



## CENTRE COUNTY RESOURCE GUIDE

*Below is a listing of programs available to place-based businesses, entrepreneurs, nonprofits and governments in Centre 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](mailto:wildscopa@pawildscenter.org).*

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

BUSINESS LOANS	Page 1
GRANTS + TAX CREDITS	Page 4
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	Page 9
HIRING + HUMAN RESOURCES	Page 12
MARKETING RESOURCES	Page 14
RECOGNITION PROGRAMS	Page 15

### 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 both early-stage and established companies with funding, business and technical expertise and access to a network of innovative, expert resources. The partnership provides seed capital, business expertise and a network of resources for new, early-stage and existing, technology-focused businesses. Learn more at 814-863-4558 or [www.benfranklin.org](http://www.benfranklin.org).

**Centre County General Authority:** The Centre County General Authority was formed under the PA Municipality Authorities Act in 2011 to promote and assist with economic development efforts, including but not limited to recruitment, expansion, rehabilitation and improvement of business and industry within Centre



County and surrounding communities. The Authority's intent is to create and maintain jobs in order to ensure an improved standard of living and to increase the prosperity of all residents of the communities served by the Authority. Tax-exempt Bonds are currently the primary form of financing administered by the CCGA on behalf of Centre County projects. Learn more at <http://centrecountypa.gov/Index.aspx?NID=624>.

**Centre County Industrial Development Authority:** The Centre County Industrial Development Authority was formed in 2003 by the Board of Commissioners to assist local businesses secure financing for construction projects under the applicable rules and regulations authorized by the PA Economic Development Financing Law. Seven members comprise the Board of Directors. Funding sources currently being administered by the CCIDA on behalf of Centre County projects include: PA Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) reimbursement grants, Infrastructure and Facilities Improvement Program (IFIP) project funds, and Tax Exempt Bonds. Learn more at <http://centrecountypa.gov/Index.aspx?NID=624>.

**The Centre County Industrial Development Corporation (CCIDC):** The Centre County Industrial Development Corporation remains the Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County's legal entity for economic development and business financing in Centre County and is also the lead agency in the county for the administration of Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority loans. In addition, the CCIDC participates in sponsorship of Pennsylvania Economic Development Finance Authority loans. Learn more at <http://www.cbicc.org/>.

**The Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County (CBICC):** The Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County is a membership organization of businesses ranging in size from large international corporations to sole proprietorships and everything in between. With more than 1,000 members, the CBICC is one of the largest and most influential chamber/economic development organizations in Pennsylvania. The Chamber, through the Centre County Industrial Development Corporation, is the primary agency for Centre County businesses needing access to business development resources. The CBICC organizes networking events, promotes business members and encourages economic development in Centre County. Learn more at <http://www.cbicc.org/>.

**Community Economic Development Loan Program:** The Community Economic Development loan is available to for-profit small businesses involved in the business-to-public service, mercantile, commercial, or point of sale retail sectors. A small business is defined as having 100 or fewer full-time employees. In order to receive a loan under this program, a small business must demonstrate a positive direct impact on the community in which it is located, on residents of that community, or on the local and/or regional economy. Funds can be used for land acquisition, site improvements, acquisition of existing buildings, building renovation, leasehold improvements, new construction, machinery and equipment, working capital and certain soft costs. Loans are up to \$100,000 or 50% of eligible project costs, whichever is less. For more information contact SEDA-COG at 570-524-4491, [finance@seda-cog.org](mailto:finance@seda-cog.org) or visit them online at [www.seda-cog.org](http://www.seda-cog.org).



**Enterprise Development Fund:** The Enterprise Development Fund is a non-territorial organization that provides loans to all businesses in the north western region of Pennsylvania along with Ohio and New York. Loans can be used for working capital, machinery, equipment and real estate. The maximum is \$500,000 and there are requirements for equity contribution. For more information, visit them online at [edcec.org](http://edcec.org) or contact Rebecca Wurst at 814-899-6022 or [rwurst@developerie.com](mailto:rwurst@developerie.com).

