secondary reps, instructors, and business and industry. In fall of 2024 Carpentry/Carpenter; Building/Property Maintenance; Mason/Masonry, and Plumbing Technology/Plumber went through a process of updating the skills aligned to these programs. Through a comprehensive constituent engagement process that includes engaging educators (secondary and postsecondary), trade associations, industry experts, and industry technicians in these CIP codes the skills for each one of these programs were reviewed and determined by the committee if those skills should remain or be removed from the task list. Additionally, the teams of experts identified any additional skills that should be added to the task list to best prepare Pennsylvania learners for successful transition into the workforce.

Through a \$3 million U.S. Department of Energy grant, the state Department of Environmental Protection is collaborating with the Penn College of Technology Clean Energy Center to help build the workforce around energy efficient buildings and building construction techniques as part of Pennsylvania's

Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). The collaboration has resulted in teacher stipends for training, free equipment and classroom assets, along with funding for field trips to expose students to these types of careers. There are 18 Career and Technology Centers (CTC) across the state engaged in the initiative, with eight additional CTC's looking to take part in the future.

Progress Update: July 2026

The Bureau of Career and Technical Education (BCTE) is working with a cross agency internal committee to identify areas across each career and technical education programs where academic standards in math, English language arts, and STEELs can be addressed in CTE classrooms. The committee is generating modern tools to be used by educators, instructional coaches, curriculum coordinators, and school leaders.

The BCTE committee is working with the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) to provide training on the new instructional integration tool along with providing instructional strategies on the integration of academic standards into the career and technical education program pathways.

DRAFT

Develop and Fund Transportation Initiative to Transport Students to Industry-related Workforce Events – Construction Committee

Recommendation:

The financial impacts School Districts face in transporting students to construction industry-related workforce events and programs, for example, at employer sites and other off-campus locations in the community, are a significant obstacle to middle and high school student's participation in activities that can best educate and prepare them for outstanding careers in construction and the building trades. This obstacle becomes even greater for students at schools that are more financially and logistically underresourced.

The PA Workforce Development Board's Construction Workforce Committee recommends that the Administration develop and fund a transportation initiative that will enable school districts to provide for transporting participating students to construction industry-related workforce events and programs.

As an active workforce partner and key member of the PA Workforce Development Board, the PA Department of Education seems well situated to oversee this initiative, in collaboration with the Board and agency partners, and to advise the Board and Committee on progress.

Progress:

Transportation is a significant component in a school entity's yearly planning and budgeting. Especially in rural areas or large districts, the time students spend on a bus, the number of buses running for student transportation and extracurricular activities, the number of times each bus runs per day, and the fuel management calculations are significant logistical concerns. Additionally, there is a shortage of qualified drivers. Without an additional allocation in the state budget, increasing the allotment for each school is cost prohibitive.

However, there are federal reimbursements for transportation that may be available and schools in urban areas may be able to negotiate waivers for public transportation. Schools in Pennsylvania have several ways in which they can develop internships, externships, apprenticeships, and job-embedded learning experiences on campus, through Career and Technology Centers, and in the community. Schools are already providing increased transportation and other forms of access to work-based learning experiences to support Act 158 graduation requirements. Without an appropriation for increased transportation, PDE and intermediate units will continue to provide resources to increase construction and building trade offerings within the student opportunities already occurring at schools.

Some non-profits, like the Partnership for Career Development, partner with local employers to provide externships including in the construction trades <https://pcd.caiu.org/>. Community organizations, like the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, partner with schools to provide field experiences, including construction, to schools <https://skillsinscranton.com/educator-in-the-workplace/>.

Progress Update: July 2026

BCTE is working to modernize its grant programs to allow for transportation resources to be purchased to support access to work-based learning for career and technical education students.

Endorse and Fund Nursing HUB Approach Under One Entity – Healthcare Committee

Recommendation:

Pennsylvania continues to face a severe deficit in the recruitment, training and retention of Nursing Assistants, an essential part of our Direct Care workforce, while needing to train and credential approximately 10,000 new Nursing Assistants over the next several years. In response, Pennsylvania should invest in a regional or multi-county “hub” model that can align as well as enhance the scale and coordination of Nursing Assistant workforce efforts for employers and workforce partners within the “hub” area of operation. The Hub will focus on recruitment, training, support, work placement, and retention, as well as crucial career pathways into Licensed Practical Nurse roles. The Hub will coordinate with all existing workforce development infrastructure and with appropriate funding, will bring new capacity for Nursing Assistant and Licensed Practical Nurse training.

The Workforce Development Board’s Healthcare Workforce Committee recommends that the Administration endorse and provide funding for a “Nursing Assistant and Licensed Practical Nurse Workforce Hub” approach that brings alignment and coordination of Nursing Assistant-related workforce supports and career pathways to Licensed Practical Nurse roles, within the Hub area, under one regional or statewide entity.

The PA Department of Labor and Industry is well situated to collaborate with workforce development partners on programmatic needs for the “Nursing Assistant and Licensed Practical Nurse Workforce Hub”, and to advise the Board and Committee on progress.

Progress:

The Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board, through its Industry Partnership program, awarded \$399,405 to The Training and Education Fund, covering Allegheny, Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fayette, Fulton, Huntingdon, Somerset, and Westmoreland Counties to create a Nurse Aide Training Hub. The Nurse Aide Training Hub will create a self-sustaining program by aligning regional resources, connecting employers with nurse aide training providers and community support services. The initiative focuses on removing barriers and linking community members interested in healthcare careers with training, support, and employment opportunities.

Additionally, Governor Shapiro’s 2025-2026 proposed budget invests \$5 million to create a pipeline of new nurses through the Nurse Shortage Assistance Program, strengthening Pennsylvania’s health care workforce, providing tuition assistance to young nurses, and setting them up with a hospital placement.

Endorse and Fund Home and Community-based Services HUB Approach Under One Entity – Healthcare Committee

Recommendation:

Pennsylvania continues to face a severe deficit in the recruitment, training and retention of the direct care workforce who support older adults and adults with disabilities in Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) settings. Making sure that Pennsylvania invests in home and community-based care and continues to transition care to those settings is vital to needs and wishes of those who will receive care - but to make this happen, there must be an investment in the workforce.

Pennsylvania needs approximately somewhere between 214,000 home health aides and 376,000 HCBS direct care workers over the next 6 years based on PA workforce data and data from PHI—the nation’s leading expert on direct care workers. In response, Pennsylvania should invest in a regional or multicounty “Hub” model that can align as well as enhance the scale and coordination of HCBS direct care workforce efforts for employers and workforce partners within the Hub area of operation. The Hub will focus on recruitment, training, support, work placement, and retention, as well as can be an incubator for trying to establish career pathways within HCBS for direct care workers.

The Hub will coordinate with all existing workforce development infrastructure and with appropriate funding, will bring new capacity for HCBS direct care workforce training.

The Workforce Development Board’s Healthcare Workforce Committee recommends that the Administration endorse and provide funding for a Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) direct care workforce Hub approach that brings alignment and coordination of HCBS direct care workforce supports, within the Hub area, under one regional or statewide entity.

The PA Department of Labor and Industry is well situated to collaborate with the PA Department of Aging and other workforce development partners on programmatic needs for the HCBS direct care workforce Hub, and to advise the Board and Committee on progress.

Progress:

The OVR State Board, PA Rehabilitation Council, Statewide Independent Living Council and Employment First Oversight Commission fully support increases to the direct care workforce and will conduct additional advocacy on the topic to legislators in future discussions and outreach in 2025. They recognize this staffing issue as paramount to the health, safety, and employability of people with disabilities and are interested in additional collaboration with the workforce board on the topic.

Progress Update: July 2026

Through July 2026, the OVR State Board advisory committee sent an advocacy letter to the Honorable Speaker of the House Joanna McClinton, requesting to meet regarding the impacts the direct care worker/attendant care industry crisis is causing across the Commonwealth of PA. This topic has remained a significant issue for the OVR Board and PA SILC this past year as they continue to advocate for changes that will improve the lives of PWDS across PA. The OVR Board also had the Office of Longterm Living present at a quarterly board meeting to further understand the depth of the issues and to ask additional questions of the Deputy Secretary.

