

PENNSYLVANIA DROPS COLLEGE DEGREE MANDATE FOR STATE JOBS



**By Anthony Hennen,
The Center Square**

In his first executive action since becoming governor, Josh Shapiro abolished college degree requirements for state job listings in hopes of expanding economic opportunity.

The executive order signed on January 18 instructs the state to prioritize skills and experience over credentials for 65,000 positions, according to a press release.

"Every Pennsylvanian should have the freedom to chart their own course and have a real opportunity to succeed," Shapiro said. "They should get to decide what's best for them — whether they want to go to college or straight into the workforce — not have that decided for them."

The move away from credential requirements comes at a time when Pennsylvania's labor force participation rate continues to fall. One analysis estimates the commonwealth is missing 113,000 workers.

"I want to make it clear to all Pennsylvanians, whether they went to college or they gained experience through work, job training, or an apprenticeship program; we value your skills and talents, and we want you to apply for a job with the Commonwealth," Shapiro said.

The executive order is effective immediately and will also review the eight percent of jobs with a college-degree requirement "to determine which job classifications are appropriate to include practical experience, in lieu of, or in addition to, a four-year college degree requirement."



On his first full day in office, Governor Josh Shapiro signed his first executive order regarding four-year degree requirements for thousands of state jobs in Pennsylvania.

The change represents a significant shift in Pennsylvania. Public-sector jobs tend to require college degrees at higher rates than private-sector jobs, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"Occupations typically requiring postsecondary education for entry made up 63.5 percent of state government employment and 61.1 percent of local government employment, compared with 35 percent of private sector employment," the BLS noted.

Pennsylvania isn't the first state to remove its college-degree requirement for state jobs. In 2022, Maryland and Utah also revoked their credential demands for public jobs.

In addition to the executive order, the Shapiro administration also launched a website where job-seekers can browse job listings that don't require a college degree.

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