**The PennCAP Program:** The Pennsylvania Capital Access Program (PennCAP) provides a loan guarantee to small businesses based on a portfolio concept. 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 \$500,000. Minimum loan amounts are established by each participating bank. To learn more information about the PennCAP Program, please visit <https://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 (past clients include a canoe livery, vodka distiller, historic tavern, art studio, hardware store, cabins, white water rafting company, coffee shop, winery and others). Find them online at: [www.progressfund.org](http://www.progressfund.org).

**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 [here](#).

**SBA 504 Loan Program:** This loan is for businesses with a net worth less than \$15 million and profit after tax less than \$5 million. Funds can be used for land acquisition, site improvements, acquisition of existing buildings, building renovation, leasehold improvements, new construction, machinery and equipment, furniture and fixtures, engineering fees, architectural fees, appraisal fees and environmental fees. 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](http://www.sedacogldc.org).



**SEDA - Council of Governments:** SEDA-COG is based in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, and offers a variety of low-interest loan programs to start-ups and existing businesses in Lycoming, Clinton and Centre counties (and other counties outside the PA Wilds). They can package First Industries loans and other state loan programs and also have other pools of money to draw upon. Call 570-524-4491 or visit them online at [www.seda-cog.org](http://www.seda-cog.org).

**SEDA-COG's U.S.D.A. Intermediary Relending Program:** This loan is for any for-profit or non-profit small business in Centre, Clinton and Lycoming counties. Loan limit is \$250,000 or 50 percent of the eligible project costs, whichever is less. Money can be used for machinery and equipment, working capital, land acquisition, site improvements, acquisition of existing building, building renovations, leasehold improvements, new construction, refinancing (restrictions apply) and certain soft costs. Established businesses must provide a minimum of 10 percent of project costs; start-ups or change in ownership must provide 15 percent. One job must be created or in some cases retained within three years for every \$25,000 of funds borrowed. Contact SEDA-COG at 570-524-4491 or [finance@seda-cog.org](mailto:finance@seda-cog.org) or visit them online at [www.seda-cog.org](http://www.seda-cog.org).

**Small Business Pollution Prevention Assistance Account Loan Program:** Provides low interest loans to small businesses undertaking projects in the Commonwealth 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. This funding can help small businesses comply with environmental regulations while receiving the economic benefits of preventing pollution and using energy more efficiently. Go to [www.depweb.state.pa.us](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us) and click on "Grants, Loans and Rebates" on the left side of the page. There will be a list of programs where you can find background and applications. Applicants are required to complete a Determination of Eligibility form and be approved by the PA Department of Environmental Protection, prior to completing the application for this program. For more information you can contact [gdelvecchi@state.pa.us](mailto:gdelvecchi@state.pa.us) or 717-772-8951.

**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. Visit the [PPAA Loan](#) website for additional information.

## GRANTS AND TAX CREDITS

**Act 129 Rebates:** Pennsylvania utilities have energy incentive programs under Act 129 that provide rebates for the purchase of new 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 either the [Pennsylvania Electric](#), [West Penn Power](#), or [PPL Utilities Corp.](#) websites.

**Centre Foundation:** The mission of the Centre Foundation is to inspire and facilitate a culture of giving which creates a vibrant community. Each year, Centre Foundation distributes hundreds of grants to Centre County non-profits from funds that have designated specific beneficiary organizations. The Foundation also has community grant funding available through the innovative Centre Inspires granting program, as well as more traditional, competitive grant funding available through Field-of-Interest Funds. The Foundation also holds Centre Gives, a 36-hour online giving event.. Learn more at [www.centre-foundation.org](http://www.centre-foundation.org).

