

# Northwest Connecticut Economic Development Commission 2022 Board of Directors Annual Meeting

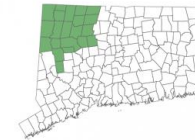
---

JANUARY 26, 2022

# AGENDA

---

- I. Partnership Planning**
- II. Staff person/personnel to support EDC initiatives**
- III. Discuss new competitive funding available for CEDS initiatives**
- IV. Brief updates on EDA funded CEDS implementation projects**
  - DiscoverLitchfieldHills.com (Evan)
  - Social Media for DiscoverLitchfieldHills + ArtsCouncil updates (Steph)
  - Fiber-to-the-home Broadband- new funding opportunities (Janet)
  - NWCT Food Hub Capacity Building (Betsy)
  - Small Business Resource Navigator (Betsy)
- V. NWCT EDC Board of Director's meetings scheduled for 2022**
  - Wednesdays, January 26<sup>th</sup>, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, August 24<sup>th</sup>, October 26<sup>th</sup>



**Northwest Connecticut  
Economic Development  
Corporation**

# NWCT EDC Planning

---

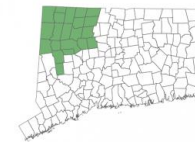
- **Partnership Planning**

Begin planning for 3-yr EDA Partnership Planning grant (July 2022- June 2025)

- **Staff person/personnel to support EDC initiatives**

- **Discuss new competitive funding available for CEDS initiatives**

Update on EDA funding programs and applications from our region



**Northwest Connecticut  
Economic Development  
Corporation**

# WEBSITE USAGE & 2021 RECAP



We've had a steady increase of businesses using our site for marketing themselves, their events, and their jobs.

In day-to-day support chats our staff has with content submitters, many have conveyed that they enjoy how the network of websites update one another.

## METRIC

2021

**Events Submitted**

**6,726**

**Places Listed**

**2,325**

**Stories Posted**

**150**

**Jobs Listed**

**1,954**

# THE ECOSYSTEM

DiscoverLitchfieldHills.com  
ArtsNWCT.org  
ItsHappeningHere.com  
TownofLitchfield.org  
Barkhamsted.us  
NorthCanaan.org  
TownofMorrisCT.com  
CanaanFallsVillage.org  
WZBG.com  
Litchfield.bz

*...a few more in the works as we speak!*



**SHARING RESOURCES AND MAXIMIZING EXPOSURE FOR  
OUR LOCAL EVENTS, PLACES, STORIES, AND JOBS**

# PAID ADVERTISING PERFORMANCE



We've been advertising through **Facebook** and **Google** to capture the attention of those who have never heard of DiscoverLitchfieldHills.

We target within 3-hour driving distance.

We are seeing high engagement from our ads, including a **4.25% click through rate** and an average time of **over 4 minutes** spent on the site when originating from an ad.

