ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOUNDATION INC.

Programs of the Entrepreneurship Foundation

The Mission of the Foundation is to provide effective support for entrepreneurs and those who nurture them. New businesses are necessary to replace aging industries, but startups and early-stage entrepreneurs are underserved, especially among low-wealth communities.

Goal: Expand Current Industries

Advertising And Marketing Industry

The Black Book: A Directory of 400 **Advertising and Marketing Service Businesses** in southern Fairfield County to help companies find much-needed support and to champion Connecticut companies that provide critical growth services.

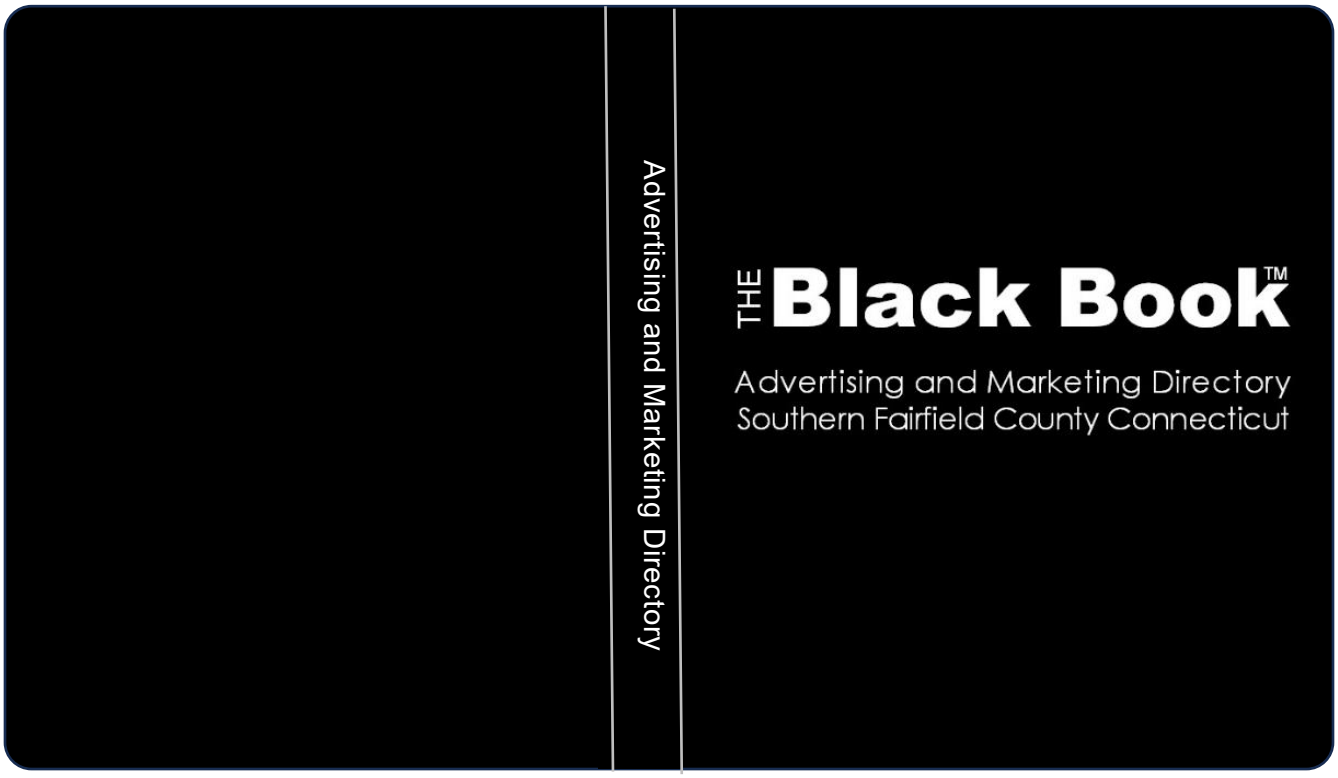
We reviewed the website of each company to verify they are active and indeed local. Half were actually in Manhattan, India, or elsewhere. (Unfortunately, search engines can no longer be trusted as firms may be listed as "nearby" even if a thousand miles away.)

