



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
GOVERNOR DANIEL P. MALLOY

**GOV. MALLOY: NEW PARTNERSHIP WILL LINK CONNECTICUT'S
SMALL BUSINESSES WITH MAJOR CORPORATIONS NATIONALLY**

*First-of-its-kind Public-Private Initiative in Connecticut to
Support Small Businesses;*

*IBM Selects The Business Council of Fairfield County to Lead Development of
the Connecticut Supplier Connection*

(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Daniel P. Malloy today announced that a new partnership between IBM and The Business Council of Fairfield County will help Connecticut small business owners to become suppliers to major corporations – a move that will benefit job growth in the state.

Known as the Connecticut Supplier Connection, this new initiative is linked to the national Supplier Connection initiative – a multi-industry procurement platform built and managed by IBM. It is a free, business-to-business platform connecting dozens of large corporations with suppliers that have under \$50 million in revenues and fewer than 500 employees.

“Small businesses are our economic engine in Connecticut – we are working to support them like never before. We have taken a comprehensive approach to boost efficiency, nurture innovation, and increase competitiveness with programs like Small Business Express,” Governor Malloy said. “This new partnership is another step in our efforts to help our state’s small and diverse businesses have national reach, so they achieve the exposure needed to keep their businesses growing. I would like to thank IBM for working with us and The Business Council of Fairfield County on this project.”

Using an online standardized profile, thousands of small businesses across the state can be identified by the purchasing agents of large corporations whose combined spending power exceeds \$150 billion a year. The comprehensive small business profiles make it easier and more efficient for large organizations to purchase from small businesses.

IBM has selected The Business Council of Fairfield County as its first Regional Growth Partner. In that role, the Business Council will take the lead in developing the Connecticut Supplier Connection as a statewide public-private initiative.

The Connecticut Supply Chain Roundtable will guide the Supplier Connection initiative statewide. This leadership group will bring together buying members, universities, professional service leaders, supply chain and manufacturing agency leaders – all of whom are key stakeholders and state economic development executives. The newly created roundtable, being co-chaired by Pitney Bowes Inc., a national leader in diverse procurement, will serve to elevate the awareness of Connecticut as a supply chain leader, provide benchmarking tools, and offer match making sessions with suppliers and buyers.

Since its inception in 2011, on a national level, Supplier Connection has helped channel over \$6 billion from participating partner corporations to registered small businesses. In 2014, the platform helped channel over \$2 billion in supply chain spending to small businesses, covering a diverse range of industries.

“Small businesses are the backbone of Connecticut’s economy. For many, finding new opportunities is a constant challenge and tapping into the supply chain of large organizations can be daunting,” IBM Vice President of Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs Stanley S. Litow said. “Supplier Connection has been a runaway success in bringing large and small companies together, and this new partnership will help strengthen Connecticut businesses, create jobs and fuel economic growth.”

IBM is one of the more than 31 corporate buying members registered on Supplier Connection and are joined by AT&T, Citibank, Facebook, JPMorgan Chase & Co, Pfizer, and Pitney Bowes Inc., among many others. Companies with a significant Connecticut presence currently participating include Pitney Bowes Inc., IBM and Pfizer. Going forward, Connecticut’s UIL Holdings will join as the newest buying member in the Supplier Connection.

“The state is a proud sponsor of the Connecticut Supplier Connection and pleased IBM chose Connecticut as its first regional growth partner. I believe this initiative will provide new opportunities for smaller companies across the region and beyond,” Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner Catherine Smith said. “Through the tools, resources, and relationships Supplier Connection offers, companies will be able to access new markets, grow their skills and improve their performance faster and smarter.”

As Regional Growth Partner, The Business Council of Fairfield County will grow Connecticut’s presence and impact with Supplier Connection and Connecticut-based businesses by recruiting new large corporate buying members and registering additional small and diverse suppliers. Supplier Connection was created by IBM on a philanthropic

basis and they continue to lead, finance and provide management support to the initiative.

“We are excited to have the opportunity to support this initiative in Connecticut,” Christopher P. Bruhl, President and CEO of The Business Council of Fairfield County, said. “Stronger, more diverse supply chains and job creation through accelerated small business growth are priorities shared by both the private and public sectors. We’re honored to play our part in making this effort a success.”

Critical to making this initiative as effective as possible is the launch of the new Connecticut Supplier Connection Supplier Development Academy. IBM and The Business Council are partnering with a number of technical assistance agencies, such as the Connecticut Small Business Development Center and CONNSTEP, among others, to provide the specialized knowledge required of small business to enter into and succeed in large procurement opportunities and strengthen the suppliers’ ability to meet the pre-qualification and due diligence requirements of large procurement buyers. The Academy will initially offer three courses including finance, manufacturing and operations excellence and marketing.

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