

2025 Warren Co Resource Guide



PA WILDS CENTER
FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP



WARREN COUNTY RESOURCE GUIDE

Below is a listing of programs available to place-based businesses, entrepreneurs, nonprofits and governments in Warren County, including business loans, grants and tax credit programs, technical assistance, marketing resources and recognition programs.

Some grant programs may require collaboration with a nonprofit organization. Every effort is made to ensure that program details are current, but applicants should double-check information with program managers before applying. Programs may have additional requirements.

Inclusion here does not imply endorsement.

Have an update or a new program you think should be listed here? Email details to wildscopa@pawildscenter.org.

Don't see your organization in the list? Join the Wilds Cooperative of Pennsylvania today by going to www.wildscopa.org/join/resource-partners-join/

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BUSINESS LOANS

Ben Franklin Technology Partners: The award-winning Ben Franklin Technology Partners is one of the nation's longest-running technology-based economic development programs. For over 31 years, BFTP has provided early-stage and established companies with funding, business and technical expertise and access to a network of innovative, expert resources. BFTP couples its financial commitment with access to a wide range of mentoring, business and technology development services. BFTP delivers hands-on technical and business expertise, providing both early-stage and established companies with a wide range of business and technical assistance. This includes business plan reviews, technical assessments, intellectual property counsel, marketing advice, operations and fund-raising strategies. Find out more at www.benfranklin.org/about/.



Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority: Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority (PIDA) provides low-interest loans and lines of credit through Certified Economic Development Organizations (CEDOs) to eligible businesses. Eligible industry sectors include agricultural, child daycare, computer-related service enterprises, construction, defense conversion, research and development, recycling, industrial, mining, hospitality, manufacturing, Keystone Innovation Zone Companies, developer, and services that commit to creating and/or retaining jobs. Funding is also available for the development of industrial parks and multi-tenant facilities. PIDA funds may be used concurrently with private financing, state financing programs and programs managed by local economic development providers. Term loans are available for land & building costs as well as machinery & equipment purchases. As a CEDO, the Northwest Commission assists administering the program on behalf of PIDA to eligible businesses within its eight-county region including Clarion, Forest, and Warren Counties. For more information on eligibility and program terms, visit www.northwestpa.org/business_development/business_financing/pida_loan.php or contact the Loan Program Manager, Rebecca Beach, at 814-677-4800 x115 or rebeccab@northwestpa.org for details on applying.

Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning & Development Commission: The Northwest Commission is based in Oil City and offers a variety of loans to for-profit businesses with less than 100 employees where assets and job benefits are located in its footprint area. Northwest Commission serves an eight-county region that includes the Wilds counties of Clarion, Forest, and Warren. Loans can be used for land & building purchases, new and used machinery & equipment purchases, and working capital. The loan program requires a 1:1 private sector match and borrower injection. Depending on the loan fund, one full-time job must be created and/or retained for every \$25,000 or \$50,000 borrowed. For more information on eligibility requirements, visit www.northwestpa.org/business_development/business_financing. For current interest rates and/or to apply, please contact the Loan Program Manager, Rebecca Beach, at 814-677-4800 x115 or rebeccab@northwestpa.org.

The PennCAP Program: The Pennsylvania Capital Access Program (PennCAP) provides a loan guarantee for all businesses with capital needs through participating banks. The Pennsylvania Economic Development Financing Authority (PEDFA) provides capital to guarantee loans made through participating lending institutions in conjunction with the program. The program is a partnership between the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and participating PennCAP banks. Most companies authorized to do business in Pennsylvania will qualify for a PennCAP loan. Start-up businesses may be financed through PennCAP. PennCAP proceeds can be used for the purchase of land, buildings, machinery, equipment and working capital. The maximum PennCAP loan amount is \$75,000. Minimum loan amounts are established by each participating bank. To learn more information about the PennCAP Program, please visit www.dced.pa.gov/programs/pennsylvania-capital-access-program-penncap/

The Progress Fund: The Progress Fund is a non-profit financial institution based in Southwestern Pennsylvania but offers loans across the PA Wilds region. The Progress Fund specializes in loaning to tourism businesses. Learn more at www.progressfund.org or call 724-216-9160.



Rural Energy for America Program (REAP): REAP provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers with at least half of their gross income coming from the agricultural operation and rural small businesses in a town with a population of fewer than 50,000 inhabitants to purchase or install renewable energy systems, or make energy efficiency improvements. Energy efficiency projects require an energy audit or assessment completed by an independent third party. Applications can be submitted any time throughout the year but will be evaluated and awarded after various deadlines. Learn more by going to www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/energy-programs/rural-energy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energy-efficiency-improvement-guaranteed-loans

SBA 504 Loan Program: This loan is for businesses with a net worth less than \$20 million and profit after tax less than \$6.5 million. Funds can be used for acquisition of owner-occupied real estate, new construction, site improvements, building renovations, machinery and equipment, eligible refinancing of existing commercial real estate and eligible equipment debt. Loans cannot be used for working capital, venture capital or investment purposes. Gross amount of the loan can be up to \$5,000,000 for regular loans, \$5,500,000 for Public Policy Goal loans, and \$5,500,000 for small manufacturers or 40% of the total eligible project costs, whichever is less. For more information about the interest rates, terms, and equity requirements, call 570-524-4491 or visit www.sedacogldc.org.