August 2024

Collaborate with the PDE to Support the Establishment of an Educator Workforce Data HUB on the PDE Website – Education Shortage Committee

Recommendation: This collaborative effort aims to create an user-friendly dashboard presenting key data elements from Acts 55 and 35. These dashboards will provide stakeholders with easy access to vital information about the educator workforce, fostering informed decision-making and strategic planning to address workforce development challenges effectively.

Rationale: Teacher shortages pose significant challenges to the education system in Pennsylvania. Addressing these shortages requires a thorough understanding of the factors contributing to current shortages, as well as proactive measures to attract, retain, and support educators. The timely collection, analysis, and dissemination of educator workforce data, as mandated by Acts 55 and 35, is essential in understanding teacher shortages throughout the state. Looking at the numbers is the fundamental starting point to understand these challenges. The number of new teachers entering the profession has declined significantly in the last four years when compared to the three years prior⁷.

Progress:

PDE recognizes the value of a public-facing dashboard to make it easier to analyze the multitude of data provided on the department's website. This type of project requires extensive planning upfront before it can be publicly released. The department is currently analyzing the scope of the project and whether it can be completed internally or whether it will require the expertise of an outside contractor.

OVR and PDE currently share limited data at the end of each secondary education reporting period. Unfortunately, the data is limited and is often received too late in the year for OVR to use the data effectively for our federal reporting cycles, due to the different reporting cycles required for PDE to obtain the data from local education entities and then to process it. OVR has had success sharing data with ODP by connecting our case management systems through a data sharing agreement. Data sharing in the disability field is challenging due to complex confidentiality rules. OVR would be interested in continuing the discussion on how more data sharing could be accomplished under our confidentiality rules.

OVR and WF use common intake screens and fields through our collaboration and use of the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS). Confidentiality rules prevent us from sharing more than basic data, but we are interested in working with our partners and legal team to determine if there are additional ways to share data and allow job seekers to have a singular hub of application and supports.

Progress Update: July 2026

PDE has hired a full-time employee who specializes in Power BI to build the educator workforce dashboards. The individual started on July 6 and is working closely with PDE's Chief Talent Officer on the development and rollout of the first set of dashboards, which will focus on key workforce facts – number of classroom teachers and administrators with filters for demographic information like gender and race. The dashboards will also allow users to filter by school district, intermediate unit and county. We expect the first dashboards to be publicly available by mid-August.

⁷ Brick and mortar charter schools are classified as rural, suburban, or urban based on their geographic location, but may serve students from other regions.

DRAFT

High School Driver Education Programs – Construction Committee

Unlike many occupations with fixed office locations or worksite, careers in construction and building trades typically involve a vast array of job sites that can be almost anywhere in the community. A vital part of preparing high school students for careers in construction and building trades is ensuring the students are able to obtain their driver's licenses, which are essential for reliable transportation to job sites and necessary in order to perform basic job duties at the worksite, like transporting tools and supplies via company vehicles. Historically, high school driver's education programs played a major role in meeting this need, however, many school districts have been forced to cut back on driver's education programs due to fiscal constraints, and these driver's education programs which were once commonplace have become increasingly scarce. Based on recent statistics from the PA Department of Education, approximately 1/3 of all PA school districts do not have any approved driver's education programming.

The PA Workforce Development Board's Construction Workforce Committee recommends that the Administration fund an initiative with school districts to develop or reinstate high school driver education programs that lead to students obtaining drivers licenses. These programs are essential for students who will enter construction and trades occupations where they must be able to drive to a broad variety of jobs sites throughout the community.

As an active workforce partner and key member of the PA Workforce Development Board, the PA Department of Education seems well situated to oversee this initiative, in collaboration with the Board and agency partners, and to advise the Board and Committee on progress.

Progress:

PDE is currently exploring possible legislative and policy changes that may increase the number of schools that provide driver education programs.

Progress Update: July 2026

No new update

Recommendations Related to Implementing Digital Intake – Barrier Remediation Committee

Recommendation:

The Barrier Remediation Committee presents the following recommendations regarding the PA CareerLink® digital intake form, in reference to [WIOA Combined State Plan](#) sub-goal 5.15 to analyze the digital intake data from all PA CareerLink® centers to improve service for individuals who face barriers, especially those who face multiple barriers.

Formatting note: **Underlined and bold font is the overarching bucket** (there are three); **bold font is the recommendation being made**; the paragraph under the recommendation is a summary of what is currently happening to provide context; the bulleted list provides reasoning for the recommendation.

Recommendations related to implementing digital intake:

- **Ensure all PA CareerLink® customers fill out the universal intake form and are reflected in the digital intake data, regardless of whether they access PA CareerLink® on site, online, or through activities at locations beyond the PA CareerLink® sites (such as schools and correctional facilities).**
- **Currently, the digital intake form is only being deployed on site at the PA CareerLink® sites, with an option to use a paper form at off-site activities, though off-site use of the form does not seem to be universal. In addition, the PA CareerLink® does not currently use the digital intake form for customers who access their online services.**
- **We encourage the PA Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) to expand its rollout of the digital intake form in 2024 and in the future by expanding digital intake beyond the physical PA CareerLink® locations.**
 - Data that include the customers the PA CareerLink® serves through its mobile and offsite activities can help the Commonwealth better understand who it is reaching and not reaching. Knowing who the Commonwealth reaches or doesn't statewide was one of the reasons for implementing a universal digital intake form, so this continues the work in that spirit.
 - Some populations' ability to visit a PA CareerLink® in person is restricted (as for incarcerated Pennsylvanians) or limited (college students and residents of rural communities). Including mobile and off-site activities will help provide a more complete picture of these Pennsylvania jobseekers' service needs and interests.
 - Since customers who use online-only services may eventually seek services in person, completing the form online before they arrive could expedite the in-person appointments and allow them to spend their time on site interacting with staff directly.
 - Conversations about implementation of the form and future improvements can include topics such as funding for additional devices, use of mobile applications including the use of devices people are most comfortable with and exploring ways to increase accessibility and accommodations for the widest audience possible.

Progress:

BWPO has met regularly to discuss digital intake enhancements. Meetings began on March 24 and will continue until a comprehensive package of enhancements is identified. There have been many enhancement tickets put forward for digital intake, the team began by reviewing each of those ticket items to determine if they should move forward for prioritization. BWPO identified a group of enhancements that will be input into the system with the 19.1 release in November 2025.

BWPO has not yet determined how we can deploy digital intake off-site statewide; however, some local workforce development areas do have the technology to take to off-site to some events. The CWDS team continues to explore a unique link that can be provided to customers to complete digital intake on their phones.

Progress Update: July 2026

BWPO has been meeting weekly to elaborate changes to include in the digital intake enhancements statement of work and will continue until a comprehensive package of requirements for enhancements is identified. There have been several smaller enhancement tickets put forward for digital intake, the team began by reviewing each of those ticket items to determine if they should be moved forward for prioritization. Minor enhancements have been made during the past program year.

- BWPO has not yet determined how we can deploy digital intake off-site statewide; however, some local workforce development areas do have the technology to take off-site to some events. The CWDS team continues to explore an enhancement that would include a unique link that can be provided to customers to complete digital intake on their phones. Additional enhancements include streamlining Lobby management for high traffic events and situations where a full registration may not be required.
- Existing reports have been reviewed and enhancements to format data for export for better analysis of barriers and potential gaps or needed services across programs.

Digital intake data should interface across agencies and programs.

Currently, each agency develops and funds their own intake for PA residents they serve. In some cases, agencies share data through a Memorandum of Understanding. In other cases, they do not—for example, Adult Education and Family Literacy staff do not all have access to the Commonwealth Workforce Data System despite serving shared customers.

We recommend that the Commonwealth ensure all partner agencies have access to the data collected from the digital intake form in real time or near-real time, to help co-enroll participants in the programs that would support them best. The vision is that participants in Commonwealth services don't have to complete the full forms every time they have to access a new service. For PA to make this possible, it may need to explore shared funding of intake forms and/or alignment of forms where possible.

- Programs funded through PA Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Labor & Industry (L&I), Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA), Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), and Department of Education (PDE) often serve the same Pennsylvania residents, who would benefit from fewer intake processes.
- The Barrier Remediation Committee specifically expressed a desire to share intake data with the WIOA Title II (Adult Education) and other WIOA title programs.
- Sharing data will better serve Pennsylvanians experiencing barriers and recognize needs that may otherwise go unaddressed through workforce services.

