

Northampton County Executive Tara Zrinski Reflects Her First 100 Days in Office

By Kelly Prentic

[Northampton County, PA] —Northampton County Executive Tara Zrinski has highlighted a series of key initiatives and early accomplishments as she marks her first 100 days in office, underscoring a commitment to strengthening county operations, expanding opportunity, and improving how government serves and connects with residents.

“When I look at the first 100 days, I see momentum,” said Zrinski. “I see a County government that is becoming more connected, more transparent, and more responsive. I see teams working across traditional boundaries to solve problems in smarter ways. And, I see the beginning of something bigger—a County government that is not only managing today’s challenges, but preparing responsibly for tomorrow’s opportunities.”

A Focus on People, Access, and Opportunity

The Zrinski administration

Convened

Signed a Human Relations Ordinance into law to reinforce fairness and inclusion

Created a Communications Manager position to enhance transparency and improve public access to County information

Developed and launched pop-up voter services events, approved by the Election Commission, so more people can access the ballot with greater ease and convenience

“These actions are about meeting people where they are. Government works best when it’s accessible, clear, and responsive.”

Creating Pathways Forward and Workforce Development

A major milestone of the first 100 days was the launch of a new workforce-focused reentry initiative. Northampton County partnered with Northampton Community College and the Lehigh Valley Justice Institute to launch the Pathway to Your Future program—designed to prepare incarcerated individuals for successful reentry into the workforce through education, career planning, and hands-on support.

“This program is about creating real second chances,” said Zrinski. “By equipping individuals with skills, direction, and support before they leave incarceration, we are strengthening both their futures and our regional workforce.”

Under the new leadership of DeAnn Lawrence, the Department of Corrections has also emphasized both accountability and long-term outcomes with improved hiring processes and increased transparency in reporting and operations.

Preserving Natural Resources

The Zrinski administration has demonstrated a deep commitment to protecting the environment, championing policies that preserve open space, reduce pollution, and promote sustainable development. Recent efforts through the Department of Parks and Recreation include:

Securing State Board Approval on the preservation of three farms, including an agreement of intent signed for the future acquisition of 82 acres adjacent to Louise Moore Park

Advanced two brownfield remediation projects, including one presented at the PA Brownfields Conference

Certifying an Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program project to install a large waste storage facility, reducing erosion, nutrient runoff, and sedimentation into a tributary of Little Martins Creek

Completing 28 conservation assessments and plans to support farmers in accessing federal cost-share assistance

Supporting Communities and Strengthening the Local Economy

Both the Department of Human Services and the Department of Community and Economic Development have made progress in expanding housing opportunities and supporting senior residents:

Initiated construction on two attainable housing projects in Easton, including Shiloh Estates

Assisted four first-time homebuyers with their home purchases, with each receiving \$10,000 toward down payment and closing costs.

Received the Governor’s Award

Launched a senior “trip and fall” prevention program at a Northampton County Housing Authority facility

Strengthening County Operations from the Inside Out

At Gracedale Nursing Home, we reduced our dependence on agency staff and increased daycare enrollment, all important signs of progress and stability. Zrinski has also made the request to separate the Gracedale continuum of care from Human Services, requiring a Director and Deputy Director position. This will increase oversight, accountability, and stability, that will help safeguard one of the County’s most valuable assets.

The administration has also advanced critical infrastructure and cost-saving efforts:

The Government Center Parking Deck project is moving forward, with construction on track for this summer

Cost-saving contracts for HVAC and facility systems are projected to reduce long-term expenses

Across departments, the administration has focused on improving efficiency, coordination, and service delivery:

Hired and onboarded 91 employees to strengthen County services

Improved c

A Team-Based Approach to Leadership

Zrinski emphasized that early progress reflects a collaborative approach across departments and staff. “My role is to make sure we have the right team on the field and give them what they need to succeed,” she said. “What I am most proud of is not simply the work we have done, but how we have done it. We have done it by working together.”

While highlighting early progress, Zrinski noted that the work is just beginning:

“We’ve spent these first 100 days building a stro



The Giant Company Announces 2026 Healing The Planet Grant Program

By Ashley Flower

WIND GAP, Pa. – The GIANT Company, known locally as GIANT and MARTIN’S, in proud partnership with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, today announced the return of the Healing the Planet Grant Program. The Healing the Planet Grant Program, funded by GIANT, aims to invest in native plantings across the company’s operating areas in Pennsylvania. A total of \$100,000 will be used towards native community plantings. The funding is available to tax-exempt organizations, including local organizations, gove

“By joining with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, we have helped to plant more than 8,500 trees and shrubs in local communities throughout the Commonwealth in recent years,” said Courtney Hopcraft, manager of community relations and strategic partnerships, The GIANT Company. “Whether it’s planting trees or reducing food waste, every action makes a difference in creating greener neighborhoods. Through our Healing the Planet Grant Program, we are proud to continue to support our community partners in their efforts towards a more sustainable future.”

The 2026 Healing the Planet grant program is accepting online applications for grants of up to \$4,000 now through May 21, 2026 at 4:00 PM via the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful website. Eligible expenses include but are not limited to plants native to Pennsylvania, equipment, educational signage, tools, and supplies. Preference will be given to applications that aim to plant the highest quantity of native plants. Awardees will be announced in June.

This is the sixth year GIANT has partnered with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful to offer Healing the Planet grants. In the past five years, more than \$1.3 million has been awarded to 177 recipients for projects which connected people and families to green spaces, improved or helped to protect local waterways and water resources, supported projects that addressed food waste prevention, reduction, and recovery, and promoted native tree planting initiatives.

“Planting native trees and plants is one of the most meaningful ways communities can improve their environment while strengthening neighborhood pride,” said Heidi Pedicone, director of programs at Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. “These plantings support local wildlife, improve quality of life, and contribute to cleaner, safer public spaces. We’re proud to continue this work alongside GIANT. Their commitment helps creates visible improvements in communities across Pennsylvania.”

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful has supported community improvement initiatives and encouraged community leadership, responsibility, and respect for the environment since 1990. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, a state affiliate of Keep American Beautiful, Inc. has more than 35 years of experience in organizing volunteer-driven community improvement events. Visit keepbeautiful.org for more information on programs or to find an event near you.

