

# PA EdVentures



## October's EdVentures: National Civics Bee, Rain Poetry Toolkit, & Early Intervention Services!

In October, Acting Secretary Rowe kicked off the [inaugural Keystone STEM Challenge](#) with students in central PA by engaging learners in offering hands-on educational experiences with practical, real-world applications. We also congratulated [two Pennsylvania students for being named US Presidential Scholars](#), and [celebrated the Governor's Breakfast Champions](#) during an event at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia.

This month, [the Office of School Climate and Well-Being](#) also hosted the first-ever Student Symposium in Erie with over 20 different schools represented from the region and over 200 attendees. Students were able to converse with PDE team members surrounding themes of belonging, access, and opportunities.



## Free Hotline for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Now Available

In September, the Department of Aging announced the expansion of a free legal service and referral resource to support grandparents raising grandchildren across the Commonwealth. **The PA Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Legal Line** is a first-of-its-kind phone service staffed by attorneys at SeniorLAW Center who will offer legal information, advice and referrals as well as services for older caregivers who need support in custody or other legal areas involving kinship care.

By calling SeniorLAW Center at **1-877-727-7529**, older caregivers can receive free advice and counsel on a variety of civil matters, including custody and dependency; support in representing themselves in family court, such as help with preparing necessary documents; information on kinship caregivers, support groups, and other resources. A grant from the Department of Aging has enabled this service to expand from serving the Philadelphia region, to now serving all 67 counties in the Commonwealth.

# Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

The Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), established in 2008, oversees the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. With all 50 states and D.C. as members, along with six ex-officio representatives including the U.S. Department of Defense, MIC3 works to ease school transitions for military and uniformed-service-connected students worldwide.

The Compact addresses common challenges related to eligibility, enrollment, placement, and graduation for students as they move between states and school systems. By providing consistent policies across member states and districts, MIC3 helps ensure educational continuity for military families.

Eligible students include Children of active-duty members of the uniformed services, National Guard and Reserve on active-duty orders, commissioned officers of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the United States Public Health Service (USPHS), and members or veterans who are medically discharged or retired for one year are eligible for assistance under the Compact. The Compact also covers students of members who perish on active duty for a period of one year following their death.

You can visit the [PDE Military webpage](#) for more information regarding support for Military Families. If you have questions, please contact [RA-edmilitaryfamk12@pa.gov](mailto:RA-edmilitaryfamk12@pa.gov).



## ICYMI: Free Online Training for New Drivers in Pennsylvania

ICYMI: Last week was National Teen Driver Safety Week! Teen drivers can increase their safety behind the wheel with the New Driver Work Zone Safety Program. Developed jointly by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, the program teaches new drivers how to navigate work zones safely and confidently.

The free 35-minute online course emphasizes 'the why' behind work zone safety for drivers and for the road crews working alongside traffic.

The course covers key aspects of work zone safety, including driving practices in work zones, real-life scenarios drivers might encounter, and work zone laws.

Work zones can be hazardous for both drivers and workers, but by understanding our state's work zone laws, we can prepare Pennsylvanians to safely navigate the road ahead. To learn more and take the course today, visit the [New Driver Work Zone Safety Program webpage](#).

# Information about SNAP Benefits

Earlier this month, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) notified Pennsylvania that it will be unable to fund November SNAP benefits because of the federal shutdown. The 2025-26 LIHEAP season is also delayed until federal funding is received.

More information is available on the [PA Department of Human Services website](#).

For immediate needs during the shutdown, Pennsylvanians can use [PA Navigate](#) to help find food and other resources. Local help is also available by visiting [www.pa211.org](http://www.pa211.org). Pennsylvanians can also visit [www.feedingpa.org](http://www.feedingpa.org) to find local food banks and other food assistance programs. Many electric and gas companies offer utility assistance programs for qualifying customers, so Pennsylvanians can contact their utilities or visit the [PA PUC's utility assistance website](#) for more information.



## PA State & National Civics Bee Information

The PA Chamber Foundation announced that the application period for middle school students to submit essays for the 2026 National Civics Bee® Pennsylvania State Finals is now open!

The [National Civics Bee®](#) is a nonpartisan competition led by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation that encourages young Americans to engage in civics, contribute to their communities, and highlight their passion for civics education to their peers. The PA Chamber Foundation has coordinated with the U.S. Chamber Foundation and local chambers across Pennsylvania to host the National Civics Bee® Pennsylvania State Finals since 2023, where participating 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students have flexed their civics knowledge to win recognition and cash prizes.

The portal for the 2026 Civics Bee essay submission is open for all 6th, 7th and 8th grade students in the Commonwealth to apply. All students must apply by **February 3, 2026**. Participation is free. Local Civics Bee finalists will advance to the 2026 National Civics Bee® Pennsylvania State Finals next year at a date and location that will be announced soon.

To learn more and submit your essay, please visit [the National Civics Bee website](#).

[Civics Bee Educator Toolkit](#)



# Rain Poetry Toolkit Now Live

[\*\*Rain Poetry\*\*](#) is a creative project that combines the humanities and creative placemaking to engage youth ages 8 -18 through hands-on poetry workshops and community installations. Youth learn about haiku, write their own poems, and see them come to life in public spaces, like parks and libraries, using a special water-activated solution that makes the words appear as if by magic when wet.

The project inspires self-expression, celebrates young voices, and transforms everyday places into opportunities for connection and creativity. Since launching in Philadelphia in 2023, Rain Poetry has expanded to Pittsburgh, Johnstown and Reading. Now we're sharing the framework and learnings statewide!

This [\*\*free resource\*\*](#) was inspired by the creativity and dedication of communities across Pennsylvania that brought Rain Poetry to life. It includes photos, insights, and practical tips to help schools, libraries, arts organizations, and community groups launch their own Rain Poetry projects.

In addition, PA Humanities is launching a special grant opportunity to support new projects across the state. They are holding a [\*\*Rain Poetry Informational Webinar on November 6 at 12:00 p.m.\*\*](#) for potential applicants. The session will preview the toolkit, go behind the scenes of Rain Poetry, and outline how to apply for a grant to start a project in your community.

## Virtual Parent Cafes for Early Intervention Services

OCDEL's Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports is providing virtual Parent Cafés on October 30th 11 AM – 1 PM and November 18th 6 – 8 PM for families with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers receiving Early Intervention Services or Family Support programs. Parent Café conversations are between families and focused on the Strengthening Families Protective Factors (SFPF). More information on the SFPF framework can be found at the [\*\*Strengthening Families - Center for the Study of Social Policy webpage\*\*](#).



## Community Bank Case Study Competition Information

The PA Department of Banking and Securities requests your assistance in promoting the **2026 Conference of State Bank Supervisors (CSBS) Community Bank Case Study Competition** to university students and their professors, as well as community banks.

The nationwide competition provides undergraduate students in all fields of study an opportunity to gain valuable, first-hand knowledge of the banking industry. The competition pairs student teams with community banks to conduct original case studies focused on timely topics.

University professors interested in sponsoring a student team must submit a [\*\*statement of interest\*\*](#) by Friday, **December 19, 2025**.

For more information on the bank case study competition, visit the [\*\*CSBS Case Study Competition webpage\*\*](#).

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