Progress:

On March 20, BWPO and DHS met to discuss their needs in digital intake. In this meeting two key topics

were discussed:

- DHS is a partner in the development of digital intake. If there are changes to digital intake that would best serve their needs, they may modify the digital intake through their CWDS enhancement process.
- It has been difficult to determine if DHS had access to the data collected through digital intake. During this meeting, there were individuals familiar with pulling reports, and L&I was able to walk partners through the process in greater detail. DHS does have access to the digital intake data.
- CWDS partners need a specifically designated role to access and manage this data. This access can be requested by partners through their usual CWDS access process.

Recommendations for using the data:

Report on the information gathered quarterly in an analysis to the PA WDB. Organize the report so Local Workforce Development Boards can benchmark to their demographics.

As of the spring of 2024, the digital intake form rollout has been completed at all PA CareerLink® sites, and L&I is in its first year of receiving data from the entire Commonwealth. L&I is releasing summative reports back to Local Workforce Development Boards but not yet at a state level.

We recommend that L&I plan to generate comprehensive reports of the digital intake data that:

- Identify customer needs, interests, and demographics on a regular basis.
- Compare populations served with the demographics of that area.
- Are shared quarterly with Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) at the Local Workforce Development Area level, with data broken down by individuals' county of residence, so that LWDBs can tailor services to the needs evident in the report and can plan to address any evident gaps between the people they are serving and people who might need services.
- Are shared quarterly with the PA WDB at a state level and LWDB level, and, for the PA WDB, include a synthesis of feedback received on the form from PA CareerLink® customers, and any planned changes.

Progress:

BWPO will begin fulfilling this request with the next Quarterly PA WDB Meeting.

Unfortunately, the data cannot be reduced to the county level; however, it can be organized by PA CareerLink®. Privacy requirements make the data unavailable on the individual level, but it is available in anonymized aggregate.

Informed by digital intake data, an MOU was executed between L&I and the Dept. of Health to provide on-the-spot-birth certificates to PA CareerLink® customers at PA CareerLink® events. The first event was held at the Lancaster PA CareerLink® on April 28, and more events across the state are being planned.

Leverage the on-demand courses for workforce staff so that information from digital intake can be effectively utilized to make referrals to the services that address their barriers to work.

The digital intake form is a tool to help staff understand customers' needs, but skilled staff make the program connections happen, and training helps staff do that effectively and confidently. Currently, PDE and L&I have developed two on-demand courses for workforce staff. All WIOA Title III program staff have been required to take the first of these courses, titled "Introduction to the PA CareerLink® System: WIOA Core Programs and Making Referrals." This course and more are available online at <https://www.workforcestafftraining.com/> for any workforce staff to take voluntarily. Staff who took the

course reported liking the online and on-demand format and asked that it be shared with partner staff working at the PA CareerLink®.

We recommend expanding use of this course among workforce development staff so they can better serve those experiencing barriers to employment.

- These courses will help onboard new PA CareerLink® staff.
- These courses will help the partner workforce staff (within and beyond PA CareerLink®) serve shared customers.
- Workforce staff play an essential role in helping customers access the services that help them most.

Progress:

BWPO presented at PWDA on April 30 on the subject of digital intake and lobby management. The presentation provided information about how to ensure customers complete digital intake so the tool provides the best possible data. This data is being used to inform work across the state and in local areas. The PWDA presentation collected best practices and staff ideas for enhancement. The suggestions will be reviewed during the BWPO digital intake meetings. Additionally, this digital intake/lobby management presentation will be provided to all Title I and Title III staff during an upcoming Interval Training this summer.

Regarding, “Introduction to the PA CareerLink® System: WIOA Core Programs and Making Referrals”:

- In February 2024, we shared the email announcement for the second course we collaborated on with PDE - **Collaborating for Success: A Shared Customer-Centered Approach to Service Delivery**. It was shared with all workforce staff and required to be completed by all BWPO. We also included in that announcement information about the first course we collaborated on - **Introduction to the PA CareerLink® System: WIOA Core Programs and Making Referrals**.
- Since February 2024, we’ve included information about both courses in multiple BWPO biweekly updates as well as our Staff Development Quarterly Update.
- We are planning to share information about both courses again this summer and require that any Title I or BWPO staff member who hasn’t completed them should complete them.

We also recommend that all PA CareerLink® partners have new staff take CareerLink 101.

Data from the Commonwealth Workforce Data System (CWDS), including the digital intake data, should be incorporated into research projects undertaken by the Pennsylvania Longitudinal Data System (PALDS) office.

Currently, the PALDS is being enhanced, and has used data from WIOA core and partner programs as well as other workforce data such as wage data.

We recommend this because:

- Incorporating digital intake data in PALDS research will help build out more complete participant profiles, including barriers those participants face beyond employment; interventions and supports that those participants received, like training and other supports; and outcomes that CWDS tracks.
- Making the digital intake data available for use with the PALDS would help state and local leaders make policy and program decisions that are best for various programs’ shared customers/participants.

Recommendations for ongoing improvements to the digital intake form itself:

Explain the available services more clearly to PA CareerLink® customers when listing service or program titles on the digital intake form.

Currently, the digital intake form lists services that customers may indicate interest in, for example, “Adult Basic Education” and “Youth Programs.” The Barrier Remediation Committee expressed concern that customers may not understand what these terms mean or whether the terms are relevant to them.

Progress:

BWPO is discussing this recommendation as a part of the 19.1 release for November 2025.

DRAFT

November 2024

Provide a Report to the Board on PA Rules Imposing Employment-related Consequences Due to Criminal Histories – Healthcare Workforce Committee

Many individuals with criminal conviction histories also face collateral consequences of their convictions, which limit or prohibit them from certain employment opportunities, particularly within the healthcare sector. A January 2021 report titled “Pennsylvania Snapshot of Employment-Related Collateral Consequences” issued by The Council of State Governments’ Justice Center and the National Reentry Resource Center, indicates healthcare, when combined with related facility care (adult care, nursing homes and residential care facilities) is the most impacted sector in terms of the number of employment related collateral consequences imposed under Pennsylvania law, identifying about 120 rules that apply within healthcare. The report also notes that almost half of Pennsylvania’s employment-related collateral consequences are mandatory, and over 80% have an indefinite duration of effect.

The Committee agrees with the importance of proper safeguards and the need for reasonable consequences of certain offenses for healthcare occupations because of the vital and trusted role healthcare workers play in the care for vulnerable patients, residents, and consumers. Recognizing that some rule reforms may have already been undertaken, we also note that the state rules imposing these consequences should be periodically re-evaluated based on expert input from the industry, and rule changes made where appropriate.

Recommendation: The Workforce Development Board’s Healthcare Workforce Committee recommends that the Administration provide a report to the Board, on the PA rules imposing employment-related collateral consequences due to criminal histories for healthcare sector occupations, and that the report include the disposition of these rules, and the current status and plans for regulatory reforms completed, underway or to be initiated as appropriate. This effort should be conducted with the direct involvement of and be informed by experts in the healthcare sector representing labor, legal, human resources and other pertinent fields.

The Committee encourages the Administration to provide additional progress updates on this topic, to the Board and Committee chair, at future Board meetings.

- [PennsylvaniaStateSnapshot \(cgjusticecenter.org\)](https://www.cgjusticecenter.org/pennsylvania-state-snapshot)
- [Welcome to the NICCC National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Criminal Conviction \(nationalreentryresourcecenter.org\)](https://www.niccc.org/welcome-to-the-niccc-national-inventory-of-collateral-consequences-of-criminal-conviction)
- <https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/professional-licensing/ACT-53-Best-Practices-Guide.pdf>

Progress Update: July 2026

PA WDB Staff met with staff from PA Department of Human Services and are setting up a meeting with PA Department of Health to gather information on current initiatives and planned steps to help address the challenges identified in this recommendation.

Make Government Contracts Less Restrictive for Those with Criminal Backgrounds – Reentry Committee

Recommendation: At the start of his term in January 2023, Governor Shapiro signed his first executive order; removing the requirement of a four-year degree for 92% of Commonwealth jobs and requiring a review of the other 8% of jobs⁸. In doing so, Governor Shapiro eliminated the barrier of a degree for thousands of jobs in the State and made the Commonwealth an example for employers and counties across the State. As this Administration continues to build strategies for eliminating unnecessary barriers to employment, this Committee urges consideration to how it may eliminate barriers for those with criminal backgrounds seeking employment with companies receiving government contracts.

