

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

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HELD AT: 250 Broadway-8th Fl. Hearing Rm. 3

B E F O R E: Shanel Thomas-Henry
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Selvena N. Brooks-Powers
Shahana K. Hanif
Virginia Maloney
Frank Morano
Yusef Salaam
Kayla Santosuosso

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Kenny Minaya
Commissioner of NYC Department of Small Business
Services

Michael Forte
First Deputy Commissioner at NYC Department of
Small Business Services

Haris Khan
Chief of Staff at NYC Department of Small
Business Services

Tsetan Dekyi
Accompany Capital

Rebecca Lurie
CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies

Charles Dilone
Business Outreach Center Network

Laura Rothrock
President of Long Island City Partnership

Emma Myers
Hot Bread Kitchen

Leah Archibald
Evergreen

Allison Eden
Allison Eden Studios

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Gary Goldstein
Allison Eden Studios

Franco Goette
TwoSeven Inc.

Michaela Crater
Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corp.

Seren Morey
Guerra Paint and Pigment Corp.

Ligia Guallpa
Workers Justice Project

Matthew Shapiro
Street Vendor Project

Christopher Casey
Association for Neighborhood and Housing
Development

William Joyce
Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A

Khalif Nunnally-Rivera
ICA Group

Gregory Morris
NYC Employment and Training Coalition

Adrian Smith
Volunteers of Legal Services

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Francesca Fernandez-Bruce
Grand Street BID

Tod Greenfield
Martin Greenfield Clothiers

Patricia Robinson
Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

Quincy Ely-Cate
Business Outreach Center

Katie Stanton
On behalf of Nepal Asatthawasi, Urban
Manufacturing Alliance

Tamika Mapp
68th Assembly District

Ernie Wong
Shanghai MKS

Ashley Graber
Cool Hand Movers

Anh-Thu Nguyen
Democracy at Work Institute

Melat Seyoum
New York Network of Worker-owned Cooperatives

Dalaeja Foreman
Breadfruit Co-op

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Shade Swift Curtis

Juan Cuautle

Center for Family Life Sunset Park

Elizabeth Demetriou

Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development
Corporation

Victoria Alexander

Brazilian Red Hook

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon and welcome to the New York City Council hearing for the Small Business Committee. At this time, please put all electronic devices on silent. At no time anyone is to approach the dais. If you want to testify or have any questions, please see one of the Sergeant-at-Arms. Chair, you may begin.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Shanel Thomas Henry. And before we begin, I want to acknowledge the tragic collision at LaGuardia Airport. Our thoughts are with the passengers, crew, their families, and the first responders. As a representative of this community, this hits close to home, and we are holding everyone impacted in our prayers. Moments like this remind us how deeply connected our communities are and how important it is that we show up for one another, not just in crisis, but in how we build stability and opportunity every day. Welcome to today's hearing on the fiscal 2027 Preliminary Budget for the Department of Small Business Services. I am honored to serve as Chair of the Council's Committee on Small Business. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and give our neighborhoods their

unique identities. It is crucial that New York City continues to support its diverse universe of small businesses. I am excited to hear from the agency about how this preliminary plan responds to the needs of our small business community and how the resources will be utilized. For context, SBS fiscal 2027 budget, as presented in the Preliminary Financial Plan, totals \$115.3 million with \$41.5 million, or 36 percent, supporting 397 budgeted full-time employees. This budget is \$58.2 million, or 33.5 percent, less than the fiscal 2026 Adopted Budget of \$173 million. Of the total budget for the agency, \$115.3 million, or 62.2 percent, supports SBS operations. The remaining \$70.2 million of the budget is pass-through funding for the New York City Economic Development Corporation, NYC Tourism and Conventions, Brooklyn Navy Yard, and the Trust for Governors Island. One of the issues SBS continues to struggle with is its extremely high number of vacancies which is currently at 23 percent. Despite this, the Preliminary Plan includes an increase of 30 budgeted positions for SBS Business Development Program area. It will be important for the committee to understand what steps the agency has taken to fill vacancies to help carry

1 out its mission. It is the Council's responsibility
2 to ensure that the city's budget is fair,
3 transparent, and accountable to New Yorkers. This
4 includes equity in funding and assistance. SBS plays
5 a key role in critical initiatives, from supporting
6 and uplifting minority and women-owned businesses to
7 in- the invaluable work that Workforce One Centers do
8 connecting New Yorkers with jobs. However, this
9 committee would also like to understand the quality
10 of jobs that the department is connecting these job
11 seekers with. Furthermore, small businesses need SBS
12 to effectively distribute loans, technical support,
13 and cut red tape. I look forward to hearing from the
14 department on all these issues and more. I would like
15 to both congratulate and thank the new Commissioner
16 Kenny Minaya, First Deputy Commissioner Michael
17 Forte, and Chief of Staff Haris Khan for testifying
18 today. I would also like to thank both my staff and
19 the staff of the Finance and Legislative Divisions
20 for their help in preparing for this hearing. Glen,
21 Dan, Chima, and Rebecca, thank you. And the committee
staff will now administer the oath.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, please
raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the

truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this committee, and to respond honestly to council member questions?

UNIDENTIFIED: I do.

UNIDENTIFIED: I do too.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: You may begin.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you, Chair.

