

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

# Community Match Fund

Building Sustainable Communities Across Connecticut





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The Community Match Fund is generously supported by the [Hampshire Foundation](#), the [Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation](#), the [Connecticut Green Bank](#), and [Supporting Organizing Work CT](#).





## About the Community Match Fund

**Sustainable CT's Community Match Fund is an innovative crowdgranting program building more sustainable, healthy, and vibrant communities across Connecticut.**

Whether you're dreaming of more green spaces, solar for public spaces, greenways for biking and walking, murals and other public art, green jobs programs, or community gardens,

the Community Match Fund can help make your great idea a reality by providing fast, flexible funding and support for sustainability projects that engage your Connecticut community. Community Match Fund projects can be found across the state of Connecticut in 75 communities.

## How It Works

Unlike traditional funding programs, the Community Match Fund is focused on decreasing the hurdles faced by community leaders when applying for grants. The Community Match Fund has no traditional grant application, no deadlines, no lengthy review period, and minimal reporting requirements. Projects are assessed and approved based on simple and objective eligibility criteria, irrespective of the person or group proposing the project. The program is structured to support and amplify grassroots efforts that strive to transform their community, neighborhood, and town for the best.

**Changemakers identify an opportunity for growth or change in their community.**

Patronicity administers the Community Match Fund program and provides an easy-to-use crowdfunding platform with one-on-one project coaching, helping communities develop a strategy to reach their fundraising goals and engage their community.

Community members buy-in and support projects with their dollars. Crowdfunding democratizes access to capital, allowing local residents and organizations to create the change they want to see in their community.

If an approved crowdfunding project reaches its goal, the project receives a matching grant from Sustainable CT of up to \$7,500 to further the project's impact on the community. Projects that promote energy efficiency, renewable energy, and greenhouse gas reductions are eligible for a match up to \$15,000.

The program is eligible to projects that align with [Sustainable CT actions](#), are in a Sustainable CT registered municipality, and are led by individual residents, nonprofits, community groups, municipalities, schools, or libraries. This program was designed with grassroots groups in mind and the team at Sustainable CT is excited to work with anyone interested in getting their idea off the ground.

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**Do you have an idea to make your community more equitable, sustainable, and vibrant?**

**Learn more at [patronicity.com/sustainablect](https://patronicity.com/sustainablect)**

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# Amplifying Community Change

Sustainable CT recognizes the importance of supporting grassroots communities in their efforts to create change. In 2023, Sustainable CT and the Community Match Fund offered additional incentives for **climate change and clean energy, social change and food waste diversion and composting projects** to amplify their efforts.



## Climate Change & Clean Energy Amplifier Fund

Sustainable CT amplified support for climate change and clean energy projects that promote, support, or target energy efficiency, renewable energy, and GHG reduction. The amplifier fund provided additional funding, raising the maximum 1:1 match opportunity to \$15,000.

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2023 TOTAL CROWDFUNDED & MATCHED: <b>\$127,949</b>	
CROWDFUNDED: <b>\$67,458</b>	MATCHED: <b>\$60,491</b>

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## Social Change Amplifier Fund

Sustainable CT furthered its commitment to social change projects by creating a new incentive to support social change projects led by Black, Latinx, Multiracial, Indigenous and other People of Color (POC) community organizers and organizations focused on systemic change. Sustainable CT covered all crowdfunding and credit card processing fees for social change projects, allowing all funds crowd-funded to go directly into the hands of the community organizers.

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2023 TOTAL CROWDFUNDED & MATCHED: <b>\$191,816</b>	
CROWDFUNDED: <b>\$91,886</b>	MATCHED: <b>\$99,930</b>

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## Food Waste Diversion Amplifier Fund

Sustainable CT amplified support for food waste diversion and composting projects in the second half of 2023, providing additional funding with a 1:1.5 match up to \$6,000.

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2023 TOTAL CROWDFUNDED & MATCHED: <b>\$255,433</b>	
CROWDFUNDED: <b>\$107,014</b>	MATCHED: <b>\$148,419</b>

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You can learn more about Connecticut's unique waste challenges and the dedicated community leaders working to create waste diversion solutions in the latest season of **Re:source:ful: Growing Sustainable Communities**, an original series from Connecticut Public Television. The fourth season features community groups confronting the challenge of waste management. By raising awareness through programs about food recovery, school lunch waste, recycling, repairs and food scrap management, these residents hope to change minds around everyday consumer habits.

