

# Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)

## *At a Glance*

**David Lehman, Commissioner**

**Alexandra Daum, Deputy Commissioner**

**Paul Robertson, Deputy Commissioner**

**Established - 1995**

**Statutory Authority - Conn. Gen. Statutes Chapters 127b and 184b, Public Act 22-1**

**Central Office- 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 5**

**Hartford, CT 06103**

**Number of Employees - 113**

**Recurring Operating Expenses - \$28,812,752**

**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, Social Equity Council**

## **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.

On June 22, 2021, Governor Ned Lamont signed legislation that legalizes and regulates the adult-use of cannabis in Connecticut. The legislation made comprehensive changes to create a novel and substantial regulatory and economic development apparatus within government to operationalize the equitable and responsible legalization of adult-use cannabis. The law specifies numerous equity programs that are overseen by the Social Equity Council (SEC).

## **Public Service**

DECD promotes business and economic development with tax credits, financing, technical assistance, opportunity zones, and enterprise zones. Strategically, DECD supports comprehensive, 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.

The Social Equity Council promotes and encourages full participation in the cannabis industry by people disproportionately harmed by cannabis prohibition and enforcement, and to support broad-based economic development in those communities.

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. In addition, the department is actively working on attracting and retaining young talent, entrepreneurs and professionals by promoting the opportunities to live, work and play in Connecticut. DECD showcases these efforts on [www.CTforMe.com](http://www.CTforMe.com) and its accompanying social media channels.

DECD works to make tourism a leading economic contributor and to position the state as a prime destination for leisure and business travelers. DECD collaborates with the Connecticut business community and tourism business across the state to present a unified positive image of the state and inspire greater visitation to every corner. Through its Office of Tourism (COT), DECD offers a broad range of services, including marketing, research, hospitality services, direct sales, industry education 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. SHPO 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 six grant programs for historic preservation, two state tax credit programs for the rehabilitation of historic structures, the federal historic rehabilitation tax credit program, and manages 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.

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 through the work of the Office of the Arts and encourages public participation in the arts and in creative endeavors.

### **Improvements / Achievements for Fiscal Year 2021-2022**

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 2021-2022**.

- 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 over 10,000 calls.
- Twenty-five companies signed Letters of Intent committing to create full-time jobs in order to earn a JobsCT grant-in-arrears. Legislation was enacted in FY 22 transitioning DECD from grants-in-arrears to the JobsCT Tax Rebate Program effective July 1, 2022.
- 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 121 production companies producing various content on stages and locations across the state.
  - \$144.9 million in Digital Media & Film Production tax credits were issued to 27 production company applicants with cumulative qualified Connecticut expenditures of \$509 million.
- DECD's Strategic 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.
  - In FY 2021-22 DECD continued to administer the \$1,400,000 grant awarded by the Department of Defense Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation's Defense Manufacturing Communities Support Program (DMCSP). With these funds DECD is undertaking a project to enhance in-state defense prime vertical supply chains and bring Model Based Definition technology, transform the supply chain from a 2-dimensional design and manufacturing platform to a 3-dimensional platform. The technology and processes developed through the CT Digital Model Initiative will provide a foundation for subsequent digital transformation initiatives in the defense manufacturing supply base.
- In FY 2021-22 DECD launched the Innovation Corridor Program. DECD undertook a competitive grant application process for two or more transformational, place-making projects in major urban areas or regional economic centers. The projects are designed to facilitate the creation of at least 15,000 new jobs in data science, advanced manufacturing, insurance technology ("insure-tech"), or other high-growth industries. Approved projects may include those which:
  - Leverage partnerships with local businesses, universities, and not-for-profit institutions to maximize investment;
  - Attract and develop talent in major urban centers or regional job hubs;
  - Support diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts; and
  - Ensure local improvements through community benefit agreements

Grant recipients will be announced in FY 2022-23

- In FY 2021-22 DECD launched the CT Communities Challenge Program, a competitive grant application process to fund multiple projects in an effort to improve livability, vibrancy,

convenience and equity of communities throughout the state. The Program is intended to create approximately 3,000 new jobs. It is DECD's goal to allocate up to 50% of the funds to eligible and competitive projects in distressed municipalities. Successful projects will likely include multiple of the below elements:

- Transit-oriented development that densifies commercial and/or residential land uses near transit hubs,
- Downtown / major hub development that improves or reuses existing property (Brownfields remediation may be a component of such application)
- Essential infrastructure that facilitates future development
- Housing to support affordability, accessibility and local workforce,
- Mobility improvements that increase connectivity to transit and promotes economic activity, including pedestrian, ADA, and bicycle improvements
- Public space improvements that provide amenities to the community, including open spaces, public art projects, wayfinding, and lighting and safety improvements

In FY 2021-22 DECD announced \$45 million in funding for 12 projects. Round 2 of CT Communities Challenge launched in FY 2022-23.