Small Business Pollution Prevention Assistance Account (PPAA) Loan Program: PPAA provides low interest loans to small businesses undertaking projects (located within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania) that reduce waste, pollution or energy use. Loans will be used to fund 75 percent of the total eligible project cost, up to a maximum of \$100,000. Small businesses with 100 or fewer full-time employees are eligible. The loan interest rate is 2% and has a maximum term of 10 years. This funding can help small businesses comply with environmental regulations while receiving the economic benefits of preventing pollution and using energy more efficiently. For additional information please visit www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/GrantsLoansRebates

GRANTS AND TAX CREDITS

Act 129 Rebates: Pennsylvania utilities have energy incentive programs under Act 129 that provide rebates for the purchase of new energy-efficient equipment for lighting systems, HVAC, motors, and other equipment. The final rebate amount is determined for each project individually but generally ranges from \$0.025/kWh to \$0.05/kWh of energy saved. Pre-approval is recommended for all projects prior to commencing construction. Based on the utility company that covers your area, you can learn more at any of the following websites: FirstEnergy PA <https://www.energysavepa-bizsolutions.com/>
PPL Electric <https://www.pplelectricbusinesssavings.com/>

Challenge America Grant Program – The National Endowment for the Arts: The Challenge America grant offers support primarily to small nonprofit, state or local government funded, and federally recognized tribal



community organizations for projects that extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations – those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability. Age alone (e.g., youth, seniors) does not qualify a group as underserved; at least one underserved characteristic noted above also must be present. Challenge America grants are limited to specific types of projects and are for a fixed amount of \$10,000 and require a minimum \$10,000 match. Project activities may include audience and community engagement, including educational activities; arts programming, including the commissioning or presentation of artists or artwork; marketing and promotional activities; and organizational planning, among others. A policy limits those recommended for certain awards within the last three fiscal years from receiving funding. To learn more, visit www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/challenge-america/grant-program-description.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program: This program offers federal income tax credits as an incentive for private property owners to rehabilitate historic properties. Generally speaking, if you rehab the building to the requirements you're eligible to get 10 to 20 percent of your costs returned at tax time. This program does not provide funding up front. It is important to research and apply to this program prior to starting work. The National Park Service administers this program at the federal level. To learn more, please visit www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm for details.

FirstEnergy Foundation Grants: FirstEnergy Foundation is the giving arm for Penelec's and West Penn Power's parent company. Penelec serves Clearfield, Forest, Tioga, Warren and parts of Centre, Clarion, Jefferson, Lycoming, McKean and Potter Counties. West Penn Power serves all of Cameron County, as well as parts of Centre, Clarion, Clinton, Elk, Jefferson, Lycoming, McKean and Potter Counties. The FirstEnergy Foundation's contributions to local nonprofit organizations help strengthen the social and economic fabric of the communities it serves. The FirstEnergy Foundation priorities include improving the quality of life in communities and supporting key safety initiatives, empowering communities' workforce development and educational initiatives, promoting local and regional economic development, and supporting employee leadership and volunteer interests that align with their business interests. Backed by a vision to invest in transformative organizations that enhance the vitality, sustainability and diversity of the communities it serves, FirstEnergy Foundation grants support nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations within the [FirstEnergy operating companies' service areas](http://www.firstenergycorp.com/community/firstenergy_foundation.html). Learn more at www.firstenergycorp.com/community/firstenergy_foundation.html.

Grants for Arts Projects – The National Endowment for the Arts: The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Grants for Arts Projects provides funding for public engagement with the arts and arts education, for the integration of the arts with strategies promoting the health and well-being of people and communities, and for the improvement of overall capacity and capabilities within the arts sector. First-time and returning applicants may be from organizations with any sized operating budgets serving communities of all sizes. Arts projects funded may be in disciplines including artist communities, arts education, dance, design, film and media arts, folk and traditional arts, literary arts, local arts agencies, museums, music, musical theater, opera, presenting and multidisciplinary works, theater, and visual arts. Grants generally range from \$10,000 to \$100,000 with \$30,000 to \$150,000 for designated local arts agencies eligible for subgranting programs. A cost share/match is required. Visit www.arts.gov/grants/grants-for-arts-projects to learn more.



