



General Assembly

January Session, 2025

Committee Bill No. 1179

LCO No. 6620



Referred to Committee on COMMERCE

Introduced by:
(CE)

***AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT COMMUNITY
MAKERSPACE INITIATIVE PROGRAM.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) For the purposes of this
2 section:

3 (1) "Financial assistance" means any and all forms of grants, loans,
4 cash payments or other forms of financing.

5 (2) "Makerspace" means a community space that (A) provides access
6 to tools and technology, (B) results in the prototyping, creation,
7 production or assembly of tangible personal property, and (C) supports
8 the development of educational opportunities.

9 (b) On or before January 1, 2026, the Department of Economic and
10 Community Development shall establish and administer a pilot
11 program to provide financial assistance to eligible entities for the
12 establishment or expansion of makerspaces in the state. The
13 Commissioner of Economic and Community Development shall (1)
14 establish eligibility criteria and an application process for participation
15 in the pilot program, and (2) explore means of funding the pilot

16 program, including, but not limited to, through public-private
17 partnerships, grant programs, federal funds or state funds and the
18 Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund.

19 (c) Applications for participation in such pilot program shall be
20 submitted in a form and manner prescribed by the department. Each
21 application shall include, but need not be limited to, the following: (1)
22 An explanation of the makerspace the applicant is seeking to establish
23 or expand; (2) the amount of financial assistance for such makerspace
24 that the applicant seeks; and (3) such other information as the
25 department deems necessary.

26 (d) The Commissioner of Economic and Community Development
27 may award financial assistance to entities participating in the pilot
28 program not exceeding in the aggregate five million dollars. The
29 amount of any financial assistance issued pursuant to this section to an
30 eligible entity shall not exceed two hundred fifty thousand dollars per
31 fiscal year.

32 (e) Not later than two years after the receipt of any financial assistance
33 pursuant to this section, and annually thereafter, each participant in the
34 pilot program shall submit a report to the Department of Economic and
35 Community Development detailing the progress of the establishment or
36 expansion of the makerspace proposed in such entity's application and
37 containing any additional information deemed necessary by the
38 Commissioner of Economic and Community Development.

39 (f) Not later than January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the
40 Commissioner of Economic and Community Development shall submit
41 a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general
42 statutes, containing an evaluation of the operation and effectiveness of
43 the pilot program to the joint standing committee of the General
44 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to commerce.

45 Sec. 2. Section 32-70 of the general statutes is repealed and the
46 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

47 (a) There is established the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation
48 Fund, which shall be a nonlapsing fund held by the Treasurer separate
49 and apart from all other moneys, funds and accounts. The following
50 moneys shall be deposited in the fund: (1) Any moneys required or
51 permitted by law to be deposited in the fund; (2) any moneys received
52 in return for financial assistance awarded from the Connecticut
53 Manufacturing Innovation Fund pursuant to the program established in
54 subsection (k) of this section; (3) all private contributions, gifts, grants,
55 donations, bequests or devises received by the fund; and (4) to the extent
56 not otherwise prohibited by state or federal law, any local, state or
57 federal funds received by the fund. Investment earnings credited to the
58 assets of such fund shall become part of the assets of such fund. The
59 Treasurer shall invest the moneys held by the Connecticut
60 Manufacturing Innovation Fund subject to use for financial assistance
61 in accordance with subsections (d) and (k) of this section.

62 (b) Any moneys held in the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation
63 Fund may, pending the use or application of the proceeds thereof for an
64 authorized purpose, be (1) invested and reinvested in such obligations,
65 securities and investments as are set forth in subsection (f) of section 3-
66 20 and in participation certificates in the Short Term Investment Fund
67 created under sections 3-27a and 3-27f, (2) deposited or redeposited in
68 any bank or banks, at the direction of the Treasurer, or (3) invested in
69 participation units in the combined investment funds, as defined in
70 section 3-31b. Proceeds from investments authorized by this subsection
71 shall be credited to the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund.

72 (c) The Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund shall not be
73 deemed an account within the General Fund. The moneys of the fund
74 shall be used in accordance with the provisions of subsections (d) and
75 (k) of this section and are in addition to any other resources available
76 from state, federal or other entities that support the purposes described
77 in subsections (d) and (k) of this section.

78 (d) The Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund shall be used:

79 (1) To provide financial assistance to eligible recipients as may be
80 approved by the Manufacturing Innovation Advisory Board pursuant
81 to subsection (g) of this section, [and] (2) to pay or reimburse the
82 administrator for administrative costs pursuant to subsection (m) of this
83 section, and (3) to provide financial assistance to eligible recipients
84 pursuant to section 1 of this act. Such financial assistance shall be
85 awarded for the purpose of: (A) Furthering the development or
86 modernization of manufacturing equipment; (B) supporting
87 advancements in manufacturing; (C) supporting advanced
88 manufacturing research and development; (D) supporting expansion
89 and training by eligible recipients; (E) attracting new manufacturers to
90 the state; (F) supporting education and training programs designed to
91 meet an anticipated demand for appropriately skilled and trained
92 workers; (G) matching federal grants or otherwise leveraging federal
93 grant funds to aid Connecticut universities and nonprofit organizations
94 to increase research efforts; and (H) funding a voucher program as
95 described in subsection (k) of this section. Additionally, such financial
96 assistance shall target aerospace, medical device, composite materials,
97 digital manufacturing and other technologically advanced commercial
98 products and services' supply chains and related disciplines that are
99 likely to lead to an improvement in or development of products or
100 services that are commercializable and designed to advance the state of
101 technology and the competitive position of eligible recipients, and that
102 promise, directly or indirectly, to lead to job growth in the state in these
103 or related fields.