**Challenge America Grant Program – The National Endowment for the Arts:** The Challenge America grant categories offer support primarily to small and mid-sized 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 of the underserved characteristics noted above also must be present. Grants are available for professional arts programming and for projects that emphasize the potential of the arts in community development. 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. Within the Challenge America category, the Public Art project type is intended to support primarily visual arts projects, which may be temporary or permanent, such as murals, sculptures, multimedia, or environmental art, developed through a meaningful community engagement process. Evidence of community involvement should be apparent in the planning, design, or fabrication of the work, and should include a professional lead artist. A policy limits consecutive-year funding. Learn more at [www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/challenge-america/grant-program-description](http://www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/challenge-america/grant-program-description).

**Grants for Arts Projects – The National Endowment for the Arts:** Grants for Arts Projects is the National Endowment for the Arts' principal grants program for organizations. Through project-based funding, NEA supports public engagement with, and access to, various forms of excellent art across the nation, the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, learning in the arts at all stages of life, and the integration of the arts into the fabric of community life. Projects may be large or small, existing or new. These grants support artistically excellent projects that celebrate creativity and cultural heritage, invite mutual respect for differing beliefs and values, and enrich humanity. Matching grants generally range from \$10,000 to \$100,000. A minimum cost share/match equal to the grant amount is required. The NEA funds projects only. Projects may consist of one or more specific events or activities. Projects do not have to be new. Excellent existing projects can be just as competitive as new ones. Visit <https://www.arts.gov/grants/grants-for-arts-projects> to learn more.

**Lumber Heritage Mini-Grant Program:** 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 therefore must adhere to all statewide rules and regulations. Eligible applicants for the program would include non-profit 501(c)3 organizations, municipalities,



COG's, Conservation Districts, Educational Institutions, and Housing and Redevelopment Authorities. The project must be located within the boundaries of the Lumber Heritage Region. To learn more visit <http://lumberheritage.org/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 serve Centre County.

- Altoona Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Serving Centre County) at 1130 12th Ave., Suite 500, Altoona, PA 16601, or by phone at 814-946-7240 Voice, 800-442-6343 Voice (Toll-free within PA), 814-414-4707 Video Phone.
- Altoona Blindness & Visual Services (Serving Centre, Clinton, and Lycoming counties) at 1130 12th Ave., Suite 300, Altoona, PA 16601, or by phone at 814-946-7330 Voice, 866-695-7673 Voice (Toll-free within PA), or 844-242-1060 TTY (Toll-free within PA).

**The Our Town Grant Program – The National Endowment for the Arts –** Supports creative placemaking projects that help to transform communities into lively, beautiful, and resilient places – achieving these community goals through strategies that incorporate arts, culture and/or design. Creative placemaking is when artists, arts organizations, and community development practitioners deliberately integrate arts and culture into community revitalization work. This funding supports local efforts to enhance quality of life and opportunity for existing residents, increase creative activity, and create or preserve a distinct sense of place. Our Town requires partnerships between arts organizations and government, other nonprofit organizations, and private entities to achieve livability goals for communities. Our Town offers support for projects in two areas: Arts



Engagement, Cultural Planning, and Design Projects (matching grants range from \$25,000 to \$200,000) and Projects that Build Knowledge About Creative Placemaking (matching grants range from \$25,000 to \$100,000). Learn more at [www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/introduction](http://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; and conservation of open space. 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 [www.dcnr.pa.gov/Communities/Grants/](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Communities/Grants/), or by contacting Wes Fahringer, the Northcentral Region Advisor for Potter, Cameron, Clinton, Centre, Tioga and Lycoming Counties, at (570) 401-2465 or [mfahringer@pa.gov](mailto:mfahringer@pa.gov).

**PA Smart 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. PA Smart Industry Partnership grants provide 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 Shuana Davis at [shesdavis@pa.gov](mailto:shesdavis@pa.gov) or at 717-571-4806, or visit <https://www.dli.pa.gov/Businesses/Workforce-Development/Pages/Industry-Partnerships.aspx> for additional resources.