The companies are grouped under two main headings:

AGENCIES are expected to provide high-level advice on marketing strategy and able to plan and manage a comprehensive advertising campaign employing a wide range of traditional and digital media.

SPECIALISTS typically are masters of one or more capabilities, such as Graphic design, Web design, Branding, Influence, or Photography. Providers are categorized by the services offered. Each company is listed under its primary function, with a note regarding ancillary services, plus contact information, year founded, number of staff and industry specialties.

For updates see www.EntrepreneurshipFoundation,org/BlackBook.
To add/update a listing, email Roer@EntrepreneurshipFoundation.org



The bound version of the directory has been distributed to 120 major buyers of creative services. An additional 500 eBooks have been sent to industry professionals to facilitate a collaborative ecosystem

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Advertising and Marketing Agencies

Creative Services

- Animation and Motion Graphics
- Branding (Product or company positioning, logo and package design, and marketing)
- Copywriting
- Graphic design, Illustration, Web design (See also “Digital Marketing/ Web design”)
- Photography and Videography
- Type design and Lettering

Digital Marketing

- Full Service
- Content Marketing
- eCommerce
- Email and Text (SMS) marketing
- Influencer and Affiliate marketing
- Lead Generation
- SEO (Search engine optimization)
- Social Media Marketing and Web design

Market Research and Analytics

Mass Marketing

- Magazines and Newspapers
- Media Buyers
- Out-of-Home (Billboards, Transit, Mall kiosks)
- Radio Advertising
- TV Advertising

Printing and Distribution

- Collateral material (Brochures, flyers, coupons, posters, business cards)
- Direct mail services
- Imprinting Apparel and Promotional Items
- Large format printing
- Package printing
- See-through Vehicle wraps and Window graphics

Production Support

- Hair and Makeup Stylists
- Locations and Scouting
- Music (Original and Stock)
- Sets, Props, Costumes and Wardrobe stylists
- Studios
- Talent

Promotional Products (apparel, pens, mugs, buttons, etc.)

Public Relations and Events

Other Marketing Services

- Chip-based self-playing audio
- Interior Design For Retail Environments
- Marketing program fulfillment
- Signage
- Sales Reps

Manufacturing Industry

DETERRENTS TO GROWING DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING include a lack of skilled labor and supply chain interruptions due to (initially) the pandemic and world conflicts, but also due to an overdependence on China for components.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

1) **Industrial Design Competition**. At a design school. The Foundation helped to judge the competition and provide feedback on product designs.

2) **Manufacturing Career Fairs**. The Foundation operated career fairs for three years with an ARPA grant. Over 1700 job seekers were connected to companies offering high-paying jobs. Only companies offering at least $50,000 annually with genuine career paths were invited to exhibit. (Telemarketing companies need not apply.) Exhibitors included General Dynamics, Lockheed Martin, and ASML



3) **Marketing Videos to Assist Companies and Training Agencies with Recruiting**



Hiring video for Rotair Aerospace, one of three produced by the Entrepreneurship Foundation this year.

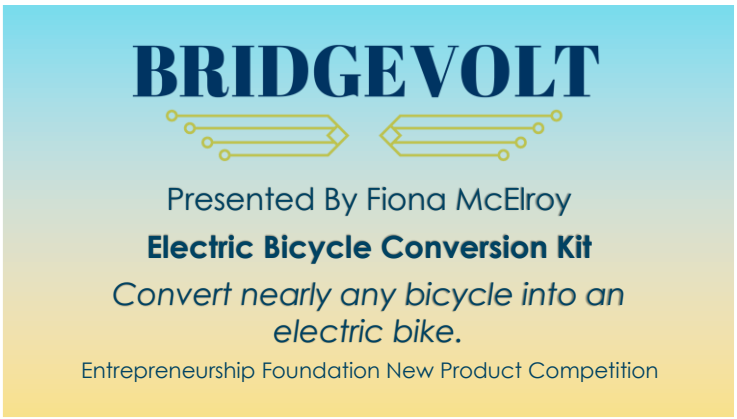
3) New Product Competition ($60.000)

PREPARATION.

