

# Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)

## *At a Glance*

**David Lehman, Commissioner**

**Glendowlyn Thames, Deputy Commissioner**

**Alexandra Daum, Deputy Commissioner**

*Established - 1995*

*Statutory Authority - Conn. Gen. Statutes Chapters 127b and 184b*

*Central Office- 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 5 Hartford, CT 06103*

*Number of Employees- 118*

*Recurring Operating Expenses - \$18,066,803.49*

*Organizational Structure -Office of the Commissioner, Office of Business Development, Office of Financial Review, Office of Finance and Administration, Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development, Office of Capital Projects, Office of the Arts, State Historic Preservation Office, Office of Tourism*

## **Mission**

*DECD develops and implements strategies to increase the state's economic competitiveness.*

## **Statutory Responsibility**

Under the provisions of Conn. Gen. Statutes Chapters 127b and 184b DECD administers programs and policies to promote business, community development, brownfield redevelopment, arts, culture and tourism and is the state agency responsible for promoting economic growth.

## **Public Service**

In an effort to provide continued quality service to its customers, the agency is staffed with highly trained economic, community development and marketing professionals who identify customer and community needs and coordinate resources—both public and private—to meet those needs.

DECD promotes business and economic development with tax credits, financing, technical assistance, opportunity zones, and enterprise zones. Strategically, DECD supports comprehensive, industry-based economic development to strengthen the competitiveness of Connecticut's workers and industries. The department's international staff provides technical and financial support to Connecticut companies looking to grow in the global markets and, in partnership with AdvanceCT, is dedicated to attracting foreign direct investment to Connecticut and helping Connecticut companies take advantage of export opportunities in the global marketplace. The department's film, TV and Digital Media staff is dedicated to providing a full-service office for these industries facilitating location search, permits, workforce development programs and tax credits among other services.

DECD also provides planning, engineering, architectural and construction management services to oversee state-sponsored real estate development, including urban and downtown revitalization, industrial site development and brownfield redevelopment. DECD provides municipalities and non-profits with financial and technical assistance for community development activities. In addition, DECD assists customers with permitting and regulatory compliance with state or federal programs

to allow for an expedited development process and manages the state Dry Cleaning Remediation Fund.

Economic and community vitality is a cornerstone of DECD's work and is evident throughout the grant programs and services administered by DECD's Office of the Arts (COA). DECD values the arts as a core asset of vibrant communities and views the arts as essential in attracting and retaining talent by offering a diverse palette of quality of life experiences. The creative workforce is strengthened when the arts participate as leaders in their communities across the state. As a result, DECD invests in Connecticut artists and arts organizations and encourages public participation in the arts and in creative endeavors.

DECD works to position the state as a prime location to start, expand or move a business. The department's marketing efforts, which target both in-state and out-of-state audiences, are focused on communicating the strengths of Connecticut, including its highly educated and productive workforce, prime Northeast location and abundance of support services.

DECD works to make tourism a leading economic contributor and to position the state as a prime destination for leisure and business travelers. DECD partners with the Connecticut business community and tourism partners across the state, to provide a positive image of the state through cooperative marketing opportunities. Through its Office of Tourism (COT), DECD offers a broad range of services, including marketing, research, hospitality services, direct sales and business marketing assistance. COT operates the state's official tourism website [www.CTvisit.com](http://www.CTvisit.com) and popular social media channels.

Through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), DECD administers a broad range of federal and state programs that identify, register and protect the buildings, sites, structures, districts and objects that comprise Connecticut's cultural heritage. DECD is the regulatory authority for the review of both federally and state funded projects to assist agencies with avoiding or minimizing the effects of their actions on historic resources. DECD currently administers seven grant programs for historic preservation, two state tax credit programs for the rehabilitation of historic structures, the federal historic rehabilitation tax credit program, as well as manage the Connecticut Freedom Trail and Washington-Rochambeau Trail programs. In addition, DECD owns and operates four state-owned museums: Henry Whitfield State Museum, Old New-Gate Prison and Copper Mine, Prudence Crandall Museum and the Eric Sloane Museum.

### **Improvements / Achievements for Fiscal Year 2019-2020**

DECD's investments, programs and services, and policy initiatives have made a significant impact on the economy of Connecticut and the quality of life of its citizens. What follows are some highlights from FY 2019-2020.

- As part of the State of Connecticut's COVID-19 response, DECD created a COVID-19 Business Emergency Response Unit call team dedicated to assisting businesses navigate financial, technical and programmatic resources and to develop new resources. To date the team has responded to 4,900 calls.
- In response to COVID-19 DECD implemented processes to identify Essential Business across the state and deployed guidance towards safe business operations. DECD staff managed guideline development, certification process, and business response. To date, over 20,000 Connecticut business have been certified.

