



THE BRIDGE BUCKS PROGRAM, FIRST ROUND, 2024

The Middlesex County Revitalization Commission (MCRC) Bridge Bucks Program will distribute \$39,000 in Bridge Bucks per year in 2024 and 2025. The program was developed to incentivize customers to re-visit the businesses affected by the East Haddam Swing Bridge and the upcoming Route 154 / Route 82 rotary construction, encourage them to shop, despite traffic delays, and redeem the “Bridge Bucks” while boosting sales for the businesses experiencing lost revenue due to the construction-related disruptions.

The 2024 application period for the first round will open on Monday, March 11, 2024. We encourage all interested applicants to prepare their applications ahead of submitting. More information can be found [on our website](#), and any questions addressed to Rebecca Mead, MCRC Administrator, rebecca@middlesexchamber.com.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. To provide an innovative way to encourage repeat customers and increased sales for the businesses affected by the bridge and road construction in Haddam and East Haddam.
2. To show the state and local commitment to the businesses located within the bridge and road construction areas.
3. To maintain a healthy business community within the bridge and road construction radius, leading to maintained and increased employment opportunities for local residents.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Bridge Bucks will be printed, sequentially numbered, and distributed in a \$10 denomination. The recipient businesses will distribute the Bridge Bucks in amounts relating to the amount of the original purchase. For example, \$10 Bridge Bucks can be given to a customer following a \$50 purchase, and/or the \$10 Bridge Bucks can only be redeemed with a subsequent \$50 purchase. The specifications on how Bridge Bucks are to be given out will be determined by the individual recipient business.

Fifty percent of the Program funding will be distributed in the first year of the Bridge Bucks program, with eligible businesses able to receive up to \$750.00.

Once the Bridge Bucks have been redeemed, the participating business will submit for reimbursement to the Middlesex County Revitalization Commission, the administrator of the program.



ADMINISTRATION

The Bridge Bucks Program is a program of the Middlesex County Revitalization Commission (MCRC). A subcommittee will review applicant eligibility, and if an applicant is eligible, the MCRC Administrator will manage the distribution, tracking, reporting, and reimbursement of the Bridge Bucks.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

The Bridge Bucks Program will open early spring 2024 and will run through to the anticipated end of the road construction in the fall of 2025. Each Bridge Buck will have a six-month expiration date from the date of distribution to allow for funds recovery and redistribution of all unredeemed funds.

AMENDMENTS

The Middlesex County Revitalization Commission reserves the right to amend these guidelines as necessary.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for the Bridge Bucks Program, you must complete the application fully, and as part of the application, you will be asked to submit documentation that supports your eligibility.

To be eligible, business must be a retail, retail service, or restaurant business located in the towns of Haddam and East Haddam, Connecticut. Eligible businesses are defined as a business that produces, sells, or services any type of consumer goods, and has a significant reliance on drive by traffic, generally, defined as retail, retail service and restaurants.

- The business may be a for-profit United States Corporation, LLC, partnership, sole proprietorship, or a non-profit organization [501(c)3 or 501(c)4] and possess good character and reputation.
- The applicant must be in good tax standing with the State of Connecticut Department of Revenue Services.
- The applicant must be compliant with the Connecticut Department of Labor Office of Unemployment Assistance and all applicable state and federal employment laws and regulations, including but not limited to minimum wages, unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, and child labor. Proof of good standing will be required.
- The business must be in good standing with the town where they are located.
- The business must be up to date on all prior MCRC and state lending programs, if applicable.



- Please note even if the business meets these conditions, it will be disqualified if it has any of the following:
 - Active bankruptcies or eviction proceedings
 - Owners with unpaid child support
 - Outstanding tax liens / judgments

Ineligible businesses include:

- Corporate-owned chains or franchises with two or more locations (single location franchises are eligible to participate)
- Payday loan businesses
- Adult-oriented businesses
- Passive real estate investments
- Pyramid schemes or multi-level marketing firms

APPLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION PROCESS

MCRC will distribute up to fifty percent (50%) of the funding during the first year, and fifty percent (50%) of the funding, and any re-allocated unredeemed funds in the second year. Each Bridge Buck will have a six-month expiration date from the date of distribution to allow for funds recovery and redistribution of all unredeemed funds.

Given the six-month expiration date on the Bridge Bucks, MCRC anticipates up to four rounds for this initial program, depending on the number of unredeemed Bridge Bucks coupons returned following expiration.