Week 1 -- Training Session on Ideation and Feasibility Analysis at University of Bridgeport
Week 2 -- Webinar on How to Conduct a Patent Search, and the Patenting Process
Week 3 -- Training Session on Prototyping, Market Research, Pitching
Week 4 -- Written Executive Summaries due online
Week 5 -- Final Presentations at Fairfield University, Judged by members of AIF and CEDF

MENTORS who worked with entrepreneurs at training sessions and lead-up to final pitches were: Sherri Dente (patent attorney), Aaron Monikowski of ForgeCT (manufacturer sourcing), Joe Ziskin (strategy), Carmen Nieves (source for pro bono interns), Fred Welk of CEDF (capital), Jere Eaton (marketing), John Ash (3D printing).

EXAMPLES OF NEW PRODUCT ENTRANTS



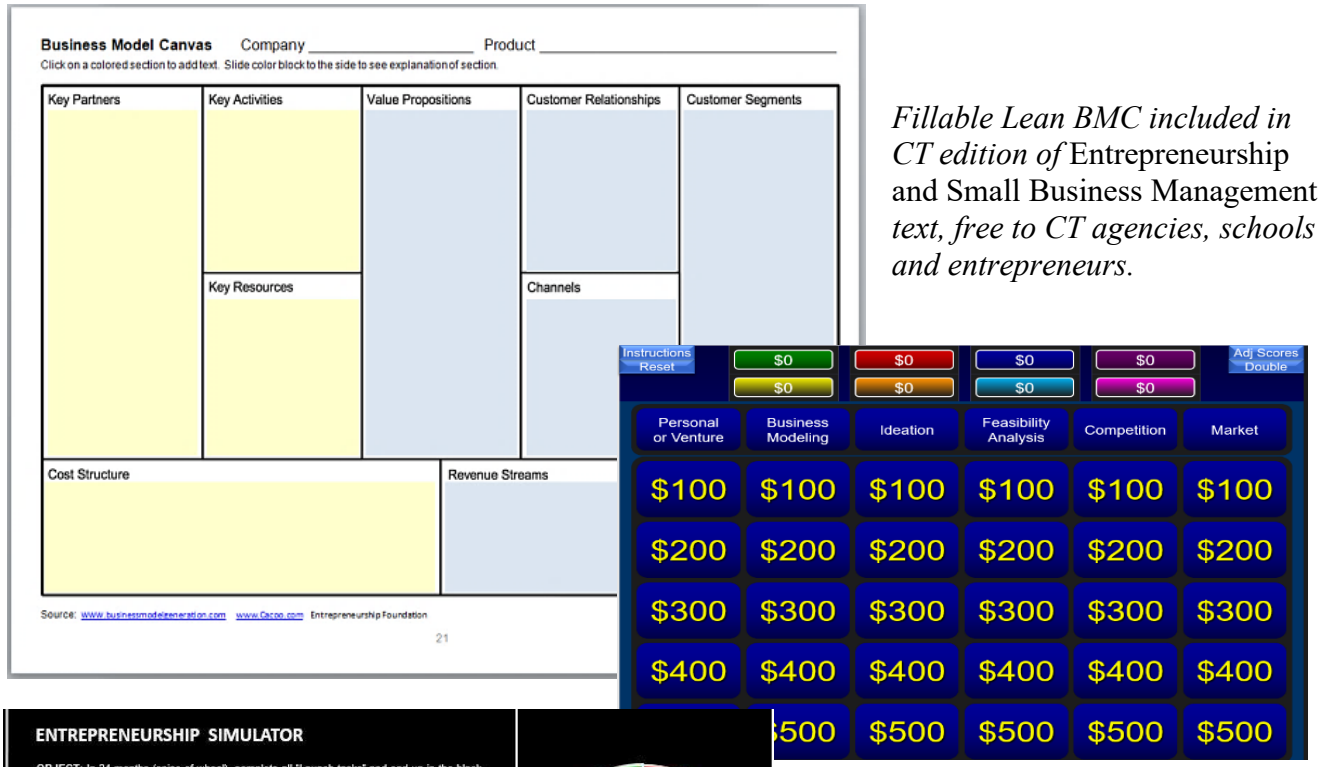




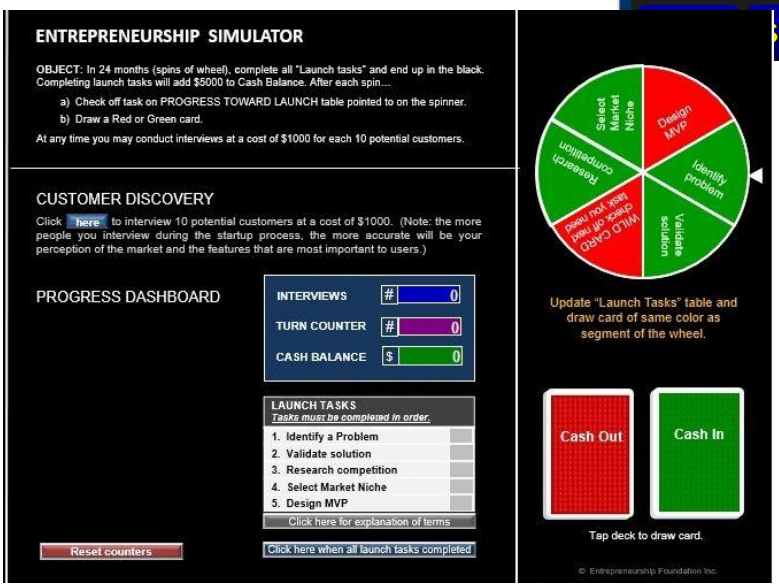
Goal: Facilitate Entrepreneurship

1) Provide Educators and Entrepreneurs Instructional Materials and Tools

a) Free 220-page guide to starting and growing a business in Connecticut
b) Financial planning spreadsheets https://entrepreneurshipfoundation.org/spreadsheets
c) Free instructional PowerPoints https://entrepreneurshipfoundation.org/powerpoints-1
d) Links to taped webinars https://entrepreneurshipfoundation.org/training-webinars
e) Entrepreneurship Simulations and Teaching Games



Fillable Lean BMC included in CT edition of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management *text, free to CT agencies, schools and entrepreneurs.*



Free Entrepreneurship Games and Simulations available from the Entrepreneurship Foundation.