METRIC	LAST 90 DAYS	2021
Ad Impressions	98,235	475,547
Link Clicks	2,384	9,875

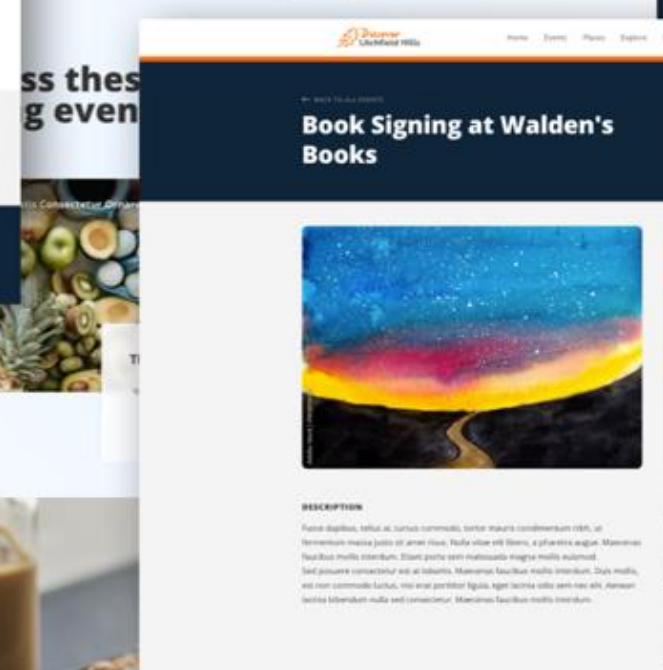
AVERAGE PEOPLE REACHED PER DAY VIA PAID ADS

800-900



# THE REDESIGN

- Updated design
- More dynamic features, so the site will always showcase new content
- Improved functionality such as on-site search, filtering, and sorting
- Improved collaboration tools for better cross-promotion and data management
- Improvements to how we structure our data for SEO purposes





# THE 2022 PLAN

- Content Strategy
- Regular Articles
- Monthly Email Blasts
- Coordinated with Social Platforms

## MAIN TAKEAWAYS

With the heavy lifting of the updates to the site nearly completed, the social media accounts as active as they are, and the content + email marketing plan in place, the stage is set for solid and sustainable growth.

[Home](#) [Events](#) [Places](#) [Explore](#) [Day Trips](#) [Stories](#) [Jobs Hub](#)



FOOD & DRINK

## 5 Can't Miss Local Eateries

Discover Litchfield Hills January 1, 2021

*On the hunt for a taste of local food? Looking to explore some new spots around Litchfield Hills? Look no further! Check out these five eateries and restaurants this season.*

### Meraki

Located at 239 West Street in Litchfield, Meraki is a Greek word that means to put soul, or love into your work. Owners Patty and Martin operate Meraki under the mission of "Food duo met in the early '90s in San Francisco at the California Culinary Academy. Since then, I traveled the nation and cooked in kitchens spanning New England all the way over to Hawaii choosing to settle down in our neck of the woods. Meraki's menu includes seasonal select alongside a wide variety of salads; muffins, scones, coffee cakes, and breads; local egg sat breakfast burritos, hash bowls, and Meraki porchetta with kimchi, among many other staples also find Meraki around town in their food truck, setting their brakes at local breweries and markets. Check them out and plan a meal at Meraki: [Website](#) / [Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#)

### The Green Cafe

Located at 9 Sharon Road in Lakeville, The Green Cafe offers online ordering and catering. Their menu includes only the freshest, seasonal ingredients in a wide array of smoothies, coffee and specialty drinks, teas, breakfast items, apps and wraps, burgers, bowls and even between. They even have a kids menu for pickier little humans. Owned by Leslie Eckstein, The Green Cafe brings her everyday life to the forefront of Lakeville, Connecticut. Leslie is a former chef, professional massage therapist and a certified personal trainer. Check them out and plan your next take out order at The Green Cafe: [Website](#) / [Instagram](#)

### Wood Creek Bar and Grille

Located at 3 Station Place in Norfolk, Wood Creek Bar and Grille is owned by Chef Mike and Heidi.


[View this email in your browser](#)




*This month in the*  
**Litchfield Hills**

Family fun, all of the winter activities, and more, right at your fingertips. Keep reading for ways to enjoy the season with family and friends, right here in Litchfield Hills!

### Coming Up:



**Get the Led Out**  
**Fri, Jan 28th @ 8:00pm**  
GET THE LED OUT (GTLO) has captured the essence of the recorded music of Led Zeppelin and brought it to the concert stage. The group consists of six veteran musicians, intent on delivering Led Zeppelin live, like you've never heard before!



**Fire & Ice Family Funfest**  
**Sat, Jan 29th @ 12:30pm**  
Join the fun with Ice Sculptor, wagon rides, climbing wall, snowshoe demo, Matika Arts Fire Show, games, food, family fun, fireside storytelling and so much more!





