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**DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES ‘SMALL BUSINESS FIRST’ TO
REDUCE REGULATORY BURDEN ON CITY’S SMALL BUSINESSES**

Interagency initiative will help save small businesses time and money by streamlining regulatory processes, providing one-on-one counseling to navigate City regulations, and making key resources accessible online and in multiple languages

NEW YORK— Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced *Small Business First*, a comprehensive plan to reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses in New York City. *Small Business First* will simplify the regulatory landscape many small businesses confront in the establishment and ongoing operation of their businesses by improving communication between business owners and City government; streamlining licensing, permitting and tribunal processes; providing support and resources to help businesses understand and comply with City regulations; and ensuring assistance is accessible to all communities across the five boroughs. This is a \$27 million dollar investment starting now through Fiscal Year 2019. Ultimately, the reforms outlined in *Small Business First* will make it easier to achieve compliance with City regulations, saving businesses time and money. The initiative is led by the Mayor’s Office of Operations and the Department of Small Business Services, with more than 15 partnering City agencies.

Small Business First includes 30 initiatives developed as a direct result of conversations with stakeholders, advocates, small business owners, neighborhood and community leaders, and elected officials representing a diverse slate of city neighborhoods. In total, more than 600 unique comments and ideas were solicited, detailing the specific needs of small businesses in communities across the five boroughs. In response, the *Small Business First* Initiatives, which will be rolled out beginning in 2015, include:

- Consolidating locations for businesses to find and process applications, permits, and information across agencies– both in person and online
- Creating one place – both in person and online – for business owners to settle the majority of fines and violations
- Helping businesses navigate regulatory processes such as providing pre-inspection walkthroughs to help them comply before receiving fines or violations
- Translating resources and informational materials into multiple languages

Read the full report here: www.nyc.gov/smallbizfirst

“*Small Business First* is about changing the way the City of New York interacts with small business owners,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “When a representative of the City walks through the door of a small business for the first time, we want the owner to see a partner. From streamlining the permitting process to increasing accessibility to resources online and in multiple languages to providing more one-on-one counseling so business owners can increase compliance and avoid fines, this is a concerted effort across the administration to ensure our small business owners have the resources and support they need to flourish.”

“We listened to the small business community across the five boroughs, and based on those conversations we are excited to work with our partner agencies on this unprecedented collaborative effort that will make it easier for small businesses in New York City to start, operate, and thrive in the ways they say they need it most,” said **Maria Torres-Springer, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Small Business Services**. “Over the coming weeks, months, and years, we will work to transform the City’s regulatory environment, making it easier for small businesses to understand the rules and interact with the City, and thereby saving them valuable time and money.”

“Small Business First is a critical step for our City to build a more diverse and inclusive economy. We look forward to working with our partners throughout government to take a comprehensive approach to reducing the burden imposed by complex regulations and fines and streamlining the way businesses interact with our City. By investing in more effective government, we will support the growth of small businesses in our communities while advancing new and emerging industries,” said **Mindy Tarlow, Director, Mayor's Office of Operations**.

“Small business success is essential to New York's long-term economic health which is why we outlined several steps the City can take to cultivate them in the State of the City,” said **City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “Reducing fines and other regulatory burdens is important and the commitments outlined in Small Business First will help accomplish that. We look forward to working with the administration to ensure all small businesses get the help and support they need.”

“The era of 'taxation through citation' had a chilling effect on our city's vibrant small business community, and I am pleased to see the de Blasio administration's work towards opening a new chapter defined by proactive education and support. I recently convened a roundtable of small business owners in Brooklyn, and many of the steps that Small Business First is taking to address their regulatory burden fit in well with the concerns they and so many others across the borough have expressed,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**. “It is critical that we centralize our resource and compliance services, while utilizing multiple languages and the power of technology to reach every small business effectively. I look forward to continuing to work with the many City agencies partnering on this effort to further our shared commitment to the strength of our small businesses.”

To help our small businesses thrive, we need to streamline the many required regulatory and application processes and make it easier to work with government,” said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**. “The initiatives that make up Small Business First will do just that

while providing a great boost to small businesses, whose success is key to our City's prosperity. I commend Mayor de Blasio for spearheading this inter-agency, five borough program. I look forward to working with the Mayor's Office of Operations, the Department of Small Business Services and all of the partnering City agencies to create a stronger, more collaborative relationship with the City's small business community."

"Small business owners across the city will be encouraged by the Small Business First report. It's a document full of commitments, not just ideas, and the goal of every one is to save small business owners time, hassle and money. The report was developed with the input of businesses and business service providers and the process of accomplishing every goal will be measured. These are many of the changes for which small business owners have been crying out. Today, they will know that they have been heard," said **Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr., Small Business Committee Chair.**

"Government should be the expediter-in-chief for small businesses. We have a lot of rules, which quickly get cumbersome, and that is why we need to find ways to streamline the process," said **Council Member Dan Garodnick.**

"The Health Department interacts with tens of thousands of small businesses each year, including restaurants and day care centers," said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary Bassett.** "Small Business First will help to streamline an individual's experience and ensure that businesses have the support they need to thrive."

"I applaud this initiative by the Mayor, and will ensure the Department of Buildings is working to support the small businesses that are essential to preserving our neighborhoods and jobs," said **Department of Buildings Commissioner Rick Chandler.** "Towards this effort, the department has begun taking steps to go paperless by increasing online job filing and payment options, which will save small business owners time and money. We will also be rolling out a weekly Small Business Owners Night in each of our borough offices which will help owners receive guidance on planned construction and building code compliance among other services."