- DECD launched the Connecticut Recovery Bridge Loan Program to provide emergency cash flow relief to small businesses and nonprofits negatively impacted by the coronavirus. The loans provided qualified organizations with 100 or fewer employees no-interest loans up to \$37,500. Through this program DECD provided 2,123 organizations with approximately \$42 million in financial assistance.
- Since the inception of the Small Business Express Program, DECD has directly funded approximately 1,896 companies totaling \$309MM. The total number of jobs to be created and retained is over 30,800. The general categories of businesses to receive funding include: manufacturing, main street retail, hospitality/entertainment/tourism, healthcare/bioscience, business/financial services, information technology, construction, and specialty products.
- In FY 2020 DECD entered into contracts with 3 companies for over \$5MM in Manufacturing Assistance Act funding. These recipients have pledged to create and retain over 500 jobs.
- The Connecticut Office of Film, Television & Digital Media (OFTDM) focuses on digital media sector growth and production in Connecticut and capitalizes on the state's strength as a major media center for television, animation, digital content and sports-related programming. The OFTDM is a full-service office which serves as liaison between production companies, state agencies, municipalities, production facilities, local crew and vendors.
  - The Office assisted 135 production companies producing various content on stages and locations across the state.
  - \$133 million in Digital Media & Film Production tax credits were issued to 27 production company applicants with cumulative qualified Connecticut expenditures of \$444 million.
  - \$639,000 in Infrastructure tax credits were issued to one infrastructure project company with cumulative qualified Connecticut expenditures of \$3.2 million.
- DECD's Economic Development Programs unit supports the department's strategic initiatives, partnerships and federal grants. It supports job creation by funding innovation, technical assistance/training, regional partnerships and new technological developments.
  - The New England Collaborative – Connecticut supports a six-state consortium of state and industry leaders working to sustain and grow a strong, competitive New England defense cluster. Resources assist in coordinating the growth of defense-related businesses across the six-state New England region. The primary goals are to aid small and medium-sized businesses in meeting new cybersecurity requirements for businesses participating in the defense industry supply chain, as well as to create a trusted supplier network that will make it easier for large defense contractors to locate smaller suppliers that are able to meet their production, certification and process requirements.
  - The National Network for Manufacturing Innovation provides a manufacturing and research infrastructure where industry and academia collaborate to solve industry-relevant problems. They are public/private partnerships with federal, state and private partners funding projects, mostly for small to mid-size manufacturers. Connecticut is a member of three institutes: Flexible Hybrid Electronics, Smart Manufacturing and Advanced Robotics Manufacturing with a potential pool of \$220 million in grant federal grant funds.
  - Acting through DECD, Connecticut was designated by the federal government as part of the Manufacturing Communities Partnership (MCP) initiative in 2015. This designation continues to provide a platform to coordinate with a network of 23 other manufacturing communities.

- The Manufacturing Innovation Fund was created to support the growth, innovation and progress of Connecticut's advanced manufacturing sector. The MIF is capitalized with \$75 million in funding offering manufacturing focused programs and initiatives in the areas of workforce and training; innovation; operational improvements; and capital access. Grants for machinery, building upgrades and cost-saving energy-efficiency improvements have been provided to numerous companies. MIF programs have also helped train and update the skills of workers and launch careers of apprentices and pre-apprentices. According to the most recent data available, the MIF had assisted approximately 1,675 companies and invested over \$60.6 million to help accelerate growth, cultivate talent, and boost investments in innovation.
- The Minority Business Initiative is a nationally acclaimed \$28 million initiative to provide minority businesses with access to capital and technical assistance. The mission is to support the economic growth of underserved and minority communities by increasing the participation of minority-owned businesses in state funding, and business development opportunities.
- From FY 2012-2020, the Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development (OBRD) has invested over \$210 million in over 240 brownfield development projects in cities and towns all across the state.
- On March 12, 2020, Governor Lamont signed House Bill No. 5518 that authorized \$30M and \$17M for the brownfield program for FY 2020 and 2021, respectively. The State Bond Commission has to approve the allocation of the authorized funds so they can be released competitively for grants and loans as per the enabling statutes. Seven million dollars of the FY 2020 legislative authorization was set aside for the Norwich State Hospital project and was approved by the Bond Commission at its July 21st, 2020 meeting. Since there were no State Bond Commission approvals in FY 2020, no new competitive rounds were conducted to award funds for other projects under the brownfield programs.
- During FY 2020 funds for the remediation of state-owned brownfield sites under PA 11-1 continued to support the remediation and redevelopment of the former Norwich State Hospital, former Mystic Oral School in Groton and the former DOT Maintenance Garage in Haddam.
- OBRD has approved 41 and 21 applications for liability relief under the Brownfield Remediation and Revitalization Program (Conn. Gen. Statutes Sec. 32-769) and the Abandoned Brownfield Cleanup Program (Conn. Gen. Statutes Section 32-768), respectively, since their inception.
- The Office of Capital Projects (OCP) manages a wide variety of economic and community development projects, most notably those funded by the Small-Town Economic Assistance Program and Urban Act Grant Program. OCP manages an existing portfolio of over \$300M in state investment in both urban and rural settings, in addition to FY19-20's 18 new projects in assisted with approximately \$42M. OCP's projects include manufacturing & educational facility improvements, road and utility infrastructure, redevelopment of underutilized properties, and theaters & museums improvements that further promote Connecticut's economy and enhance citizens' quality of life. Highlighted projects include:
  - The Trinity College Project assisted with \$2.5M in Urban Act funding to renovate and establish Innovative and Entrepreneurship Space at its new downtown campus in Hartford;
  - The Route 34 Project funded with \$21.5M in Urban Act funds to assist with phase 2 of the Downtown Crossing Project in downtown New Haven; and
  - The Connecticut Science Center Enhancement Project funded with \$10.5M in Special Act funding.