# 2021 Social Media Marketing Report

**Facebook, Instagram, & TikTok**

Presented by: Maddie Stenson, NWCT Arts Council



# Facebook Engagement

Organic reach and engagement



## Post Engagement

(Direct Interactions)

Sept. - Oct. '21: **1,481**

Dec. '21 - Jan. '22: **1,670 (+190)**

## Total Post Reach

(# of individuals who see posts)

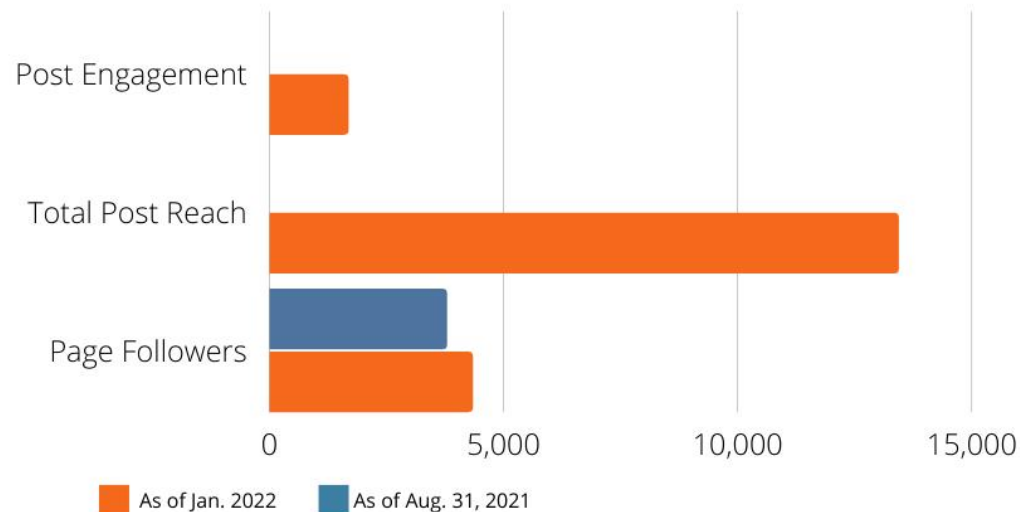
Sept. - Oct. '21: **11,845**

Dec. '21 - Jan '22: **13,425 (+1,580)**

## Total Followers

As of August 2021: **3,787**

As of January 2022: **4,338 (+551)**



## Top Posts

Discover Litchfield Hills is at The Crossroads  
Published by Instagram · December 30, 2021 at 10:35 PM · Winsted ·

@the\_crossroads\_winsted is a metaphysical store that provides tarot readings and a range of metaphysical goods. 🌿 Get a tarot reading at or take a look around The Crossroads during a day trip to Winsted, link in bio.

#litchfieldhills #litchfieldcounty #discoverlitchfieldhills #winsted #winstedct #ct #connecticut #nwct #northwestct #nwconnecticut #northwestconnecticut #shoplocal #findthearts #findtheart



3,415 People reached  
505 Engagements  
↑ +4.0x higher Distribution score  
Boost post

Discover Litchfield Hills  
Published by Madeline Belle Stenson · December 15, 2021 at 11:22 AM ·

Christine Dascanio, a teacher at Lee H Kellogg School in Falls Village, knows the value of "finding your WHY" in her work as a teacher. When she started working at the school she was overwhelmed with how helpful people were and got the royal treatment from her predecessor, who clearly loved working in the school as well. She gets reinforcement every day about how valued her work is, and she things NWCT is one of the most beautiful parts of the state.

Visit the Jobs Hub at d... See more



3,461 People reached  
140 Engagements  
Boost post

# Instagram Engagement

October 2021 - January 2022



Total # of Posts

79

Average Post Reach

407

Total # of Stories

82

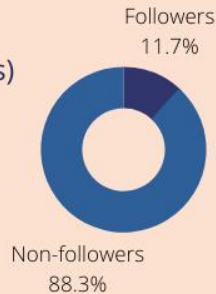
## Top Post



All Instagram posts are also shared to the DLH Facebook page.