- The Community Investment Fund 2030 (CIF), authorized in Section 32-285a of the Connecticut General Statutes, was launched in FY 2021-22. CIF will foster economic development in historically underserved communities across the state. CIF will provide a total of up to \$875 million over five years to eligible municipalities as well as not-for-profit organizations and community development corporations that operate within them. Municipalities designated in state law as Public Investment Communities or Alliance Districts are eligible. Grants are available for:
  - Capital improvement programs, such as brownfield remediation, affordable housing, infrastructure, clean energy development, and home or public facility rehabilitation
  - Small business capital programs, including revolving or micro loan programs, gap financing, and start-up funds to establish small businesses

The CIF Board of Directors, comprised of members of the executive and legislative branches, will review applications and make recommendations to the Governor and State Bond Commission. CIF will award up to \$175 million each fiscal year across two or more application periods per year. CIF launched its first application round in FY 2021-22 and awards will be announced in FY 2022-23.

- From FY 2013-2022, the Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development (OBRD) has invested over \$225 million in approximately 260 brownfield development projects in cities and towns across the state. This investment has impacted approximately 3,200 acres of brownfield properties in the state. Also, every dollar invested in this ten-year period has been able to leverage \$13.6 of non-DECD funds. The OBRD continues to be a dedicated single point of contact for brownfield remediation and development in the state, collaborating effectively with other state agencies, especially the CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection.
- In this past fiscal year, OBRD conducted three competitive funding rounds. On January 6, 2022, OBRD announced approximately \$17.9 million in grant funding under Round 14 of the Brownfield Municipal Grant Program (C.G.S. Sec. 32-763) to fourteen (14) projects spanning thirteen (13) towns. This funding will help remediate brownfield sites so that they can be put

back to productive use. Many of the remediation grant awards are for public-private partnerships that will significantly help leverage private investment in the state.

- OBRD focused on brownfields projects with environmental site assessment, and/or hazardous building material assessment needs under the competitive Funding Round 15 of the Brownfield Municipal Grant Program (C.G.S. Sec. 32-763). On May 23, 2022, approximately \$1 million in grant funding was awarded to 6 projects located in 6 municipalities. The assessment funding provides seed money for the crucial initial steps in identifying the potential and obstacles for redevelopment of a brownfield site.
- OBRD also conducted a competitive funding round (Funding Round 3) inviting applications for planning funding under the Brownfield Area-Wide Revitalization (BAR) Planning Grant Program. On August 5, 2022, OBRD awarded approximately \$490,000 in grant funding for 3 projects located in 3 municipalities. This funding for brownfield planning work enables municipalities to identify and prioritize brownfield remediation and redevelopment in their communities.
- The Small Business and Community Development Unit (Office of Capital Projects and Small Business/Community Development Office) manages large capital, infrastructure as well as smaller community development projects funded under the Urban Act (UA) Grant Program, Small-Town Economic Assistance (STEAP) Program, and Special Acts. Seventy-seven projects totaling approximately \$188M were approved in FY 2021 and added to the active project portfolio. A variety of projects are funded under these grant programs including, but not limited to, manufacturing facilities, educational facilities, health facilities, roads, sidewalks, utility, theaters, and museums that further promote Connecticut's economy and enhance citizens' quality of life.