**PA Wilds Mini Grants:** PA Wilds Center operates occasional mini grant programs for businesses, nonprofits and communities. The focus, amount and timing of the mini grant offering changes depending on funding source and other parameters, but the program is always tied to PA Wilds strategies. Past offerings have included signage grants, design assistance grants (connected to the *PA Wilds Design Guide for Community Character Stewardship*), and grants that advance nature and heritage tourism projects in the region. To stay up to date on mini grant offerings, sign up for our e-newsletter on the homepage of [www.pawildscenter.org](http://www.pawildscenter.org), or check out the "Mini Grants" under the site's "Programs & Services" tab.

**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 foster excellence, diversity and vitality of the arts and to broaden the availability and appreciation of those arts throughout the state. Operating in all 67 PA counties, PPA re-grants funds to support a variety of local and community arts activities. The PPA Program is administered by 14 local partners statewide. PPA offers Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program (CEAP), Entry to Program Stream, and Program Stream grants for art-related projects and organizations. CEAP 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, CEAP 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. Entry to Program Stream and Program Stream supports qualified applicants that provide artistic programming and/or arts services in Pennsylvania that expand constituent access to the arts, increase awareness and advocacy for arts funding at all levels, and enable the PCA to provide increased assistance. Generally, grant amounts will range from \$2,000 to \$3,000 for the Entry to Program Stream. Organizations or programs stay in Entry to Program Stream until recommended for Program Stream, based on panel review and assessment totals. Once in Program Stream, generally, grants range from \$3,000 to \$5,000. Learn more on the [CEAP](#) and [Program Stream](#) landing pages, or on the [PPA website](#). You may also contact your PPA Partner, the Centre Foundation via email at [molly@centre-foundation.org](mailto:molly@centre-foundation.org) or by phone at 814-237-6229.

**PennTAP Energy Grants and Rebates:** The Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Program (PennTAP) at Penn State is a statewide technical assistance organization with a network of expert technical advisors that supports Pennsylvania businesses and anchor institutions — including manufacturers, municipalities, educational institutions, entrepreneurs, farmers and economic development agencies. The PennTAP team can assist with opportunities for funding to assist with efforts to improve efficiency and reduce energy-related costs, which often require investment in new equipment, technology or controls. PennTAP advisors help identify funding programs available to businesses, help determine the right grants for each company and project needs, provide estimates of project payback, and assist with grant and rebate applications and required paperwork. A limited amount of free assistance is available. Call 814-865-0427, email [penntap@psu.edu](mailto:penntap@psu.edu), or visit <https://penntap.psu.edu/> for the most up-to-date information on funding for which your organization may qualify.

**Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit Program:** This program offers federal income tax credits as an incentive for private property owners to rehabilitate historic properties for income-producing uses. 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. Visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov) for details.

**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: <http://pawatersheds.org/>.

**Small Business Advantage Grant Program:** This grant provides assistance to small businesses in Pennsylvania with under 100 full time employees to incorporate pollution prevention or energy-efficient equipment or processes to increase the business's competitiveness while simultaneously improving the environment of Pennsylvania residents. Average grant amount is \$5,800. Go to [www.depweb.state.pa.us](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us) and



click on Citizens and then click on “Grants, Loans and Rebates” on the third box in the first column and then click on Small Business Ombudsman’s Office under Related Information for more information. You can also obtain information by contacting 717-772-5160 or [epadvantagegrant@pa.gov](mailto: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 or [RA-BWPO-TaxCredits@pa.gov](mailto:RA-BWPO-TaxCredits@pa.gov). To learn more, visit <https://www.dli.pa.gov/Businesses/Workforce-Development/WOTC/Pages/default.aspx>.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

**Bellefonte SpringBoard:** Bellefonte SpringBoard, located at 127 S. Allegheny St. #2, Bellefonte, PA 16823, is an initiative that aims to provide resources, support, and programming to aspiring and current entrepreneurs in Bellefonte, PA, and the surrounding area. Part of an economic development initiative through Downtown Bellefonte Inc., SpringBoard aims to encourage entrepreneurship and the start of new businesses while fostering collaboration with community members. SpringBoard provides low or no-cost resources, support, and workshops to the business community. For business owners, remote workers, or freelancers that need a quiet and professional space to get some work done, SpringBoard also offers coworking options. To learn more, visit <https://www.bellefontespringboard.com/>.

