

Town of Clinton Small Business Resources

[The First Selectman's Office](#) and [Clinton Economic Development Commission](#) is a great place to get connected with the right organizations. We compiled a list of organizations that are knowledgeable about business resources locally and at the State level. Below are some of these resources available from the Town of Clinton Business Resource Forum as well as a summary of questions asked.

[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

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[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

[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.

Business Counselors

(203) 776-6172 ext 120

En Español (203) 776-6172 ext 141

info@ciclending.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

[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
(860) 347-6924
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[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
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Veteran’s Advocate: Frank Alvarado, Sr. Area Manager Bridgeport
(203) 335-0427
Frank.alvarado@sba.gov

Veteran’s Advocate: Tanisha Baptiste, Administrative Officer
(203) 240-4671
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[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
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[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

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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 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 Connecticut 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 offers a broad range of services, including marketing, research, hospitality services, direct sales and business marketing assistance. 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](#).

Frank Alvarado, Sr. Area Manager Bridgeport

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Tanisha Baptiste, Administrative Officer

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How can we aggressively deal with vacancies?

Creating a marketing plan 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 of Clinton Land Use Office](#) 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?

In this fiscal year the Town of Clinton has allocated funding for 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. [Connecticut Economic Resource Center \(CERC\)](#) is currently assisting Clinton's EDC members in determining where best to spend their time and talent.