

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

PFMA

Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association

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INTRODUCTION

The Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association is a statewide trade association advocating the views of convenience stores, supermarkets, independent grocers, wholesalers and consumer product vendors operating in Pennsylvania.

OUR MEMBERSHIP ...

includes convenience stores, supermarkets, independent grocers, wholesalers, consumer product vendors, national and regional chain stores and locally owned independent retailers of all sizes operating in Pennsylvania.

OUR MISSION ...

is to improve the public image, effectiveness and profitability of companies providing products and services in agriculture production, consumer education, consumer packaged goods, food retailing and wholesale food distribution.

OUR PURPOSE ...

is to advocate for our members, communicate legislative and regulatory activity to keep them informed, and help them stay in compliance with regulations. PFMA provides legislative and regulatory representation, publications, digital communication, conferences, seminars, research, media support, and webinars. Through these efforts, we empower our members to stay ahead of industry trends, navigate regulatory challenges, and foster growth within Pennsylvania's food and beverage industry.

OUR HISTORY ...

started in 1952 when a group of independent retailers met in Erie, Pa., to discuss common concerns. During the meeting, the group officially accepted a charter from the National Association of Retail Grocers (NARGUS), and they selected the name Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association. The association operated from Erie and eventually opened a branch office in Harrisburg to maintain closer relationships with the state legislature. In 1986, PFMA consolidated its offices and moved to Harrisburg. Today, PFMA's office is located in Lemoyne, Pa., just five minutes from the Capitol.

WELCOME

from our president and board chair



ALEX BALOGA
President and CEO



ANDREA KARNS
Board Chair

As we close out another successful year at the **Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association**, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible progress we've made together in 2024. From legislative victories to industry collaboration, PFMA has remained steadfast in its mission to support and advocate for our members.

This year, we worked diligently with industry partners and policymakers to advance key legislative priorities, including securing crucial funding for programs like WIC and advocating for policies that strengthen our industry. Our advocacy efforts bore fruit, with meaningful wins such as the availability of permits for retailers to sell **ready-to-drink cocktails** and significant discussions on **organized retail crime with the Attorney General's Office.**

Our events were a highlight of the year, bringing members together to learn, connect, and drive progress. The **Annual Conference** in Lancaster was a resounding success, featuring insightful sessions, networking opportunities, and valuable industry discussions. We carried that momentum into the **Fall Legislative Conference** in Hershey, where we tackled pressing policy issues and welcomed **new leaders to our Board of Directors.**

Throughout the year, we also celebrated the people who make our industry strong. We welcomed **new PFMA members**, recognized our **Food Industry Trailblazer Award** recipient, and honored the outstanding students awarded the **Thomas R. and Laura Ridge Scholarships**. As we look ahead, applications are now open for the 2025-26 scholarship program, ensuring we continue to invest in the next generation of leaders.

Beyond business, PFMA members continue to demonstrate the spirit of generosity that defines our industry. Whether through food drives, holiday meal donations, or supporting local charities, **our members** show time and again that they are **committed to their communities**.

As we step into 2025, I invite you to join us for another year of growth and advocacy. Mark your calendars for our **2025 Annual Conference, May 13-14 at the Omni Bedford Springs Resort**, where we will once again come together to strengthen our industry and build for the future.

Thank you for your dedication to PFMA. Your commitment fuels our success, and I look forward to all that we will accomplish together in the year ahead.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Karns Foods



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CORPORATE LEADERSHIP SPONSORS

As a **Corporate Leadership Sponsor**, you'll play a vital role in PFMA's advocacy efforts—supporting legislation that benefits your business and pushing back against policies that could be harmful. We champion the interests of grocery stores, convenience stores, wholesalers, consumer packaged goods companies, lottery and gaming organizations, and more.

Learn more at **pfma.org/sponsors**



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ANNUAL CONFERENCE









PFMA members gathered in Lancaster for the **2024 Annual Conference**, a two-day event filled with industry insights, networking, and business development opportunities.

The event kicked off on **Tuesday, May 7**, with PFMA's **annual and wholesalers' meetings**, setting the stage for discussions on the association's strategic direction. That evening, members explored the expanded **mini trade show**, which featured 14 vendors from across the food and beverage industry, including meat manufacturers, energy providers, and tech companies.

During the Tuesday night dinner, **Patrick Andrews, division chief of markets at the Pennsylvania Department of Agricultur**e, delivered a keynote address on the **PA Preferred program**. He highlighted initiatives such as **Homegrown By Heroes**, which supports veteran farmers, the **Farm to School Network**, connecting local agriculture to schools, and the new **PA Preferred Organic** designation.

On **Wednesday, May 8**, attendees participated in three expert-led panel discussions:

- **Building a Successful Brand –** Panelists shared strategies for standing out in a competitive market.
- **Leveraging AI in the Food Industry –** Experts explored practical applications of artificial intelligence to improve operations.
- **Developing Your Team –** Leaders discussed mentorship and training programs that enhance workforce development.







The conference also saw changes to **PFMA's Board of Directors**, welcoming four new members and naming new executive officers.

Looking ahead, PFMA invites members to the **2025 Annual Conference at the Omni Bedford Resort & Spa on May 13-14**—another opportunity to learn, connect, and shape the future of the industry.



FALL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

The **2024 PFMA Fall Legislative Conference** brought together food industry leaders, policymakers, and key stakeholders at the Hershey Country Club for two days of insightful discussions, networking, and advocacy.

Day 1: Board Meeting, Golf, and Keynote Dinner

The conference opened with a PFMA Board Meeting, where members reviewed association initiatives and set priorities for the coming year. Following the meeting, attendees enjoyed a golf outing, providing a perfect setting for informal networking and industry conversations.

The evening concluded with a keynote dinner reception, featuring remarks from **Rick Siger, Pennsylvania's Secretary of Community and Economic Development**. Siger outlined Governor Shapiro's economic vision and emphasized state initiatives aimed at strengthening Pennsylvania's food and retail sectors.

