



# The Municipal Primer

Your Guide to  
Creating a  
"Green and Growing"  
Community



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*Commissioner*







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Pictured —  
West Hartford, Connecticut



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## Introduction

*The Municipal Primer Your Guide to Creating a “Green and Growing” Community* is part of the municipal outreach effort of Connecticut’s Department of Environmental Protection (hereinafter, the Department or CT DEP). *The Municipal Primer* provides basic information and guidance on a wide variety of topics related to environmental protection. Its purpose is to inform municipal decision-makers about environmental issues, the potential impacts of their decisions, environmentally preferred alternatives, and potential permit or license requirements. The intent is to give municipal officials a tool that allows them to quickly determine which CT DEP programs relate to any given situation, and provide additional information sources including Web page links and staff contacts

There are two main themes in *The Municipal Primer*: 1) landscape stewardship, or how we cooperatively manage and regulate land and its uses in an environmentally responsible way; and 2) environmental permitting and compliance requirements.

## Landscape Stewardship

The Department’s Landscape Stewardship Initiative coordinates CT DEP programs that affect land use to ensure they support responsible growth. Taking action to encourage, support and promote informed land use, development, and conservation decisions is one of our most important environmental challenges. Poorly planned, high impact development in Connecticut fragments the landscape, consumes our precious natural resources, wastes energy, pollutes air and water, overwhelms our limited capacity to provide for local and state infrastructure, and changes forever the character of our communities and the state. Land use decision-makers must be conscious of and take into consideration our rich natural and cultural heritage while recognizing the human need for quality housing and a strong economy. Through the Landscape Stewardship Initiative, the CT DEP is enhancing its ability to assist municipalities, land trusts, landowners and others in making better-informed decisions about land use, which in turn will result in better stewardship of our shared landscape.

## Permitting and Compliance

The CT DEP regulates numerous activities to protect our air, water and land resources. When municipalities are undertaking a regulated activity, they must follow the standards and criteria set forth through these regulatory programs. The municipal CEO is responsible for regulated activities undertaken by the municipality and typically signs applications submitted by a municipality for a CT DEP permit. Each municipality is expected to maintain compliance with all environmental laws and the conditions of any issued permit. Also, in the event of any violation, the municipality is responsible for returning to compliance and may be subject to penalties as prescribed by law. Detailed information on the permitting process is provided in *The Municipal Primer*, in the section titled: Guide to CT DEP Permits, Licenses and Other Authorizations.

The array of permitting programs administered by the CT DEP can be complex and confusing to the infrequent applicant. To assist permit applicants, including municipalities, the CT DEP has a permit assistance office ready to provide help in understanding the process, identifying specific permits required for a given project, and coordinating “multi-media” projects (where multiple permits are needed). The permit assistance office can be reached at: 860-424-3003.

## Grants and Financial Assistance

The CT DEP offers grants, loans and other financial assistance to municipalities for projects that meet the criteria for specific funding opportunities. The availability of funding varies depending upon the program, with some programs funded on an annual basis and others only as funds are available.

Additional information on grants and financial assistance is provided in the fact sheet on *Grants and Financial Assistance* under the Financial Assistance section of *The Municipal Primer*.

## Technical Assistance

The CT DEP offers technical assistance to municipalities on a wide variety of disparate topics, such as: how to deal with nuisance wildlife; the proper placement and use of outdoor wood-burning furnaces; how to purchase environmentally preferred and recycled products; and where rare and endangered species can be found. This assistance is most commonly provided through direct communication with staff, meetings, or correspondence on specific topics. For more information, please visit [www.ct.gov/dep](http://www.ct.gov/dep), or contact the individual program representative as identified in the relevant fact sheet.

## Training

The CT DEP also offers training on specific departmental programs and responsibilities. Workshops and presentations are provided on such varied topics as: municipal inland wetlands regulation, the state’s aquifer protection area program, coastal management and coastal site plan review, decentralized sewage treatment, and climate change. These are just a handful of examples and do not represent an exhaustive list of outreach topics. For training assistance on other topics, please contact the appropriate program as identified on the related fact sheet in *The Municipal Primer*, or use contact information in Appendix III of *The Municipal Primer* or from the CT DEP website: [www.ct.gov/dep](http://www.ct.gov/dep).



# Content and Organization of The Municipal Primer

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*The Municipal Primer* is organized based largely on municipal functional areas. The CT DEP recognizes that each municipality in Connecticut is organized in its own fashion, based on its own needs. We have done our best to structure the municipal functions based on how a “typical” municipality is organized. Each section contains an introduction, followed by a series of fact sheets on related CT DEP programs and/or issues.

*The Municipal Primer* provides basic information on both Landscape Stewardship and CT DEP’s regulatory programs. The information related to boards and commissions, land use regulation and planning has a primary focus on Landscape Stewardship while the infrastructure, public works and facilities information provides a greater focus on permitting and regulatory matters, however, each section and factsheet often contain a little of both.

*The Municipal Primer* also contains a *Guide to CT DEP Permits, Licenses and Other Authorizations* where more specific information related to air, water, waste and land use permitting; the professional and occupational licensing programs; and recreational and natural resources permits and licenses can be found. A flow chart of the typical process for an individual air, water, waste or land use permit and a matrix of permits and/or licenses that might be required for listed municipal activities and functions are also included. This matrix and the individual fact sheets are not intended to be exhaustive lists of any and all CT DEP permits, licenses, certifications or other authorizations that may apply to a specific municipal circumstance. If in doubt about whether CT DEP authorization is required, please contact the Department. Finally, additional supplemental information is included in the appendices, including: 1) a topical index linking key environmental issues and words to the appropriate fact sheet(s) and identifying where they are located; 2) shortcuts to information on the CT DEP Web site; and 3) key contact information for CT DEP programs in the form of a removable brochure for easy reference.

***The Municipal Primer* is current as of the date of printing. However, please be advised that much of this information is dynamic and may have changed since publication of this document. Readers are encouraged to check for up-to-date information by either visiting *The Municipal Primer* online at [www.ct.gov/dep/municipalprimer](http://www.ct.gov/dep/municipalprimer), or requesting updated information from the individual program contacts.**