Businesses within a 10-mile radius of the Swing Bridge/Bridge Street area in Haddam and East Haddam may apply for up to a maximum distribution of \$750.00 Bridge Bucks through an online application in a secure portal. Participating businesses can re-apply for a second or third round only if the business has successfully participated and all reporting requirements have been fulfilled in a previous round.



Application requirements will include, but not be limited to:

- Name of Business
- Address
- Point of Contact, Phone / Email
- Type of Business
- Number of Employees
- Business Formation
- Woman/Veteran/Disabled/Minority/LBGTQ+ Ownership – Y/N
- Age of Business
- Letter of Good Standing from the State of Connecticut
- Description of the impact of the DOT projects on the business
- Use of Budget Bucks – narrative on how the Bridge Bucks will be distributed, details of campaign
- How business plans on tracking/monitoring the redemption of Bridge Bucks

Applications will be reviewed for accuracy and eligibility as they are submitted, and a MCRC sub-committee will review the applications on a bi-weekly basis and make approvals. The MCRC Administrator will notify the business and distribute the approved Bridge Bucks in person to the business point of contact.

REPORTING / REQUEST FOR REIMBURSEMENT

On a monthly basis, all businesses that have been provided with Bridge Bucks will be reminded via email to report on usage and will have until the 15th day of the month following to provide a usage report. Reporting must include:

- Total number of Bridge Bucks provided to business
- Total number of redeemed Bridge Bucks within that period
- Certificate number of all redeemed Bridge Bucks
- Submission of images of all redeemed Bridge Bucks along with receipts showing the transaction associated with the Bridge Bucks’ redemption – these can be cell phone images uploaded to the MCRC secure portal
- Percentage increase/decrease in sales / revenue from previous month
- Increase / decrease of FTE from the previous month



Middlesex County Revitalization Commission will report to the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, on a quarterly basis, the total amount of all redeemed “Bridge Bucks,” an accounting of all outstanding “Bridge Bucks,” and the balance of funds remaining to distribute. In addition, information on the businesses will be submitted to include increase/decrease of FTE and previous month’s sales.

COMPLIANCE

A formal agreement between the assisted business and Middlesex County Revitalization Commission will be required. This agreement will constitute how MCRC monitors and enforces compliance with the grant program requirements.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

All applications are to be submitted online at mxcrc.org. You will receive a confirmation of receipt via email and will be contacted with questions or requests for additional information.

There are five sections to the application:

1. Business information
2. Description of the impact of the DOT project on the business to date
3. Description of how the business plans to use and promote the Bridge Bucks – e.g. develop a new promotional campaign or incorporate the Bridge Bucks into an ongoing promotional campaign, including a narrative on how the Bridge Bucks will be distributed.
4. Description of how the business plans to track/monitor the redemption of the Bridge Bucks
5. Certification

2024 APPLICATION

1. Business Information

Legal Name of Business, Business Address, Federal Tax ID Number, Business Phone, Business Email, Form of Corporation, Date of Business Start, IRS Determination Letter (for nonprofit organizations - upload PDF file), and Letter of Good Standing with the CT DRS (upload PDF file). Additionally, the name and address of the majority business owner is required.



Additionally, applicants will be asked to describe the business and the services / products that the business provides, and whether the business is owned and operated by veteran, woman, minority, or disable person(s).

2. Description of the impact of the DOT project on the business to date
Please provide a narrative sharing how the business has been impacted by the East Haddam Swing Bridge and other DOT projects to date, e.g. reduction in sales, increase in costs associated with employee travel, increase in costs and delivery fees for inventory or raw materials.
3. Description of how the business plans to use and promote the Bridge Bucks
Please be as detailed as possible as to how the Bridge Bucks will create or be added to a marketing promotion campaign for the business.
4. Description of how the business plans to track/monitor the redemption of the Bridge Bucks
In addition to the required monthly reporting process to MCRC, please share details on how the Bridge Bucks will be managed internally.
5. Certification
Certification that all information provided, and attachments are true and complete. Business Contact Name, Role, Phone, and Email required.

Once the application has been successfully submitted, an email will be sent confirming receipt. If any information or documentation is missing or incomplete, the application will be rejected. If the PDF files are password protected, the application will be rejected.

All applications must include the following documentation:

- IRS Determination Letter (nonprofit organizations only)
- Letter of Good Standing from the CT Department of Revenue Services
- IRS Form 941 for 2023 Q4

Please direct any questions to Rebecca Mead, Administrator, Middlesex County Revitalization Commission via email rebecca@middlesexchamber.com.