For reentrants across Pennsylvania, the presence of their criminal record serves as a significant barrier to employment long after their release. The Council of State Government's Justice Center's 2021 Report determined that nationally, 72% of local, state, and federal statutes and regulations (collateral consequences), impacted employment opportunities.⁹ They also ascertained that these collateral consequences limit employment by restricting access to occupational and business licenses, and directly limiting the ability of employers to hire workers with convictions.¹⁰ Stipulations within government contracts about hiring individuals with criminal backgrounds can also significantly limit the employment opportunities for reentrants and can limit the growth of the employer, as well. In a study done by Kellogg and Northwestern University's Pritzker School of Law, researchers found that the turnover rate for employees with criminal records was 13% lower than employees without criminal records.¹¹ They estimated that because of that lower turnover rate, companies could save around \$1,000 per year per position.¹² An earlier study done by the Center for American Progress in 2014, found that the cost of employment losses among reentrants was as much as \$65 billion per year in terms of GDP.¹³ In 2021, the US Chamber reported a loss of \$78 billion-\$87 billion in GDP due to the exclusion of reentrants from the workforce.¹⁴ Ultimately, all of the research shows a real workforce need for reentrants in the workforce.

As the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board continues to explore ways to increase career opportunities for individuals and eliminate unnecessary barriers to employment, the Reentry Committee recommends that the State review how it may help local areas to make their government contracts less restrictive for those with criminal backgrounds.

Progress:

EO 2024-01 HIRE encourages Commonwealth agencies to hire formerly restricted populations, including reentrants. DOC is working with PennDOT and OA to start a pilot

Progress Update: July 2026

Act 53 of 2020 was updated on October 19, 2024 to remove convictions that were not license relevant.

For EO 2024-01 HIRE, DOC currently is working with PennDOT and DCNR to share job openings in those agencies with parolees. Dorenda Hamarlund provides updates quarterly in the PA DOC report.

⁸ [In his first executive order, Shapiro removes degree requirement for thousands of state jobs Pennsylvania Capital-Star \(penncapital-star.com\)](#)

⁹ [National Snapshot - CSG Justice Center](#)

¹⁰ [Ibid](#)

¹¹ [Should You Hire Someone with a Criminal Record?](#)

¹² [Ibid](#)

¹³ [VallasCriminalRecordsReport.pdf](#)

¹⁴ [The Business Case for Criminal Justice Reform: Second Chance Hiring U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#)

Public Awareness Campaign, Facilitate Employers' Transition, Transitional Support for Disabled Population to Ensure Essential Benefits, Develop Phase Out Plan of 14 (c), State Funded Employers Training – Barrier Remediation Committee

Barrier Remediation Committee Recommendation: The Barrier Remediation Committee presents these recommendations on removing barriers to employment for individuals with a disability, including exploring ways to bolster and elevate competitive integrated employment (CIE).

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) defines competitive integrated employment (CIE) as work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis for which an individual is:

- Compensated at or above minimum wage and comparable to the customary rate paid by the employer to employees without disabilities performing similar duties and with similar training and experience;
- Receiving the same level of benefits provided to other employees without disabilities in similar positions;
- At a location where the employee interacts with other individuals without disabilities; and
- Presented opportunities for advancement similar to other employees without disabilities in similar positions.

This supports [WIOA Combined State Plan](#) sub-goal 5.2 to improve employment opportunity, workplace inclusion, and professional networking and mentoring opportunities for populations that experience stigma, bias, and discrimination. Expand on existing strategies and explore new approaches to reduce bias, from recruiting to hiring and employment.

Formatting note: **bold font is the recommendation being made**; paragraph under the recommendation is a summary of what is currently happening to provide context and rationale for the recommendation.

Launch a public awareness campaign aimed at informing individuals with disabilities, their families, and employers about available programs and benefits—such as, but not limited to, Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities—generally, and especially during the transition to Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) from a sheltered workplace and/or sub-minimum wage job. This effort should focus on alleviating concerns about potential loss of benefits and highlight resources that ensure continued support.

Employers, disability advocates, and workers communicate that despite the availability of resources and information to support workers with disabilities, there is a gap in understanding of the breadth and depth of what is available for both employers and workers. A campaign effort that disseminates information on programs and benefits for workers with disabilities will help close this gap. Specifically, it will help educate employers about supporting and retaining their workers with disabilities, particularly through transitioning into CIE; it will also guide employers to share information about supportive services directly, or indirectly through their Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), to their workers with disabilities, and their families.

There is currently an array of resources that can help support workers with disabilities, particularly as they transition into Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). Many resources are available through Commonwealth agencies for example, The Department of Labor and Industry's Office of

Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), Office of Developmental Programs, the Department of Treasury, Page 36 among others. Resources are also available through community and disability advocacy organizations. These resources address a wide array of topics including but not limited to:

- Career counseling and support for individuals with a disability transitioning from 14(c) employment into CIE;
- Maintaining benefits individuals are eligible for such as Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD);
- Savings and financial stability such as [PA ABLE](#) ;
- Long-term services and supports for in home and community settings through the PA Department of Human Services' Home and community-Based Services (HCBS) Waivers;
- OVR's technical assistance offered to employers.

Take steps to facilitate employers' transition from sheltered workshops to competitive integrated employment (CIE), including consideration of tax credits and other incentives.

Currently, individuals with disabilities are a "target group" listed and applicable for the federal Workforce Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) which provides tax credit to companies and nonprofit organizations that hire individuals who face systemic challenges in finding and retaining employment. The state could create an additional tax credit that would go beyond the hiring and short-term retention of individuals with disabilities, and support employers as they transition their work environments, and adopt CIE.

Provide state-funded transitional support to bridge the gap between federal means-tested benefits and economic independence, to ensure that individuals with disabilities do not lose essential benefits when they are earning higher wages.

Surveys suggest that individuals with disabilities may be hesitant to seek and accept higher wages/increase in earnings, or more hours out of fear of losing essential benefits such as healthcare, housing, and income support, which undermines the Commonwealth's efforts to promote and transition to CIE models. There are existing programs and services that the Commonwealth can leverage, adjust, and increase to support a gradual and equitable transition to higher earnings without the risk of losing necessary services and benefits. Providing increased transitional support, such as in the form of increased access to benefits counseling, the Commonwealth can help create a more gradual and equitable transition for individuals with a disability whose earnings increase. By adjusting and increasing public programs that provide transitional support, like the Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD), the Commonwealth can remove this barrier, empowering individuals with a disability to more fully participate in the workforce and achieve greater economic independence while employers could benefit from workplace outcomes such as increased productivity and morale.

Develop a multi-year phase out plan of 14 (c) that also includes ways to improve quality of employment for individuals with disabilities and supports employers in transitioning to CIE models.

Introduced federal legislation, the Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act would phase out the payment of subminimum wages under Section 14(c) of the FLSA over a five-year period. This follows the recommendation of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, whose 2020 Page 37 report, “Subminimum Wages: Impacts on the Civil Rights of People with Disabilities” concluded that “Congress should repeal Section 14(c) with a planned phase-out period to allow transition among service providers and people with disabilities to alternative service models prioritizing competitive integrated employment.” This recommendation would prepare the Commonwealth for the passing of such legislation if that happens first. Or, the state could proactively begin phasing out 14(c) in alignment with the growing number of states that have already officially phased out the use of Section 14 (c) subminimum wage certificates for workers with disabilities. Many state policies and executive actions are accompanied by measures to support the transition to competitive integrated employment (CIE), such as technical assistance that the OVR already offers.

A phase-out would allow transition among service providers and people with disabilities to alternative service models prioritizing competitive integrated employment. Other efforts could include creating a tiered approach for businesses/certificate holders to phasing out 14(c), such as gradually raising wages over time or setting firm deadlines for compliance with competitive wage standards. The state can maintain and encourage non-employment (sheltered workshops) programs for persons with significant disabilities who may not be able to transition to competitive employment.