**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. This program assists small businesses with regulatory compliance, provides information about cost saving pollution prevention practices, and ensures that small businesses are considered when new regulations are developed. Learn more on the [DEP website](#).

**Energy and Operational Assessments:** PennTAP Technical Advisors can assist small to mid-sized Pennsylvania manufacturers assess and address energy, efficiency, and sustainability challenges by a systematic "low-cost/no-cost" approach to periodically re-commission a building to restore or exceed the building's original energy performance known as building re-tuning (BRT), 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](mailto:penntap@psu.edu), or visit them online at <https://penntap.psu.edu/>.

**PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship:** Founded in 2013, this regional non-profit 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, PA Wilds Mini Grants, *PA Wilds Design Guide for Community Character Stewardship*, PA Wilds Licensing, PA Wilds Conservation Shops and PA Wilds Champion Awards. Many of these programs are outlined on this resource sheet. To learn more, go to [www.pawildscenter.org](http://www.pawildscenter.org).

**PA Wilds Conservation Shops:** PA Wilds Center operates this growing network of online and physical gift shops. To be eligible to sell wholesale to the Conservation Shop, businesses must be members of The Wilds Cooperative of PA (see previous listing).

**PA Wilds Licensing:** The PA Wilds Licensing Program provides a way for businesses and organizations to apply to use the PA Wilds logo on saleable and non-saleable products to help them leverage their business and community development efforts. To learn more about how to apply to use this trademark, go to <http://www.pawildscenter.org/use-the-pa-wilds-brand/>.

**PA Wilds Media Lab:** This business accelerator space at 61 N. Fraley Street, 2nd Floor, in Kane, PA, will be the PA Wilds Center's first office and program space. The 5000-square-foot area, located on the second floor of an older Main Street-type building, will have tools, technologies, and classroom space to support the nonprofit's expanding entrepreneurial ecosystem and its regional partnership work. PA Wilds Center staff plan to use the Media Lab to develop content to continue to market the region as a premier outdoor recreation destination, and to support the PA Wilds-branded online marketplace to help rural entrepreneurs reach new markets. Later on, it plans to open the Media Lab to the 350+ businesses and organizations in its free Wilds Cooperative network for low-cost use of its equipment. Additional details will be announced soon, and visit <https://www.pawildscenter.org/tag/media-lab/> to follow updates on the space's progress.

**The Wilds Cooperative of PA:** The Wilds Cooperative of PA is the main business development program of the PA Wilds Center. It focuses on growing and connecting the kinds of unique businesses and establishments at the heart of place-based nature tourism development – artisan and craft producers, B&Bs, specialty retailers, breweries, wineries, galleries, state parks and more. This is a juried, member based program. The program assists businesses with marketing and branding tools; access to new markets; education and networking opportunities with similar kinds of businesses; and referrals to PA's service provider network (lenders, technical providers, etc). For membership guidelines, go to: [www.WildsCoPA.org](http://www.WildsCoPA.org) or contact: ECCOTA/Wilds Cooperative Staff Support, 814-772-7051 or [WildsCoPa@pawildscenter.org](mailto:WildsCoPa@pawildscenter.org).



**Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Centers (IRCs):** PA's seven IRCs serve as the state's lead economic development organizations, providing technical assistance and offering resources and events to the manufacturing community in order to assist companies with improved bottom line strategies, productivity enhancement, and waste elimination, and with topline growth by supporting strategic initiatives, new and improved products, market differentiation, and workforce development strategies. Funds will be awarded based upon submission and review of IRC proposals and work plans demonstrating regional needs, number of manufacturers, proposed projects, and projected impacts. The IRC serving Centre County is the Innovative Manufacturers' Center based in Williamsport. For more information, visit <https://imcpa.com/>.

**Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers:** ([www.pasbdc.org](http://www.pasbdc.org)): These organizations provide educational programs and no-cost, confidential consulting services to entrepreneurs looking to start or grow a business. Management consulting services provided by a professional staff emphasize education and guidance in finding practical solutions to business problems. SBDC consultants work with entrepreneurs one-to-one to help test new business ideas, shape business plans, or investigate funding opportunities. There are 18 university-based centers in Pennsylvania with more than 100 outreach locations. SBDCs are often the first stop for entrepreneurs. The SBDC serving Centre County is the Penn State Small Business Development Center. Learn more by calling 814 863-4293 or visiting [www.sbdc.psu.edu](http://www.sbdc.psu.edu).

**PennTap Information Technology Help:** PennTAP (Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Program), an Outreach arm of Penn State University, can help small businesses with a host of technology-related questions regarding the internet, website development, software selection, connectivity, security, networks and computer systems. A limited amount of free assistance is available. Contact Donna Yale, Advanced IT Team Lead, at 570-596-3585 or [dyale@psu.edu](mailto:dyale@psu.edu) or visit them online at <http://www.penntap.psu.edu>.

**Phillipsburg Business Incubator:** The Phillipsburg Business Incubator, located at 220 N. Front St., Suite 3, Phillipsburg, PA 16866, was created with office units for interested entrepreneurs who want to start a business in the area. One requirement for the incubator is that entrepreneurs must have a business plan together within 90 days of moving into the space, which offers monthly rental prices that cover a fractional receptionist, conference room space, a kitchen, a private office and IT consulting. Email [incubator@centrecountypa.gov](mailto:incubator@centrecountypa.gov) to learn more.

**Product Development and Innovation Services:** PennTAP (Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Program), an Outreach arm of Penn State University, 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, entrepreneurial coaching 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 [txk128@psu.edu](mailto:txk128@psu.edu) or visit them online at [www.penntap.psu.edu](http://www.penntap.psu.edu).



**Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE):** A network of retired business professionals, SCORE provides assistance to anyone wanting to start or expand a business. Their free business consultation can include seminars on specific topics or business startups in general. Call 814 234-9415 or visit [www.scorepa.org](http://www.scorepa.org) 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. A limited amount of free assistance is available. For more information, call 814-865-0427, email [penntap@psu.edu](mailto:penntap@psu.edu), or visit <https://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, 12th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17121, by email at [Apprenticeship@pa.gov](mailto:Apprenticeship@pa.gov), by phone at 717-783-5857, or online at <https://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. A confirmation letter is then sent to the company and McLaughlin Company, which issues the bond directly to the employer. Contact the State Bonding Coordinator at 717-783-3676 or 1-800-345-2555, or visit [www.dli.pa.gov/Businesses/Finding-Skilled-Workers/Pages/FederalBondingProgram](http://www.dli.pa.gov/Businesses/Finding-Skilled-Workers/Pages/FederalBondingProgram).

**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 Centre County: Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board (Centre, Clinton, and Lycoming counties): 570-568-6868 or <https://advancecentralpa.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 Centre County CareerLink at 240 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte, PA, 16823-1366 or by phone at 814-548-7587. Details: <https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/Common/LandingPage/Employer>

**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 <https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/Employer/ReportNewHires>.



**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](http://www.workamper.com).

## MARKETING RESOURCES

**The Bellefonte Intervalley Area Chamber of Commerce:** represents all areas of business and industry, service and tourism, as well as individuals. Its membership is comprised of sole proprietorships, small and large businesses, corporations, nonprofits and community organizations and individuals located throughout Centre County. The Chamber offers the following benefits to members: group health insurance, promotional opportunities, and networking and business development opportunities. Learn more at <http://bellefontechamber.org/member-information>.

