

Office of Transformation and Opportunity



2024 IMPACT REPORT

WHO WE ARE



2024 IMPACT



2025 VISION



“Pennsylvania needs a government that works more quickly, one that is able to figure out a way to get to yes.” – Governor Josh Shapiro

WHO WE ARE

The Office of Transformation and Opportunity (OTO) is dedicated to helping the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania become a more competitive place to do business. Since its establishment in 2023 by Governor Shapiro’s Executive Order 2023-05, OTO has led business and customer-centric economic development strategies and internal modernization initiatives to help the Commonwealth transform the way it does business. Guided by its strategic priorities, OTO is cross-functional, solution-driven, and a core partner in driving Pennsylvania’s economic growth.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- ✓ Solve problems and address bottlenecks impacting the business communities’ interaction with the Commonwealth
- ✓ Help lead coordinated efforts to develop and implement the Commonwealth’s economic development and innovation strategy
- ✓ Design and implement performance management systems and data visualization tools
- ✓ Serve as a single point of contact for businesses as they navigate complex projects that require coordination amongst multiple state agencies

In its first two years, OTO's has established itself as a key partner for businesses and Commonwealth agencies. The Office has engaged numerous private sector stakeholders, assisting the business community in navigating complex government processes and programs. OTO has been a collaborative driver of internal process improvements, streamlining permit reform across state agencies by launching PA Permit Fast Track and the Permit Accelerator, engaging the Budget Office to improve the RACP application process, standing up PAYback for improved customer service and accountability, and establishing systems and metrics to benchmark permits, license, and certifications. These cross-functional efforts have solidified OTO as a collaborative partner, demonstrating the importance of a solution driven approach to empower agency modernization and continuous improvement.

Changing the way Pennsylvania does business requires the Commonwealth to look inward, challenge norms, and develop a pathway forward. OTO has served as a cross-functional partner for state agencies across the Commonwealth, driving collaborative, innovative work to strengthen processes, programs, and customer service. The Office is also a key partner to Department of Community and Economic Development and its BusinessPA business attraction and retention team, assisting partners navigate the complexities of state government and serving as a connector to local, state, and federal resources.

Tasked with evolving the Commonwealth into a top ten state for business growth, OTO is central to growing Pennsylvania's brand as a business-friendly state. The Office recognizes that building trust with public and private partners is core to its work. OTO's team has attended in more than 50 local, 30 state, 20 national, and five international economic development events to boost the Commonwealth's engagement and profile. The staff has also taken an on-the-ground approach to business support, engaging 212 businesses in 2024: 63 facing permitting challenges; 62 with policy, legislative, or regulatory inquiries; 49 RACP applicants; and 38 companies looking to move or expand here in PA. This engagement also includes Chief Transformation Officer Ben Kirshner's role in co-chairing the Team PA Board, important to facilitating ongoing, strategic engagement with business leaders from across the Commonwealth.

Entering its third year, OTO is motivated to continue its work, prioritizing initiatives that will enhance Pennsylvania's business climate, support data-driven agency collaboration and decision-making, and identify and address gaps to support long-term economic growth. Together, with agency and private sector partners, OTO is committed to making Pennsylvania a more competitive place to do business. And together, Pennsylvania can and will get it done.

"The Office of Transformation and Opportunity is dedicated to growing Pennsylvania's business climate. OTO is breaking down barriers and fostering collaboration between public and private sectors, truly transforming how the Commonwealth supports economic development. Our mission is clear: build trust, drive solutions, and grow Pennsylvania's competitive advantage. That's what our team does every day. It may seem simple, but it's dynamic, customer-centric work that is putting PA on the map. And we're just getting started." – Ben Kirshner, Chief Transformation Officer