Employers who receive workforce funding through state agencies (Department of Labor & Industry, Department of Aging, Department of Education, Department of Community and Economic Development, Department of Human Services) including competitive grants, formula funding, tax credits, or direct funding for the hiring or training of people with barriers to employment should participate in training that fosters inclusive practices, improves accessibility, and enhances understanding of the unique needs and strengths of individuals with disabilities in the workplace during the life of the funding period of performance.

Despite the robust presence of state resources, it is not required for recipients of state workforce or employment funding—even if the scope of the funding project is primarily related to individuals with disabilities—to be educated about disability inclusion and prepare and ensure their workplace culture is going to be welcoming for individuals with disabilities.

Training could cover a range of topics, for example, fostering inclusive work environments, best practices for communicating with individuals with a disability, understanding the range and different types of disabilities, misconceptions about disabilities and unconscious bias. Training topics could be customized responsive to what employers say they need.

Such training could take several forms: for example, a standardized, recorded, or series of short trainings and videos with modules (similar to Workforce Staff Trainings). Another training model could be [Project Echo](#): training that brings together experts (such as HR professionals, accessibility specialists, etc.) and practitioners (employers) for a series of sessions that each include a brief lesson and a case-based approach to shared learning from experts and from one’s peers. Customized training to employers based on the employees hired with workforce funding is

another possibility, since at time of hire, workers can self-identify as a member of a population with barriers to employment via the WOTC 8850 Form, and L&I certifies eligible WOTC recipients, which could trigger a customized training to be sent to that employer.

We recommend that training come from vetted sources such as OVR and other organizations that represent the perspective of people with disabilities, such as the Center for Long Term Living. It is important to note that supporting training efforts for disability inclusion also align strongly with OVRs goals within the broader WIOA state plan. Overarching goals include OVR suggesting recruitment processes for employers, targeting career ladders and pathways, and supporting workers' financial needs, unique aspirations, and talent succession, among others. Disability inclusion training can help facilitate meeting these goals.

Progress:

OVR in collaboration with ODP have submitted comments to the National Public Rule Making regarding the phase out of subminimum wage employment nationally. In solidarity with the State Workforce Board, the State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation also voted to recommend to the governor to phase out subminimum wage strategically over a period of time. OVR and ODP have also recently held a listening session during the ODP-ISAC meeting in April to gather input from the disability community, providers, and other stakeholders on the eventuality that subminimum wage will end. OVR in partnership with OPD and BSE are also working to implement the Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) grant Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (SWTCIE) – known as Project InVEST in PA. InVEST will connect individuals who may be considering or are currently participating in subminimum wage employment to consider and pursue competitive integrated employment through a variety of collaborative and innovative solutions that build supports around the individual and the employer.

Additionally, DHS has begun sending monthly informational mailings to targeted individuals who may be eligible for Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD). The goal of these mailings is to increase awareness for the MAWD program by reaching out to individuals with disabilities who close in Medicaid for being over income.

Finally, DHS and L&I commented on the [proposed federal rule](#) to stop issuance of new section 14(c) certificates and to phase out existing certificates over several years. We recommend a five-year phase out period to allow adequate time to create new services, train providers on national best practices, and ensure collaboration between state agencies, community rehabilitation providers, and employers.

Progress Update: July 2026

In March 2026, The PA Rehabilitation Council (PaRC) received sign-on support to from the OVR State Board (SBVR) on a letter to members of Congress, advocating against recent federal policy changes which threaten employment rights of people with disabilities (PWD). Specifically, calling to return and improve accountability requirements for federal contractors, hiring practice oversight and compliance enforcement programming, aiding strengthen disability employment policy and civil rights protections to ensure equal opportunity and fair compensation for equal labor by stopping the issuance of new 14c certificates at the federal level.

OVR continues to maintain awareness of neighboring and partnering states who have made the transition to phase out subminimum wage (SMW) and continues to create competitive integrated employment opportunities through

the mission of the agency in serving customers. OVR's Project InVest has made several successful employer partnerships as a result of the grant proposal and funding. We are also implementing the Charting the LifeCourse Framework through our other federal DIF grant – Pathway's to Partnership that allows schools and professionals to better plan with students with disabilities regarding the transition from school to work. To date, this grant has funded well over 1,000 professionals on this model with the intention to ensure that CIE is the first choice and preferred outcome for students with disabilities as they exit school.

DRAFT

February 2025

Implementation of Reforms for NA Training and Testing Program – Healthcare Workforce Committee

Healthcare Workforce Committee Recommendation:

Background: Nurse Aide (NA) workforce issues have been a top priority for the Healthcare Workforce Committee and NA employers, particularly Nursing Facilities, for the past several years at a minimum. While some encouraging work has been done or is underway, for example, grants to support NA training, training website improvements, etc., nursing facilities and their NA employees continue to face significant challenges and barriers related to training and testing, especially the required on-site skills testing, where delays, rescheduling, transportation issues, long travel distances and unavailability of timely testing have placed an unacceptable burden on NA's, preventing or delaying their ability to become registered and in some cases, beyond the 120 day timeframe they may work in non-registered status under federal rules. As a result, these issues have forced some NA's to stop working. The NA training and testing program in PA is administered by a vendor, Credentia, and overseen jointly by 3 state agencies: the PA Department of Human Services (DHS), the PA Department of Education (PDE) and the PA Department of Health (DOH). We understand from these agencies and from facilities using the NA training and testing program, that there are various causes for the problems including shortages of evaluators/testers for on-site testing; low reimbursement rates for testers (from Credentia); and state policies that delay ability of training programs to offer on-line virtual training and testing, and do not allow on-line virtual skills testing.

Recommendation:

The Workforce Development Board's Healthcare Workforce Committee recommends that the Administration, and the PA DHS, PA PDE and PA DOH which jointly oversee the NA training and testing program, implement the following reforms for the NA training and testing program:

- **Revise the policy that currently requires a NA training program to operate an in-person training program for 2 years prior to being approved for offering an online training program. The policy should be changed to allow properly vetted on-line training programs, without a prior "in-person" training program requirement to be eligible to offer online NA training.**
- **Actively implement on-line virtual skills testing within the program. This should help to reduce the transportation, travel distance and some of the scheduling problems under the current program.**
- **Implement transparent reporting from the program vendor, Credentia, and provide recurring, regularly scheduled reporting that includes (at minimum):**
 - **Number of test events scheduled;**
 - **Number of test events cancelled and reason for cancellation;**
 - **Travel distance of the candidates to the test event;**
 - **Number of test events completed, and Pass/Fail rate of the candidates.**
 - **Increase the reimbursement rate from the vendor, Credentia, for evaluators. The rate currently stands at \$12 per candidate/examinee, which is insufficient to incentivize tester participation in the program.**

The Committee also asks the Administration, via the agencies who jointly oversee the state's NA training and testing program, to provide status updates to the Board with their action plans and progress on the recommendations above.

These updates should also be part of the standard updates the state agencies provide to the to the Board, during the quarterly Board meetings, to allow for Board member discussion. HC-

Progress:

Based on these recommendations and feedback from other stakeholders, on May 1, 2025 PDE approved a policy change for NATCEP programs to have the option of virtual delivery for the theory/classroom component of the training, regardless of how long the program has been in operation. The NATCEP must still meet all requirements and apply for approval to teach the theory/classroom portion of the program in a web-based/online/blended format. Additional information can be found on the attached supporting guidance document.

PDE is in active discussion with Credential related to providing a publicly available reporting tool and will provide updates as they become available.

Progress Update: July 2026

PDE adopted the recommended policy shift for virtual delivery of theory content and hours. Virtual delivery is available upon initial program application. Currently 6 of 184 training programs are approved to offer a virtual theory component. Northern PA Regional College (NPRC), which serves 10 counties in the northern tier, are in the process of developing a hybrid training program with virtual theory to support nurse aide learning opportunities in these underserved rural regions.

A virtual skills test pilot is tentatively scheduled to run on July 20th at Penn Asian Senior Services Inc. in Philadelphia. Proctor training was conducted in June, and the test site has been evaluated as meeting the technical requirements. An additional 15 test sites have expressed interest in participating in virtual skills testing. They are all in various stages of proctor training and site evaluation.

Real-time reporting on test events is available to state clients through the reports dashboard on Credentia's website. Reporting includes number of test events scheduled; number of test events cancelled and reason for cancellation; travel distance of the candidates to the test event; number of test events completed, and Pass/Fail rate of the candidates.

