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**Governor Wolf Signs Executive Order to Improve Job, Skills Training as Part of PAsmart Initiative**

*Microsoft, Labor and Business Leaders, Wolf Cabinet Celebrate Innovative \$30 million Investment in a 21st Century Workforce*

**YORK, Pa.** – Governor Tom Wolf was joined by labor and business leaders, including Microsoft, and several cabinet secretaries today to launch the next phase of PAsmart, a first-of-its-kind \$30 million investment in workforce development. During the press conference in York, the governor signed an executive order to cut red tape and improve coordination between several state agencies to more effectively deliver workforce development services to Pennsylvanians.

“PAsmart is bringing together labor, industry, the tech sector, education, state government and more to connect people of all ages with STEM and computer science education, apprenticeships and other training needed to get good, middle class jobs,” said Governor Wolf. “By listening to workers and businesses, we will focus job training on in-demand jobs, create a talented workforce, and grow the economy for everyone.”

PAsmart is built on recommendations of the governor’s Middle Class Task Force, which last year brought together the leaders from the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry, education, and workforce development. The task force held listening sessions throughout the commonwealth and heard a clear message: There are jobs without trained people to fill them and some workers need new skills, but a four-year college is not for everyone and a one-size fits-all approach will not work.

“PAsmart is the result of stakeholders collaborating to equip current and future working Pennsylvanians with the skills they need in the 21st Century workforce,” said Pennsylvania AFL-CIO President Rick Bloomingdale. “This proactive response to Pennsylvania’s needs encourages comprehensive investment in our workforce through results-oriented approaches like high-quality apprenticeships and training programs that develop a worker’s skills while they earn a living wage. Governor Wolf’s PAsmart initiative and his bold efforts in workforce development breaks down bureaucratic barriers to promote innovation.”

“One of the consistent themes that came before the Middle Class Task Force was the need to strengthen workforce development programs in the Commonwealth,” said PA Chamber President and CEO Gene Barr. “Pennsylvania’s diverse employment needs across a wide

range of industries provide ample job opportunities. However, the existing jobs skills gap within our workforce makes it difficult for employers to find qualified job candidates. Working together, business; labor; the education community and state government can strengthen workforce development programs and meet the needs of Pennsylvania's changing workforce."

### **PAsmart invests \$20 million in computer science and STEM learning**

The demand for jobs in science, engineering, math and technology (STEM) and computer science is rapidly growing. An estimated 700,000 STEM jobs will be available in Pennsylvania this year, and over the next decade, seven in 10 new jobs will require workers to use computers and new technologies in a constantly changing economy.

PAsmart will:

- Increase STEM and computer science training for K-12 students;
- Increase the number of STEM and computer science educators;

"Investments in computer science education sustain American innovation," said Allyson Knox, Senior Director of Education Policy with Microsoft. "PAsmart will help train teachers and expand access to computer science education for all Pennsylvania students, ensuring they have access to the skills needed for the modern workplace. We applaud the leadership of Governor Wolf and the Pennsylvania legislature."

Earlier this year the State Board of Education, acting on the governor's request to make computer science education available to all students, endorsed the Computer Science Teacher Association (CSTA) K-12 Standards. In STEM training, Pennsylvania is a national leader, ranking fifth for the number of STEM graduates and is home to five STEM learning ecosystems.

### **PAsmart invests \$10 million in apprenticeships, job training**

To develop a stronger workforce pipeline, by 2025, the governor has set a goal of increasing the number of workers with training after high school from 47 percent today to 60 percent, as well as doubling the number of registered apprentices.

PAsmart will:

- Invest \$7 million to expand apprenticeships in traditional and non-traditional occupations, including youth pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeships at high schools and career and technical centers, and encourage businesses, community colleges and other higher education providers to expand registered apprenticeships and work-based learning experiences for adults.
- Provide \$3 million increase to build on the Department of Labor and Industry's successful Industry Partnerships program, which connects similar businesses with educational and economic development partners to provide the job training.

### **Executive Order Enhances Workforce Development**

The governor signed the [executive order](#) at the York Campus of HACC, Central Pennsylvania's Community College. The executive order places the Pennsylvania Workforce Development

Board (PA WDB), the governor's private sector policy advisor, in a leading role to coordinate job training strategies across the public and private sectors and multiple state agencies.

The PA WDB ensures the workforce development system is meeting employers' needs for skilled workers and workers' needs for career and economic advancement. The majority of board members are business leaders. Other members include labor officials, education leaders, economic development practitioners, local elected officials and the secretaries of the departments of Aging, Agriculture, Community and Economic Development, Corrections, Education, Human Services and Labor and Industry, and Policy and Planning.

Under the executive order the PA WDB will:

- Report to the Governor Office.
- Improve coordination among state agencies to provide the most effective services.
- Add the departments of Aging and Corrections, to increase access to apprenticeships and job training for older workers and to help reentrants get the skills for meaningful employment.
- Develop stronger reporting requirements and use data to create policies, initiatives, strategies, and programs.

"I applaud Governor Wolf for his leadership in developing the innovative PAsmart initiative," said Jeff Brown, Chairman of the PA WDB and owner of Brown's Super Stores, Inc in the Delaware Valley. "We believe this effort will result in high-quality jobs for Pennsylvania's workers, while also supporting businesses' growing need for skilled workers. The Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board is excited about its role in implementing this initiative in a coordinated, strategic way."

Additionally, the PA WDB will provide recommendations on the distribution of the \$30 million in PAsmart funding, which will be driven out through a competitive grants process. Organizations that will be eligible to apply include: local education agencies; intermediate units; postsecondary institutions; local workforce development boards; public libraries; employers; labor organizations; chambers of commerce; after-school providers; education, training and workforce providers; nonprofits; community organizations, and others.

NOTE: Video, audio, and photos from this event will be available for download later today in an email from the Pennsylvania Internet News Service (PINS). To register for PINS emails contact, [cms@pacast.com](mailto:cms@pacast.com).

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