2024 IMPACT

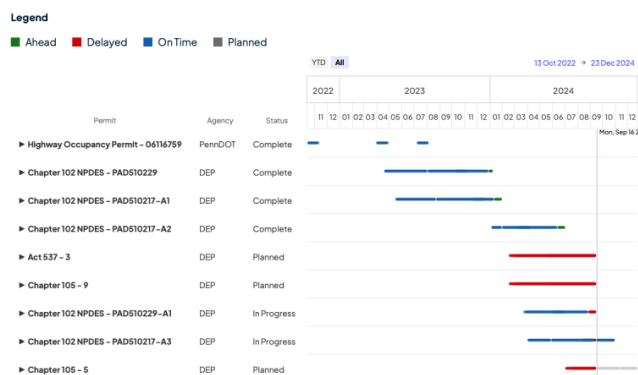
- ✓ Direct Project Assistance
- ✓ Reduced Permitting Timelines & Increased Permitting Transparency
- ✓ Spearheaded Policies and Initiatives to Drive Economic Development

DIRECT PROJECT ASSISTANCE

PA Permit Fast Track

In November 2024, Governor Shapiro signed [Executive Order 2024-04](#) creating the PA Permit Fast Track Program to streamline the Commonwealth's permitting process for complex, large economic development projects. Developed by OTO to facilitate projects requiring permits from multiple agencies, often over many years, the program brings together project sponsors and agencies for early communication on project needs. The Office coordinates across government agencies and private partners to ensure timely and transparent permit issuances. OTO tracks project progress through a unique, publicly accessible [permitting dashboard](#) to ensure accountability for both state agencies and project sponsors.

Permitting Timeline



Fast Track is [currently live](#) with three key economic development projects: the Bellwether District in Philadelphia, a 1,300-acre logistics and innovation campus on the former Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery site; Project Hazelnut in Luzerne County, a transformative technology campus; and the Martinsburg Community Digester in Blair County, a community-scale anaerobic digester to convert manure from local dairy farms into biogas for commercial use.

"The Fast Track Program provides businesses with certainty and predictability to make strategic decisions and minimize risks. When business leaders can rely on accurate forecasting, they can confidently pursue opportunities that create jobs and drive greater economic growth for Pennsylvania." - Chellie Cameron, President & CEO, Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce

"We proudly stand alongside Governor Shapiro and the Commonwealth in advancing economic growth and opportunity. This Executive Order strengthens the critical partnership between economic development projects and permitting agencies, fostering a streamlined, transparent, and effective process. This collaboration accelerates investments, creates meaningful jobs, generates tax revenue, and further strengthens the economy for all Pennsylvanians." - Brian Stahl, Vice President of Development, NorthPoint Development

Streamlining Agency Coordination & Collaboration

OTO serves as a single point of contact to help businesses overcome complex bureaucratic challenges. In this role, OTO is the common thread that connects state agencies and their processes and programs to one another. Whether entities need permitting assistance, grant support, or programmatic connections, OTO is the internal collaborator and project manager to ensure timely government engagement.

Collaboration in Action

Waste Management Inc. (WM)

WM operates a municipal solid waste landfill in Bucks County and is constructing a state-of-the-art renewable natural gas facility to convert landfill biogas into pipeline-quality gas for commercial distribution. The project required close stakeholder coordination for land development planning and environmental permitting. OTO collaborated with project sponsors and DEP to facilitate priority reviews. This resulted in permit issuances 40% faster than standard timeframes. WM expects to recover and distribute enough gas to serve roughly 65,000 households per year.

"The Renewable Natural Gas plant at the Fairless Landfill is an important part of WM's Sustainability initiatives, focusing on GHG reductions through the beneficial reuse of landfill gas derived from the waste we generate. OTO was responsive, understood our concerns and was very helpful with coordinating the permitting effort required for our project." -Christopher S. Farley, Area Vice President Greater Mid-Atlantic Area

Coherent Corp.

Coherent is a global leader in materials, networking, and lasers for the industrial, communications, electronics, and instrumentation markets. Headquartered in western PA with operations across the Commonwealth, their Easton manufacturing plant is pursuing an expansion which requires a complex air quality permit. OTO worked with DEP and their regional air quality team to complete technical review and issue the permit 30% faster than standard timeframes. These efforts demonstrate how enhanced coordination is facilitating economic development and job creation across the technology sector.