- DECD’s Office of Tourism (COT) works to grow tourism, traditionally one of the largest economic sectors and employers in the state, by positioning Connecticut as a prime destination for leisure and business travelers. COT offers a broad range of services, including marketing, research, industry education, hospitality services, direct sales and business marketing assistance. COT operates the state’s official tourism website, CTvisit.com, and popular social media channels. As part of these services, COT engages the tourism business community and tourism industry partners across the state in to stay continuously abreast of relevant activity and needs, to educate and inform, and to coordinate promotion opportunities.
- From July 2019 to February 2020, COT continued its highly effective, research and data-driven marketing campaign promoting travel to and within Connecticut. The year-round campaign integrated tactics such as out-of-home advertising, social media, email, content marketing, search engine marketing, influencer programs, public relations and digital marketing. The campaign was continuously optimized and measured using state of the art analytical tools including GPS tracking and algorithm-driven digital media placement. The campaign emphasized the rich mix of available experiences that are close together and close to the target audiences in New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts. Messages emphasized overnight stays, major attractions such as the casinos and aquariums, and over a thousand smaller attractions, restaurants and hotels in every corner of the state. Messages also focused on outdoor adventures, culinary experiences, relaxing retreats, family fun, and arts, culture and history attractions. COT promoted businesses in every town and city across the state.
- Brand research following the summer and fall 2019 campaign showed that the marketing had a very positive influence on driving tourism. In comparing the responses of consumers in the target market who saw the campaign to those in the same target that did not, the study showed that among those who saw the campaign 68% more reported being more interested in Connecticut as a place to visit, 83% more reported being actively interested in visiting, 41% more say they will visit in the next year. In fact, 13% of respondents said that they actually already visited as a result of seeing Connecticut’s ad.
- With the severe impact of COVID-19 on tourism in March 2020, COT completely retooled the marketing program and launched a Tourism Recovery Campaign aimed at mitigating the losses for this hardest hit industry. During the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” orders, COT promoted virtual experiences, through CTvisit.com, offered by tourism partners, meal pick-up and delivery offerings from the restaurant industry, and safe outdoor experiences for social distancing. As the state’s guidelines began lifting in Phases 1 and 2, the messaging changed to vigorously promote the experiences that became available. Reopening messages were delivered to in-state, NYC and Boston audiences via a very successful series of videos promoting what Connecticut attractions, restaurants and hotels were doing to keep visitors safe. Other tactics included social media, search engine marketing, email marketing and public relations. In mid-June, COT launched the new “So Good to See You, Connecticut” campaign encouraging the target audiences to see Connecticut through fresh eyes, noticing and appreciating all there is to see and do in this beautiful state. The campaign, which also emphasized safety and mask-wearing, launched via an integrated array of tactics including social media, content seeding, search engine marketing, video marketing, and TV. Response to the campaign has been very strong, with consumer feedback clearly showing the campaign inspired interest in visiting, confidence in safety, and state pride.
- In FY 2020, over 1,500 tourism industry partners were featured and/or supported through advertising, public relations and content marketing efforts, representing every town and region in Connecticut.