"As the City's central independent administrative court, OATH's top priority is to make it as easy as possible for New Yorkers who receive alleged violations to have their day in court and be given the chance to contest any charges that have been filed against them. OATH looks forward to continuing to expand access and convenience at its trials and hearings and providing business and property owners with a neutral forum where many of these matters can be heard," said **OATH Commissioner and Chief Administrative Law Judge, Fidel F. Del Valle.**

"Our Mayor cares deeply about the livelihood of the City's businesses and prioritized DCA to reduce onerous fines through education, fairness and transparency, not on the backs of small businesses," said **Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Julie Menin.** "With the reforms we announced last summer, we are on target to reduce fine revenue by \$5 million, which will go directly back into the pockets of small business owners allowing them to reinvest their hard-earned money. That coupled with the new initiatives under Small Business First will help businesses grow and thrive in New York City."

“The FDNY is committed to the safety of every business owner, employee and customer in New York City,” said **Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro**. “Through our partnership with "Small Business First," the Department is working diligently to ensure businesses continue to safely grow and thrive in neighborhoods throughout our city.”

“Leveraging digital technology is critical in our efforts to continue to make New York City a business-friendly city,” said **Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications Commissioner Anne Roest**. “DoITT is thrilled to have partnered with SBS in scoping this important program through our new human-centered design methodology. We look forward to continuing this partnership to develop a user-friendly online space that will ease the efforts of doing business in this great city.”

“Small Business First is setting the pace in using technology to enable small business owners to start, run, and grow in NYC,” said **Minerva Tantoco, Chief Technology Officer of New York City**. “In addition to an online portal that will make it easy to access city information on regulations and support services for businesses, we will be releasing new features and functionality to help tech entrepreneurs quickly “Stand up your Start Up” to ensure every borough is home to innovation.”

The Mayor’s Office of Operations and SBS will work closely with the Departments of Buildings; Consumer Affairs; Environmental Protection; Fire; Health and Mental Hygiene; Information, Technology and Telecommunications; Sanitation, and Transportation and the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings, the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities and the Taxi and Limousine Commission as well as projects with the Board of Standards and Appeals and the Departments of City Planning and Finance to execute the reforms detailed in the *Small Business First* report. Supporting agencies include the Departments of Administrative Services, Housing Preservation and Development, and Law, the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Office of Labor Relations, and the Office of Management and Budget.

Free services are available to help small businesses in New York City succeed at every stage – whether they are starting, operating, or growing. Services include business courses, access to capital, recruitment, pro-bono legal assistance, employee training and more. For more information on the free business services available, visit www.nyc.gov/sbs, call 311, or visit an NYC Business Solutions Center, located in all five boroughs. For more information and the full list of Small Business First initiatives, visit www.nyc.gov/SmallBizFirst.

“New York City's economic growth depends on the ability of its small businesses to start up, scale up, and create new jobs,” said **Kathryn Wylde, President & CEO of the Partnership for New York City**. “The de Blasio Administration is taking an important step toward eliminating barriers to small business success by making it easier for entrepreneurs to understand, navigate, and comply with city regulations.”

“Small Business First is converting a system that was punitive and focused on generating revenue, to one that will be constructive and supportive,” said **Marlene Cintron, president of the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation**. “These changes will provide equal

access to pertinent rules and regulations for all which will create even more jobs for our residents. Every small business will be met where they are, in their own language. Bravo!”

“The Brooklyn Chamber fully supports any initiative that will benefit small businesses, and the Small Business First recommendations will certainly go a long way towards improving the business climate in our city,” said **Carlo A. Scissura, President & CEO of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce**. “These recommendations greatly reduce the burden placed on our businesses by making services more easily accessible, reducing unnecessary fines, and helping owners to properly comply with the city’s often complex rules and regulations. Along with making it easier to receive assistance, the City is attempting to reach more businesses than ever before by expanding outreach efforts and making materials available in additional languages. I want to thank Mayor de Blasio and Small Business Services Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer for this proposal and for all they do to help businesses.”

“Small businesses make the Queens economy tick. Whether it is day care center in St. Albans, a dance studio in Maspeth, or a caterer based out of our Entrepreneur Space in Long Island City. The Small Business First Initiative is a proactive way to help business owners work with city agencies in a positive way that will provide them with the time, knowledge and tools to focus on growing their operations,” said **Seth Bornstein, Executive Director, Queens Economic Development Corporation**.

“SIEDC is excited that the de Blasio administration has developed the innovative Small Business First program to address many of the issues which affect local firms,” said **Cesar J. Claro, President & CEO of Staten Island Economic Development Corporation**. “New York City continues to be a place where small businesses want to set up shop and this program will help address bureaucratic and regulatory issues while also helping foster a robust training and information network for entrepreneurs.”

“The 70 Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in New York City represent thousands of merchants, and one of our many responsibilities is assisting them in navigating through regulatory agencies. For many years we asked the City for ways in which we could assist in streamlining the process of understanding compliance issues for the local businesses. Mayor de Blasio and his administration has recognized the need for better communication and transparency, and the Small Business First initiative is a great starting point,” said **Lisa Sorin, Executive Director of the Westchester Square BID and leader of the BID Association Working Group for Small Business First**. “The City has selected key areas of concerns for the local industries and the first steps to help address them. We look forward to working closely with all city agencies that will help make this initiative a success. We will do our part to partner with outreach and education. We want to thank the Mayor of New York for listening and providing an opportunity to make owning a business in New York City easier.”

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