



Connecticut Economic Development Association (CEDAS)
BEST PRACTICES IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & LAND USE PLANNING
A Program for Municipal Accreditation



2024 CERTIFICATION

QUESTIONS & REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The Best Practices Certification application must be completed by a team that includes those responsible for both land use and economic development in your community. The application contains four components:

- I. Communications & Marketing
- II. Coordination & Collaboration
- III. Organizational Capacity & Strategy
- IV. Policies & Programs

Each question will require evidence that supports the criteria (for example, a narrative of no more than one paragraph, a hyperlink or URL to a webpage or document, or a PDF).

The following pages document the questions on the online application.

For more information, and the link to the online application, go to:

<https://www.cedas.org/Resources/CT-Best-Practices-In-Land-Use-and-Economic-Development/>

COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

1. Offers pre-application meetings to those applying for building, zoning, or other related permits to discuss timeframes, board or departmental requirements, restrictions, or address concerns and follows up with the applicant if necessary.

Provide narrative description no more than one paragraph.

2. Has a website or web page for Planning and Economic Development that is updated regularly at least quarterly.

Confirm date of last update and provide URL.

3. Uses social media and or newsletter to communicate with business community & stakeholders.

Provide evidence of at least one town social media account and one example of a post or newsletter in the previous 6 months.

4. Land Use Regulations are available online.

Provide URL.

5. Communicates within 72 hours to pending applicants and responds to questions within 72 hours regarding application status.

Narrative description of process used, policy if applicable, and average length of permit process. No more than one paragraph.

6. Offers GIS land use and parcel information online to applicants and the public.

Provide URL.

7. Shares applications and renderings online for stakeholders to review during the approval process.

Provide URL.

8. Offers online permitting that allows for electronic signatures and payments.

Provide URL.

9. Community has a written brand identity and marketing strategy.

Provide narrative description no more than one paragraph.

10. Community maintains a “sell sheet” to quickly respond to proposal requests that includes: demographic information, workforce data, largest existing employers, cost of doing business, tax rates, and utility providers.

Upload a PDF of the sell sheet.

11. Community has a plan for communicating effectively across language barriers.

Provide link to plan and/or examples. No more than one paragraph.

Upload additional files supporting criteria above. Please label your files with the criteria number for reference.

COORDINATION & COLLABORATION

12. Coordinates meetings between relevant municipal departments to encourage collaboration on applications and avoid conflicting schedules.

Provide narrative description no more than one paragraph explaining the process or statement of policies.

13. Actively partners with regional economic development organizations and other communities.

Please list economic development organizations you have partnered with in the last year and the projects or activities in no more than one paragraph.

14. Works collaboratively with a diverse group of partners, reflecting the diversity of your community (race, ethnicity, gender, unique perspectives, etc.) that informs inclusive growth and equitable economic development.

Description of organizations town is partnered with or members of and an example of collaboration in no more than one paragraph.

15. Publishes a check list or flow chart demonstrating required permit submittals and it is sent to applicants with steps that must be completed in order to proceed.

Please provide a description or URL of checklist or flow chart and evidence of dissemination (e.g. website or sample communications).

16. Encourages applicants to conduct community and neighborhood meetings in advance of public hearings and provides relevant contacts or support.

Description of process and at least one example in no more than one paragraph.

17. Offers coordinated inspections if applicable; e.g. public safety and building inspector.

Evidence that this is an option available to applicants (emails, general correspondence, or notices of inspection).

18. Hosts interdepartmental staff meetings to address issues related to applications for building, zoning, or other related permits.

Narrative description, evidence of meeting attendance. No more than one paragraph.

Upload additional files supporting criteria above. Please label your files with the criteria number for reference.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY & STRATEGY

19. Has a point person dedicated to economic development who serves as coordinator/ombudsman for on-going communications and has relevant training or experience.

Evidence of point person designated or appointed and description of role. No more than one paragraph.

20. Has a mission statement for economic development that reflects the community's vision and values.

Provide a URL, screenshot or other information as to where the mission statement is published or has been distributed to the public.

21. Supports ongoing training/professional development for economic development and land use staff and commissioners (e.g. orientation and continuing education for new commission members).

Provide a short narrative describing recent training and professional development. No more than one paragraph.

22. Has completed a standardized economic development self-assessment and has a plan for continuous improvement.

Provide a PDF copy of the self-assessment summary or finalized results. If possible provide a URL where results may be accessed online. Otherwise please provide a one-page summary.

23. Asks applicants to provide feedback on the application process and uses feedback to make process improvements (customer satisfaction survey).

Provide URL link to survey tool, short narrative description of process and how results are being used.

24. Reviews zoning and land use regulations at minimum every five years for consistency, best practices in planning and economic development, alignment with the plan of conservation and development, economic inclusion, and vision for economic development.

Provide evidence that regulations are reviewed or updated and narrative describing what updates were made and how this incorporates feedback from businesses. No more than one paragraph.

25. Has an economic development strategic plan current within the past three years.

Provide the URL for the plan or 1-2 page PDF summary and narrative description of its use in shaping economic development policies.

26. Maintains an inventory of available properties.

Provide a URL if possible or or screenshot of the current list of properties.

Upload additional files supporting criteria above. Please label your files with the criteria number for reference.

POLICIES & PROGRAMS

27. If the community has municipal incentive policies, they are posted on the community's website.

Provide URL.

28. Publishes design and signage guidelines or design review criteria.

Provide URL.

29. Has a formal Business Retention and Expansion plan/program. Formal programs are systematic approaches to business visits. These must include some strategy beyond occasional visits.

Describe the program goals, activity over the last year, and how it is conducted. Provide a PDF or URL if available.

30. Zoning codes provide reliability, predictability and transparency through tools such as form based zoning.

Provide evidence for use of form-based codes through URL link to codes or PDF.

31. Demonstrates movement towards administrative review.

Provide evidence through URL link to codes or PDF.

32. Engages women and minority-owned businesses to determine specific needs and direct them to specialized resources.

Provide URL or narrative description of evidence, no more than one paragraph.

33. Other innovative and creative ideas not previously accounted for in other criteria.

Upload additional files supporting criteria above. Please label your files with the criteria number for reference.