

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, Aug. 24, 2026

Contact: kirstinalv@pa.gov

Lt. Gov. Austin Davis Highlights Shapiro-Davis Administration's Support for Small Businesses Across Pennsylvania

The 2026-27 budget increases funding for Historically Disadvantaged Business Assistance Program by \$3.75 million

SCRANTON, PA – Lt. Gov. Austin Davis stopped by the University of Scranton's new makerspace and innovation lab, the IDEA Center, today and met with local entrepreneurs to discuss how the Shapiro-Davis Administration is supporting small businesses in northeastern Pennsylvania and across the Commonwealth.

"Governor Shapiro and I have been working hard to create ladders of opportunity, so that every Pennsylvanian can chart their own course – whether that means going to college or trade school or starting their own business," said **Davis**. "We're making Pennsylvania more competitive by cutting red tape, streamlining permitting and licensing and attracting more than \$41 billion in private-sector investment. But we're not just focused on attracting big businesses here to Pennsylvania. We're also focused on supporting entrepreneurs and our homegrown small businesses, too."

Davis joined **Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Deputy Secretary Mandy Book**, representatives from the Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA) Alliance, the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission, local small business development centers and several small-business owners for a roundtable conversation focused on state investments through the Historically Disadvantaged Business Assistance (HDBA) program.

"Pennsylvania's small businesses are the backbone of our communities and our economy, and the Shapiro-Davis Administration is committed to making sure entrepreneurs have the tools and resources they need to grow and succeed," said **DCED Deputy Secretary Mandy Book**. "Through the Historically Disadvantaged Business Assistance program, we're expanding access to capital and support for businesses that have historically faced barriers to opportunity. By investing in these entrepreneurs, we're helping create jobs, strengthen communities, and build a more inclusive economy across Pennsylvania."

[Funding through the HDBA program opened in December 2024](#), thanks to support in the 2024-25 state budget.

In November 2025, the Shapiro-Davis Administration announced [more than \\$21 million in funding to create 11 Business Assistance Service Centers](#) across Pennsylvania to offer technical support services to small businesses in every region. NEPA Alliance received nearly \$2 million to support Bradford, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne,

Lycoming, Montour, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Wayne and Wyoming counties as their Business Assistance Service Center.

In February 2026, the Administration announced [\\$15 million in micro-grant funding for direct support to small businesses, through the HDBA program](#). NEPA Alliance received \$1 million to support businesses in Tioga, Bradford, Susquehanna, Lycoming, Sullivan, Wyoming, Lackawanna, Wayne, Pike, Montour, Columbia and Luzerne counties.

“The northeast Business Assistance Service Centers are designed to make sure entrepreneurs and small-business owners have access to the knowledge, guidance and resources they need to succeed,” said **NEPA Alliance President and CEO Jeffrey Box**. “Through the collaboration of NEPA Alliance, the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission, our Small Business Development Center partners at Wilkes University and The University of Scranton, and many other valued partners throughout the region, we are creating a true ‘no wrong door’ approach that connects businesses with the right support at the right time, from the earliest stages of an idea through growth and expansion.”

Under the Shapiro-Davis Administration, Pennsylvania has become a national leader on economic development, is the [only state in the Northeast with a growing economy](#) and is [the region’s top state for business according to CNBC](#). The [2026-27 budget](#) builds on this momentum by investing in long-term economic growth and ensuring communities across the Commonwealth can compete and win, including:

- A \$3.75 million increase in state funding for small, historically disadvantaged businesses across the Commonwealth through the HDBA program;
- [\\$20 million in continued funding for main streets and small businesses through Main Street Matters](#) to strengthen commercial corridors that are the heart of Pennsylvania’s communities;
- \$125 million to create the Innovate in PA 2.0 program, funded through Insurance Premium Tax Credits.

#