



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
GOVERNOR DANIEL P. MALLOY

**GOV. MALLOY: DECD SURVEY FINDS MAJORITY OF SMALL BUSINESSES
PLEASED WITH EXP APPLICATION PROCESS**

*Promotes Small Business Saturday at Family-Owned and Operated Toy Store in
West Hartford*

(HARTFORD, CT) - Governor Daniel P. Malloy today [released the results](#) of two customer satisfaction surveys that were conducted to determine the level of satisfaction and experience of small business owners who had applied for financial assistance under the Department of Economic and Community Development's (DECD) Small Business Express Program (EXP). To date, 1,210 companies have received \$171,632,484 million in grants and loans through EXP and are expected to create or retain over 17,000 jobs.

Governor Malloy also announced he will visit Toy Chest in West Hartford tomorrow to promote Small Business Saturday, a nationwide campaign to encourage people to shop at local businesses, on November 29th. The Toy Chest, which has been located in West Hartford Center since 1956, is a family owned and operated store that specializes in fun toys that encourage creativity and learning.

"From the beginning, my administration has been committed to making it easier to do business with state government by lowering costs and being a more efficient, more transparent and more responsive partner," said Governor Malloy. "We created EXP to ensure smaller companies have the support they need to expand, compete and create jobs and to make Connecticut a more attractive place to start and grow a business. The results of this survey show that EXP has done just that and I commend the staff at DECD for their successful delivery of this program."

The surveys were conducted by the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) in 2013 and again in 2014 and requested feedback from both successful and unsuccessful EXP applicants. All metrics held solid or showed improvement, registering at least 55 percent meeting or exceeding expectations. CERC asked applicants to rate their experience relative to their expectations for the six phases of the EXP application process:

- Time to complete the application;

- Time before being contacted by a DECD Project Manager;
- Time to receive the results of the Financial Review process;
- Time to receive the commitment letter, known as a Letter of Intent (LOI);
- Time to complete the contract process with legal counsel;
- Time to receive payment (for those that were approved).

“EXP was perhaps the most impactful component of the 2011 Jobs Bill, because it addressed a serious need in the small business sector, in the aftermath of the Great Recession – private lending had almost completely stopped,” said DECD Commissioner Catherine Smith. “That was what was artificially constraining many small businesspeople who were trying to recover and grow. The demand for the program was so great that it was a real challenge to keep up with it. So it is truly gratifying to see the efforts of our staff yielding such great results.”

CERC received responses from 425 businesses that were funded and 77 businesses that were declined for EXP. Key findings of the survey include:

- 86 percent of businesses responding would recommend the EXP program to a friend or colleague (up from 78 percent in the previous time period);
- 85 percent of respondents were very or somewhat satisfied with the level of professionalism/customer service of the project managers and staff involved with the application process (up from 83 percent in the previous time period);
- 81 percent of respondents were very or somewhat satisfied the overall experience in dealing with the project managers and staff and with the level of knowledge and expertise of the project managers and staff involved with the application process (up from 80 percent in the previous time period).

All of the survey respondents indicated that the timing of the application process took about the amount of time they expected, with the timing of a project manager contacting them receiving the highest marks, and the length of time it took for the contract to go through the legal process receiving the lowest marks. These findings were virtually the same for both groups of respondents.

The full report containing the survey findings is available on the [DECD website](#).

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