2) Provide Training, Mentoring and Networking

- The Foundation mentored 45 entrepreneurs during the year.
- The Foundation provided five entrepreneurship internships.
- The president appeared on a TV program on several dates to discuss entrepreneurship and take calls.
- The Entrepreneurs Society held 7 meetings.

The Entrepreneurs Society

EXAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

5:30 pm Network with peers and mentors
6:00 pm Five-Minute University: ***Using Pricing as a Marketing Tool***
6:10 pm Elevator Pitches. *Do you need investment, customers, employees, advice?*
7:00 pm Meet with Mentors
7:50 pm Announce what you will commit to accomplish by next meeting



125 Entrepreneurs and 10 mentors attend a meeting of the Society



A New Haven entrepreneur receives industrial design advice for a new 3D printed product

3) Connect Entrepreneurs to Talent



Form a team -- Join a team

Search for the talent you need to build out your team, or advertise your skills if you would like to join a team. To get started, click the link below!

LEARN MORE

4) Provide Access to Capital

ASSUMPTIONS

- Asset-challenged entrepreneurs need grants, not more debt
- Grants of $500 to $5000 are adequate to incentivize plans to launch or grow ventures
- High-potential proposals can be equitably and efficiently triaged through competitions.
- Grants allow promising concepts to be market-tested

A. **GSEA Competition** for CT students with active businesses, ($2500 in grants distributed each year). The Foundation provided funding, competition procedures, and marketing services to recruit entrants.