"DEP, partnering with OTO, provided accelerated permit issuance critical to enabling Coherent to advance time-sensitive operational planning and funding alignment for the Easton project. The cooperative whole-of-government approach established by the Governor's Executive Order that created OTO is successfully working as envisioned." - Rob Beard, Chief Legal & Global Affairs Officer, Coherent

Programs Employing People

Programs Employing People (PEP) is a Philadelphia-based non-profit that supports Pennsylvanians with intellectual and/or physical disabilities. PEP gained support for selling its building from stakeholders across Commonwealth government but encountered a series of legislative and bureaucratic hurdles. OTO helped coordinate legislation and ensured signatures were executed in time to close on the sale in the fall of 2024.

"For almost one year, PEP and its stakeholders worked with local and state organizations to ensure the organization and the people it supports were involved in the process. Then everything stopped and PEP was unsure where to turn. That's when we were introduced to OTO. The team immediately stepped in to determine what the issues were and put a plan in place to assist PEP. After OTO involvement, the local and state agencies began to work together, and we saw immediate results. Without the OTO's direct involvement, this would have taken much longer than it did. PEP and the people we support are very grateful!" - Michael A. Tucker, PEP CEO

The work above demonstrates the importance of building private sector trust to accelerate economic development, but it's also key to informing internal continuous improvement opportunities, particularly elevating systems and processes where OTO can partner with agencies to continue making strides to work at the speed of business.

Business Support & Engagement

Companies seeking incentives for relocation or expansion in Pennsylvania typically work with DCED's BusinessPA. However, those not seeking financial support, or those who do not meet BusinessPA's assistance thresholds, have lacked a clear partner in the Commonwealth to guide their project pathways. OTO bridges this gap by engaging directly with these companies, connecting them with agency partners and providing answers to programming, regulatory, and permitting questions essential for their business operations. Through its case-by-case project support and assistance with due diligence, OTO has positioned itself as a key business attraction and retention partner.



**200+ Business
Inquiries with
Direct Support**



**60+ Permitting Challenges
Solved or Working towards
Resolution**



**Engaged 36
Companies looking
to Move/Expand in PA**

"We are grateful to the Governor's Office of Transformation and Opportunity for working tirelessly with us to place a new traffic light near our new distribution facility to ensure business continuity and public safety. OTO helped us navigate the complexities of state and local stakeholders, connecting us with PennDOT, the Borough of Hanover, and Adams County, all of whom were important entities to get this project across the finish line. This project epitomized the need for and the success of the Governor's new "fast track" office!" - Theresa R. Shea, EVP, GC & Corporate Secretary, Utz Quality Foods

REDUCED PERMITTING TIMELINES & INCREASED PERMITTING TRANSPARENCY Permit Accelerator

The Permit Accelerator is a first-of-its-kind program that provides Commonwealth employees with the skills and aptitudes necessary to identify, innovate, and launch improvement strategies to solve challenges in their agency's permitting processes and policies. It's comprised of two parts. First, a ten-week professional development course designed and facilitated by faculty and staff at Penn State University Harrisburg. Participants covered topics like customer discovery, human-centered design, cost-

benefit analyses, and product market fit. A collaborative environment, employees shared pain points, discussed challenges, and designed compelling pilot projects to address challenges in their permitting work. The second part of the Accelerator involved each agency team pitching their pilot to Commonwealth leadership, earning seed funding in the amount of \$20,000, and implementing their project with the support of OTO.



**7 Solutions
Proposed**



**4 Agencies
Engaged - 12
Participants**



**4 Projects Moving
into Implementation
Phase**

"The Accelerator has fantastic tools that allow us to look at issues in a manner that provides multiple resolution ideas. It trains you on how to ask the correct questions to gain the most pertinent information and to think outside the box. It also brought to light that we need remember one important item, 'How will this affect the public'. I highly recommend this program for anyone who is striving to decrease the delays in permitting across the Commonwealth." – Penny Myers, Administrative Officer, Department of Labor & Industry