Accounts Reached  
(# of individuals who see posts)

8,234



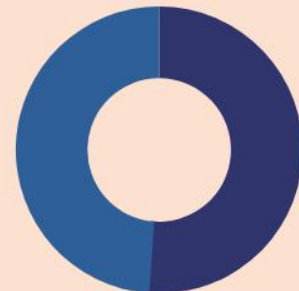
Current # of Followers

1,573  
(+307 since August)

Accounts Engaged  
(People who directly interact with posts)

779

Non-followers  
48.9%



Followers  
51.1%



# TikTok Engagement

October 2021 - January 2022



Total Views

6,367

Average # of Views per Post

425  
Views

Total # of Posts

15

Top Post ▶

All TikToks are also shared to Instagram as Reels.



## Plans for 2022

- Content marketing utilizing Stories that highlight small businesses and drive traffic back to the website.
- Actively tap into marketing the Litchfield Hills as a destination for Wellness Travel, a tourism trend that is on the upswing in 2022.
- Utilize features on TikTok and Instagram that encourage active participation (i.e. encouraging others to use the Stitch feature on TikTok to share personal experiences in the Litchfield Hills.)



# Winter/Spring Marketing theme

---

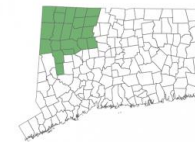
**Thematic:** Discover “*Wellness and Healthy Living*” in the Litchfield Hills

- Incorporate a “*healthy spin*” to marketing content

**Highlights:** “*Buy local – it creates a healthy local economy*”

Local restaurants, yoga, arts, outdoor activities, trails, day trips, etc

**Rationale:** tracking Berkshires, Millerton, nearby tourism sites/social media



**Northwest Connecticut  
Economic Development  
Corporation**



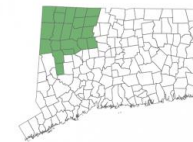
# Marketing & Outreach

JANUARY, 2022

---

# 1.11 Group

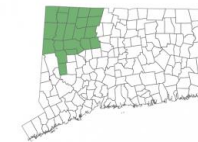
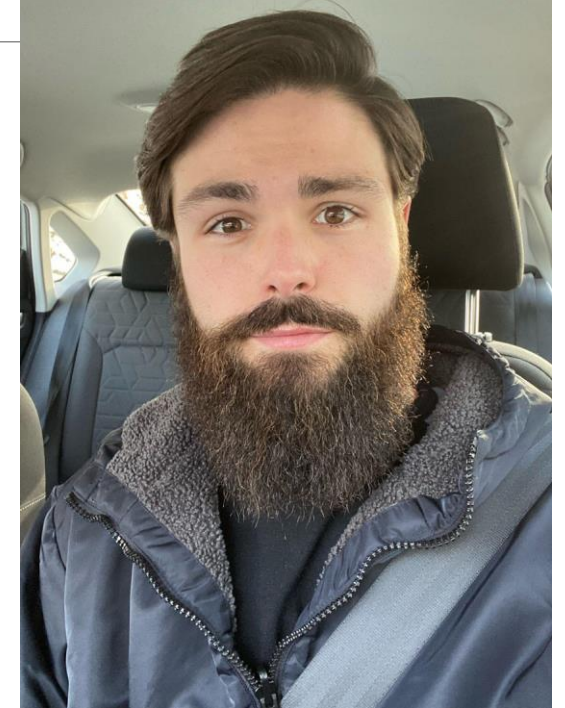
- Agency of Record for NW Connect for 7 years
- Website and all marketing materials created
- Revamping materials for 2022
- Work done to date in January
  - Hired outreach consultant
  - Met with leadership on vision for the next 6 months
  - Studied Strategic Plan and President's report from Kim Maxwell
  - Crafted complete contact list of all 1st Selectmen
    - Create list of Town Internet Committee Board Chairs
  - Prepared email template for communications
  - Wrote first email, introducing outreach consultant and kicking off new phase
  - In first draft of communications strategy
    - Next steps: complete communications strategy, present and get approval
    - Create list of tactics with timing