B. **Urban Business Challenge**. $150,000 in R&D grants distributed among over 100 entries from students, startups and established companies..

C. **Native American Business Plan Competition**

The Foundation sponsored a business competition for students of the 12-campus Oglala Lakota College System on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. $5000 in startup grants was distributed among five members of the tribe.



If you think the Native Americans on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservations are asset-rich, one need only look to a map: the lands "reserved" for them are literally called the Badlands.

D. **Reentry Business Plan Competitions**. $20,000. To reduce recidivism and provide hope and opportunity for individuals re-entering society, we have partnered with MIRA (Mayor's Initiative for Reentry Affaris), META (Minority Entrepreneurs Training Association), Pivot Industries, Homebridge, and Career Resources to provide training, mentoring and capital.



Entrants participated in two formal training sessions at City Hall (below) and received individual mentoring for their business models and coaching on presentations.



TO ENSURE FUNDS ARE USED EFFECTIVELY, grant recipients are required to complete and sign a contract and to provide receipts for purchases.

Reentry Entrepreneur Grant Agreement

Applicant: Full legal Name _____ Date _____20_____

Full legal company name _____

Permanent Email Address _____ Phone _____

If you want check made out to you personally, enter Social Security number below. If you have an LLC or Corporation and you want the check made out to the company, enter your FEIN below instead.

Make check to: [ ] Individual **SSN** _____ [ ] Company **FEIN** _____

Bridgeport home address to mail check: _____

Indicate below how you would like to use the funds to advance your business.

Resource	To be purchase from	Amount
_____	_____	$_____
_____	_____	$_____
_____	_____	$_____
_____	_____	$_____
_____	_____	$_____
_____	_____	$_____

TOTAL AMOUNT OF GRANT ..... $_____

Impact: Sales during first half of 2024 $_____

Expected Results from Grant: sales during second half of 2024 (est.) $_____

Email this form to MIRA.Service@BridgeportCT.Gov by Monday July 8.

Or drop off for MIRA at Bridgeport City Hall Annex, 999 Broad Street.

Signed _____

OFFICE USE: [ ] Uses approved [ ] Documentation approved _____
MIRA Director

EF Check # _____ issued to _____ by _____ date _____

ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOUNDATION

MiRA
Mayor's Initiative for Re-entry Affairs



Judges, Staff and Finalists



TO ASSIST PARTICIPANTS WITH REENTRY, we hired a photographer to take photos appropriate for a business website, social media, or resume'.

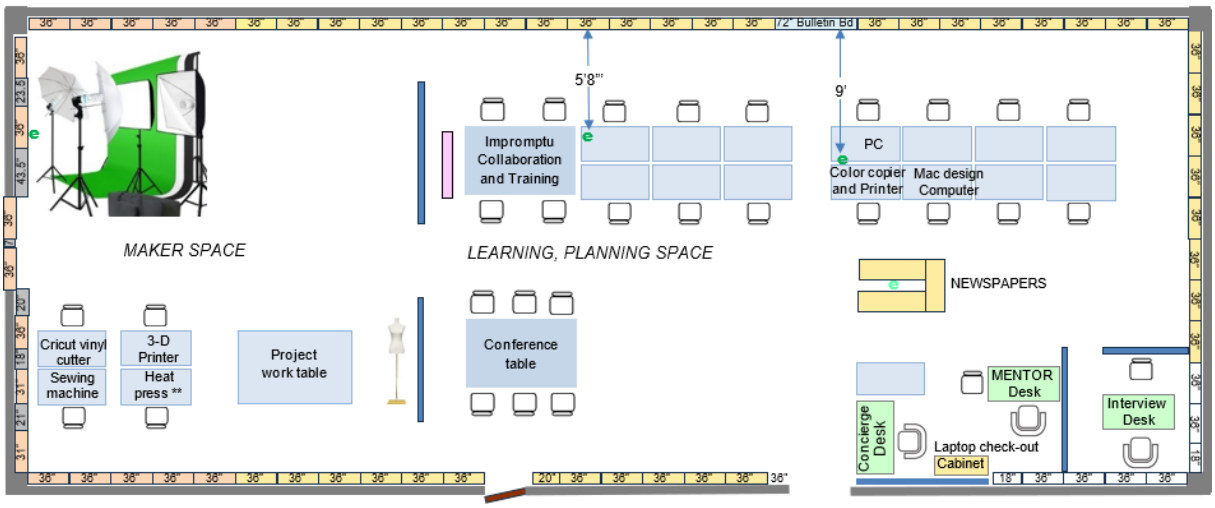
We also made suits of clothes available at no charge through Dress-for-Success and the state Department of Labor. (See photo at far left below.)