Permit, License and Certification (PLC) Tracker

The PLC Tracker is an annual internal effort to collect permitting data to measure impact, find opportunities for improvement, and tell compelling narratives about permitting across the Commonwealth. The Tracker is also the mechanism to maintain the accuracy of [Payback](#), the Governor's permitting money-back guarantee for delayed permits. The Tracker has three main components: data collection, data analysis, and agency coordination. In the data collection phase, agencies submit information about every permit, license, and certification they issue, including but not limited to application volume, average processing time, submission method, and whether a third party is involved in the review. During the analysis phase, OTO reviews the data and builds a dashboard to reports out findings in easy-to-understand ways and, perhaps most importantly, shows comparisons between year-over-year data. Finally, in the agency coordination phase, agencies receive summary reports that highlight both permit areas where they improved performance, and areas where their performance declined, helping them not only prioritize future efforts, but tell accurate narratives about their permits.

IMPROVEMENTS FROM 2022 to 2023



42.2% decreased
processing time
for DEP's CH. 102
NPEDS Individual
Transfer Permits



70% reduced
processing time
achieved for
PDE's Temporary
Teaching Permits



81% decreased
processing time for
DOH's Clinical
Laboratory Permits

"For years, the Commonwealth has lost business to other states due to our broken permitting system. These efforts welcome recognition that the Commonwealth can do better when dealing with the private sector. When permits are stalled, the Commonwealth and small businesses lose money. This is a welcome, innovative, change." - Greg Moreland, NFIB Pennsylvania State Director

Process Improvement Support

In tandem with efforts like the PLC Tracker and the Permit Accelerator, OTO also works with agencies in more systemic, ongoing ways to ensure permit reform remains a focal point for teams across the Commonwealth. Because of the role they play in economic development, PennDOT and DEP are two agencies where OTO has established ongoing relationships with specific workgroups designed to improve high impact permits – the 102 and 105 in DEP and the HOP in PennDOT. OTO plays an active role in "improvement teams," offering executive support and insight into process improvements, technological advancements, and data analysis to assist with increased reviewer consistency, shorter timelines, and a greater emphasis on customer satisfaction and user experience.

"It's been a pleasure partnering with OTO over the past year in our efforts to streamline PennDOT's highway occupancy permitting processes. It is really helpful to have executive level support as we work to improve this permitting program, and we appreciate the investment of OTO." - Mike Dzurko, HOP Program Manager, PennDOT

Agency KPI Dashboards

OTO is working with agencies to measure internal permitting key performance indicators (KPIs) and enhance visibility to improve performance. This work involves standing up agency dashboards, referred to as Performance Management Systems in our 2023 Annual Report, to provide agency staff and the Governor's Office with real-time visibility into agencies' turnaround time for the permits, licenses, and certifications most important to businesses. These KPIs are already in use supporting budget planning, staffing, and business process decisions. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) dashboard demonstrates the results of OTO's iterative process with agencies to capture in an actionable format the metrics that are most important for agency executive and program staff. OTO's dashboards also support the Office's PLC Tracker and Fast Track

initiatives. The Office is expanding these efforts in the new year, with new dashboards for additional Commonwealth agencies.

“In addition to DEP’s permit modernization initiatives, department staff have been working in close partnership with OTO to improve permit review timelines and increase transparency. The joint development of a performance dashboard and successful roll-out of the PA Permit Fast Track Program shows that we are committed to Getting Stuff Done for the people and businesses of Pennsylvania.” - Acting Environmental Secretary Jessica Shirley

Advancing Broadband Connectivity

OTO is working to improve broadband connectivity across the Commonwealth. In 2024, the Office hired an additional coordinator who is spearheading efforts between the Office of Enterprise Wireless Management (OEWM) and the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority (PBDA). OTO has provided critical project support, acting as a liaison across state agencies and permittees. It has also provided key transparency and visualization to demonstrate need, mapping permitting processes, building OEWM’s map capacity, and documenting state-owned assets such as poles, rights-of-way, properties, and other types of vertical structures. Maps, like the example below, have identified more than 36,000 underserved locations, nearly 12,000 unserved locations, and more than 5,000 community anchor institutions.



