



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 12, 2025

For More Information:

Lauren Coakley Vincent, President + CEO
Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District
(203) 908-3622

lauren.dssd@infobridgeport.com

DOWNTOWN BRIDGEPORT AWARDED \$5,000 CT MAIN STREET CENTER ACCELERATOR GRANT

BRIDGEPORT, CT – August 12, 2025 – The Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District (DSSD) was recently awarded a \$5,000 CT Main Street Accelerator Grant from CT Main Street Center (CMSC). The award was made at the conclusion of the Bridgeport DSSD’s participation in CMSC’s signature downtown leadership program. During the virtual, six-month Main Street Accelerator program, the Bridgeport DSSD collaborated with Groundwork Bridgeport, the City of Bridgeport’s Office of Planning & Economic Development, and the Bridgeport Arts + Cultural Council to apply the insights gained from the program to develop the concept for the Arcade Food Hall, an entrepreneurial ecosystem for food businesses housed in a beautifully restored historic structure located at the heart of the neighborhood.

The Main Street Accelerator grant will help the Bridgeport DSSD and its partners to host a temporary food hall activation in the Arcade Mall, paired with a food entrepreneur resource event, with the goal of completing a market analysis and business plan to present to large-scale funders that can support the fit out the historic Arcade Mall’s ground floor for the purpose of a fresh produce market and food hall. This critical funding allows the Bridgeport DSSD to gain insights and demonstrate the viability of establishing a market and food hall that will serve Downtown Bridgeport’s growing residential population.

“The Main Street Accelerator program is designed to inspire and empower collaborations that have high impact for downtowns, such as the plans being developed for the Arcade Mall,” said Michelle McCabe, CMSC’s Executive Director. “We applaud the Bridgeport DSSD and the team for taking their aspirations to the next level, first by undertaking the Accelerator program, and now by implementing their ideas into action. We look forward to seeing the Arcade Food Hall come to fruition and contributing to the downtown’s refreshed spirit.”

Bridgeport DSSD President + CEO Lauren Coakley Vincent said that “The Bridgeport DSSD is honored to be selected for the Main Street Accelerator grant. This funding will build on the skills we gained during the leadership development program component to continue our work adding vibrancy to our friendly, eclectic business and residential community. The Accelerator grant allows us to establish and grow a destination to taste and experience the creativity of local entrepreneurs, welcome visitors, and encourage people to explore the neighborhood we know and love.”

Downtown Bridgeport was one of four communities, including Bethel, East Hartford, and Enfield, that were chosen for the Main Street Accelerator program. The Main Street Accelerator program and grants are [supported by Webster Bank](#).



Photo: The Downtown Bridgeport 2025 Main Street Accelerator participants are joined by CT Main Street Center leadership for the project grant award presentation. Photo taken by Christine Schilke.

###

Bridgeport
Downtown Special
Services District

DSSD

About Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District

The Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District (DSSD) serves the vibrant and diverse businesses within the 30 blocks in of our heart-shaped neighborhood. Our role at the Bridgeport DSSD is to support the needs of growing businesses in the district, from keeping the Downtown clean and friendly, connecting them to city resources to offering free marketing and advertising, and everything in between. Throughout the year we deliver sanitation services, our friendly team of Ambassadors keep the district clean and safe, we promote the district through the dynamic Colorful Bridgeport campaign, and produce community events including the Downtown Farmers Market.

Contact Lauren Coakley Vincent at

lauren.dssd@colorfulbridgeport.com or (203) 908-3622 and learn more at www.colorfulbridgeport.com.



About Connecticut Main Street Center

CT Main Street Center (CMSC) is the state's premier resource for downtown vibrancy. Our mission is advancing communities across Connecticut to establish and maintain vibrant Main Streets. We provide education and training, resources and technical assistance, and function as the statewide champion for downtowns and Main Streets of all sizes. CMSC is supported in part by the [Department of Economic & Community Development](#) (DECD). Learn more by visiting ctmainstreet.org.