Day 2: Legislative Insights and Election Forecasts

The second day focused on policy discussions, starting with two expert-led panels:

Federal Issues Panel – Representatives from the Food Industry Association (FMI), NACS, and the Consumer Brands Association examined national challenges impacting food and beverage retailers.

State Issues Panel – Bipartisan Pennsylvania House and Senate representatives discussed key state legislative priorities affecting the food sector.

The afternoon session, held at Tröegs Brewery, featured an **Election Forecast Panel** with political strategists Chris Nicholas and TJ Rooney, who provided analysis on Pennsylvania's upcoming elections and their implications for the industry.

Celebrating a Trailblazer

PFMA honored **Chris Reed, General Counsel for Rutter's, with the PFMA Food Industry Trailblazer Award** in recognition of his dedication and leadership in advancing the industry.

PFMA thanks all attendees, speakers, and sponsors for making this event a success!



Rick Siger, PA Secretary of Community & Economic Development









Andrea Karns of Karns Quality Foods, Chris Reed of Rutter's and Alex Baloga PFMA President.

WATCH THE VIDEOS FROM THE PFMA FALL 2024 LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE





SHELF CONFIDENCE



PFMA wrapped up its sixth season of the Shelf Confidence podcast this year, sharing 9 episodes in 2024. Over 2024 there have been 472 downloads of the Podcast.

Pa Lottery Modernization – What Pa Lottery retailer partners and players need to know Jan 3, 2024 – 32 downloads

Helping Retailers and Brands Really Maximize Profits in 2024 with guest Old City Media – January 17, 2024 – 26 downloads

Learn how Shelfmark uses Practical AI to Keep the Shelves Stocked – January 31, 2024 – 61 downloads

De-escalation Training by Ready Training Online – March 13, 2024 – 46 Downloads

Food Modernization Safety Act (FSMA) with Upshop – June 11, 2024 – 36 downloads

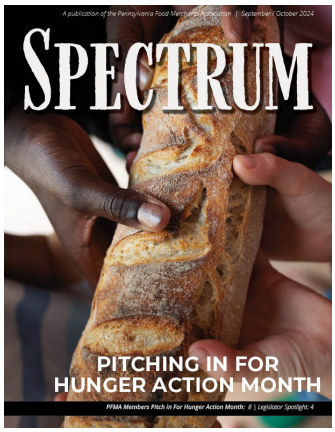
Dynamic Pricing with Tanvi Surti of Luca Software – June 27, 2024 – 19 download

Supporting a Neurodiverse Workforce with Dave Simonetti of Wawa – July 12, 2024 – 25 downloads

Creating a safer workplace with Jon Norton of ZeroEyes – Aug. 16, 2024 – 27 downloads

Eliminating food waste with Divert – Sept. 30, 2024 – 36 downloads

PFMA publishes several annual reports, including the **Legislative Review and Priorities**, outlining industry achievements and goals. The updated **Membership Directory and Buyer's Guide** features member listings, key resources, and event promotions. Additional publications include materials for conferences, **board reports, and year-end reports**.



SPECTRUM

This past year, the association published six issues of Spectrum magazine. The bimonthly publication is printed for members and shared widely online.

Spectrum featured six legislative spotlights:
Sen. Judy Schwank (January/February)
Sen. Chris Gebhard (March/April)
Rep. Eddie Day Pashinski (May/June)
Rep. Marci Mustello (July/August)
Rep. Emily Kinkead (September/October)
Sen. Vincent Hughes (November/December)

Spectrum highlights include:

PFMA Annual Conf. 2024, Congress should match food retailers' commitment to WIC (Jan/Feb)

Legislative priorities in state budget, remembering Dick Redner, and an op-ed on inflation/"greedflation" (Mar/Apr)

Loss Prevention Committee meets with AG on new ORC taskforce, annual conf. recap, welcoming new board members (May/Jun)

Budget wins, new RTD legislation, Ridge Scholarship winners, and a guest piece on We Card Awareness Month (Jul/Aug)

PFMA Fall Leg. Conf., Hunger Action Month, and an article by Guy Yehiav, Pres., SmartSense by Digi (Sep/Oct)

Holiday philanthropy, article from John Wesolowski, Pres., Milazzo Industries on pet-friendly ice melters (Nov/Dec)

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

For PFMA, 2024 was a significant and effective year, led at the state level by victories on a number of key priorities, and at the federal level by progress on several key pieces of legislation and successful opposition to a number of harmful proposals. As always, thanks go to our members for your help and support; it is essential to our success.

LEGISLATION SUCCESSFULLY ADVANCED

FEDERAL

Note: The 119th Congress will be sworn in on January 3, 2025. The notes below refer to activity in calendar year 2024, the second half of the 118th Congressional term.

Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024 - H.R.7024 - $79 billion business and family tax relief bill. The legislation passed the House in January by a vote of 357 to 70 but fell short of the 60 votes needed to begin consideration in the Senate in August. PFMA supported this bill, which included provisions eliminating the phase-down of bonus depreciation through the end of 2025, increasing the maximum deduction amount and the phaseout threshold for expensing under Section 179, and reformed business interest deductions through 2025.

Affordable Prescriptions for Patients Act - S. 150 – Bipartisan legislation limiting the number of patents a pharmaceutical company can assert on a drug in an effort to curb rising medicine prices. This legislation passed the Senate in July. PFMA supported this bill.

Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024 – H.R. 8467 - House version of the Farm Bill reauthorization. The legislation passed the House in September. PFMA supported efforts to pass a bipartisan Farm Bill in 2024.

Food Traceability Enhancement Act - H.R. 7563 – Bipartisan legislation to strengthen compliance with the FDA Food Traceability Rule, to enhance the FDA foodborne illness outbreak investigation process, and for other purposes. PFMA supports the legislation which would make industry compliance more reasonable while enhancing food safety. The bill was introduced and referred to the House Subcommittee on Health in March.

Federal Reserve Board of Governors' decision in a 6-1 vote to initiate a proposed rulemaking that would reduce the regulated debit interchange rate and adjust the rate every two years consistent with data. The public comment period took place early in 2024. PFMA supports efforts to reduce the cap on debit card interchange fees.