Lumber Heritage Region Mini Grants: The Lumber Heritage Region of PA, Inc. occasionally offers a mini-grant program for eligible projects throughout the region. Funding for the Lumber Heritage Region, LHR, Mini-Grant Program is provided through the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (BRC) and thus must adhere to all statewide rules and regulations. Eligible applicants for the program would include nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations, municipalities, COG's, Conservation Districts, Educational Institutions, and Housing and Redevelopment Authorities. The project must be located within the Lumber Heritage Region boundaries. To learn more, visit the Lumber Heritage Region mini-grants page at <https://lumberheritage.org/category/mini-grants/>.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR): Dedicated to serving Pennsylvanians with disabilities who want to work, the OVR provides a wide range of services just for employers to meet recruitment and hiring needs. The OVR matches prescreened, qualified candidates to business requirements, and provides follow-up and support to make sure both the employee and the employer are satisfied. In addition to offering on-the-job training and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) technical assistance among other employer services and business incentives, they also offer tax breaks for hiring persons with disabilities and for making improvements to facilities making them accessible to persons with disabilities:

- **Disabled Tax Credit:** The Disabled Tax Credit is specifically geared to eligible small businesses for meeting increased expenses incurred in complying with the ADA. To qualify, a business must have fewer than 30 employees or a gross yearly income of less than \$1 million. The maximum that can be claimed in any tax year under this provision is \$5,125, as the allowable amount of tax credit is equal to 50 percent of the expenditures in excess of \$250, but not more than \$10,250. Eligible expenditures may include removing architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, providing qualified readers, taped texts, interpreters, the myriad of technical assistive devices, and offsetting the purchase or modification of equipment and devices for individuals with disabilities.
- **Architectural and Transportation Barrier Removal Tax Deduction:** Any private business may claim up to \$15,000 per tax year for making its premises or public transportation vehicles more accessible to persons with disabilities or the elderly. Eligible expenditures may include installing ramps, widening doorways, modifying restrooms, or equipping a shuttle van with a lift.

For more information about these tax breaks and other OVR benefits and services, contact an Employer Representative at one of the two District Offices listed below that serves the Pennsylvania Wilds area to find out more.

- Erie Blindness & Visual Services (Serving Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Elk, Forest, Jefferson, McKean, Potter and Warren counties) at 4200 Lovell Place, Erie, PA 16503, or phone 814-871-4401 Voice, 814-871-4599 TTY, 866-521-5073 Voice (Toll-free within PA) or 888-884-5513 TTY (Toll-free within PA).
- Erie Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Serving Clarion, Forest and Warren counties) at 3200 Lovell Place, Erie, PA 16503, or phone 814-871-4551 Voice, 814-871-4535 TTY, 800-541-0721 Voice (Toll-free within PA), 888-217-1710 TTY (Toll-free within PA), or 814-240-2477 Video Phone.



The Our Town Grant Program – The National Endowment for the Arts – Supports creative placemaking projects that integrate arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities over the long term through project-based funding or provide opportunities for the arts to be integrated into the fabric of a community by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social improvements. Creative placemaking is when artists, organizations, and community development practitioners deliberately integrate arts and culture into community revitalization work. This funding supports strategies that are responsive to unique local conditions, that develop meaningful and substantive engagement in communities, that center equity, that advance artful lives, and that lay the groundwork for long-term systems change. Our Town requires a partnership between a local government entity and nonprofit organization and requires an arts, design, or cultural partner that can be either the government entity, nonprofit or an additional partner. Applicant organizations must have completed at least three years of arts programming prior to the application deadline. Our Town offers support for projects with matching grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$150,000. Learn more about this program by visiting www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/introduction.

PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR): DCNR offers competitive grant opportunities that may be of interest to local governments and recreation and conservation organizations through its Community Conservation and Partnerships Program (C2P2). C2P2 grants fund projects related to parks, recreation and conservation, including planning, acquisition, and development of public parks; recreation areas; motorized and non-motorized trails; river conservation and access; conservation of open space; and community and watershed forestry. Grants also support regional and statewide partnerships that build capacity to better develop and manage resources. Applications for DCNR's C2P2 grants are accepted once a year, typically during the spring. In addition, DCNR also offers special grants periodically. Learn more at <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/programs-and-services/grants.html>, or by contacting customer service by calling (800) 326-7734 or by emailing DCNR-Grants@pa.gov

PAsmart Industry Partnership Grants: Through Industry Partnerships (IPs), businesses are partnering to build stronger, more competitive industries through training, networking, recruitment, and collaboration to raise career and industry awareness. PAsmart Industry Partnership grants offer funds to support the development, launch, implementation, and technical assistance of IPs that are demand-driven in addressing the workforce, economic development, and educational needs of Pennsylvania industries. For more information about Industry Partnerships, contact Michelle Lengel at miclengel@pa.gov or at 717-787-2368, or visit www.dli.pa.gov/Businesses/Workforce-Development/Pages/Industry-Partnerships.aspx for more resources.

Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA) – Is a partnership between local organizations and Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA), a state agency whose mission is to strengthen the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of Pennsylvania communities through the arts. Administered by 14 local partners statewide, the PPA regional re-granting program assists PCA in allocating state arts funds to support a variety of local and community arts activities. PPA offers the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator (CEA) Program, which is designed to pair access to existing small business consulting services with financial resources up to \$2,000 for PA creative entrepreneurs who aspire to start their own for-profit business or who operate an existing for-profit



micro business within at least one creative industry area, which include marketing, architecture, visual arts and crafts, design, film and media, digital games, music and entertainment, and publishing. With the PCA's overarching value of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the CEA Program prioritizes investment in creative entrepreneurs who identify as Black, Indigenous, or persons of color or those located in and whose work benefits low-income communities. Learn more on the [CEAP](http://www.arts.pa.gov) website at www.arts.pa.gov, or reach out to your local PPA Partner, [Erie Arts & Culture](http://erieartsandculture.org), by contacting Casey Corritore at 814-452-3427 ext. 108, casey@erieartsandculture.org, or The Studios at St. Mary's, 310 East 10th Street, Erie, PA 16503.

PennTAP Energy Grants and Rebates: The Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Program (PennTAP) at Penn State is a statewide organization with a network of expert technical advisors that supports Pennsylvania businesses — including manufacturers, municipalities, educational institutions, entrepreneurs, farmers, and economic development agencies. The PennTAP team can assist with opportunities for funding related to efforts to improve efficiency and reduce energy-related costs, which often require investment in new equipment, technology, or controls. PennTAP advisors help businesses find and apply for energy grants and rebates fitted to the needs of each business, including helping with grant qualifications, audit support, completing applications, and continuing assistance. A limited amount of free assistance is available. Call 814-865-0427, email penntap@psu.edu, or visit www.penntap.psu.edu/ for the most up-to-date information on funding for which your organization may qualify.

River Sojourn Grants: The PA Organization for Watersheds and Rivers offers competitive grants for single and multi-day paddling events on Pennsylvania rivers. Sojourns must incorporate significant educational programming, and be open to all participants (i.e., private trips are not eligible). To learn more, go to: www.pawatersheds.org/sojourns/apply-for-a-mini-grant/.

Small Business Advantage Grant Program: The Small Business Advantage Grant provides reimbursement grants ranging from 50% to 80% of eligible project costs to Pennsylvania small businesses (with 100 or fewer employees) to improve energy efficiency, to undertake pollution prevention measures, or to develop natural resource protection projects designed to enhance a small business's competitiveness while simultaneously improving the environment for state residents. Maximum grant award amounts will vary from up to \$7,500 to up to \$12,000, based on the environmental impact of the project and whether the project location is in an Environmental Justice Area in Pennsylvania. Visit <https://www.pa.gov/grants/search/grant-details.dep40.html> for more information, call 717-772-5160 or email ra-epadvantagegrant@pa.gov.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC): The WOTC is a federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from specific target groups, which include numerous qualified candidates such as veterans, who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. WOTC incentivizes workplace diversity and facilitates access to good jobs for American workers, helping targeted employees move from economic dependency to self-sufficiency while earning a steady income and becoming contributing taxpayers. Employers generally can earn a tax credit equal to 25% or 40% of a new employee's first-year wages, up to the maximum for the target group to which the employee belongs. For questions, contact the Tax Credit Services Unit at



800-345-2555. To learn more, visit <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wotc>.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

DEP Small Business Assistance Program: Complying with environmental regulations can be difficult, especially for small businesses. Recognizing this, DEP created the Small Business Assistance Program, which assists small businesses with regulatory compliance, provides information on cost saving pollution prevention practices, and ensures consideration of small businesses in development of new regulations. Learn more at <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/programs-and-services/air/bureau-of-air-quality/business-topics/small-business-assistance.html>.

PennTAP Energy and Operational Assessments: PennTAP Technical Advisors can assist small to mid-sized Pennsylvania manufacturers assess and address energy, efficiency, and sustainability challenges by providing pollution prevention and energy efficiency (P2/E2) on-site or virtual assessments, performing economy-energy-environment (E3) assessments and employee training, and delivering training pertaining to energy management systems, ISO 50001, and Superior Energy Performance (SEP) certification and implementation, including a no-cost DOE 50001 Ready Navigator program for manufacturers. For more information, call 814-865-0427, email penntap@psu.edu, or visit them online at www.penntap.psu.edu/.

Innovault Coworking: At the heart of downtown Warren, Innovault Coworking accommodates the modern professional with a newly renovated shared workspace in the historic Warren National Bank building. The space primarily serves independent professionals such as entrepreneurs, consultants, counselors, freelancers and remote workers. Innovault offers users with workstations, supplies, a private phone booth, technology, conference rooms, a kitchenette, a lounge, mail services, networking events, whiteboards, phone services, and more (some services depend on membership). For more information, call 814-240-2419, email contact@innovaultco.work, or visit www.innovaultco.work.

