



**TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD PUBLIC WORKS
MEMORANDUM**

To: DEEP Recycling Program
From: Marilyn Cruz-Aponte, Assistant Director and Recycling Coordinator
Tom Baptist, Project Manager - Sustainability
Date: November 17, 2021

RE: DEEP Beverage Container Recycling Grant Program Feedback

General Comments:

The grant program, and its effort to expand urban access to container redemption and recycling, is commendable and an important environmental justice opportunity.

Some overarching questions associated with developing interest in this grant include the following:

What will the mechanism be for promoting this grant program and growing interest in disenfranchised communities?

Will the grant materials be available in multiple languages?

Will the DEEP utilize multi-cultural media to reach potential business owners? Are media/marketing consultants, knowledgeable of and connected to urban Latino, African-American, West Indian, Asian and female, to be employed for outreach purposes? Will DEEP host meetings (virtually) using leaders from these communities to inform and educate potential applicants?

As part of the pre-grant process, will DEEP access CT Economic Development resources to offer template for business plans that may assist disadvantaged applicants in preparing a comprehensive business plan?

There is concern in East Hartford that existing redemption centers, that can improve operations or expand them, are exempt. However, can an existing redemption center apply for funds to establish a new location?

DEEP Questions:

- 1) The scope provided by DEEP indicates encourages applicants to evaluate and document factors that are reasonably to be required for any grant. However, the DEEP may have to take a preliminary pre-application step that includes providing a business plan template that asks for proposed location, zoning regulations in location proposed, facility details, source of funding/financing plan to augment grant, employee sources, hours of operation etc.
- 2) Factors to evaluate—urban location (walkable/mass transit access), applicant from diverse communities, business plan viability.
- 3) In East Hartford, regulations may not allow free-standing redemption centers. There is an existing free-standing business that was established before the current regulations were promulgated and adopted. There is an “accessory use” allowance. Is there a way that existing bodegas, convenience stores can use funds for an “accessory” business next to current store until change in local regulation can be made?
- 4) Performance reporting is reasonable. However, if the intent of the legislation and DEEP is to see success---thriving and sustainable business, then meetings with grant applicants to problem-solving, offer administrative support and coach, is essential. Can CT Economic Development help?
- 5) Capacity. Can DEEP allow for three (3) categories to allow for business development at different tiers:
 - a. No technology
 - b. Low technology
 - c. Technology
- 6) If DEEP and legislation is committed to urban development and environmental justice, the redemption centers will need multi-year funding and business planning support.
- 7) The grant process may itself reveal what other considerations are necessary.

cc: Jeff Cormier, East Hartford Town Planner