- COT's tourism website, CTvisit.com, offers information on over 4,000 tourism attractions, accommodations and restaurants. Site visitors can find information about places to visit, stay and eat in Connecticut, as well as hundreds of inspirational travel stories, vacation deals and event listings, all in one place. In calendar year 2019, CTvisit.com received almost 7 million visits and drove nearly 3 million referrals (call, clicks, and emails) to tourism partners. 57% of the site visitors came to the site to read a content marketing article.
- Due to COVID-19, the annual Connecticut Conference on Tourism was cancelled. COT, however, orchestrated a series of virtual Strategic Planning and Sharing meetings across the state, inviting hundreds of tourism professionals from hotels, restaurants, resort casinos, visitor attractions, entertainment venues, historic sites, and cultural and arts institutions to share best practices for adapting to the new tourism landscape, learn of the state's marketing plans and opportunities, and collaborate on marketing efforts for the benefit of all.
- Due to COVID-19, the 16th Annual Connecticut Open House Day event was unable to continue in its typical form, so COT created and promoted a Virtual Open House Day and featured offerings from many dozens of tourism attractions. The virtual event was promoted to consumers in-state, inviting them to engage with great attractions in their own state, inspiring them to visit in the future bringing visiting friends and family.
- COT continued the Regional Marketing Program, which creates and enhances partnerships with organizations from every region of the state, in pursuit of increasing tourism. The program works closely with regional organizations, COGs and chambers of commerce to help more tourism-related businesses capitalize on the state's existing broad array of marketing initiatives.
- SHPO reviewed or provided guidance on nearly 3,000 projects throughout the state to avoid or reduce development impacts on our state's most important historic resources.
- Twenty-six new projects were accepted into the State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program and \$31.7 million in tax credits were reserved for 18 projects. The total project costs for the 18 projects is over \$133.6 million, which leverages the state's investment by an over 4:1 ratio.
- SHPO reserved over \$1 million in tax credits for 66 projects through the Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit program, generating over \$3.6 million in local rehabilitation expenditures. This direct assistance enhances stewardship of historic properties and pride in home ownership.
- As a testament to SHPO's strong belief in partnerships, last year SHPO awarded \$12,000 in Partners in Preservation grants and another \$322,000 in grants to local preservation partner organizations.
- Historic Preservation is important to Connecticut's communities. In support of local initiatives, SHPO awarded \$183,500 to 9 communities for survey and planning projects, \$82,500 to municipalities in the Certified Local Government program, and \$818,963 for project-specific restoration, rehabilitation, and stabilization projects. In response to the economic difficulties many non-profits are facing as a result of the Corona Virus pandemic, SHPO implemented a Stewardship Relief Grant program and was able to award 4 grants to non-profits across the State by the end of the Fiscal Year.

- To recognize the important places in our state’s history, SHPO assisted with the listing of 5 properties to the National Register of Historic Places, including 1 district of multiple properties, and 6 properties on the State Register of Historic Places.
- COA awarded \$2,013,825 in grants to 16 nonprofit organizations through the 2019 Good to Great grant program. The Good to Great program awards grants to eligible organizations that link art, history and tourism in ways that enable cultural and historical sites to enhance the visitor experience. These projects tell the stories of our cultural and historic sites in engaging, meaningful, and relevant ways.
- COA established a new category of significance for the Connecticut Freedom Trail, Civil Rights and 20th Century Contributions, and added two new sites; the Ellis Ruley Memorial Park in Norwich and the Judge Constance Baker Motley Preserve and House in Chester. The Connecticut Freedom Trail documents and designates sites that embody the struggle for freedom and human dignity, and celebrates African American communities.
- All renovations at the Eric Sloane Museum have been completed.
- A 1.3 million dollar restoration of the Prudence Crandall Museum was finalized and ready to begin in September of 2020.
- Through the support of the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA), COA provides a range of grant programs to support the arts sector with a combination of NEA and state funding across the state that support a range of institutions and activities. COA uses the lenses of Relevance, Equity, Access, Diversity and Inclusion (READI) to guide programmatic and investment decisions within the framework of artistic excellence.
- Supporting Arts in Place and the Connecticut Arts Endowment awarded a total of \$1,436,242 to eligible arts organizations and municipal arts offices to strengthen the state’s nonprofit arts industry.
- Various COA project grant programs awarded 90 grants for a total of \$470,855. These grants funded schools, nonprofit organizations, artistic work, and municipalities and align with COA strategic goals to promote relevance, equity, access, diversity and inclusion in the arts.
- Through its READI-branded programs for young creatives between the ages of 18-40, COA provided professional development opportunities including the 2nd Annual READI Music Conference, two READI Talks and the Arts Workforce Initiative, which awarded 20 individuals with paid summer internships across the state at host organizations that were selected through a competitive program. The total awarded was \$70,000 and supported \$3,750 payments to interns for 10 weeks of service.
- Through the Artist Fellowship program, COA awarded 51 grants to Connecticut artists of all creative disciplines such as visual artists, literary artists, choreographers, music composers, playwrights, etc. to support the creation of new work.
- To strengthen the financial and business capacity of arts administrators and artists of all disciplines, COA presented workshops on a variety of topics including ADA compliance, arts & economic impact, business/finance as well as support for rural artists with funding from the USDA.

- To support arts and education, COA awarded 24 grants totaling \$75,540 to support teaching and learning for K-12 students in, about, and through the arts through high quality arts engagement, arts integration, arts exploration, and discovery experiences both in and out of school time.