Northwest Industrial Resource Center (IRC): Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Centers (IRCs): The Northwest Industrial Resource Center serves Warren County and is one of PA's seven IRCs established to serve as the state's lead economic development organizations. IRCs provide technical assistance and offer resources and events to the manufacturing community in order to assist companies with improved bottom line strategies, productivity enhancement, and waste elimination, and with top line growth by supporting strategic initiatives, new and improved products, market differentiation, and workforce development strategies. Learn more about the Northwest Industrial Resource Center, at www.nwirc.org/.

PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship: Founded in 2013, this regional nonprofit is dedicated to integrating conservation and economic development in a way that strengthens and inspires communities in the Pennsylvania Wilds. The Center operates several programs for businesses and communities, including The



Wilds Cooperative of PA, Sustainable Commerce, Regional Planning and Partnerships, Regional Marketing and PA Wilds Licensing. Many of these programs are outlined on this resource sheet. To learn more, go to www.PAWildsCenter.org.

The Wilds Cooperative of PA: The Wilds Cooperative of PA is the main business and organization development program of the PA Wilds Center. It focuses on growing and connecting the kinds of unique businesses, nonprofits and establishments at the heart of place-based nature tourism development – B&Bs, artisan and craft producers, specialty retailers, breweries, wineries, galleries, state parks, etc. The program has three core membership umbrellas: Creative Makers (juried artisans), Experience Makers (hospitality and retail establishments), and Resource Partners (nonprofits and partners who serve the region, its communities and businesses). Membership is free, and members gain access to marketing and branding tools; education and networking opportunities with similar kinds of businesses; access to new markets; and referrals to PA's service provider network (lenders, technical providers, etc). See www.WildsCoPA.org for membership guidelines or www.WildsCoPA.org/benefits for more information on membership benefits, or contact wildscopa@pawildscenter.org. One of the newest and most visible opportunities available to members includes:

PA Wilds Media Lab: Part of the Wilds Cooperative of PA program, the PA Wilds Media Lab is a business accelerator space located at 61 N. Fraley Street, 2nd Floor, in Kane, PA. It is the PA Wilds Center's first office and program space. The 5000-square-foot area offers tools, technologies, and classroom space to support the nonprofit's expanding entrepreneurial ecosystem and its regional partnership work. Learn more about the space at www.PAWildsCenter.org/tag/media-lab.

Sustainable Commerce: The Sustainable Commerce program provides unique market opportunities tied to the Pennsylvania Wilds brand for artisan businesses who participate in the Wilds Cooperative of PA. The opportunities include selling wholesale to PA Wilds Conservation Shops (physical stores in the region typically located on public lands) and selling direct-to-customer via the online PA Wilds Marketplace at www.ShopThePAWilds.com (which functions similar to Etsy and allows artists to set up their own seller storefront to market products and sell directly to their customers at retail prices with the added value of PA Wilds marketing). For more information, visit www.WildsCoPA.org/gift-shops or www.WildsCoPA.org/PA-Wilds-Marketplace.

Regional Planning and Partnerships: The PA Wilds is a designated Tourism Region and Conservation Landscape at the state level, and the PA Wilds Center collaborates with regional partners to advance the PA Wilds regional strategy, which looks to position the region as a premier outdoor recreation destination by leveraging the region's iconic brand and 2+ million acres of public land as a way to diversify local economies, create jobs, inspire stewardship, attract investment and improve quality of life. The PA Wilds Center is also the administrative home for the PA Wilds Planning Team, a separate group formed in 2006 by a groundbreaking intergovernmental cooperative agreement, which



brings the region's 13 counties together along with conservation and economic development partners to address planning issues. One of the most visible opportunities available through this program include:

PA Wilds Design Assistance: The PA Wilds Design Assistance Program was created based on the idea that early, strategic and coordinated regional planning for new development will protect the authentic character and lifestyle of the Pennsylvania Wilds. At the core of the program is the PA Wilds Design Guide for Community Character Stewardship, now in its second edition, published in 2017. The Design Guide is a voluntary planning document that highlights how communities in the Pennsylvania Wilds can protect or enhance their unique community character as they grow – whether that growth is due to tourism, other economic development planning, resource extraction or other industries. The Design Guide can be downloaded in its entirety, or individual chapters that are targeted towards a particular project may be downloaded individually. For more information, or to download the free guide, visit www.PAWildsCenter.org/community-character-stewardship/.

PA Wilds Licensing: The PA Wilds Licensing Program provides a way for businesses and organizations to apply to use the PA Wilds logo for marketing and merchandising use to help them leverage their business and community development efforts. Licensees must be members of The Wilds Cooperative of Pennsylvania (see listing above). To learn more about how to apply to use this trademark, go to www.PAWildsCenter.org/use-the-pa-wilds-brand/.

Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers: These organizations provide educational programs and no-cost, confidential consulting services to entrepreneurs looking to start or grow a business. SBDC consultants work with entrepreneurs one-to-one to help test new business ideas, shape business plans, or investigate funding opportunities. There is a network of 15 university-based centers with outreach locations across Pennsylvania. Visit the SBDC online at www.sbdcgannon.org/, call 877-258-6648, or email gusbdc@gannon.edu.

Product Development and Innovation Services: PennTAP (Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Program), a department within the Penn State Office of Industrial Partnerships, can assist businesses and startups with a number of issues related to product development, such as feasibility of product design, assistance addressing design and material issues, connection with prototype development and manufacturing resources, business development resources for market research and commercialization planning and connecting small businesses to the scientific and technical expertise within Penn State University and the federal laboratory system. For more information contact Tim Kerchinski, Team Lead for Innovation at 814-865-4388 or penntap@psu.edu or visit them online at www.penntap.psu.edu/.

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE): SCORE is a nonprofit association with a network of more than 10,000 volunteers dedicated to educating entrepreneurs and helping small businesses start, grow, and succeed nationwide by offering confidential business counseling services at no charge. SCORE is a resource



partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and has been mentoring small business owners for more than 60 years. Representing more than 3,000 years of experience across 62 industries, SCORE volunteers have the knowledge and experience to help any small business owner get the help they need. SCORE also provides resources, templates, tools, and local workshops and events throughout the country to connect small business owners with the people and information they need to start, grow, and maintain their businesses, as well as online workshops available 24/7. Call 1-800-634-0245 or visit www.score.org/find-location?state=PA to learn more.

University Engagement Services: A department within the Penn State Office of Industrial Partnerships, PennTAP acts as the connection point between small to medium-sized businesses across the state and Penn State student and faculty communities seeking opportunities to engage with industry. PennTAP's expansive network of industry professionals is eager to connect with academics from Penn State looking to apply their knowledge to improve and innovate the industry space. The PennTAP team offers access to an abundance of university resources, including faculty expertise, research centers, state of the art facilities as well as students (for example, having senior engineering students work on one of your backburner projects for free as part of a capstone course), and connections to a network of government entities and private groups. For more information, call 814-865-0427, email penntap@psu.edu, or visit www.penntap.psu.edu/.

HIRING AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Apprenticeship Program Registrations: The Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO) within the PA Department of Labor & Industry is responsible for guiding and promoting the expansion of apprenticeship programs across the state. Apprenticeships are innovative training programs that allow employers to develop and prepare their future workforce while providing individuals with a learn-while-you-earn approach to career development. Apprenticeships include paid jobs where apprentices are paid employees who produce high-quality work while they learn skills that enhance their employers' needs, on-the-job learning that develops skilled workers through structured learning in a work setting, classroom learning that improves job-related skills through education in a classroom setting (virtual or in-person), and mentorships which provide apprentices with the support of a skilled worker to assist and enhance critical hands-on-learning. Portable, nationally-recognized credentials will be issued at the completion of the program. Looking to increase the number of Registered Apprenticeship opportunities in PA, including expansion into non-traditional occupations and underrepresented populations, the ATO supports sponsors with resources they need to implement high-quality apprenticeship programs, including through technical assistance, strategic planning and ecosystem building, education and advocacy, and funding opportunities such as the PAsmart grant program. For more on apprenticeships, contact the PA Department Of Labor & Industry, Apprenticeship and Training Office, 651 Boas Street, 2nd Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17121, by email at Apprenticeship@pa.gov, by phone at 717-787-6997, or online at www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/Apprenticeships.



Federal Bonding: The Federal Bonding Program was created as an incentive to employers to hire at-risk, hard-to-place job seekers and may provide a business insurance policy that protects an employer against loss of money or property due to employee dishonesty. The bond is good for six months up to the amount of \$5,000 at no cost. To request a Federal Bond, the employer must call the Bonding Coordinator for a phone interview on the new employee's start date. The bond is issued immediately, and a confirmation letter is then sent to the company and the Union Insurance Group, which mails the bond certificate directly to the employer in the couple of weeks that follow. Call 1-800-345-2555, email RA-BWPO-TaxCredits@pa.gov or visit <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dli/programs-services/workforce-development-home/workforce-opportunity-tax-credit-wotc-faqs/wotc-resources.html> for more information.

Incumbent Worker Training: This training is provided to a current employee(s) (incumbent worker(s)) to meet the needs of an employer for an in-demand occupation (as determined at the local workforce service delivery system level) and assists an employer to retain a skilled workforce or avert the need to lay off employees, increase the competitiveness of the employer or employee, and are conducted with a commitment by the employer to retain or avert the layoffs of the incumbent worker trained. Such training may also include the up-skilling of an employer's current workforce, which may lead to additional opportunities for potential jobseekers. Pennsylvania's local workforce development boards, or LWDBs, are part of the public workforce system – a network of state and local providers and programs that support local and regional economic development, and the education and training of Pennsylvania's workforce. LWDBs connect the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry with PA CareerLink services for job seekers, workers, training providers, and employers. For more information on incumbent worker training, contact the LWDB that serves Warren County: Northwest PA Workforce Development Board at 814-333-1286 or www.nwpajobconnect.org/.