Banning SNAP processing fees – PFMA supported efforts to extend the current prohibition on SNAP processing fees as part of bipartisan budget negotiations this fall. The association also supports standalone legislation – the Ensuring Fee-Free Benefit Transactions (EBT) Act (S. 2449 | H.R. 4103) and the inclusion of a permanent prohibition in the next Farm Bill.

LEGISLATION PASSED

STATE

Ready to Drink Beverages - A longtime PFMA priority, enabling legislation was signed into law by Gov. Shapiro in July and went into effect in September. The result of intense advocacy, negotiation and compromise, SB 688 by Sen. Mike Regan (R-York) settles one of the most gaping inconsistencies in Pennsylvania's alcohol laws by allowing retailers to sell spirit-based RTDs.

Restoration of PLCB Backhaul Discount - The reinstatement of this program, included in omnibus liquor reform legislation that also passed in July, represents a significant win for PFMA members involved in alcohol sales, who will see substantial savings by once again receiving a discount for collecting their own alcohol shipments.

WIC Advisory Board Legislation – PFMA supported passage of SB 721, which establishes a permanent Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) advisory board, by the Pennsylvania General Assembly. PFMA occupies two seats on the board, which will continue as a permanent institution in Pennsylvania.

Budget Line Items – PFMA successfully advocated for the following specific line items that were included in the 2024-25 state budget:

- ORC Task Force Funding - $2.5 million to establish and support operations of the new ORC Task Force.
- Healthy Food Financing - $2 million
- $3 million in state funds to ensure seamless implementation and administration of the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program
- $10.3 million in agriculture innovation, important funding that will help support and attract new agricultural businesses, including energy and conservation endeavors
- $96,000 investment for child care providers participating in the Child Care Works program, which will leverage $62 million in federal funding to raise rates to the 75th percentile.
- The association also supported increased SNAP Funding in the amount of $16 million but this additional funding was not included in the final product.

Advocating business-friendly tax reforms – PFMA helped advocate for the inclusion of net operating loss carryforward language in the budget this year. Pennsylvania was one of only two states to limit net operating loss deductions to a lower level than the federal limit of 80 percent - in the commonwealth the deduction has been capped at 40 percent of taxable income. The budget agreement includes a tiered increase to the NOL cap that will ultimately bring Pennsylvania in line with the federal limit.

Infrastructure Development – Lawmakers approved Gov. Shapiro's PA SITES proposal, including in the budget language authorizing $500 million to provide grants or loans to developers or local government agencies so they can prepare sites for industrial or mixed-use projects. PFMA continues to share details on this and other grant opportunities relevant to members.

Pharmacy Benefit Manager Reform – PFMA's Pharmacy Council worked extensively with lawmakers and other stakeholders on comprehensive reform legislation that addresses some of the most egregious problems facing grocery and independent pharmacies, such as price steering and spread pricing. HB 1993 emerged as the legislative vehicle containing many of the reforms we have advocated, and was signed into law by the governor in July.

LOCAL—PHILADELPHIA

PFMA staff continue to meet regularly with members of City Council, and its new leadership including Council President Kenyatta Johnson and majority leader Katherine Gilmore Richardson to communicate our priorities and our willingness to collaborate on shared goals, including combating retail theft, developing EV charging infrastructure, and addressing food insecurity.

Tax Reform – PFMA testified before the Tax Reform Commission over the summer on the impact of the city's beverage tax and the need to assess how it is structured and implemented. The Tax Reform Commission is expected to issue their recommendations for improvements to the city's tax structure this fall and we will weigh in on that when we see what they have put together. We are looking for progress on both the city's wage and BIRT taxes and ideally eliminating the effective double tax that businesses pay right now in Philadelphia. We believe there is an appetite among City Council to make changes on that portion of the tax structure.

Fair Workweek / Permitting Reform - PFMA is in touch with Council and the Commerce Department to weigh in with feedback on the city's fair workweek law and other potential targets for streamlining and reform to make it easier to do business in Philadelphia.

Retail Crime – PFMA is working hard on the retail crime issue. The association met in early fall with staff from the Philadelphia Police Department and the Delaware Valley Intelligence Center and will continue to do so at regular intervals.

LOCAL—PITTSBURGH

Medical Marijuana Reform - The bill, sponsored by Councilor Barb Warwick, would make medical marijuana users a protected class in the city. It would specify that it is discriminatory to routinely test medical marijuana patients for marijuana as a condition of being hired for or retaining most jobs. The bill was signed by the mayor in September.

LEGISLATION OPPOSED

FEDERAL

Tax Increases – PFMA successfully worked with federal stakeholders to block tax increases in 2024.

RECHARGE Act – S. 4989 – PFMA joined national partners in opposing this legislation, introduced in August, which would threaten to halt private investment in EV charging stations by amending longstanding federal law prohibiting automotive services at rest areas.

Bank Resilience and Regulatory Improvement Act - H.R. 8337 – PFMA submitted comments to the House Financial Services Committee in May expressing opposition to the bill, and specifically its inclusion of an increase to the current debit asset threshold for banks.

American Privacy Rights Act of 2024 – H.R. 8818 – PFMA joined national and state associations opposing this bill's inclusion of problematic private right of action and service provider requirements language.

Minimum Wage Increases – PFMA opposed the inclusion of minimum wage increases in any omnibus legislation, as well as the standalone Raise the Wage Act.

Paid Leave Mandates – PFMA continues to work with its national partners to resist unfunded paid leave mandates. PFMA understands businesses are best positioned to determine such leave policies.

DOL Joint Employer Rule – PFMA opposes the proposal that would deem two or more employers to be joint employers if they "share or co-determine those matters governing employees' essential terms and conditions of employment" such as wages, scheduling, and workplace health and safety. PFMA submitted comments in opposition to the rulemaking which took effect early in 2024 but is facing multiple lawsuits and legislative opposition.

FDA Tobacco Standards rules – PFMA believes the FDA's proposed prohibitions on menthol in cigarettes and all flavors other than tobacco in cigars is misguided and will lead to a dangerous, unregulated black illicit market for these products. In 2024 the association submitted testimony and spoke with the White House Office of Budget and Management to urge against implementation of these rules.

