



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 25, 2025

Media Contact:
Kristina Diamond
Kristina.Diamond@ct.gov
(860) 513-8481

CT Social Equity Council Launches “Reimagine & Revitalize” Community Reinvestment Program with \$36 Million Investment Over Three Years

RFP issued seeking qualified Grant Managers. Proposals are due by Monday, August 4, 2025, at 12:00 PM.

Hartford, CT — The Social Equity Council (the Council) announced today the relaunch of its Community Reinvestment Program under a bold new vision: **Reimagine & Revitalize (R²)** — a strategic initiative that advances equitable economic prosperity and long-term community transformation across ten targeted regions in Connecticut.

Rooted in the Council’s mission to support social equity entrepreneurs and reinvest in communities most harmed by the “War on Drugs”, the redesigned R² Program is guided by a newly adopted **three-year strategic plan**, an **updated funding model**, and **robust performance metrics**.

These updates reflect extensive feedback and analysis — including findings from the Council, the Connecticut General Assembly’s Black & Puerto Rican Caucus, State Comptroller Sean Scanlon— and were approved under the leadership of Brandon L. McGee, Jr., Chief Executive Officer of the Social Equity Council and the Council members.

“When we approved this legislation, we envisioned that funding it delivers would be directed to prevention and recovery services and also righting some of the wrongs that the war on cannabis caused in many communities, particularly in those that have been most disproportionately affected. Today’s announcement by the Social Equity Council advances this objective by investing these funds into the most impacted communities,” said **Governor Ned Lamont**.

“The war on drugs devastated communities across Connecticut. Reimagine & Revitalize is not just a program—it’s a promise to repair, restore, and reinvest in our communities and

our residents,” said **Brandon L. McGee, Jr., CEO of the Council**. “We’ve moved from conversation to coordination and now we are taking real action.”

“The release of reinvestment dollars comes at a time when federal policies are rolling back desperately needed resources to marginalized communities,” said **Andréa Comer, Chairwoman of the Council**. “While these funds are a small piece of what’s necessary to truly address the harm, I am encouraged by the equitable approach in supporting those most impacted areas in our state.”

“The Social Equity Council has made great strides to chart a new, stronger path forward,” said **Comptroller Sean Scanlon**. “My office has been proud to work alongside SEC staff to address the full scope of recommendations included in the 2024 audit, and we will continue to be steadfast partners in advancing efforts to Reimagine & Revitalize communities impacted by the war on drugs. I commend Executive Director Brandon McGee, Chair Andrea Comer, and the SEC members and staff who worked together in these efforts.”

A Proven Start, A Stronger Future

In its inaugural round of funding in 2023, the Council awarded **\$6 million** in grants to community organizations across the state. Now, with a **\$36 million commitment over the next three years**, the updated R² Program is positioned to make even deeper, more sustainable impact.

What Can R² Funds Be Used For? Program will prioritize three high-impact focus areas when awarding grants:

- **Economic Development** – Igniting economic growth by enhancing access to vital resources and capital to drive forward economic development initiatives, including shovel-ready projects. The long-term vision is to achieve sustainable wage growth and enhance existing brick-and-mortar projects.
- **Reentry Initiatives (Justice Impacted Adults and Youth)** – Providing justice-impacted adults and youth with critical support services such as job training, housing, counseling, and education to ease their transition back into the community and reduce recidivism.
- **Youth Initiatives** – Supporting mentorship, academic support, and social enrichment programs that equip children and teens with tools for lifelong success.

Stronger Investments, Smarter Oversight

“I want to thank SEC and Director McGee for listening,” said **State Rep. Derrell Wilson** (Norwich). “This new approach helps to show a sustainable future in developing and impacting communities affected by the War on Drugs”

“With this RFP, we are demonstrating what equity in action looks like—clear criteria, transparent evaluation, and an unwavering focus on the communities that deserve reinvestment the most,” Said **Ojala Naeem, Council member and chair of Reinvestment Committee**. It’s not just about funding—it’s about trust and transformation.”

To ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the program, the Council is issuing **RFP# 25ECD2439** seeking qualified **Grant Managers as a first step**. The grant managers will provide program oversight and contract management services as further detailed in the RFP document available on the Council’s website. Selected grant managers should expect to manage approximately 18 contracts ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000.

The Council intends to issue one contract per targeted region, for a total of 10 contracts.

The targeted regions are as follows: *Bridgeport, Danbury, Hartford/East Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven/East Haven/West Haven, New London/Norwich/Windham, Norwalk, Stamford, and Waterbury*. These areas account for **194 out of Connecticut’s 237 disproportionately impacted census tracts**.

Proposers must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Be a non-profit, grantmaking entity with at least 5 years of grant making experience.
- Demonstrate experience and ability to work with diverse groups in DIA’s.
- Knowledge of economic development, reentry services, and youth initiatives.
- Demonstrate strong understanding of and experience with grant compliance, data management and financial reporting.

Proposals are due by Monday, August 4, 2025, at 12:00 PM. Full RFP details can be found at:

 <https://portal.ct.gov/social-equity-council/community-reinvestment>

About the CT Social Equity Council

The Social Equity Council was established to ensure that Connecticut’s cannabis industry and economic development efforts provide real access and lasting investment for communities disproportionately harmed by cannabis criminalization. Through strategic funding, partnerships, and accountability, the Council is creating pathways to prosperity for individuals and neighborhoods long excluded from opportunity.

Official RFP Contact:

Mariedy Collazo Cruz, Legal Director

 SEC.Community@ct.gov

 450 Columbus Blvd., 5th Floor, Hartford, CT 06103