

Where is one resource for all the information provided by the presenters?

The Clinton Economic Development Commission and/or First Selectman's Office is a great place to get connected with the right organizations, as staff and volunteers within these entities are knowledgeable about business resources throughout the state. Below are some of the resources that are available to your business:

Clinton Chamber of Commerce – The Clinton Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to enhancing local economic vitality and quality of life of the greater Clinton area by promoting leadership, support, and networking within the business community.

Ken Hartley, Executive Director
(860) 669-3889
ken@clintonctchamber.com

Community Investment Corporation – The Community Investment Corporation is an economic development lender contributing financial expertise and practical guidance to small business entrepreneurs in Connecticut who have powerful ideas and need more power to grow them.

Aya Beckles Swanson, Vice President of Community Lending
(203) 776-6172 ext. 133
abswanson@ciclending.com

Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development – The Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development is the state's lead agency responsible for strengthening Connecticut's competitive economic position by, among other actions, providing a wide range of programs in areas such as financing, technical assistance, and workforce development to help companies prosper here.

Sheila Hummel, Business Development Program Manager
(860) 500-2405
sheila.hummel@ct.gov

Connecticut Economic Resource Center – The Connecticut Economic Resource Center works with businesses of all sizes, from global to local, to help them start, expand, or relocate in Connecticut by providing registration and licensing support to start ups, connecting businesses with municipal, regional, state, and federal program, and leveraging relationships with the commercial and industrial real estate community.

Beth Wallace, Director of Business Services
(860) 571-6207
bwallace@cerc.com

Connecticut Procurement and Technical Assistance Center – The Connecticut Procurement and Technical Assistance Center provides marketing and procurement assistance to Connecticut business interested in selling their goods or services to federal, state, or local governments.

Lisa Wood, Director
(860) 437-4659 ext. 208
lwood@secter.org

Connecticut Small Business Development Center – The Connecticut Small Business Development Center provides advising, training, and resources to help Connecticut's businesses start, grow, and thrive through a team of advisors that provide no-cost support to new and existing businesses.

Jim Jackson, Business Advisor
(860) 347-6924 ext. 249
jim.jackson@uconn.edu

jpuigliese@middlesexchamber.com

Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce – The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce is a dynamic business organization with over 2,175 member companies that provides opportunities for professional development, workforce development support, and networking to business in Middlesex County.

Margo Weitekamp, Chair
mweitek1@gmail.com

SCORE – SCORE provides free business advice and ongoing mentoring through a network of over 40 business professionals who volunteer their time to help build small businesses in Connecticut.

Lisa Powell, Business Development Specialist
(860) 240-4892
lisa.powell@sba.gov

US Small Business Administration – The Connecticut Office of the Small Business Administration is responsible for the delivery of federal programs such as financial assistance, business counseling, and minority-, woman-, and veteran-owned business support.

Jeff Pugliese, Administrator
(860) 347-6924 ext. 234

Workforce Alliance – Workforce Alliance is a policy and oversight agency tasked with improving the delivery of workforce services in close collaboration with business, education, and training providers, and local elected officials through the coordination of a variety of employment and training initiatives.

Wanda Lary, Business Services Coordinator
(203) 867-4030 ext. 254
wlary@workforcealliance.biz

What is available for women-owned businesses?

Programs that are available for woman owned businesses mainly pertain to the contracting arena. Designations/certification have different eligibility criteria for the State of Connecticut, the federal government, and the private sector. The common denominator for all is that the business has to be 51% controlled, owned, and operated by a woman or women. She holds the highest position in the company, makes the day to day businesses, etc. With the State of Connecticut (Department of Administrative Services), this is a certification process called the Supplier Diversity Program. This would be a minority business enterprise (MBE) because a woman is considered a minority within the State regardless of ethnicity. This only pertains to contracting, and there is no fee. The private sector may require certification through the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC). There is a fee for this membership. For the federal government, it is a process done through the SBA. There is no fee for this.

What criteria is used for women-owned businesses to benefit?

The designation only comes to play if a business is entering the contracting arena – see answer above.

What resource can be created for public officials to have at their fingertips?

The Town can create a business resource guide that includes contact information and an overview of the variety of organizations tasked with assisting businesses in Connecticut.

Describe some tourism initiatives being led by the State.

The Office of Tourism is currently undertaking a variety of marketing programs designed to increase Connecticut's visibility, boost visitor spending, and increase the economic impact of tourism as a result. Advertisements are focused largely within the major markets of the Northeast such as Boston, New York, and Philadelphia as well as the surrounding areas. Additionally, social media advertisements reach a national audience, as does the very successful State-run website, ctvisit.com. The Office of Tourism has also partnered with other New England States and an organization called Discover New England to market the region's assets to European and Asian customer bases. All of these efforts are designed to spread the word about the countless cultural and recreational amenities that Connecticut has to offer.

How can we market our town to remain competitive? Is there funding the Town is not utilizing or applying for?

The Town must market its assets to remain competitive – its skilled workforce, central location along the shoreline, robust inventory of commercial-industrial properties, and welcoming small-town atmosphere are all essential components of Clinton's appeal. The funding options that the Town can utilize to accomplish this marketing are through either the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) or economic development funding within the Town budget. However, a call for STEAP applications has not yet been announced for 2018.

What is available to veteran-owned businesses? Are there special loans?

The US Small Business Administration (SBA) has loan programs which are done through banks. The bank does the lending, and SBA guarantees a portion of the loan so the bank's risk is lower. However, the bank must show SBA that it would not make the loan without the guaranty. SBA's veteran loan program is called the Veteran's Advantage Loan. SBA also has a VBOC – Veteran's Business Outreach Center. CT is part of Region 1. The Center is in RI but covers all of the New England States.
<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/grow-your-business/veteran-owned-businesses>

This office has two Veteran Advocates: Frank Alvarado and Tanisha Baptiste. Both are veterans, work with the veteran small business community, connecting them to the appropriate resources. Connecticut also has a Veteran's Chamber of Commerce: <https://ctvetschamber.org/>.

How can we aggressively deal with vacancies?

The marketing plan previously mentioned is essential for dealing with vacancies. Spreading the word that Clinton is a viable town for both large and small businesses is extremely important, as many firms looking for space may not immediately consider Clinton. Additionally, creating and sustaining relationships with commercial real estate professionals is critical so that Clinton stays top of mind when they are assisting their clients.

What would you recommend to help developers with the regulatory process and environment?

One action that could be undertaken by the Town to support developers going through the regulatory process is the creation of a process document and/or checklist. This document would outline each step and include contact information as well as information on required documents to be presented at each stage in the process. Town land use staff and relevant board and commission members would work together on this document to ensure that all voices are heard and that the process is streamlined and understood by all involved.

What is the best practice (road map) for a Town to follow?

The Town should dedicate resources to economic development in order to proactively retain businesses and help them grow locally while also maintaining the character of the community.

What local funding is available to EDC function?

Generally, no funding outside the municipal budget is available to fund economic development activity.

What do you see the role of the EDC?

The role of the Economic Development Commission should be one of ambassadors between the local business community and municipal government. EDC members should answer questions, solve problems, and guide businesses through the regulatory process as necessary. CERC is currently assisting Clinton's EDC members in determining where best to spend their time and talent.