STATE

Unreasonable Minimum Wage Increases - PFMA was again successful in preventing an untenable increase to the minimum wage. Many PFMA members have raised their starting wages well above the state and federal minimum and the association has signaled a willingness to discuss a reasonable increase to the state minimum wage.

Unreasonable Workers Compensation and labor law reform – PFMA has opposed and has worked to mitigate legislative proposals that would seek to disrupt federal regulations on certain industries by expanding mandates and training requirements.

Tobacco and OTP Taxes - No new or increased taxes on tobacco or other tobacco products were enacted at the state level in 2024. In addition, PFMA opposed state-level attempts to prohibit flavored tobacco products, including HB 1161.

Combined Reporting – PFMA opposed efforts to institute combined reporting, including as part of the 2024 state budget.

Food Additive Proposal – A two-bill proposal introduced to ban certain food additives in Pennsylvania was halted in the state legislature following advocacy by PFMA and other stakeholders. This is an issue that fundamentally should be addressed at the federal level.

LOCAL—PITTSBURGH

Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Tax- PFMA continued to monitor and push back against attempts to develop or consider a potential sugar-sweetened beverage tax in Pittsburgh or Allegheny County.

PROGRESS MADE ON PRIORITY ISSUES

FEDERAL

Credit Card Competition Act - H.R. 3881/S. 1838 - Prohibits credit card issuers from restricting the number of payment card networks on which an electronic credit transaction may be processed. This legislation was reintroduced in both chambers in 2023. PFMA believes the need for competition in the payment processing space is vital and has advocated strongly for passage of the CCCA.

Food and Drug Administration Foods Accountability Act - S. 5103 - Requires the Department of Health and Human Services to develop, submit to Congress, and post on FDA's website a strategic plan for FDA's Human Foods Program, including the food-related functions of the Office of Inspections and Investigations. The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee held a public hearing on this bill in September.

Enhanced Cybersecurity for SNAP Act - S. 3893 - The bill would require USDA to issue updated regulations requiring EBT cards to have anti-fraud technology that will be updated every five years and keep pace with security of credit and debit cards. It would phase out the magnetic stripe on a SNAP card so states will have to reissue cards within five years of adoption of new regulations. The bill was introduced in March 2024 by bipartisan legislators in the US House and Senate.

Overtime Pay Flexibility Act - H.R. 7367 - Would prohibit the Department of Labor from finalizing, implementing, or enforcing its proposed rule titled "Defining and Delimiting the Exemptions for Executive, Administrative, Professional, Outside Sales, and Computer Employees." The bill was introduced and referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce in February. PFMA supports efforts to ensure that businesses can manage overtime compensation in a way that benefits both the business and employees.

Trucking Reform Legislation - H.R. 3372/H.R. 2367/H.R 3013 - H.R. 3372 would establish a pilot program of up to ten years to increase the gross vehicle weight on federal interstates; the Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act (H.R. 2367) would authorize funding for the creation of thousands of new truck parking spaces; and, the Licensing Individual Commercial Exam-Takers Now Safety and Efficiently (LICENSE) Act (H.R. 3013) would modernize and streamline the commercial driver's license (CDL) process. The legislative package passed out of the US House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in May 2023. PFMA supports efforts to enhance and grow the transportation workforce.

Ensuring Fee-Free Benefit Transactions Act - S. 2449/H.R. 4103 - Permanently prohibits processing or other related fees from being imposed on retailers or consumers participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The bill also protects retailers from the financial burden of a migration to EBT chip cards. PFMA supports protecting the SNAP program from harmful processing fees.

Main Street Tax Certainty Act - H. 4721/S. 1706 - The Main Street Tax Certainty Act would make permanent the Section 199A 20-percent deduction for qualified business income for S-corporations. PFMA supports efforts to streamline and improve the business tax climate in the United States.

The Hemp and Hemp-Derived CBD Consumer Protection and Market Stabilization Act - H.R. 1629 – Would make hemp, cannabidiol derived from hemp, and any other ingredient derived from hemp lawful for use under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act as a dietary ingredient in a dietary supplement, and for other purposes. PFMA supports the classification of these products as dietary supplements.

Protect Patient Access to Pharmacies Act - S. 2052 – Would improve enforcement of the "any willing pharmacy" law intended to prevent the exclusion of pharmacies from Part D plan networks. PFMA supports comprehensive PBM reform.

Pharmacy DIR Reform To Reduce Senior Drug Costs Act - S. 1909 – Establishes certain requirements for prescription drug plans and the prices of covered drugs under the Medicare prescription drug benefit. PFMA supports efforts to reform direct and indirect renumeration (DIR) fees.

Medical Nutrition Therapy Act - S. 3297/H.R. 6407 - Would increase access to counseling by registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) for Medicare beneficiaries to help prevent, delay and manage chronic disease and diet-related medical conditions. PFMA believes food retailers are uniquely positioned to provide nutrition counseling services at the same place customers buy their groceries and medications.

Improve and Enhance the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Act - H.R. 6833 - Strengthens the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), which has not been changed since its enactment twenty-seven years ago, to encourage longer-service employment. The bill would increase the current credit percentage from 40% to 50% of qualified wages and add a second level of credit for employees who work 400 or more hours. In addition, the bill eliminates the arbitrary age cap at which SNAP recipients are eligible for WOTC. This change will provide an incentive to hire older workers and better align the credit with the work reforms adopted in the debt ceiling negotiations in 2023.

STATE

Alcohol Reform

Register legislation – PFMA is advocating for legislation which would allow restaurant licensees with a wine expanded permit the ability to sell wine and beer at any register, require ID card readers at these registers, and permit a sales clerk under 18 to operate these registers except when alcohol would be purchased. If alcohol is to be purchased, an employee 18 or over would then operate the register. In addition, the bill allows customers to access beer and wine within the main store area. This session the legislation was SB 117 introduced by Sen. Judy Ward (R-Blair).