Honor Youth Workforce and Skill Development by Declaring a Day for Special Celebration – Youth Committee

PA WDB Youth Committee Recommendation:

The Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board encourages the Governor to honor youth workforce and skill development by declaring a day for special celebration. The investments and professionals that are dedicated to youth development are critical to the future of Pennsylvania and declaring a special day to recognize all of the hard work and investments is an opportunity to show appreciation for their work and dedication to youth futures.

Research on Youth Workforce Development Programs show the following positive impacts for young people participating in these programs:

- Every year, tens of thousands of young people across the United States gain valuable experiences in the workforce through subsidized youth employment programs. From on-the-job training and mentorships to resume-building work experience, these programs help young people prepare for a bright future.¹⁵
- Summer employment programs reduced crime among participating youth.¹⁶
- In 2022, nearly half of all civilian jobs required prior work experience. Youth facing barriers to employment such as a low-income background, a disability, or low English proficiency must have access to resources that can help them build the foundational skills and experience needed to obtain a job, sustain themselves, and achieve their future career goals.¹⁷
- Subsidized employment programs support businesses and young workers in the same way that regular employment does: Companies fill talent needs, while workers earn a necessary wage. These programs, for their duration, are particularly effective at increasing earnings and employment for those who are considered harder to employ, including people who have been out of the labor force for long periods of time or do not have a high school diploma.¹⁸

Some timeframes to consider are:

- The United Nations General Assembly has declared that World Youth Skills Day be celebrated on July 15 to “celebrate the strategic importance of equipping young people with skills for employment, decent work, and entrepreneurship”. [World Youth Skills Day United Nations](#).
- PA and the PA Department of Education celebrate Remake Learning Days in May every year to help kids discover their spark for learning. [Home - Remake Learning](#)

Progress Update: July 2026

PA WDB has spoken with the Governor’s office and is in the process of submitting a formal request for consideration by the Governor’s office that handles such declarations.

May 2025

Barrier Remediation Committee Proposed Recommendation – Create Statewide Task Force to address workforce challenges experienced by immigrants.

The recommendation below addresses WIOA Combined State Plan:

- Sub-goal 5.2: Improve employment opportunity, workplace inclusion, and professional networking and mentoring opportunities for populations that experience stigma, bias, and discrimination. Expand on existing strategies and explore new approaches to reduce bias, from recruiting to hiring.
- Sub-goal 5.11: Develop ways to address federal or legal barriers that prevent work opportunities or limit access to employment for immigrants.

Create a statewide task force of employers, advocacy groups, workers, and other subject matter experts to address workforce challenges experienced by immigrant workers and proactively address federal policy shifts that may impact the immigrant workforce. The Committee encourages the Administration to provide additional progress updates on this topic, to the Board and Committee chair, at future Board meetings.

As of January 2025, federal immigration policies may be subject to rapid changes that could disproportionately impact the immigrant workforce. With immigrants comprising a vital portion of the labor force in key Pennsylvania industries such as agriculture, health care, construction, and food processing, shifts in work visa regulations, asylum policies, or legal status protections create considerable uncertainty for both workers and employers across the Commonwealth.

To ensure a proactive and coordinated response, we recommend the Commonwealth establish a statewide task force dedicated to addressing workforce challenges faced by immigrant workers. This task force would monitor federal policy developments, assess their implications for Pennsylvania's labor market, and develop strategies to mitigate risks to workers and employers alike. In addition to tracking national trends, the task force would collaborate with state agencies, local governments, industry leaders, and community-based organizations to advance concerted policies within Pennsylvania. These could include expanding access to workforce development programs for immigrants, streamlining credential recognition for foreign-trained professionals, strengthening legal and language support services, and ensuring equitable labor protections across industries. By remaining nimble and responsive, the Commonwealth can protect existing workers, support employers with a vested interest in workforce stability, and ensure that Pennsylvania remains a competitive and inclusive economy.

There are currently effective models in Pennsylvania at the local level that can help inform the structure and practice of a statewide task force. For example, the structure can potentially be modeled on similar immigrant-focused employment collaboratives such as the Philadelphia Immigrant Employment Collaborative (co-chaired by The Welcoming Center in Philadelphia).

Progress Update: July 2026

The Department of Labor & Industry works with the Governor's Office and other Commonwealth agencies on emerging issues related to immigration at the federal, state, and local level. Agencies share updates about program operations and public engagement where they intersect with federal immigration policy. The group regularly

monitors regulatory and enforcement notices from the federal government and evaluates potential impacts in the Commonwealth. Labor & Industry provides insights on workforce and labor law compliance issues when relevant. From this work the Commonwealth published a [Know your Rights](#) website where Pennsylvanian's can find information about how to navigate interactions with immigrations officials or law enforcement, as well as links to agency information about changes to certain benefits.

DRAFT

Agriculture Workforce Committee - Recommendation on the H-2A and H-2B Survey

In May of 2024, the Agriculture Committee conducted a survey of H-2A and H-2B visa users on their experiences and challenges with the programs. The Committee received 97 responses to their survey with 63 being users of the H-2A visa program, 1 being a user of the H-2B program, and 6 using both. The responses given in this survey paralleled the issues raised by Committee members who also use these visa programs. The demand and need for the H-2A and H-2B Visa programs continues to grow. In program year 2024 Pennsylvania received 297 H-2A job orders with 3,125 H-2A petitions requested. Many respondents and Committee members have both noted that without these programs, they would be forced to close or significantly reduce their businesses. At the same time, many respondents also reported that their major challenge with the program is the cost of using them.

These results are particularly troubling considering the significance of Agriculture to the state. In the *Economic Impact of Agriculture in Pennsylvania: 2021 Update*, it was reported that Agriculture contributes \$1 out of every \$16 in gross state product, and as a state, Pennsylvania has the 5th highest number of fruit and vegetable farms in the U.S. Agriculture also annually contributes \$132 billion to Pennsylvania's economy and currently supports more than 580,000 jobs across the Commonwealth. Agriculture is a crucial part of Pennsylvania's economy, and it is essential to farmers across Pennsylvania that the State be a source of help in addressing these challenges.

Given the gravity of this situation, the Agriculture Committee recommends that the Administration review the results of this survey and strongly encourages them to explore how they may address the issues raised by respondents of the survey.

As a part of the survey, respondents were asked what the State or Federal Government could do to assist or address some of these challenges. Below are some identified steps for the Administration to consider implementing, where the Commonwealth has the authority to do so, and advocating for change at the Federal level, for processes that are not handed at the state level:

- **Streamline paperwork approval processes and reduce regulations to a point where farmers are not overburdened but worker health & safety is still protected**
- **Clarify/Simplify the application process**
- **Provide assistance and/or grants to farmers and H-2A/H-2B visa holders for housing, ESL, or required training.**
- **Have a help line where issues can be addressed and individuals can get help with filling out paperwork**
- **Remove PA UC Tax for individual's ineligible to receive UC benefits**

Progress Update: July 2026

Based on the update from Agriculture Workforce Committee on 22nd April 2026, the majority of the recommendations that were made involve aspects of the H-2A program are federally controlled. This means that at the state level we cannot do anything to change them or improve the process. They have been able to share the responses from the survey and elevate to the right individuals who may have

more impact. USDOL made changes in October through new rules that addressed in part many of the issues below. Changes were made to application requirements that have allowed employers to submit one job order for multiple arrival dates for workers. Some changes to the application process have also been made to help streamline the application. In regard to the UC Tax, this is something that they have not heard anything more on and pointed that L&I may have more insight on where it stands.

DRAFT

August 2025

Construction Workforce Committee Recommendation – Helmets to Hardhats:

Helmets to Hardhats (H2H) is a nationwide non-profit joint labor-management organization whose mission is to serve U.S. military service members and veterans, assisting them as they transition to career opportunities within the building trades. The primary pathway is through trades-related apprenticeship programs, frequently utilizing the GI Bill benefits that services members and veterans earned during their military service. In 2024, H2H helped 122 service members and veterans here in PA, successfully transition into trades career opportunities. The Committee believes that further expanding awareness about and referrals to H2H will be a great benefit to PA service members and veterans, as well as trades employers and union-sponsored apprenticeship programs.