**Northwest Connecticut  
Economic Development  
Corporation**

# Arnon Fischer: Outreach Consultant

- Political Science and Economics background
- Active member of Cornwall Internet Committee
- Active member of Cornwall EDC
- January activities:
  - Reviewed all NW Connect reading material, website content review
    - Initial meeting with 1.11 team
  - Reviewed initial email to Town Leadership, approve
  - Contact each of the Town Leaders to introduce himself
  - Next steps:
    - Review communications strategy with 1.11 team members
    - Prioritize tactics for outreach
    - Create outreach plan for 6 months



**Northwest Connecticut  
Economic Development  
Corporation**



# NWCT Regional Food Hub

Supporting Local Farms

---

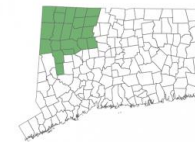


## End of year sales volume - \$110,000, steady from 2020

- 80/20 split sometimes the Hub gets less, the farmers always get 80%
- Increased Food pantry, senior nutrition, and at risk product deliveries in 2020 and into 2021
- Cost covers the product and cost of driver, not operation costs (staff time, etc)
- Staff working on increase awareness, volume and demand - Restaurants and/or schools are not back to pre-covid levels

## 4 farmers participating in GAP

- Good Agricultural Practices through the Department of Ag and Consumer Protection



**Northwest Connecticut  
Economic Development  
Corporation**

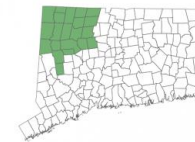
# NWCT Regional Food Hub

Supporting Local Farms

---



- **Started Strategic 5 year Plan with Mattson Consulting**
  - Include a business plan, input from Farmers – funding w/ Partnership and Dept of Ag grant
  - Received grant from Dept of Ag for a walk in freezer
    - increase capacity extend the season, minimally processing veggies, freezing, start with blueberries and tomatoes – restaurants & school excited
  - Ed Avance – get more local food w/ school menu
- **Received a \$50,000 van via anonymous donation**
  - allows for more efficient delivery system

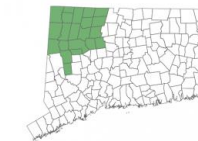


**Northwest Connecticut  
Economic Development  
Corporation**

# CARES & PP EDA Spending thru Dec. 2021

Partnership Planning EDA July2021- June 2022			
CEDS Initiative	EDA Share	Spent thru Dec2021	Balance
Small business support through DiscoverLitchfieldHills website & virtual Jobs Hub (website content upgrades)	\$20,000	\$13,000	\$7,000
CivicLift			
Social media marketing of DLH/Day Trips Arts Council	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Fiber Broadband PPP Coordination	\$10,000	\$360	\$9,640
NWCT Regional Food Hub PSHC	\$20,000	\$14,870	\$5,130
TOTAL	\$60,000		
		\$33,230	

CARES Act Supplemental EDA Awards for EDDs		
	Year 2 (July 2021-June2022)	Balance
Fiber-to-the-Home Broadband		
111 Group Consulting		\$400
Market study/strategic plan	\$48,000	\$48,000
NWCT Food Hub		
Sales rep. (8 months at 15hrs/week, \$25/hr)	\$12,000	
Hub Manager- new customer/farmer engagement (10 hrs./wk for 8 months) \$45/hr		\$25,600
Increase driver/delivery capacity	\$5,000	
DiscoverLitchfieldHills/JobHub		
Social media marketing campaign	\$30,000	\$14,885
AMP young worker videos	\$5,000	\$0
Direct outreach & TA to small businesses		
Chamber Job Fair	\$10,000	\$10,000
Small business outreach coordinator	\$50,000	\$39,596
Entrep. Center webinars		\$2,500
Staff support of EDA grant admin		
NHCOG (250 hours in Yr 1)	\$7,723	\$6,371
TOTAL	\$167,723	\$146,952

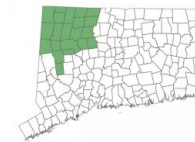


**Northwest Connecticut  
Economic Development  
Corporation**

---

Thank you!

Next NWCT EDC Board of Directors meeting:  
March 23<sup>rd</sup> @ 8am



**Northwest Connecticut  
Economic Development  
Corporation**