Alcohol Delivery - PFMA supports legislation, HB 41 by Rep. Marci Mustello (R-Butler), that would permit beer and wine delivery by WEP licensees and third parties who hold LCB-licensed Transporter-for-Hire permits through an on-line ordering and delivery platforms that they establish. The association has pushed back on proposed amendments to the bill that would complicate enforcement and licensee reporting requirements.

Gaming – Governor Shapiro proposed taxing and regulating games of skill to generate revenue for the Commonwealth as part of his initial budget proposal. PFMA's priority on this issue is ensuring member businesses have the opportunity to participate on a level playing field if they choose. A regulatory framework was not included in the 2024-25 state budget and as of today, with the issue bound up with public transportation funding by lawmakers, it is unlikely anything will be passed before the end of the legislative session. We expect this to resurface in the next session beginning in January.

Cannabis – As another new revenue source, Governor Shapiro proposed the legalization of adult-use cannabis in Pennsylvania. Again, PFMA's focus is making sure members can participate in the sale of this product if they want. In this context PFMA is working to make sure any framework for adult-use cannabis sale is not restricted to the state liquor system. Adult-use cannabis also did not make it in a final budget agreement, and we expect the issue to be taken up again in the new session.

SNAP Distribution Uniformity – PFMA's SNAP distribution schedule reform bill was reintroduced in the Senate as SB 244 by Sen. Dave Argall (R-Schuylkill) and in the House as HB 2095 by Rep. Dave Madsen (D-Dauphin) with more than 20 co-sponsors. In addition to collaborating with lawmakers on a legislative solution the association is also working with state agencies on this issue.

Sales Tax Collection Support for Businesses – Pennsylvania's Sales and Use Tax Vendor Discount offers a small reduction in the amount of taxes owed by businesses that collect and remit sales tax to the state in a timely manner. PFMA has developed a proposal to expand the 1%/$300 cap that was placed on the vendor discount in 2016 and secured bipartisan sponsors in both the House - Rep. Paul Friel (D-Chester), and Senate - Sen. Kristen Phillips-Hill (R-York).

Sustainability Issues – We continue to monitor developments on statewide PFAS and single-use plastic proposals. A single-use plastic bill was introduced in the state House – HB 2624 – late in the legislative session but no progress was made before session concluded. On single-use plastic our priority remains ensuring any statewide policy includes a preemption on the local ordinances that are making member compliance efforts increasingly untenable. On PFAS it is making sure any proposed language includes references to the presence of these chemicals being "intentionally added." We fully anticipate continuing this advocacy in the new session.

Emergency hauling during travel restrictions – PFMA supports SB 153 which would authorize milk hauling during travel restrictions, and continues to work with state agencies on improving flexibility for shipping transport during such events.

Acceleration of the CNIT Reduction – PFMA supports accelerating the reduction in the Corporate Net Income Tax (CNI) implemented as part of the FY 2022 state budget.

Data Privacy – PFMA provided input on HB 1201, legislation that would lay out consumer rights and business requirements pertaining to data privacy.

Portable Benefits for App-Based Workers – SB 967 would establish a portable benefits framework for app-based workers to enable the provision of income replacement, health and wellness benefits, and other benefits for eligible workers. It would also establish a separate occupational accident insurance requirement for network companies to purchase. PFMA worked with the bill sponsor and member stakeholders to share feedback on this proposal.

LOCAL—PITTSBURGH

FFood Justice Fund – In 2023 Pittsburgh City Council approved a plan for how the city will distribute federal aid dollars toward food equity initiatives. PFMA has been monitoring progress of this effort as part of its broader focus on the role of the private sector in food accessibility.

Allegheny County Food Safety Reform Legislation – In late 2024 Allegheny County introduced reform legislation to the county's food safety code. PFMA will continue to engage in the new year on this issue.

ADVOCACY EFFORTS

PFMA's public advocacy this year included the following:

In January, PFMA sent correspondence to newly elected Philadelphia Mayor Cherelle Parker outlining the association's priorities and areas of alignment with the new administration.

Also in January, PFMA participated in a webinar hosted by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' Disaster Feeding Task Force, specifically discussing challenges and strategies for pediatric feeding during mass care events, and the role played by the private sector and food industry.

In February, City and State PA published a guest editorial by PFMA President and CEO Alex Baloga entitled "Congress should match food retailers' commitment to women, infants and children"

PFMA in March submitted testimony to the state House Consumer Protection, Technology and Utilities Committee on the topic of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and the role to be played by the retail food industry.

As a member of the Partnership to Protect Workplace Opportunity, PFMA joined with other coalition members on a letter to the US House of Representatives sent in the spring urging support of H.R. 7367, the Overtime Pay Flexibility Act, which would prohibit the Department of Labor from finalizing, implementing, or enforcing its proposed rule titled "Defining and Delimiting the Exemptions for Executive, Administrative, Professional, Outside Sales, and Computer Employees," published in the Federal Register on September 8, 2023.

Also in March, Pennlive published a guest editorial by PFMA President and CEO Alex Baloga pushing back on the concept of "greedflation" among food merchants.

In the spring PFMA authored a coalition letter delivered to state legislative committee chairs expressing concern and opposition to proposed bills that would prohibit certain food dyes and additives in Pennsylvania.



The association submitted testimony to the state House Labor and Industry Committee on HB 98, which would amend the state's Equal Pay Law to prohibit employers from discriminating against and paying workers less because of their gender, race, or ethnicity.

PFMA submitted a letter to the US House of Representatives expressing our opposition to H.R. 722, the Bank Resilience and Regulatory Act, which would increase debit swipe fees on merchants by billions of dollars.

In May, the association submitted a letter to the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee in support of HB 2286, legislation clarifying liability protections for food donations.

PFMA submitted testimony to Philadelphia City Council during their budget deliberations, urging further action on the city's wage and BIRT taxes.

In June, PFMA sent a letter to the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee expressing concern over HB 2238 and the challenges of a state-level approach to addressing PFAS chemicals.

PFMA provided written testimony to the PA House Finance Committee in support of a proposal to prohibit swipe fees from being charged on the sales tax portion of electronic transactions. The committee also spearheaded a coalition letter in support of this legislation.