5) Provide Free Access to Office Co-Working Space

A. **Maintained online Directory of Incubators, Co-Working facilities and Makerspaces**
https://entrepreneurshipfoundation.org/business-incubators-in-ct

B. **Founded the Bridgeport Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship**. After surveying alternative locations in Bridgeport (the only major city in CT without an Incubator, Coworking or Maker Space), we obtained 3000 sf of free space at the downtown branch of the public library.



The Foundation provided furniture, a photo studio, high-end design computers (2), an office computer with MS Office, conference table with large-screen TV, and a 3D printer.

We arranged for SCORE, along with other expert mentors, to provide business counselling on the third Wednesday of each month.



Grand Opening
Attended by 80 mentors and entrepreneurs

Mentor John Ash demos 3D printer to Center patron.



6) Provide Access to Customers

A. **Brick and Mortar Store for CT Startups**



The Emporium in downtown Bridgeport, where 25 young startups showcased their products and services. The store retains 20% of the retail price to defray overhead and hosting costs; and processes sales taxes for the vendors.

B. **Saturday Pop-ups at the Emporium.** Events with multiple vendors were held on eight successive weekends during the summer.





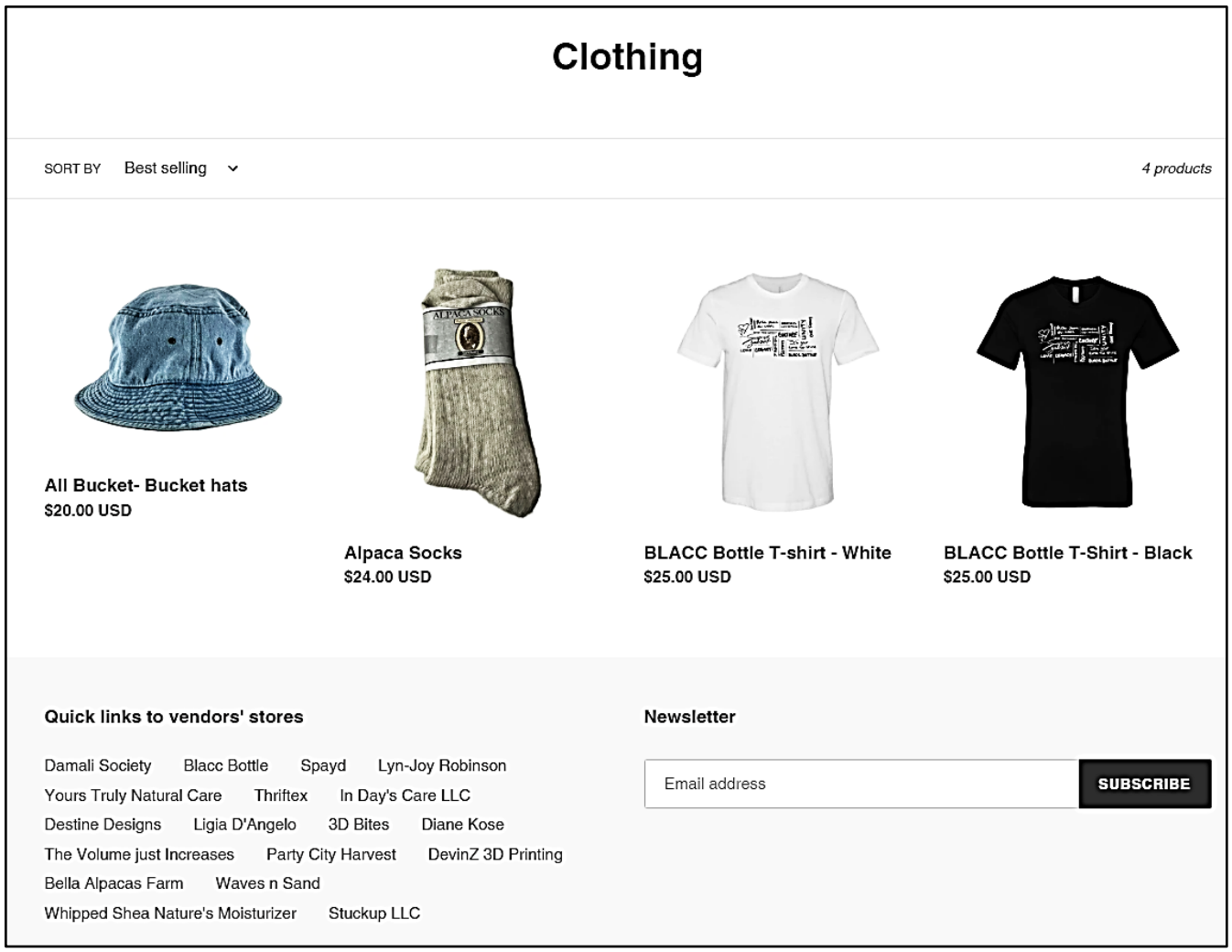
Shia Stewart (LEFT) with her handmade jewelry; Chef Kya (RIGHT) offers cupcakes.