104 (e) The administrator, in consultation with the Manufacturing
105 Innovation Advisory Board, shall give priority consideration to
106 proposals from any company that is located in or planning to relocate
107 to: (1) A distressed municipality, as defined in section 32-9p; (2) a
108 targeted investment community, as defined in section 32-222; (3) a
109 public investment community, as defined in section 7-545; (4) an
110 enterprise zone designated pursuant to section 32-70; or (5) a
111 manufacturing innovation district established pursuant to subsection (f)
112 of this section.

113 (f) The administrator, in consultation with the Manufacturing
114 Innovation Advisory Board, may establish manufacturing innovation
115 districts in order to promote economic development priorities identified
116 by the administrator.

117 (g) All expenditures from the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation
118 Fund, except for administrative costs reimbursed to the administrator
119 pursuant to subsection (m) of this section, shall be approved by the
120 advisory board, provided the advisory board may delegate to staff of
121 the administrator the approval of transactions not greater than one
122 hundred thousand dollars. Any such approval by the advisory board
123 shall be (1) specific to an individual expenditure to be made; (2) for
124 budgeted expenditures with such variations as the advisory board may
125 authorize at the time of such budget approval; or (3) for a financial
126 assistance program to be administered by staff of the administrator,
127 subject to limits, eligibility requirements and other conditions
128 established by the Manufacturing Innovation Advisory Board at the
129 time of such program approval.

130 (h) The administrator shall provide any necessary staff, office space,
131 office systems and administrative support for the operation of the
132 Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund in accordance with this
133 section. In acting as administrator of the fund, the Department of
134 Economic and Community Development shall have and may exercise
135 all of the powers set forth in this chapter, provided expenditures from
136 the fund shall be approved by the Manufacturing Innovation Advisory
137 Board pursuant to subsection (g) of this section.

138 (i) The Manufacturing Innovation Advisory Board shall establish an
139 application and approval process with guidelines and terms for
140 financial assistance awarded from the Connecticut Manufacturing
141 Innovation Fund to any eligible recipient. Such guidelines and terms
142 shall include: (1) A requirement that any applicant for financial
143 assistance operate in the state, or propose to relocate operations to the
144 state, in whole or in part, as a condition of such financial assistance; (2)

145 limitations on the total amount of financial assistance that may be
146 awarded in the form of loans and grants; (3) eligibility requirements for
147 loans and grants, including a requirement for applicants to obtain
148 matching funds from nonstate sources; (4) a process for preliminary
149 review of applications for strength and eligibility by the administrator
150 before such applications are presented to the advisory board for
151 consideration; (5) return on investment objectives, including, but not
152 limited to, job growth and leveraged investment opportunities; and (6)
153 such other guidelines and terms as the advisory board determines to be
154 necessary and appropriate in furtherance of the objectives of this
155 section.

156 (j) Financial assistance awarded from the Connecticut Manufacturing
157 Innovation Fund to eligible recipients shall be used for costs related to
158 facilities, necessary furniture, fixtures and equipment, tooling
159 development and manufacture, materials and supplies, proof of concept
160 or relevance, research and development, compensation, apprenticeship
161 and such other costs that the Manufacturing Innovation Advisory Board
162 determines pursuant to subsection (i) of this section to be eligible for
163 financial assistance within the purposes of this section.

164 (k) The Manufacturing Innovation Advisory Board may establish a
165 voucher program that shall provide eligible recipients access to
166 technical experts in universities, nonprofit organizations and other
167 organizations that can provide specialized expertise to such eligible
168 recipients to solve engineering, marketing and other challenges. The
169 Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, in
170 consultation with the advisory board, may adopt regulations, in
171 accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to implement such
172 voucher program.

173 (l) On or before July 1, 2015, and prior to each fiscal year thereafter,
174 the administrator shall prepare a plan of operations and an operating
175 and capital budget for the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund,
176 provided not later than ninety days prior to the start of each fiscal year,

177 the administrator shall submit such plan and budget to the
178 Manufacturing Innovation Advisory Board for its review and approval.

179 (m) Administrative costs shall be paid or reimbursed to the
180 administrator from the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund,
181 provided the total of such administrative costs in any fiscal year shall
182 not exceed five per cent of the total amount of the allotted funding for
183 such fiscal year as determined in the operating budget prepared
184 pursuant to subsection (l) of this section. Nothing in this section or
185 section 32-7n shall be deemed to require the administrator to risk or
186 expend the funds of the Department of Economic and Community
187 Development in connection with the administration of the Connecticut
188 Manufacturing Innovation Fund.

189 (n) Not later than January 1, 2016, and annually thereafter, the
190 administrator shall provide a report of the activities of the Connecticut
191 Manufacturing Innovation Fund to the Manufacturing Innovation
192 Advisory Board for the advisory board's review and approval. Upon
193 such approval, the advisory board shall provide such report, in
194 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing
195 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
196 relating to commerce. Such report shall contain available information on
197 the status and progress of the operations and funding of the Connecticut
198 Manufacturing Innovation Fund and the types, amounts and recipients
199 of financial assistance awarded and any returns on investment.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 2	July 1, 2025	32-7o

Statement of Purpose:

To establish the Connecticut Community Makerspace Initiative program to support entrepreneurship, innovation and economic opportunity in the state.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]

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