Over the summer PFMA provided oral testimony to the City of Philadelphia's Tax Reform Commission detailing the challenges incurred by members following the city's enactment of a sugar sweetened beverage tax in 2016-17.

PFMA joined other state associations over the summer in a letter expressing opposition to the American Privacy Rights Act of 2024 in the form released on June 20 to be marked up in the Committee on Thursday, June 27. We urged members of the Committee to vote no when APRA is marked up in the full House Energy & Commerce Committee unless significant changes were made to address our concerns with the private right of action and service provider requirements within the bill.

PFMA also signed a letter sent in June to members of Congress opposing S.4570, a bill that would unnecessarily further delay the Federal Reserve Board (Fed) from moving forward with its process of considering proposed revisions to Regulation II.

In July, PFMA joined on a coalition letter to Congressional leaders urging progress on the 2024 Farm Bill.

In August, PFMA submitted testimony to the House Transportation Committee on the topic of infrastructure investment in Pennsylvania.

In September, Pennlive published a joint op-ed by Alex Baloga and Dawn Roller, PFMA's Loss Prevention Committee chair, on organized retail crime.

In October, PFMA joined a coalition letter in support of H.R. 6833, the Improve and Enhance the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Act, which would strengthen the WOTC.

In December, PFMA signed a letter to Congressional leaders from state trade associations urging the extension of the Section 40A Biodiesel Tax Credit.

Throughout the year, industry publication Food Trade News published a number of Statehouse Update articles by PFMA President and CEO Alex Baloga.

The association also corresponded regularly with members of the state General Assembly urging support for priority legislation throughout 2024.

ASSOCIATION SERVICES

MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT

2024 was a pivotal year for PFMA, marked by legislative successes, membership growth, and increased engagement across government and industry boards. The association was invited to join several key panels, including the **Pennsylvania Food Protection Task Force, PennDOT Charging & Fueling Infrastructure Grant Regional Working Group, and the City of Philadelphia's Food Insecurity Task Force.** PFMA also played a role in the newly established permanent **WIC Advisory Board**, solidifying its influence on key policy decisions.

At the state and local levels, PFMA worked closely with lawmakers to advance industry priorities. Staff met with all new members of **Philadelphia City Council** and the **Mayor's Office**, testified before the **Tax Reform Commission** on the impact of the beverage tax, and collaborated with the **Allegheny Conference and Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce** to expand advocacy efforts statewide.

PFMA's committees played a critical role in driving policy discussions. The **Sustainability and Food Protection Committees** engaged lawmakers on expanding food donation protections. The **Loss Prevention Committee** met with the **Attorney General's** office on organized retail crime. **The Pharmacy Council** helped advance Pharmacy Benefit Manager reform, which passed into law.

The Legislative Committee hosted top state lawmakers throughout the year, ensuring PFMA members remain engaged with key decision-makers. Looking ahead, PFMA will continue advocating for Pennsylvania's food industry at every level.

POLICY FEEDBACK REQUESTS

Feedback from our membership is hugely valuable in helping guide our advocacy efforts and we strongly urge the use of this channel to let us know how member organizations feel about policy proposals moving through government. Some policy proposals put out for feedback this year include:

- **Paid Sick Leave**
- **Workers Compensation Reform**
- **Residual Food Processing Waste Legislation**
- **Break Period Requirements**
- **Battery Stewardship Legislation**
- **PFAS Legislation**
- **Food Additive Prohibition**
- **Alcohol delivery**
- **Portable benefits for app-based workers**
- **Over Order Premiums**
- **Skill Game Legislation**
- **Antitrust Legislation**
- **Healthy Food Bucks Legislation**
- **Gift Card Scam Prevention Legislation**
- **Employee Credit Check Prohibition**
- **Philadelphia – Fair Workweek Law**
- **Philadelphia – Contract Worker Protections**

ACTION ALERTS

PFMA issued Action Alerts – calls to action for members to reach out directly to public officials – on the following issues in 2024:

- **Organized Retail Crime**
- **Federal Swipe Fee Reform**
- **Sales Tax Collection Support for Businesses**
- **Opposing SNAP Choice Restrictions and Data Reporting Requirements**
- **SNAP Distribution Schedule Reform**
- **Net Operating Loss Reform**
- **Alcohol Reform**

EMERGENCY UPDATES

In cooperation with the Pennsylvania Business Emergency Operations Center, the Delaware Valley Intelligence Center and other law enforcement and emergency management agencies, PFMA relayed updates and guidance documents to members this year regarding disasters and other emergencies. Notable situations included:

- **FMCSA Emergency Declaration/Extensions**
- **Winter weather emergencies**
- **Hurricane Forecast/Roadway & Power Outage Updates/Post-Storm Survey & Resources**
- **First Amendment Activity**

INFOSHARES

Launched in 2020, Infoshares are intended as a way for PFMA to communicate events, services and other items of interest to members that may not fall in a specific committee category, or across the purview of multiple committees. Highlights for 2024 included:

- **Active Shooter/Workplace Safety**
- **Federated Insurance Webinars**
- **Managing Cyber Risk**
- **Department of Labor and Industry Webinars**
- **Pediatric Feeding in Mass Care**
- **Cannabis and the Workplace**