Entrepreneurs sharing merchandizing tactics at the store.

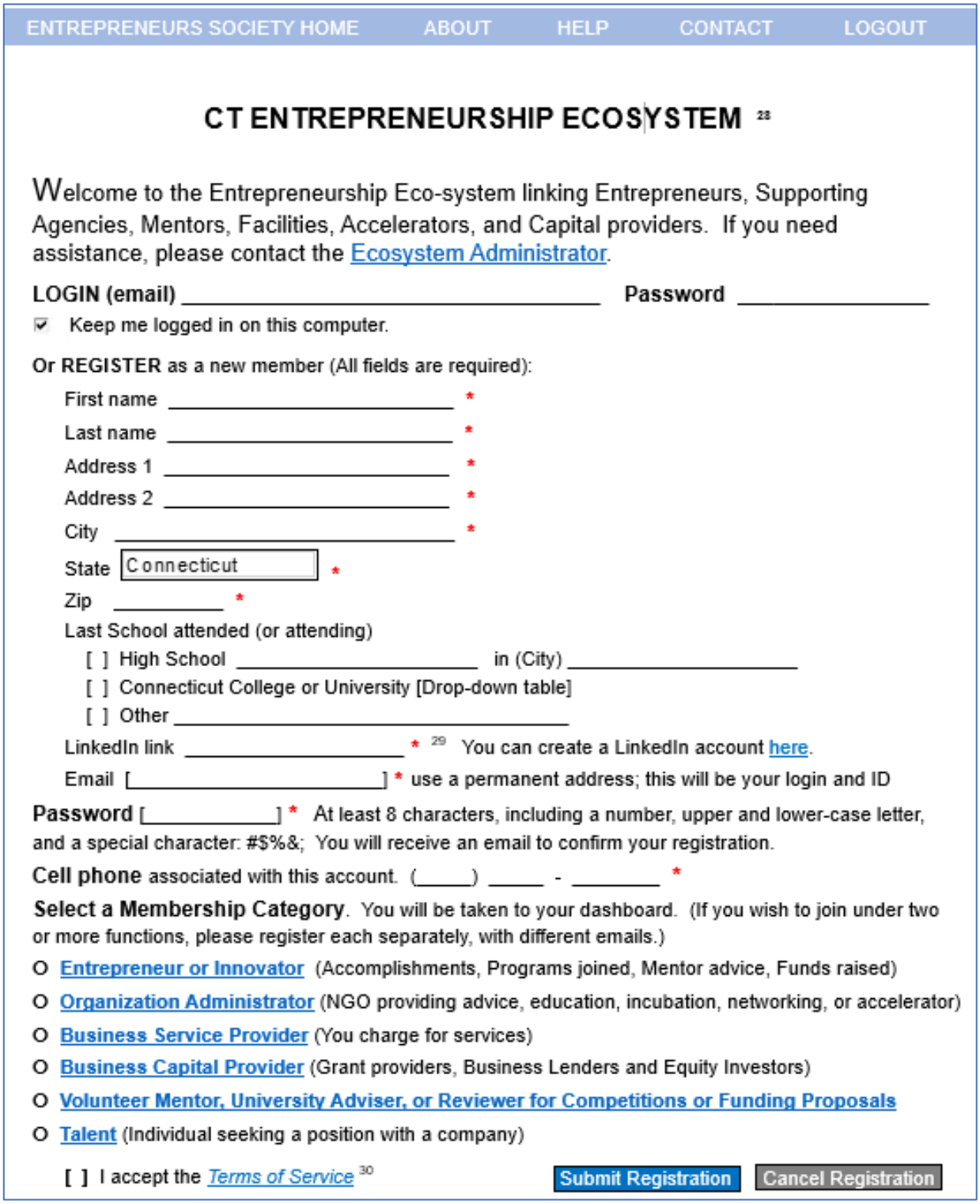
C. **Online Marketplace for CT Products** www.CTEntrepreneurs.com