The Committee's recommendation is as follows:

Helmets to Hardhats is an organization dedicated to assisting service members and veterans with entry into construction and trades-related apprenticeship programs and effective use of G.I. Bill benefits. The PA Workforce Development Board's Construction Workforce Committee recommends that the PA Department of Labor and Industry, in partnership with local workforce development boards and other workforce development partners, at all PA CareerLink® offices and other appropriate workforce events and venues, conspicuously promote Helmets to Hardhats (via signage, brochures and other visual materials, messaging, counseling and other reasonable methods) and encourage referral to Helmets to Hardhats, when appropriate.

The Committee requests that the PA Department of Labor and Industry lead this effort, develop and present a plan and timetable for this initiative, and periodically advise the Board and Committee on progress.

Progress:

Based on the WDB's recommendation, Helmets 2 Hardhats presented to Disabled Veteran Outreach Program specialists and Local Veteran Employer Representatives and BWPO Supervisors on January 6th. During the meeting, Joseph Osborn shared information about the program, his contact information and promotional flyers that all PA CareerLink® offices could share at their locations.

On January 27th, Joseph Osborn presented at the Education, Employment and Workforce Development Committee that is a part of the Governor's Advisory Council for Veterans Services. This committee has representations from multiple agencies that serve veterans. The agencies included are OA, DOL-VETs, Banking and Finance, Department of Ag, PDE-GI Bill, DCED – One Stop Shop, WIC, OVR, DMVA-PA VetConnect, and Lehigh County District Office.

PA WDB Manufacturing Committee Recommendation: Advocate for additional funding and promotion of Manufacturing related workforce development initiatives.

Given that manufacturing remains Pennsylvania's largest and most dynamic industry sector and a quality jobs provider, the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board encourages Governor Shapiro and his Administration to continue to enhance statewide awareness and visibility of local and regional manufacturing events and projects.

It is important to note that not only is manufacturing currently 10-12% of the workforce in PA but Manufacturers in Pennsylvania produce an extraordinarily wide range of products essential to everyday life and critical infrastructure, including:

- Medical devices and pharmaceutical components
- Food and beverage products
- Automotive and aerospace parts
- Building materials and construction systems
- Electronic components and semiconductors
- Defense and national security technologies
- Robotics, automation equipment, and additive manufacturing systems

This variety showcases manufacturing's indispensable role in both domestic well-being and global competitiveness.

In addition, it is important to note that the manufacturing industry is so critical that there was a statewide task force that created the Pennsylvania's Manufacturing Competitiveness Playbook and that work currently continues with TeamPA. Among a large quantity of valuable information regarding the manufacturing sector in PA, the document also contains very pertinent data, providing a solid foundation for this recommendation. Relevant data regarding the impact of the PA manufacturing sector can also be found in A Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Economic Development in Pennsylvania 2024-2033.

To further illustrate the impact manufacturing has in PA, a Manufacturing Report furnished by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania states that the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from Manufacturing in 2023 was \$110.3 billion. Along with other significant history and data, Brookings provided research on Southeastern Pennsylvania market assessment for growing opportunity industries and economic mobility, stating that while Southeastern Pennsylvania continues to hold tremendous economic influence and innovative prowess, the sectors driving its regional economy are very different now than they were even three decades ago, further illustrating the need for continued support for awareness and visibility.

Two decades ago, there was an unfortunate steady decline in PA manufacturing sector interest, awareness, and popularity which was further exacerbated during the Great Recession of 2007-2009. On a positive note, the PA manufacturing sector emerged from the Great Recession, stronger and more vibrant. Following the Covid pandemic, the manufacturing sector began gaining even more forward momentum, but the manufacturing sector needs continued state support and statewide advocacy to maintain that

momentum. The PA WDB Manufacturing Committee is delighted that Governor Shapiro placed an emphasis on manufacturing, including it as one of the five priority sectors outlined in the Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Economic Development in Pennsylvania. However, regional and local activities to promote the sector continue to be stronger and more consistent than statewide support has historically been. As such, the PA WDB Manufacturing Committee recommends that the Governor's Office continues to prioritize support for, advocacy of and investment in, the manufacturing workforce sector.

This committee believes that the State must continue to strengthen regional manufacturing workforce pipelines through statewide programming as well as a community-based approach that ensures manufacturing jobs and careers are viable options for all students and job seekers alike. The networks of educators, employers, and advisors that are needed to create robust regional talent pipelines and strategies must be prioritized and supported by the state both financially and fundamentally. Additionally, there should be a continued focus on funding of statewide programs that nurture interest in manufacturing careers throughout the job seeker and student lifecycle – from middle school through high school and beyond, including an emphasis on expanding existing manufacturing sector competitions statewide for middle/high school students (e.g., BotsIQ in SW PA, What's So Cool About Manufacturing, Manufacturing Day) and create stronger connections with those programs to high school programming and manufacturing job placement.

The PA WDB Manufacturing Committee recommends the following:

- **Continue support for funding increases to the Workforce & Economic Development Network of Pennsylvania (WEDnetPA) as well as other relevant funding sources for incumbent worker training and the PA Industry Partnership Program to support critical incumbent worker training needs of Pennsylvania's manufacturers.**
- **Advocate for continued investment and funding, especially for high quality Career and Technical Education programs and career education for all students that is geared to the needs of 21st Century manufacturing.**
- **Active promotion and support of proven manufacturing promotional programs such as the annual BOTS IQ program, What's So Cool About Manufacturing video contest and the Manufacturing Dream Teams.**
- **Statewide level support for public information campaigns and strategies highlighting the quality career opportunities within the manufacturing sector that do not require a four-year college degree to get started.**

Progress Update: July 2026

- **Continue support for funding increases to the Workforce & Economic Development Network of Pennsylvania (WEDnetPA) as well as other relevant funding sources for incumbent worker training and the PA Industry Partnership Program to support critical incumbent worker training needs of Pennsylvania's manufacturers.**
 - a. In the Governor's FY26-27 budget, there is a proposed increase to the WEDnet program. The total amount being requested is \$12.5 M. The FY26-27 was signed into law on July 12th and funds \$8 M for the WEDnet Program.**
 - b. a. In the Governor's FY26-27 budget, there is a proposed increase to the PA Industry Partnership Program. The total amount being requested is \$6.3 M. The FY26-27 was**

- signed into law on July 12th and funds \$2.5 M for the PA Industry Partnership Program
- Advocate for continued investment and funding, especially for high quality Career and Technical Education programs and career education for all students that is geared to the needs of 21st Century manufacturing.
 - a. Advanced Manufacturing pathways one of the four career clusters prioritized for funding in the 2025 – 2026 PAsmart Innovation and Planning grant packages. These grant packages were available to partners across the Commonwealth. There were over 92 submissions and PDE is working to announce awards.
 - Active promotion and support of proven manufacturing promotional programs such as the annual BOTS IQ program, What's So Cool About Manufacturing video contest and the Manufacturing Dream Teams.
 - a. These initiatives are ongoing, but more at a local, regional level. Local Workforce Development Boards recruit businesses to be sponsors for local schools and students.
 - Statewide level support for public information campaigns and strategies highlighting the quality career opportunities within the manufacturing sector that do not require a four-year college degree to get started.
 - a. Similar to manufacturing programming (bullet 3), this work is happening more at the local level versus a statewide initiative, especially through Manufacturing Industry Partnerships. L&I will provide examples from manufacturing Industry Partnership programs after the annual report is submitted on August 15th, 2026.

November 2025

Reentry Committee Recommendation

An individual's employment status is one of the largest predictive factors as to whether or not a formerly incarcerated individual recidivates. According to the 2022 Recidivism Report issued by the Department of Corrections, individuals released from the Department under parole supervision and had no record of employment within the first 12 months of release had a recidivism rate of 72.8% which is approximately 16 percentage points higher than those with at least some employment (57.25%).

In order to legally work in the United States, "All U.S. employers must properly complete Form I-9 for every individual they hire for employment in the United States."² Included among acceptable I-9 verification documents are state issued driver's licenses or ID cards.

While ID cards are required to work, a valid driver's license is preferable, given that "77 percent of workers in the U.S. drive to work."³

In addition to the inability to find work, individuals also face significant barriers to education and training, obtaining housing, and meeting basic daily needs, without possessing valid, state issued, identification documents.