[Watch Now](#)



# Impact by the Numbers

This is a snapshot of Community Match Fund projects from January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023.

## Total Matched



**\$459,349**  
2023

**\$1,796,009**  
LIFETIME

## Total Crowdfunded



**\$450,328**  
2023

**\$2,006,180**  
LIFETIME

## Total Projects



**62**  
2023

**295**  
LIFETIME

## Total Patrons



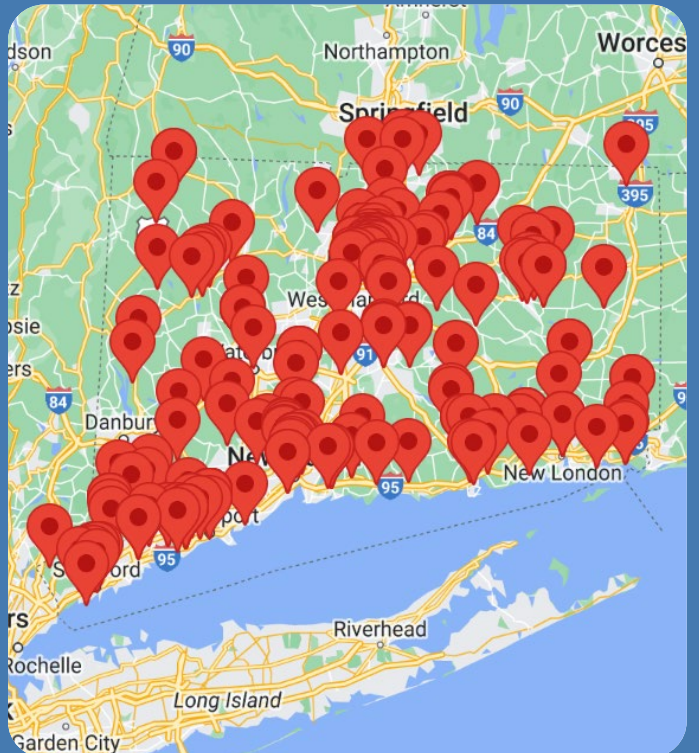
**6,747**  
2023

**19,545**  
LIFETIME

**100% Success Rate**

**104% Funded**

AVERAGE OF SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGNS



**\$6,610**

AVERAGE GOAL

**\$7,252**

AVERAGE RAISE

**109**

AVERAGE PATRONS

SMALLEST TOWN

**Falls Village**  
**Population:**  
**509**

LARGEST CITY

**Bridgeport**  
**Population:**  
**148,333**

COMMUNITY WITH THE  
MOST PROJECTS

**Hartford**  
**15 projects**

HIGHEST RAISE

**Fairfield**  
**Public Schools**  
**Cafeteria**  
**Composting**  
had the highest  
crowdfunding  
campaign raise  
of \$25,115.

SMALLEST CAMPAIGN GOAL

**Martin Luther**  
**King Jr. Building**  
**a Beloved**  
**Community**  
**Dancing toward**  
**DIVERSITY** had  
the smallest  
crowdfunding  
campaign goal of  
\$1,200.

LARGEST NUMBER OF PATRONS

**A Midsummer**  
**Night's Dream**  
**in Downtown**  
**Rockville** had the  
largest number  
of patrons with  
390 contributing  
to the campaign's  
success.

Percent of projects by entity type

**Individuals & Groups: 19%**  
**Nonprofit: 73%**  
**Municipality: 8%**

NUMBER OF NEW COMMUNITIES IN 2023

**8**

**79**

Community Match Fund projects are in  
Connecticut's 25 distressed communities as  
defined by the Connecticut Department of  
Economic and Community Development.





## Patron in the City: Diana Martinez

In June 2023, Diana Martinez, Project Manager at [Cultivating Justice](#) launched a crowdfunding campaign, [EggUcation Series: Cultivating BIPOC Farmers](#), to help 15 BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), women, and low-income people become Connecticut farmers.

Cultivating Justice is a youth-led organization meeting community-identified needs around food security, land access, environmental justice, civic engagement, power building, and pathways towards agriculture for people underrepresented in Connecticut's farming community. Their goal is to nurture Connecticut's next generation of farmers of color.

Cultivating Justice and several partners crafted a curriculum to train new farmers, covering different types of agriculture work, composting, farm registration, and more. The crowdfunding campaign was launched to cover program administration and course expenses.