Highlighted projects include:

- The City of Shelton's Constitution Boulevard Extension and Commerce Park Project - \$5,000,000 in funding authorized by P.A. 21-111 to support the extension of Constitution Boulevard in order to provide roadway access to the City-owned and undeveloped Mas property and create economic development opportunities on the property.
- The non-profit Cornell Scott Hill, Inc. received \$10,000,000 in grant funding authorized by PA 17-2 to facilitate additional financing from the New Market Tax Credit program to construct a new recovery and Wellness Center for substance abuse patients in New Haven.
- The SEC was established effective July 1, 2021. SEC is responsible for overseeing the verification of social equity applicants, as defined in law, creating new programs to support both cannabis businesses and businesses in other industries, and managing the more general community investments derived from cannabis tax revenue. SEC works closely with multiple state agencies, including DECD and the Department of Consumer Protection, to carry out its duties. SEC recently celebrated its first year of operations. During FY 22, the SEC focused on standing up the adult-use cannabis industry in Connecticut. Its most notable achievement was to set criteria that defined the eligibility of social equity applicants. In addition, the council played a key role in conducting the first cannibals license lottery that provided opportunity for applicants disproportionately impacted by the war on drugs to participate in the state's adult-use cannibals industry on a level playing field with programs and services designed to promote and support success.
- The Connecticut Tourism Office housed under DECD works to position the State as a world class, vibrant, diverse, and inclusive tourism destination, inviting visitors and our local

communities to explore everything we have to offer. The primary function of Tourism Office is to drive awareness and visitation to tourist assets and experiences and drive economic growth for all relevant industry sectors. The Tourism office is responsible for creating an annual strategic plan including a Program of Work. The tourism office leverages participation in key travel industry shows, conducts sales missions in drive markets, national, international territories and encourages staycations. We focus on key disciplines including global travel, drive market, groups/meetings, sports, cultural tourism, multicultural tourism, heritage tourism, and LGBTQ+ tourism. In addition, the Tourism office uses PR, media & social media to drive awareness with as much reach as possible. The Tourism Office manages CTVisit.com, oversees and the state welcome centers, and continues to collaborate with the business community, builds partnerships, and works closely with regional districts.

- In FY 2021-22 DECD’s Marketing and Branding efforts included the following:

CT Summer at the Museum – Arts/Tourism & Branding June-Sept 2021

- To support the Office of the Arts, CT Summer at the Museum program, which provides Connecticut children free admission at more than 90 museums across Connecticut we launched a \$250,000 media campaign.
- The campaign included a dedicated web page [www.CTSummermuseums.com](http://www.CTSummermuseums.com), email marketing, public relations, paid media and social media outreach.
- Results generated: 529 million earned media impressions, over 16 million paid media impressions across streaming radio, digital display, nativeads, paid search and social, CT visit traffic: 702,501 page views: 457,800 referring clicks to museums sites: Average time on site 6 minutes

“State I’m In” – Branding & Tourism campaign ran Jan – March 2021

- The State I’m In aimed to create a more current perception of Connecticut — one that is vibrant, diverse, youthful, and full of surprising experiences. The campaign included billboards that feature authentic, user-generated photos from residents, visitors and influencers, as well as vibrant new TV spots which used spoken word poetry to challenge misperceptions about the state.
- Winter 2021/2022 Increased Media Investments, unlocked a delivery of over 79MM Impressions (5.6x2020/2021 campaign delivery) & 764K Clicks To Ctvisit.com (4.2x 2020/2021 campaign delivery) Arrivalist, an organization that uses GPS technology to track actual visitors to states all around the country. Across all 50 states, they compared the visits in Q1 of 2022 with those in Q1 of 2021. reported that **Connecticut has seen the highest increase in year-over-year trips of any state**...including states that have much bigger budgets to promote tourism. That’s a 31% increase in overnights and a 26.5% increase in all trips to CT,

Annual Brand Awareness Study – 2021

- Every brand category increased this year, including “offers a sense of history” and “offers arts and culture” to “offers action/adventure” and “offers exciting nightlife”.
- Brand descriptors increased for “authentic” and “artsy” to “fun” and “diverse”.
- Interest in visiting Connecticut increased significantly to 63%, well above the historical average of 51%.
- Intent to visit within the next 12 months increased to 55%, exceeding even 2019’s stats.
- State pride rose 7 points and is now the second highest score generated in the past 15 waves of research.
- Marketing strongly impacted consumer interest: Generating an 83% increase in interest in visiting. Creating a 91% increase in intent to visit.

- Connecticut’s visitor demographics also shifted, now slightly younger and more diverse than indicated in past studies.