The most recent data provided to the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (2024 data) indicates that up to 28 percent of individuals who are released from State Correction Institutions have neither a Pennsylvania State ID nor a driver's license that was acquired during incarceration. Furthermore, no breakdown was provided on the proportion of individuals with IDs versus driver's licenses.

Given these facts, the Workforce Development Board asks the Administration to take the following actions:

- Provide the PA WDB, including the PA WDB Reentry Committee, with an accounting of the percentage of individuals that are released in the following categories:
 - Individuals who have a valid state issued driver's license
 - Individuals who have a valid state issued ID card
 - Individuals who leave SCI custody without state issued ID – for these individuals:
 - Identify the specific barriers that prevent the incarcerated individuals from acquiring the ID prior to release
 - Individuals who refused (have ID at home or other reason)
- Develop a formalized auditing process that will allow DOC to consistently evaluate performance, identify obstacles that hinder incarcerated individuals from obtaining identification documents, and ensure that these barriers are addressed effectively.
- Provide information to incarcerated individuals about the importance of acquiring and maintaining a valid ID

Progress Update: July 2026

PA DOC developed a training for staff on the importance of obtaining identification pre-release. This summer, 692 staff were trained and the training will be recorded for future staff to attend.

As for the tracking piece, PA DOC is currently working to revise how the data is tracked. Once PA DOC has the revised report, they will be able to start sharing in DOC's quarterly report out.

February 2026

Draft recommendation from Apprenticeship & CTE Committee: Redesign how a skilled industry professional becomes a qualified CTE educator in Pennsylvania.

The Board urges the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to redesign the process of becoming a certified career & technical education (CTE) teacher.

We aim to address factors that limit the number of certified career & technical educators, which in turn limits students' access to high-quality CTE and employers' access to a well-educated workforce. Our first point highlights an earn-while-you-learn model for prospective teachers. Our second recommendation would make it easier to seek Level 1 certification to limit the use of emergency teaching permits and help dedicated and willing CTE teachers stay in the classroom. Our third would open the possibility of teaching to more professionals and shorten the timeline to becoming a certified teacher for people already on that path. Our fourth and fifth points would ensure that in the time prospective teachers spend in that preparation pathway, every hour has direct impact on their classroom instruction, to make the best use of their time and improve the quality of teaching their students receive. Finally, we recommend ongoing study and testing to continue to improve the CTE system.

- 1. Prioritize the development of registered apprenticeship as an alternative postsecondary pathway to a career as a CTE teacher.**
- 2. Recognize industry experience and credentials to broaden the ways an industry expert can gain Career and Technical Instructional 1 Certification. For example, consider Related Technical Instruction hours of a Registered Apprenticeship graduate as postsecondary educational credit.**
- 3. Support the implementation of changes within PDE's authority and publicize them to prospective teacher candidates. For example, make it well known that prospective CTE educators may now demonstrate an appropriate industry certification in place of taking a skill exam, and ensure that this is straightforward for candidates to do.**
- 4. Revise or re-sequence teacher preparation programs' initial CTE teacher preparation coursework so that the first 18 credits focus on key teaching skills, especially math and reading pedagogy.**
- 5. Expand the instructional coaching pilot, and increase opportunities for new CTE teachers to participate in mentorship.**
- 6. Continue to research and test changes to pathways to becoming and remaining a licensed CTE teacher that simplify the process while ensuring instructors' professional expertise and supporting instructional quality, and report ongoing progress to the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board. For example: create job-shadowing opportunities where interested industry professionals can explore a career as a CTE teacher; explore how school-based induction could accelerate obtaining permanent/Level II certification; facilitate peer-to-peer learning to help instructors stay on the cutting edge of their trade; explore how to address the issue of salary competitiveness.**

Progress:

Based on the update from Apprenticeship & CTE Committee Recommendation, there are currently 35 apprenticeship programs approved for building the educator workforce. The programs are focused on elementary, early childhood, and special education. There is not currently an approved CTE program, however they are in the works. They are exploring opportunities for industry experiences and credentials to count. Committee is having conversation with the Office of Higher Education and Department of Labor. Supporting and publicizing within PDE's authority change was made in school code negotiations for ACT 47 and is currently being operationalized for emerging educators. Now an educator could use their industry credentials as a pathway and / or take the skills

exam. This flexibility provides multiple pathways for educators to reach certification. Currently the CTE teacher preparation competency is getting reviewed and rewritten by a statewide committee. This will lead to a reprioritization of what is taught and when it is taught. It will also require each of the programs to re-apply through the Office of Higher Education to ensure their programs align with and meet the vision of the new competencies.

This past year they have supported 9 institutions with their “Instructional Coaching Pilot”. They are considering expansion of the Pilot project including more schools, more coaches, and more opportunities for participating educators and leaders to connect. Also, the PDE is exploring a variety of new pathways for building the CTE educator workforce including a pathway for new graduates of a CTE program at the secondary level to become an educator. The Bureau of Career and Technical Education is also working with local schools to assess related areas (educators with instructional certifications) that could potentially teach a CTE program. Committee has reviewed and approved several cases that are opening opportunities for different certifications to teach CTE programs.

Progress Update: July 2026

BCTE in collaboration with Office of Higher Education has worked to modernize the standards being used to develop and design certification programs at the Commonwealth’s Institutes of Higher Education. The modernized standards are designed to better prepare industry professionals with the knowledge and skills to train the next generation of skilled trades professionals. The updated standards will lead to a modernization of certification programs for CTE educators.

BCTE in collaboration with Office of Higher Education has modernized guidance and provided regulatory recommendations that now allow Pennsylvania Intermediate Units to offer Post-Baccalaureate programs for certifying CTE educators.

In the past year the three workforce development centers at Temple University, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and Pennsylvania State University along with Point Park University are serving 136 individuals holding an Experience Based credential. This group of IHE’s has helped 53 educators convert their certification from level I to level II. The areas with the highest concentration of emerging educators are cosmetology, automotive, culinary, and health related technologies.

May 2026

Barrier Remediation Committee - Establish a website that consolidate information for employers about hiring incentives to support individuals with barriers to employment.

Employers across the commonwealth play a critical role in expanding employment opportunities for individuals who experience barriers to work, including people with disabilities, justice-impacted individuals, veterans, individuals receiving public benefits, and others navigating structural barriers to employment. The Commonwealth has developed a range of incentives to support employers in hiring and supporting individuals who are in these populations, including tax credits, wage subsidies, training reimbursements and other workforce development supports. However, these incentives are often underutilized due to fragmented information systems, and limited awareness.

The challenge is evidenced by:

- Incentives being spread across multiple agencies and programs – employers often must navigate multiple websites to identify the full scope of credits that are potentially available to them, adding layers of administrative complexity.
- Awareness of incentives remain low – [national survey have found](#) that many employers are unfamiliar with key incentives to support individuals with barriers to employment. This is particularly true of small and mid-sized employers.

To address these challenges, the Commonwealth should establish a centralized website that provides employers with clear, cross-agency information about tax and hiring incentives that are designed to support individuals with barriers to employment. The website can be embedded into existing locations where employers liaise with the Commonwealth; for example, [PA CareerLink employer resources](#), and DCED's [business one stop shop business.pa.gov](#). These can function as a single entry point for employers, helping them easily identify available incentives, understand eligibility requirements, and access assistance for participation. By simplifying access to information the commonwealth can help more employers take advantage of the programs that support inclusive hiring and strengthen Pennsylvania's workforce.

This recommendation supports [WIOA Combined State Plan](#) sub-goal 5.5 to invest in regional and local strategies that address multiple, individual, or community-wide barriers to employment through applying supportive service funds, braiding funds, program cost sharing, cross-training staff, and other means of coordination and collaboration across sectors and state agencies.

Progress Update: July 2026

PA WDB Staff met with Leora Appleby, Director of the PA Business One-Stop Shop in July. Her office oversees the <https://business.pa.gov/> web site that contains many of the features advocated for in this recommendation. Additionally, Labor & Industry recently developed a "Business Services Guide" which is now available on the PA Business One-Stop Shop site. This site also lists workforce development and other business-related grant opportunities across commonwealth agencies. Finally, as new resources are developed and identified, the team at PA Business One-Stop is committed to including these resources among those on the site.