



PA 25-149—sSB 1179

Commerce Committee

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

SUMMARY: This act requires the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) commissioner to establish and administer, by January 1, 2026, a pilot program to give financial assistance (grants, loans, or other financing) to entities establishing or expanding makerspaces that may serve as self-sustaining models in Connecticut. A makerspace must use financial assistance provided under the pilot program for costs related to establishment or expansion, such as planning activities, operational costs, and capital expenditures, but may not use it for personnel costs.

Under the act, a “makerspace” is a community space (1) providing entrepreneurs access to tools, technology, or educational materials; (2) where prototyping, creation, production, or assembly of tangible items happens; and (3) supporting the development of educational opportunities for personal growth, workforce training, and early-stage business ventures.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

MAKERSPACES PILOT PROGRAM

Development and Funding

Under the act, the DECD commissioner must explore funding options for the program, including public-private partnerships, grants, and federal or state funds. The act caps funding at (1) \$250,000 for any applicant per fiscal year and (2) \$5 million for the pilot program in total.

The act requires DECD to use \$1 million from previously authorized Manufacturing Assistance Act (see BACKGROUND) bonds for the pilot program and allows the department to use up to 10% of this amount for pilot program administration costs.

Applications

The act requires the DECD commissioner to establish the pilot program’s eligibility criteria and application process, and applications for program participation must be submitted in a form the commissioner prescribes. Under the act, applications must include (1) a description of the makerspace the applicant wants to establish or expand and that may serve as a self-sustaining model, (2) the requested amount of financial assistance, and (3) any other information the commissioner deems necessary.

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

Reporting Requirements

Under the act, the DECD commissioner must require pilot program participants, within two years after receiving funding, to report to DECD on the progress of establishing or expanding their makerspace and any other information the commissioner deems necessary. Beginning by January 1, 2027, the commissioner must annually report an evaluation of the pilot program's operation and effectiveness to the Commerce Committee.

BACKGROUND

Manufacturing Assistance Act (MAA)

MAA provides grants, loans, loan guarantees, credit extensions, and other types of financing to small and large businesses, nonprofit corporations, municipalities, and regional councils of government for a range of projects (CGS § 32-220 et seq.). These include developing facilities, acquiring new machines and equipment, diversifying local and regional economies, and supporting research and development. MAA is administered by DECD and supported by general obligation bond funds.