CTforMe - ([www.CTForMe.com](http://www.CTForMe.com)) and Instagram account (@CTForMe)

- *CTforMe* is Connecticut’s content hub for all things live, work, and play, *CTforMe.com* features Connecticut businesses and organizations representing in-demand industries, top employers, entrepreneurs, young talent groups, and local favorites. It also contains short interviews, engaging stories, and authentic resident experiences about choosing CT. It’s where young professionals learn about the state — and why they should launch a career here.
- CTforMe.com features over 300 Connecticut businesses and organizations
- 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.
- Thirty-Two new projects were accepted into the State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program and \$29,099,834 in tax credits were reserved for 22 projects. The total project costs for the 22 projects is over \$102,000,000, which leverages the state’s investment by an over 3:1 ratio.
- Fifty-five Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit program vouchers were sold to Eversource for \$1,015,784.94, leveraging a \$3,385,949.80 investment in the state through local trades, materials, housing stock, and quality of life. 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 \$316,300 in Partners in Preservation grants and \$300,000 in grants to local preservation partners for institutional support for capacity building.
- Historic Preservation is important to Connecticut’s communities. In support of local initiatives, SHPO awarded \$489,100 to 20 communities for survey and planning projects, \$188,300 to municipalities in the Certified Local Government program, and \$1,226,827 for 23 specific restoration, rehabilitation, and stabilization projects. As our Stewardship Relief Grant program came to an end, SHPO awarded a final 5 grants for \$1,000 each to assist non-profits facing economic difficulties as a result of the Corona Virus pandemic.
- To recognize the important places in our state’s history, SHPO assisted with the listing of 7 new resources to the State Register of Historic Places, including one new historic district. In addition, there were 9 new resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places in FY2022. This included 5 individual properties and 4 new historic districts.
- SHPO added one new site to the Connecticut Freedom Trail, the Center Church, located at 60 Gold Street in Hartford. The Connecticut Freedom Trail documents and designates sites that embody the struggle for freedom and human dignity, and celebrates African American communities.
- Building restoration of the Prudence Crandall Museum, the school operated by Connecticut’s State Heroine, was completed in June, 2022.
- Through a combination of federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and state funding, COA provides various grant programs and partnerships to support the arts sector across the state. COA supports a range of institutions, artists, and activities using the

lenses of Relevance, Equity, Access, Diversity, and Inclusion (READI) to guide programmatic and investment decisions.

- In FY22, COA awarded 560 grants totaling \$2,172,431 to eligible arts organizations, municipal arts offices, and regional arts service organizations to support programming and strengthen the operations and infrastructure of the state's nonprofit arts industry.
- COA partnered with Connecticut Humanities to award \$20,000,000 in state funds to support Connecticut's cultural infrastructure through the Cultural Fund Operating Support grants and partnerships.
- COA invested \$502,500 in CT's creative workforce through 112 Artist Respond grants supporting the creation of new work by Connecticut artists of all creative disciplines and 3 Mahaffey Fellowships to support rising arts administrators. COA also partnered with Career Resources to begin a \$50,000 pilot project to provide paid work experience in the creative sector to justice-involved youth.
- COA invested \$64,190 to develop community-centered approaches to including arts and culture in municipal planning, with the long-term goal of creating thriving creative economies in municipalities across the state. This program trains CT creatives as facilitators and deploys them to communities upon the request of the community.
- To support arts in education, COA awarded grants totaling \$160,000 to support teaching and learning for K-12 students and educators in, about, and through the arts with a focus on social-emotional learning, developing culturally responsive curriculum and practices, and closing the opportunity gap for CT students. Additional programming is geared toward developing and diversifying the professional field of teaching artists to teach in areas of social justice, creative aging, health & healing, community engagement as well as PK-12 schools.
- Weekly spotlights through CT Creative futures, a partnership with FOX61 CT, the CT Department of Education, and the Governor's Prevention Partnership, highlight career pathways in the creative industry and provide engagement opportunities for parents and students. This year's partnership included the support of FOX61 Student News. Metrics are collected to measure the impact of this program on communities.
- In addition to its regular responsibilities, COA has managed legislative line-item application, review and contracting for 73 organizations receiving legislatively allocated awards from state American Rescue Plan funds, totaling \$18,741,730. In addition, COA managed 254 contracts for an additional \$45,775,085 of state allocations.