

Governor Tom Wolf addresses key workforce challenges for both career seeker and employer in latest state budget address

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PHILADELPHIA – On Tuesday, February 4, Governor Tom Wolf delivered his 2020-2021 Pennsylvania budget address. His proposed \$36 billion budget addressed several economic matters from education and the arts to fair wages and gun violence; however, there was a welcomed focus on workforce, as he prioritized addressing the state-wide barriers to economic development and success.

Key workforce challenges were outlined by the Governor’s [Keystone Economic Development and Workforce Command Center](#), a strategic public-private partnership created by Gov. Wolf in February of 2019. Access to affordable childcare, transportation access, assistance to the re-entry population, outdated and cumbersome licensure requirements, and gaps in workforce training were prioritized.

“Our local workforce system is excited to see these additional resources targeted towards combating a number of barriers that often impeded our residents from navigating local workforce opportunities successfully,” said H. Patrick Clancy, President and CEO at Philadelphia Works, the city’s Workforce Development Board. “As Governor Wolf and his administration continue to strategically prioritize workforce, we will support his vision of strengthening Pennsylvania, by continuing to prepare our Philadelphia residents for the future of work.

On January 27, Gov. Wolf delivered a [preliminary address solely focused on workforce funding and strategy](#). He proposed a collective \$26 million towards addressing employment barriers (\$14 million towards Command Center recommendations and \$12 million through a competitive grant program from the Department of Community and Economic Development) and a \$2 million increase for WEDnetPA, which helps businesses with training needs upskill existing employees.

Additionally, the funding would build upon recent investments already made to [fully fund PAsmart grants](#), of which [Philadelphia workforce stakeholders have received \\$2.5 million](#) to support innovative approaches to career and technical centers, industry partnerships, and apprenticeships; all which provide the training needed to prepare

residents now for the jobs of tomorrow.

“Addressing the barriers that prevent Philadelphians from accessing meaningful career opportunities is a central piece of our citywide workforce strategy,” said Sheila Ireland, Executive Director of the City of Philadelphia’s Office of Workforce Development. “It is critical that our citywide public-private partnership continues to build innovative solutions, so all residents can obtain the skills to compete for sustainable careers, and employers have the workforce they need to compete in the global economy. We are thrilled about Governor Wolf’s proposed new investments toward strengthening the Commonwealth’s workforce and grateful for the opportunity to advance Philadelphia’s momentum.”

The Governor’s proposed additional resources will help Philadelphia workforce stakeholders further address many of the recommendations put forth in [Fueling Philadelphia’s Talent Engine](#), the citywide workforce development strategy released in 2018. The strategy focuses on three main goals: preparing Philadelphia residents with the skills employers need; addressing barriers to career opportunities; and building a workforce system that is more coordinated and effective.

<https://newsroom.philaworks.org/2020-02-07-Governor-Tom-Wolf-addresses-key-workforce-challenges-for-both-career-seeker-and-employer-in-latest-state-budget-address>