Goal: Identify and Track Progress of Entrepreneurs in CT

The Foundation designed an ENTREPRENEUR PROGRESS TRACKING SAAS based on interviews with agencies, entrepreneurs and mentors; and an analysis of 21 other online CRM, mentoring and membership management programs. We made the most appropriate of these off-the-shelf models available free as a Beta test of the concept. Based on user feedback, we have embarked on the development of custom software to meet the needs of Connecticut's ecosystem.



ENTREPRENEURS SOCIETY HOME ABOUT HELP CONTACT LOGOUT

CT ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM [28]

Welcome to the Entrepreneurship Eco-system linking Entrepreneurs, Supporting Agencies, Mentors, Facilities, Accelerators, and Capital providers. If you need assistance, please contact the Ecosystem Administrator.

LOGIN (email) _____ **Password** _____

☑ Keep me logged in on this computer.

Or REGISTER as a new member (All fields are required):

First name _____ *
Last name _____ *
Address 1 _____ *
Address 2 _____ *
City _____ *
State Connecticut *
Zip _____ *
Last School attended (or attending)
[ ] High School _____ in (City) _____
[ ] Connecticut College or University [Drop-down table]
[ ] Other _____
LinkedIn link _____ * [29] You can create a LinkedIn account here.
Email [_____] * use a permanent address; this will be your login and ID

Password [_____] * At least 8 characters, including a number, upper and lower-case letter, and a special character: #$%&; You will receive an email to confirm your registration.

Cell phone associated with this account. (_____) _____ - _____ *

Select a Membership Category. You will be taken to your dashboard. (If you wish to join under two or more functions, please register each separately, with different emails.)

O Entrepreneur or Innovator (Accomplishments, Programs joined, Mentor advice, Funds raised)
O Organization Administrator (NGO providing advice, education, incubation, networking, or accelerator)
O Business Service Provider (You charge for services)
O Business Capital Provider (Grant providers, Business Lenders and Equity Investors)
O Volunteer Mentor, University Adviser, or Reviewer for Competitions or Funding Proposals
O Talent (Individual seeking a position with a company)

[ ] I accept the *Terms of Service* [30] Submit Registration Cancel Registration

Goal: Coordinate Entrepreneurship Programs in the state and facilitate collaboration to avoid duplication of efforts.

The Foundation hosts semi-annual meetings of the CT Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (CCEE) professors and department heads of colleges and universities in Connecticut, with typically 14 to 16 schools represented.

The most recent meeting was held in January of 2026.