COMMUNICATIONS

6 ISSUES OF SPECTRUM

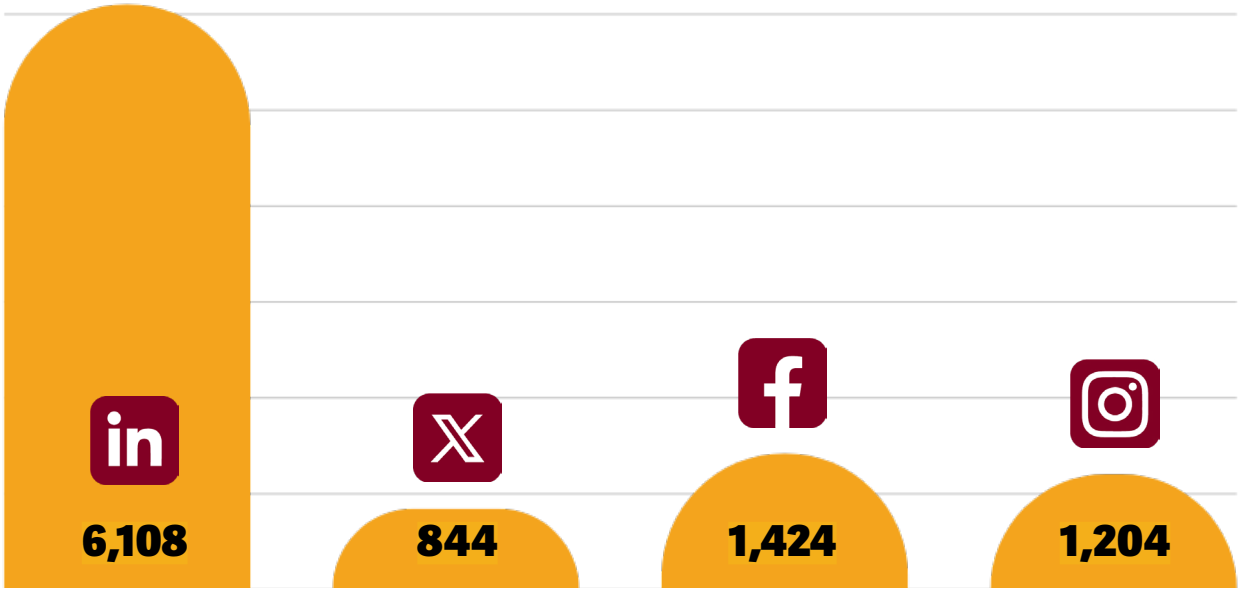
13 PRESS RELEASES

11 MEDIA MENTIONS

9 PODCAST EPISODES

23K WEBSITE VISITS

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



COMMITTEES

There are several other lists maintained by Association Services to which pertinent updates are distributed. They include Dairy, Human Resources, PennDOT/Transportation and Convenience Products.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The Legislative Committee meets on the last Wednesday of each month to discuss state and federal policy developments and PFMA's advocacy efforts. Members regularly engage with top policymakers, including House and Senate leaders, during meetings. These interactions provide direct access to decision-makers on key industry issues. PFMA also delivers a weekly update email with legislative news, policy requests, and action alerts, ensuring members stay informed. The committee remains committed to advancing industry priorities and addressing regulatory challenges. The association's 2024 Legislative Review outlines the status of legislation that PFMA has supported, opposed, and actively worked on this year.

PHILADELPHIA LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

This committee focuses on legislation in Philadelphia City Council and mayoral actions. It meets virtually on the first Thursday of every other month, with additional meetings as needed to address urgent legislative matters. Members receive weekly updates on city and local government issues, keeping them informed of new proposals and regulatory changes. In 2024, PFMA strengthened relationships with city officials and key stakeholders, testified before the city's Tax Reform Commission on the beverage tax's impact, and engaged city leaders on pressing concerns like tax reform, regulatory adjustments, and retail crime prevention. These efforts ensure PFMA members' voices are heard.

LOSS PREVENTION COMMITTEE

This committee connects professionals to discuss organized retail crime, fraud prevention, counterfeit detection, and security technologies. It provides a platform for members to collaborate on crime reduction strategies and implement best practices. In 2024, the committee held in-person meetings, including discussions with the state Attorney General's office on retail crime and a facility tour at Zeroeyes to explore de-escalation techniques. Members also attended the Attorney General's ORC Unit Multidisciplinary Team Meeting in Pittsburgh, where they collaborated with law enforcement and industry experts. The committee remains dedicated to improving security and loss prevention strategies. Chaired by Dawn Roller of Brown's Super Stores.

FOOD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

This committee helps members prevent foodborne illnesses, comply with food safety laws, and manage allergens effectively. It meets quarterly and provides ongoing email updates on critical food safety news, including outbreak alerts and regulatory changes. In 2024, discussions covered the FDA's 2024 Food Code update and legislative proposals regarding food additives, allergen awareness, and enhanced safety protocols. The committee also facilitates collaboration between retailers and regulatory agencies to improve food handling practices and compliance measures. By staying informed on industry best practices, members can proactively address food safety challenges. Chaired by Corrin Howard of Wawa.

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

This committee focuses on environmental sustainability, waste reduction, and energy efficiency. In 2024, it held a joint meeting with the Food Protection Committee to discuss bipartisan legislation expanding liability protections for food donations past label dates. Members also explored strategies for decarbonization, sustainability initiatives, and regulatory developments. By fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing, the committee helps businesses implement eco-friendly practices that benefit both operations and the environment. Chaired by Patrick Iannotti of Price Chopper.

GAMING COMMITTEE

This committee focuses on legislative and regulatory issues affecting the gaming industry, including policies impacting skill games and lottery operations. In 2024, it maintained active engagement with state legislators to support expanding gaming opportunities and provided critical feedback on proposed legislative measures. The committee also monitors industry trends and regulatory shifts that could impact PFMA members involved in gaming. By advocating for fair policies and industry growth, the committee plays a crucial role in shaping the future of gaming-related businesses and ensuring members remain informed about changes that affect their operations and profitability.

PHARMACY COUNCIL

The Pharmacy Council provides a platform for members to discuss key issues in the retail pharmacy industry, including technician certification, regulatory compliance, and prescription assistance programs like PACE/PACENET. The council meets as needed, with members receiving timely email updates on industry developments. In 2024, it worked closely with legislators on Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) reform, backing HB 1993, which became law. Multiple meetings were held with Sen. Judy Ward and Rep. Jessica Benham to advocate for meaningful industry improvements. By engaging with policymakers, the council ensures PFMA members have a voice in shaping pharmacy regulations and reforms.

FUELS AND FORECOURT COMMITTEE

This committee educates members on fuel storage, sales regulations, and the evolving landscape of EV infrastructure. Meeting as needed, members receive updates through a monthly newsletter that highlights key industry trends and legislative developments. In September, the committee joined discussions with PennDOT and Philadelphia's Senior Policy Advisor for EV and Parking to explore grant funding and EV charging opportunities. The committee continues to monitor changes in fuel regulations and infrastructure expansion, helping members navigate new challenges in the energy sector. By providing critical insights, it ensures businesses remain compliant and competitive in the evolving fuel marketplace.