**The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau:** Happy Valley Adventure Bureau (HVAB) is Centre County, PA's official destination marketing organization (DMO) and is a nonprofit, membership-based organization whose mission is to develop, promote, and engage in travel-related activities and coordinate visitor services designed to improve the county's economy and quality of life. See <https://happyvalley.com/about-us/join-cpcvb/> to learn more or try 814-231-1400, 814-355-2917, toll-free at 1-800-358-5466, or [LesleyK@happyvalley.com](mailto:LesleyK@happyvalley.com).

**The Moshannon Valley Economic Development Partnership:** a non-profit corporation, the result of a 1988 merger of the former Moshannon Valley Chamber of Commerce and Philipsburg Association of Commerce. It is a voluntary organization working for the improvement of the Moshannon Valley area. The Partnership unites business leaders and government officials to enhance cooperation and build a better region. The Partnership assists existing and startup businesses, helps attract new businesses, and more. Members are able to access free advertising in the Partnership's quarterly newsletter, receive a listing in the online business directory and more. Learn more at <http://www.mvedp.org/>.

**PA Signing Trust:** Tourist Oriented Directional Signing (TODS) are the official blue and brown directional signs installed on roadways that help the traveling public find businesses and attractions. To learn more about cost, eligibility requirements and how to apply, go to: <https://palogo.org/tods-program/>.

**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 available on website at [www.PennsylvaniaOnDisplay.com](http://www.PennsylvaniaOnDisplay.com).



**Pennsylvania Tourism Office:** The PA 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 Pennsylvania visit. Realize the impact of the Pennsylvania tourism brand and the marketing initiatives driving travelers to visit the Keystone State. Promotion options include inclusion on visitPA.com, the official tourism site of Pennsylvania, whether through strategic placement on the homepage, display ads or listings in listings by category; the visitPA.com eNewsletter or Happy Traveler Travel Guide. More information can be found online at <https://visitpa.com/articles/advertising-opportunities>.

## RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

**Champion of the Pennsylvania Wilds Award:** Each spring the Pennsylvania Wilds Center recognizes individuals, groups, organizations, communities or 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 Pennsylvania Wilds by marrying economic development and conservation goals. These awards are presented at an Annual Dinner. Award nominations are judged by the degree to which they help advance one or more of the following goals: to create jobs, diversify local economies, inspire stewardship of natural and cultural resources, and improve quality of life. Award nominations are also judged by the degree to which they reflect the hallmarks of the effort to grow the outdoor recreation economy in the Pennsylvania Wilds. These hallmarks 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. Learn more: <http://www.pawildscenter.org/nominate-a-pa-wilds-champion/>.

**Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence:** The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) each year selects recipients for the prestigious 2019 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence. Any individual, business, school, government agency, or community organization in Pennsylvania is eligible to apply. DEP evaluates projects for their degree of environmental protection, innovation, partnership efforts, economic impact, environmental education and outreach, consideration of climate change, sustainability, environmental justice benefits, and results achieved. Information can be found at [www.dep.pa.gov/About/Awards/EnvironmentalExcellence/](http://www.dep.pa.gov/About/Awards/EnvironmentalExcellence/).

**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 media and, often, increased visitation that supports small businesses while raising awareness about good stewardship of the waterway. To learn more, go to: <http://pawatersheds.org>.

**PA Trail of the Year Award:** Each year, the 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 the value of Pennsylvania's trail network. Nominations for PA Trail of the Year are typically accepted through late fall. The honor of being selected helps draw attention to trails across the Commonwealth and, often, increased visitation that supports small businesses while raising awareness about good stewardship of regional trails. To learn more, go to: [www.dcnr.pa.gov/Communities/TrailDevelopment/TrailOfTheYear/](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Communities/TrailDevelopment/TrailOfTheYear/) .