Currently, PBDA is facilitating the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) grant program, which aims to help residents and businesses gain access to affordable high-speed internet through investments in broadband planning, deployment, mapping, equity, and adoption activities. As PBDA works with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for final approval to implement \$1.16 billion program, OTO stands ready to aid PBDA and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in their mission to bring internet to all Commonwealth citizens.

“OTO has been a valuable partner as we endeavor to accomplish our mission. In the past year, OEWM/DGS has benefitted significantly from the collaborative support of OTO. This partnership has enabled both agencies to streamline state operations, expedite processes, and achieve shared goals more effectively. OTO has always been ready to support as needed any initiative that benefits the Commonwealth. It has been a pleasure working with the OTO Team.” - Barbara Burba-Filoret, Director, OEWM

PermitConnectPA Conference

The PermitConnectPA conference brought together key stakeholders from Commonwealth agencies, local government, utility providers, and industry to share ideas, uncover challenges, and generate solutions to some of Pennsylvania’s most pressing and pivotal economic development priority areas: broadband, wastewater and drinking water, energy and industrial decarbonization. By taking advantage of federal funding and tax credits to support each of these priorities, Pennsylvania has the opportunity to radically re-make and modernize our infrastructure in each of these areas, building a solid foundation for economic growth in every corner of our Commonwealth.

Based on the conference outcomes, as well as continued conversations happening with stakeholders across Pennsylvania, OTO crafted and is driving forward a series of improvements that aim to positively impact the permitting landscape across the Commonwealth. We are focusing on:

1. Incentivizing regional planning to speed up permitting
2. Infusing customer feedback and user experience into agency operations
3. Leveraging private sector engagement in DEP permitting
4. Upgrading technology and advancing e-permitting

“I enjoyed the opportunity to connect with multiple industry professionals in person. The chance to interact and provide feedback is very important and I felt the Commonwealth valued our input.” - 2023 PermitConnectPA Participant

ENHANCING PENNSYLVANIA’S COMPETITIVENESS

Developing and Deploying PA’s Economic Development Strategy

As a core part of Pennsylvania’s economic development team, OTO worked closely with DCED, the Governor’s Policy Office and the Governor’s Budget Office to develop the Commonwealth’s first economic development strategy in two decades. With this plan serving as our roadmap, OTO is working to deliver on the plan’s strategic initiatives, focusing on making government work at the speed of business. In close coordination with DCED’s BusinessPA, OTO is actively engaging with businesses considering investing in the Commonwealth, with an emphasis on businesses from the plan’s 5 priority sectors.



Agriculture



Energy



Life Sciences



Manufacturing



Robotics
and Technology

"OTO understands what businesses need to compete. Having that business perspective within government enhances Pennsylvania's ability to retain and attract investment and the jobs of tomorrow." - Abby Smith, President & CEO, Team PA

SUCCESS STORY

Adare Pharma Solutions was a New Jersey-headquartered pharmaceutical company with a presence in Philadelphia when the company's leadership first connected with OTO to explore the possibility of moving their headquarters to Philadelphia. Knowing that life sciences would be a key to Pennsylvania's economic development strategy, OTO moved quickly to connect Adare with our colleagues at DCED. Along the way,

OTO was a sounding board for the company's representatives as they explored the opportunity.

Ultimately, thanks to nearly \$3 million in funding from the Shapiro Administration through DCED, the company committed to a \$16.8 million expansion of its Philadelphia operations along with moving the company's headquarters to the Commonwealth.

"When we began our journey to relocate Adare's global headquarters our first stop was with the newly established OTO. They provided invaluable insights, advice, and contacts that ultimately led to a successful move to Pennsylvania. We are grateful to Governor Shapiro, Ben Kirshner, and the team for making Pennsylvania a more friendly place to do business." - Rick Taylor, Government Affairs, Adare Pharma Solutions

Program & Policy Collaboration

OTO has positioned itself as a collaborative team, often serving as thought leaders and partners to agencies as they navigate industry feedback, program reviews, grant opportunities, policy development, and other solution-based ideas that can help government streamline its interactions. In 2024, OTO helped more than 10 state agencies work through program and policy challenges and opportunities, supporting initiatives such as practical tax credit reforms, IT systems support, Broadband visualization, internal program and grant reviews, federal funding opportunities, and Small and Diverse Business programming. Many of these challenges have been raised by both public and private sector partners, creating a collaborative opportunity to reform policies and programs to help Pennsylvania become a more competitive place to do business.