The campaign raised \$6,400 from 85 patrons. By reaching their crowdfunding goal, the project unlocked a 1:1.5 matching grant from the Community Match Fund, for a total of \$15,400 to make the project a reality.

**At Patronicity, we believe that passionate individuals can spur change in their communities. We refer to those individuals as Patrons in the City, dedicating their time, sweat, and tears to building vibrant communities.**

**Diana:** Our campaign focused on the creation of a public, free learning series, EggUcation. EggUcation includes workshops for the public about farming and community organizing.

Through this series, we were able to engage 15 individuals and their families in a deeper understanding of farming history in America—particularly as it relates to the historical lack of access for people of color; support them through registering with the State of Connecticut to become farmers; and help them develop a composting project to better familiarize themselves with the development of healthy soil.

This is particularly important to my community because in Connecticut, 98% of all farmers are white. This means that the people who are most directly involved in growing and processing our food do not represent me or the majority of people in my community. This program is how we both illuminate why this disparity exists, how it is perpetuated systematically, and how we can begin to shift that dynamic. We are creating pathways to farming for folks who are currently not represented nor supported in the field.

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We spoke in-depth with Diana to learn more about her passion for climate justice.

Read more at [resources.patronicity.com](https://resources.patronicity.com).

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# Groundbreaking Climate Justice

Take a closer look at all of the 2023 Community Match Fund projects by viewing Sustainable CT's [flip book](#).

## Tri-Town Sustainable Committees Food Scrap Composting and Education Campaign Supporting All Region 4

ESSEX, DEEP RIVER & CHESTER, CONNECTICUT

CROWDFUNDED: \$12,247      SUSTAINABLE CT MATCH: \$18,000

POPULATION: 14,897      PATRONS: 214

Sustainable Essex, Sustainable Deep River, and Sustainable Chester joined together to teach Connecticut youth the simple yet transformative habit of separating food scraps from the waste stream to help keep the community healthy and resilient. The three communities worked collaboratively to support their regional school system by diverting food waste and educating students on the importance of composting and recycling. The campaign provided funding for all five schools in the region to haul food scraps for two years.

[Learn More](#)



## FREE HART – Art for All

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

CROWDFUNDED: \$7,500      SUSTAINABLE CT MATCH: \$7,500

POPULATION: 121,054      PATRONS: 130

FREE HART Closet is a free art supply shop for artists and makers in Connecticut. FREE HART believes everyone deserves access to the tools, resources, and space they need to create. The organization opened in October 2022 and has served over 100 artists.

In June 2023, FREE HART launched a crowdfunding campaign to relocate and continue to provide artists and the community access to high quality art supplies for free. The funds raised will also allow them to provide art programming for adults who want to keep their creative juices flowing.

[Learn More](#)





# Groundbreaking Climate Justice

## Safe Bike Riding for Mansfield 4th Graders

MANSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

CROWDFUNDED: **\$8,841**      SUSTAINABLE CT MATCH: **\$7,500**

POPULATION: **26,543**      PATRONS: **90**

Mansfield is a nationally designated Bicycle Friendly Community. Further building on their national reputation, Bike Mansfield is working with the PE teachers and administrators at Mansfield Elementary School to integrate bicycle education into the 4th grade physical education program for students. The bike education program will teach every 4th grader at Mansfield how to safely ride a bicycle and provide them with a helmet of their own. The crowdfunding campaign raised funds to purchase bicycles, a storage trailer, and program supplies for the first year.

[Learn More](#)



## Solar Youth Green Jobs Park Improvement Project

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

CROWDFUNDED: **\$7,500**      SUSTAINABLE CT MATCH: **\$7,500**

POPULATION: **134,023**      PATRONS: **105**

This was Solar Youth's 2nd successful crowdfunding campaign through the Community Match Fund. Solar Youth provides out-of-school youth development programs to young people who live in some of the most distressed neighborhoods of New Haven. Solar Youth's programs provide long-term supportive relationships and teach environmental stewardship, youth-led problem solving, and leadership development. The programs build the motivations and behaviors to achieve long-term success in life.

Solar Youth, through their Green Jobs Youth Development Program, partnered with the City of New Haven's Parks & Trees Department on a project to improve a public green space. Green Jobs Apprentices learned how to remove invasive species and plant shrubs, which are important for climate control, soil stabilization and production, ecosystem water balance, carbon uptake and storage, and air quality.

[Learn More](#)





# Community Match Fund

[patronicity.com/sustainablect](http://patronicity.com/sustainablect)



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