2.4 Provide Resources and Supports to Local Businesses

5 – 60 Points

Action Updates

This action was last updated in 2025. The previous version of this action is available for comparison. Edits are highlighted in yellow.

Objective

Provide inclusive and accessible resources to and support local businesses and your Main Street and retail areas.

Complementary Actions:

- Participate in and Promote the C-PACE Program
- Reduce and Compost Organic Waste
- Inventory and Promote Local Retail Options
- Encourage an Equitable and Just Food System

What to Do

The more you do, the more points you earn.

1. Host or support a business roundtable and/or event with municipal officials and staff to support training and dialogue on topics including but not limited to the needs and opportunities to build and expand business development in the community; potential barriers to incentive programs, grant and loan applications; permitting and land use issues; emergency preparedness; sustainable business planning; and any other topics identified collaboratively by businesses and municipal representatives. The roundtable must have taken place in the last three years. **(5 points)**

   Submit: A completed worksheet and at least one example of materials disseminated, which could include flyers, articles, letters, newsletters, presentations, or digital communications. For websites, submit both a hyperlink and a screenshot of the relevant webpage(s).

2. Create or support Small Business Development Centers, Main Street Programs, Tourism Boards, Central Business Development Districts, or other comparable entities by providing municipal leadership support, municipal staff time, and/or funding. **(5 points)**

   Submit: A partnership letter, memorandum of understanding, or comparable document outlining the organization(s) you're supporting, and the resources you're supporting them with (i.e., a specific description of the municipal leadership, staff time, funding and/or other resources and support). If this document is more than three years old, include a brief description of how your municipality has most recently provided support.

3. Invite businesses to participate in at least three events to build community recognition, provide access to potential customers, and connect the businesses to civic and community organizations. The events must have taken place in the last three years. **(10 points)**

   Submit: For each community event in which businesses are invited to participate, please submit a list of businesses that participated in the event; name and date for each event; and at least one document related to the event, which could include flyers, articles, letters, newsletters, presentations, or digital communications. For websites, submit both a hyperlink and a screenshot of the relevant webpage(s).

4. Identify or create, and then disseminate a toolkit for resiliency, such as for pre-disaster business preparedness and for post-disaster conditions. Publish in key languages that are represented in your business community. **(10 points)**

   Submit: A copy of the toolkit and evidence of its dissemination among businesses (via e-mail, an in-person convening, or other channels). If the toolkit was created and disseminated more than three years ago, include a brief description of how it is still relevant and used by your municipality.

5. Support food-based entrepreneurship with strategies identified through a process of authentic community engagement, including the holding of one or more community roundtables. **(10 points)**

   Such support could include:

   - Creating topic-specific guides and/or comprehensive toolkits for food entrepreneurs on licensing (such as guides and sample applications for city and/or state required food business licenses) leasing or otherwise utilizing space (such as accessing shared, commercial-licensed kitchen space), and food sourcing (such as entering food procurement contracts with local schools)
   - Providing grant-writing support, especially for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and other underrepresented food system entrepreneurs
   - Implementing license fee waivers or providing other forms of financial assistance for BIPOC and other underrepresented food-based business entrepreneurs
   - Providing technical assistance to farms interested in wholesaling to restaurants

   Submit: A description of the community roundtables, including dates, and engagement used to determine which strategies to pursue; a description of your municipality's specific actions to support food-based entrepreneurship, along with supporting documentation. For example, if your municipality created a comprehensive toolkit for business entrepreneurs, please submit the toolkit. If your community engagement process took place more than three years ago, or if the support strategies were implemented more than three years ago, include a brief description of how they are still relevant and used by your municipality.

6. Other initiative supporting local business(es) in your community, not listed above. This initiative must be current and active or, if a one-time initiative, must have been completed within the last three years. **(10 points per initiative, up to 20 points)**

   Submit: Documentation that shows completion of an activity that supports your community's local business(es). This should include dates or other documentation that the support is current or took place in the last three years.

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "Partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the "Partners Guidance Document".

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Appropriate municipal and community stakeholders should be involved, with specific collaborators dependent upon the action items selected above. Generally, stakeholders include any municipal economic development representatives, any municipal tourism or recreation boards, municipal information technology staff, and community partners such as business associations, chambers of commerce, downtown organizations, other business alliances, nonprofit organizations, and individual businesses.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the Sustainable CT Grants Portal, which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the Support for Your Town page for opportunities for technical

assistance and other supports.

- Urban Act Grant Program
- Sustainable CT Community Match Fund
- State Funding Readiness Project

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- Preparedness Planning for Small Businesses
- Competitive Advantage of Racial Equity in Business
- Community Engagement for Main Street Transformation
- Legal Food Hub, Resource Library

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- Connecticut Business Council
- Connecticut Department of Labor
- Regional Workforce Development Boards
- Connecticut Business and Industry Association
- Chambers of Commerce
- Business Alliance for Local Living Economies
- Connecticut Small Business Development Center
- Connecticut Main Street Center Downtown Resources
- AdvanceCT (formerly the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, CERC)

Benefits

Strong local businesses provide numerous economic, environmental, social and health benefits.

They may employ local residents, can create a unique sense of place that promotes community quality of life, and may have deeper roots than non-local businesses. Supported local businesses have the added opportunity to improve community-building.

CT Success Stories

- Southbury - May 2022 Certification
- Mansfield - Oct 2022 Certification
- New Haven - Oct 2022 Certification
- Vernon - Oct 2022 Certification
- Middletown - Sep 2023 Certification
- Haddam - May 2024 Certification
- Old Saybrook - May 2024 Certification
- Thomaston - May 2024 Certification
- Bristol - Oct 2024 Certification
- Glastonbury - Oct 2024 Certification
- Groton - Oct 2024 Certification
- West Hartford - Oct 2024 Certification
- Stamford - May 2025 Certification