CHALLENGE

Stack AV, Autonomous Trucking Solutions, reached out to OTO for assistance navigating AV challenges they were experiencing. Guidelines associated with Act 130 of 2022 require testing plans be established, along with supplemental testing forms.



ENGAGEMENT

OTO provided technical assistance, navigating customer support questions, agency coordination, and process navigation, ensuring electronic AV forms could be made available on the PennDOT website for business partners.



SOLUTION

The collaborative work of OTO and PennDOT has led to a customer-centric solution. AV industries can now complete required testing forms online, for review and submission to PennDOT, allowing technology and business to move forward.

"As a new company, Stack AV Co. is grateful to OTO for its assistance in helping us stand up operations in the Commonwealth. Initiatives like OTO are invaluable to attracting new businesses to Pennsylvania and creating jobs here at home." - Bryan Salesky, CEO, Stack AV

Permitting Case Studies

From site selection to ribbon cutting, standing up a business is complex, particularly as one navigates permitting timelines and regulatory approvals. That said, Pennsylvania has a competitive story to tell, and there are many businesses who have successfully partnered with the Commonwealth to open their doors. In 2024, OTO developed case studies to help tell this story. These case studies are a key cross-agency marketing tool for business attraction and retention efforts, sharing transparent timelines and best practices to assist consultants and private sector partners as they navigate starting or expanding operations in PA. Importantly, these stories – and many more – are a testament that Pennsylvania Gets It Done.

Pennsylvania Gets it Done.



We're open for business, and we want you to be too.
From groundbreaking to ribbon cutting, Pennsylvania is committed to helping you open your doors at the speed of business. - That's the PA advantage.
Together, let's get it done.

TIMELINES IN ACTION

Project	Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA)
Permitting to Sales	14 months



Pennsylvania's first CEA partner opened its doors in 2020. From submitting its first permit to completion, the greenhouse was operational in 14 months. Working with the Commonwealth, the site was functional even as it finalized its Hazardous Waste Permit, keeping the project on track to capture sales and market growth.

ANTICIPATED STATE PERMITS



Permit Type	Regulatory Timeline in Months
Stormwater	~6
Hazardous Waste	~18
Highway	~2
Occupancy	~2

WORKING TOGETHER

Successful Projects Leverage:

- ✓ Early conversations with local authorities and state permitting agencies.
- ✓ Experienced network of planners, engineers, and consultants.
- ✓ Permit Application Consultation Tool (PACT) and follow-up meetings.
- ✓ Office of Transformation & Opportunity (OTO)

Permit, license, and certification requirements are case by case and subject to change based on locality, regulations, and business needs. To learn more about how OTO can assist, visit oto.pa.gov or email oto@pa.gov.

2025 VISION

As OTO enters its third year, it is at a reflection point to harness successes and lessons learned to advance its mission. Moving into 2025, OTO will focus on building upon the structural foundation it has established over the past two years while refining and scaling its impact. The Office will expand key initiatives like the PA Fast Track Program, the Permit Accelerator, and case by case project support to drive greater efficiency and to continue to grow the Commonwealth's competitive advantage. By formalizing its processes and advancing tools like the PLC Tracker and performance dashboards, OTO will empower agencies to make data-driven decisions that improve outcomes for businesses and residents alike. With a focus on building its long-term strategy and strengthening partnerships, OTO will continue to align closely with Pennsylvania's economic development strategy to prioritize high-impact sectors and foster sustainable growth. Together with its partners, OTO is poised to cement the Commonwealth's position as a leader in business and innovation, creating opportunities to spur exciting growth in 2025 and for many years to come.