WIC/SNAP LIST

PFMA provides members with essential updates on WIC and SNAP, including disbursement schedules, stocking requirements, and the implementation of eWIC in Pennsylvania. These updates help retailers navigate regulatory changes and ensure compliance with federal nutrition assistance programs. Association Services also maintains lists covering Dairy, Human Resources, Transportation, and Convenience Products, ensuring targeted updates for industry segments. By keeping members informed on policy changes and program updates, PFMA helps retailers effectively serve customers relying on these programs. The list serves as a valuable resource for businesses seeking to stay up to date with government assistance program requirements.

MEMBERSHIP SNAPSHOT

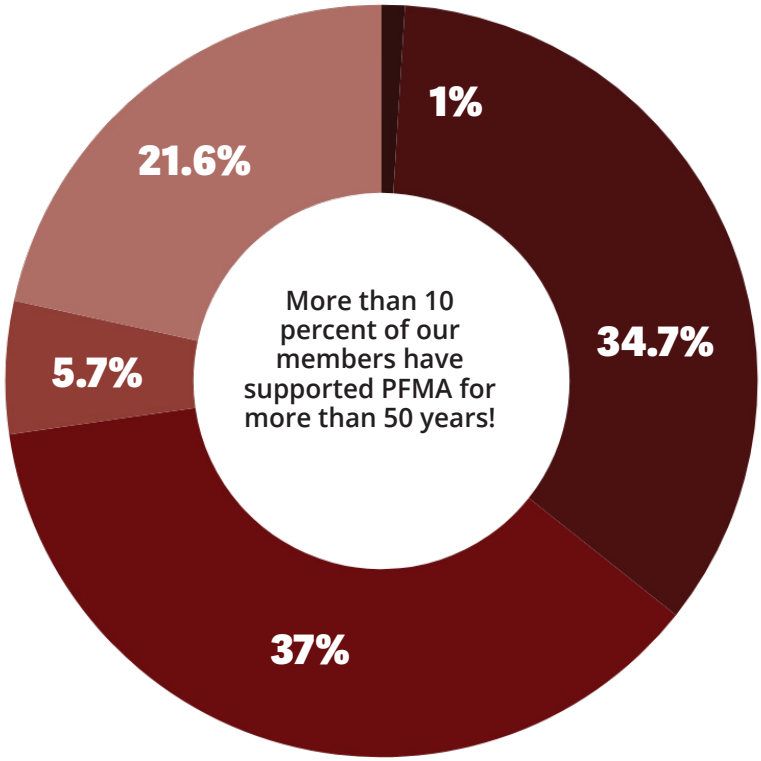
~500
CORPORATE MEMBERS

50
NEW MEMBERS IN 2024

2,300+
RETAIL FOOD STORES

MEMBER RETENTION

50+ years	25
20-49 years	870
10-19 years	929
6-9 years	143
0-5 years	541




PFMA
Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association
REGISTER NOW!
2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE | MAY 13-14, 2025 | OMNI BEDFORD SPRINGS


PFMA
Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association
SAVE THE DATE
2025 FALL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE | OCT 7-8 | HERSHEY COUNTRY CLUB

2024 RIDGE SCHOLARSHIPS

The Thomas R. and Laura Ridge Scholarship Fund provides scholarships to PFMA member employees and their children to assist with college or graduate school. Recipients receive a one-year scholarship up to $2,500. Applications are accepted until the beginning of March, and scholarships are available for the following fall. All PFMA member companies are encouraged to promote the scholarship.Twenty-seven students who represent PFMA's membership earned scholarships in 2024 based on their academic record, school and community involvement, a submitted essay and required recommendations. Recipients are sponsored by PFMA members that contributed to the Ridge Fund Endowment, including The GIANT Company, Karns Quality Foods, Rutter's, and Sheetz.



HELAYNA BAER
Cheswick, Pa.



ALEXIS BENNER
Reedsville, Pa.



CARL ANDREAS
Allentown, Pa.



NANCY COLWELL
Hayes, Va.



MASON BOWERSOX
York Pa.



ALEXIA BRUBAKER
Manchester, Pa.

IN 2024,

28

SCHOLARSHIPS WORTH

$70,000

WERE AWARDED

SINCE 1996

600+

STUDENTS HAVE RECEIVED

$1.1M+



LAILA BUCKMAN
Haymarket, Va.



LINDSAY FITTIPALDI
Egg Harbor, NJ



GILBEIRY MARTE DIAZ
Martinsburg, WV.



NOAH GADSBY
Bellefonte, Pa.



KAYLA GASTON
Brookville, Pa.



JESSE HOOPES
Paradise, Pa.



DEVON LEVIN
Philadelphia, Pa.



EMILY MARKS
Douglassville, Pa.



PETER MURNANE
West Chester, Pa.



TRAVIS NOECKER
Hamburg, Pa.



JESSICA PALACIOS
New Market, Va.



RIYA PATEL
Ellicott City, Md.



HARLIE MARKS
New Castle, Pa.



CASEY MAZUR
Middlesex, NJ.



HANNAH RILL
Red Lion, Pa.



NICHOLAS SANTUCCI
Pittsburgh, Pa.



EMILY SHERIFF
Landisburg, Pa.



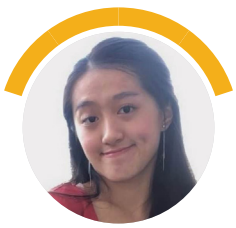
PARKER WILLIAMS
Hanover, Pa.



JENA WOOD
Kennett Square, Pa.



RYAN WILSON
Mechanicsburg, Pa.



SANDY ZHENG
Spring Grove, Pa.



AUBRYANA ZETTLEMOYER
Shamokin Dam, Pa.

PFMA
Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association

Advocating the views of convenience stores, supermarkets, independent grocers, wholesalers and consumer product vendors operating in Pennsylvania.

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