PA CareerLink services for employers: PA CareerLink is part of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry's initiative to transform the landscape of how job-seekers find family-sustaining jobs and how employers find the skilled candidates that they need. Through this initiative, a user-friendly job-matching system was created to help bridge the gap between job-seekers and employers. It is easy for employers to search the talent pool in PA CareerLink and receive detailed information about job-seekers, create a job posting, get candidate recommendations, and connect with candidates for free. Benefits of the system include sorting and filtering capabilities for managing referral lists, free business service team consulting to help find job candidates, keeping track of candidates associated with your job posting, saving customized searches, and receiving email alerts for new candidates. PA CareerLink also offers many resources to employers, which include news, facts, and statistics on job market data, workforce and compliance-related policies, services, and procedures, and Unemployment Compensation Tax and Employer UC Services programs that manage employer contributions (in the form of quarterly tax payments) that are the primary funding source for UC benefit payments and provide a wide array of services to employers and third-party administrators. For more information, contact the Warren County CareerLink office at 255 Elm St, Ste 1, Oil City, PA, 16301-1467 or call them at 814-678-5050.



Report New Hires: New hire reporting is a process by which employers submit information about their newly-hired and rehired workers to a state directory for crossmatching open child support cases, locating non-custodial parents who change jobs frequently, and reducing fraudulent overpayments in state benefit programs such as unemployment and worker's compensation program. For more information on the various ways to report, visit www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/Employer/ReportNewHires.

Warren County Chamber of Business & Industry: The Warren County Chamber of Business & Industry (WCCBI) is dedicated to serving the local business community. Their goals are to provide economic and community excellence to Warren County businesses and industries, helping citizens with employment, and sharing resources and goods. The WCCBI, in partnership with Warren County and the City of Warren, is also spearheading an initiative aimed at combating the decline in population throughout Warren County called Warren WORX, a new way of collaborating for local municipalities, municipal governments, businesses, and nonprofits which allows them to come together to creatively look at opportunities, challenges, and projects to ensure Warren County is a community of desire for future generations of residents and businesses. Call 814-723-3050 or visit www.wccbi.org to find out more about WCCBI's work.

Workamper News: It can sometimes be difficult for tourism businesses in remote areas to find help for their peak seasons. Workamper News is a service that can help with this need. It is a national network of RVers who want to go someplace interesting and work, sometimes for just a season or year-round. More than half of the program's participants work to supplement their retirement income, while the rest work to support a full-time, or near full-time, RV lifestyle. Most Workamper jobs are in the outdoor hospitality industry (resorts, campgrounds, theme parks, state and national parks, etc.). For more information, go to www.workamper.com.

MARKETING RESOURCES

PA Route 6 Alliance: An official state Heritage Area, this nonprofit organization works to preserve, enhance and promote the transportation heritage of one of the nation's first transcontinental highways – Scenic Route 6. The organization works to sustain and enhance the small rural communities linked by the highway; and to preserve and enhance the natural, scenic beauty of one of America's favorite "road trips." PA Route 6 Alliance has six areas of concentration intended to help make the Route 6 Corridor a memorable experience, a great place to visit and an even better place to live. These areas include tourism promotion; cultural conservation; education and interpretation; open space and recreation; economic development and partnerships. Route 6 runs through four counties in the Pennsylvania Wilds region – Warren, McKean, Potter and Tioga. Programs offered for businesses include cooperative advertising and an Artisan Trail; community programs include mini grant offerings (such as Bike Friendly Business, Facade and Community Heart & Soul programs), workshops, awards and more. To learn more information about the PA Route 6 Alliance, visit www.paroute6.com/.

PA Tourism Signing Trust: Tourist Oriented Directional Signing (TODS) are the official blue and brown directional signs that are installed on roadways to help the traveling public find businesses and attractions.



Logo Signs were designed as a motorist information network to help motorists find much needed services. They are installed along certain sections of freeways and identify eligible businesses that are accessible at the exits, and provide a series of trailblazing signs at every turn to specifically reach those businesses. To learn more information about the cost, eligibility requirements, and how to apply for TODS and the Pennsylvania LOGO Signing Program, go to: www.palogo.org/tods-program/.

PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship Regional Marketing: The PA Wilds Center is charged with managing regional marketing for the Pennsylvania Wilds region and the Wilds Cooperative of PA network. Members of the network are promoted on www.PAWilds.com and related social media platforms, including [www.Facebook.com/thepawilds](https://www.facebook.com/thepawilds) and [www.Instagram.com/thepawilds](https://www.instagram.com/thepawilds). PA Wilds Center receives Google AdWords in-kind grants for nonprofits to implement a \$120,000/year advertising campaign based on targeted keyword searches relevant to the region. Members of the Wilds Cooperative can leverage this through their profiles, which populate www.PAWilds.com, by adding events to the calendar, and sharing articles for the blog. Paid advertising coming soon.

Pennsylvania On Display: is the official brochure distributor for the state of Pennsylvania distributing brochures in the 35 Interstate Rest Areas, 17 Turnpike Plazas, and 14 Welcome Centers. Additional information is available on the website at www.PennsylvaniaOnDisplay.com.

Pennsylvania Tourism Office: The Pennsylvania Tourism Office offers a variety of opportunities to grow your tourism business and connect with potential visitors by advertising in one or more of their offerings. The state of Pennsylvania's marketing program enables advertisers to connect directly with travelers planning a visit to Pennsylvania. Use the impact of the Pennsylvania tourism brand and the marketing initiatives driving travelers to visit the Keystone State to connect your business with a highly qualified audience of travelers. Promotion options include inclusion on visitPA.com, the official tourism site of Pennsylvania, whether through native display ads, video spotlight ads, sponsored content or listings in an industry specific category; the visitPA.com eNewsletter or PA Travel Guide. More information about the PA Tourism Office and its advertising opportunities can be found online at www.visitpa.com/advertising-opportunities.

Warren County Visitors Bureau: The Warren County Visitors Bureau leads the effort to stimulate and support tourism and economic growth in Warren County through education, promotion, marketing and cooperative and regional partnerships to increase overnight stays. Accomplished by utilizing various marketing venues such as ads placed in strategic publications that target our market, including: consumer and trade shows; PA Travel Guide and co-operative marketing projects with PA Route 6, and the Pennsylvania Wilds; production and distribution of the Warren County Visitors guide, etc. Each year, Warren County Visitors Bureau distributes more than 75,000 visitors guides through other TPA, AAA, Business and Visitors. For more information visit www.wcvb.net, or contact the visitor's bureau at 814-726-1222 or info@wcvb.net.



RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

Champion of the Pennsylvania Wilds Awards: Each year the PA Wilds Center recognizes individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and businesses that in the last year have made significant contributions to help grow and sustainably develop the outdoor recreation economy and nature tourism in the PA Wilds by marrying economic development and conservation goals. The awards are presented at an Annual Dinner, typically held the fourth Thursday of July. Nominations, accepted on a rolling basis and due by the first Monday of April each year, are judged by the degree to which they help advance one or more of these goals: to create jobs, diversify local economies, inspire stewardship of natural and cultural resources, and improve quality of life. Nominations are also judged by the degree to which they reflect the hallmarks of the effort to grow the Wilds' outdoor recreation economy, which include: use of creative partnerships and planning; fostering a strong sense of place and community pride; ability to replicate new ideas or models in other communities; and demonstration of strong grassroots support. www.pawildscenter.org/programs-and-services/awards-dinner/.

Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) each year selects recipients for the prestigious Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence. Any business, farm, government agency, educational institution, nonprofit organization, or individual in Pennsylvania that has created, or participated in, the development of a project that promotes environmental stewardship in the state is eligible to apply. DEP evaluates projects for their degree of environmental protection, innovation, partnership efforts, environmental education and outreach, consideration of climate change, sustainability, environmental justice benefits, and results achieved. Information can be found at <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/about-dep/awards/governors-award-environmental-excellence.html>.

PA River of the Year Award: Each fall, the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the PA Organization for Watersheds & Rivers hold an online voting contest to name PA's River of the Year. Voting typically opens in November-December, with the winner being named in the new year. The honor brings with it recognition in the media and, often, increased visitation that supports small businesses while raising awareness about good stewardship of the waterway. To learn more, go to: www.pawatersheds.org.

PA Route 6 Alliance "Do 6" Awards: Each year, PA Route 6 Alliance recognizes individuals, organizations, businesses and corporations who exemplify its mission to protect, preserve and enhance the scenic, cultural, historical and recreational resources of Pennsylvania's northern tier. Award categories include the Lifetime Achievement, Heritage Partnership, Heritage Tourism, Artisan of the Year, Heritage Leadership, and Heritage Community of the Year. For more information, visit www.paroute6.com/annual-awards-program.

PA Trail of the Year Award: Each year, the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee designates a Trail of the Year to help build enthusiasm and support for both large and small trails, and raise public awareness about PA's trail network value. Nominations for PA Trail of the Year are typically accepted through late fall. The honor of being selected helps call attention to trails



across the state and, often, brings more visitation that supports small businesses while raising awareness for good stewardship of trails. Learn more information about this award or make a nomination for a trail at: <https://www.pa.gov/services/dcnr/apply-for-pennsylvania-trail-of-the-year-status.html>.