Good afternoon, everyone. Chair Thomas-Henry, members of the New York City Council Committee on Small Businesses. My name is Kenny Minaya, and I'm the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Small Business Services. I am joined here today by First Deputy Commissioner Michael Forte and Chief of Staff Haris Khan, and in spirit with over 300 SBSers who are out there serving New Yorkers as we speak. I am pleased to appear before you to discuss our fiscal year 2027 Preliminary Budget and begin the first of many conversations on how we can partner together to support New York City's small businesses. Last Monday, I took office as the first Dominican-American to serve as SBS Commissioner. This once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver for small businesses under Mayor Mamdani is deeply meaningful to me. My family has owned and operated a bakery for

the past 42 years, and I grew up watching my parents hustle and wear many hats. They were the accountant, the chef, front of the house, and HR all rolled into one. As SBS Commissioner, my job is simple: make it easier for small businesses like theirs to open, operate, and succeed. Mayor Mamdani has made clear that supporting small businesses is central to his affordability agenda. Just 14 days into the administration, he issued Executive Order 11 to cut red tape and help businesses open faster. That commitment reflects a simple truth: when businesses thrive— small businesses thrive, they create jobs and strengthen our neighborhoods. To support SBS's charter responsibilities and Mayor Mamdani's affordability agenda, SBS's fiscal year 27 Preliminary Budget stands at \$185.5 million with an authorized headcount of 397 employees. Approximately 38 percent or \$70.2 million represents pass-through funding for other city entities including the New York City Economic Development Corporation at \$30.6 million, NYC Tourism and Conventions at \$23.1 million, and the Trust for Governors Island at \$16.5 million. We serve as a funding conduit to these other city entities and thus do not spend or manage any of

those funds. The remaining \$115.3 million, or 62 percent of the fiscal year 27 Preliminary Budget, is allocated for SBS's core program. Let me tell you about some of the small businesses we have helped. Gina and Giselle Chung have long had entrepreneurial aspirations. The two sisters started out by operating an empanada business in Queens, taking online sales and marketing through WhatsApp. But like many businesses picking up traction and a loyal customer base, they wanted to expand and grow with a storefront but did not know the next steps to take. SBS's NYC Business Express Service team, also known as NYC BEST, stepped in and helped Giselle review her business model, learn about the required permits, applied for her food service establishment permit, and once she secured a location, received an A grade from the Department of Health. Through coordinated guidance and continued follow-up, in less than four months, Ñañitas opened its doors in Woodside with all required permits. Since our inception— since its inception, our NYC BEST team has saved small businesses more than \$60 million in fines and fees through compliance education, and in the last two years alone, SBS has connected small businesses to

over \$120 million in financing to help grow their businesses. On my second day as Commissioner, I was proud to announce the citywide launch of our revamped NYC Future Fund program that will provide \$80 million in financing to support nearly 100 small businesses annually. This one-of-a-kind loan program is designed for seasonal businesses with revenue-based repayments, so a tough winter doesn't have to put a small business under. But financing alone isn't enough. Entrepreneurs also need fair access to opportunity. At SBS, we support minority and women-owned business enterprises, local business enterprises, and emerging business enterprises grow through certification support, technical assistance, legal services, mentorship, and capacity building. We first met Kathy Chan in 2018 when she wanted to grow her business, Studio V Design and Planning. She identified city contracting as her next growth opportunity and joined our mentorship program to gain the know-how needed to compete. After winning her first subcontract, Kathy continued to attend SBS's resource fairs and took advantage of our QuickBooks for Construction Clinic to strengthen her firm's financial management. The results speak for

themselves. In fiscal year 25 alone, the city awarded \$6.9 billion in contracts to certified firms like Cathy's with a utilization rate of 36.4 percent, the highest in program history. And 75 percent of those firms used SBS services to successfully navigate the procurement process. Our work to connect entrepreneurs to these opportunities happens year-round through webinars, activations of our Mobile Outreach Unit, and large-scale events like the NYC Contracting Summit, where we brought small businesses, particularly MWBEs, and contracting agencies under one roof. SBS also plays a crucial role in connecting New Yorkers to good quality jobs. One such New Yorker contacted SBS for help after giving birth to her third child. Connie wanted to reenter the workforce in a role that would provide her the flexibility and wages to care for her children. SBS helped her train, certify, and apply for roles as a home health aide. When she was unable to complete the computer-based trainings at home, SBS's Workforce One Career Centers supplied her with space and resources. Due to these efforts, Connie was hired full-time. We are proud to have enabled Connie and so many New Yorkers like her to achieve their

career goals and support their families. Through our 18 Workforce One Career Centers across the five boroughs, SBS offers job seekers employment opportunities, career coaching, and free job training. In the last two fiscal years, SBS has placed nearly 45,000 New Yorkers in jobs and enrolled 14,000 in job trainings with a focus on high-demand industries. The hires include 13,000 individuals with disabilities and 2,000 veterans and their spouses. We also make sure we are meeting job seekers where they are through our Jobs NYC Hiring Halls. SBS delivers monthly hiring halls in neighborhoods with high unemployment rates to reach underserved New Yorkers. Since the start of 2024, SBS has served more than 16,000 New Yorkers at 55 hiring halls across all five boroughs. This effort has resulted in over 5,200 on-site interviews and 2,600 conditional job offers. This week, we are hosting a Career Panel and Jobs NYC Hiring Hall on March 27th in Queens and will be hosting SBS focused Hiring Hall on March 31st to hire for our soon-to-be expanded New York City Business Express Service team and other supportive units. Beyond entrepreneurship and employment, SBS supports neighborhood vitality through our oversight of New

York City's 78 Business Improvement Districts, or
BIDs, which collectively deliver more than \$216
million in services annually across nearly 300 miles
of commercial corridors in all corners of the city.
This past February, SBS joined Mayor Mamdani, Council
Member Kayla Santosuosso, and the Alliance for Coney
Island to celebrate the formation of the new Coney
Island BID. The BID's creation culminates a
decade-long effort in the neighborhood to foster
neighborhood stewardship and local organizing through
more than \$850,000 in grants. Since fiscal year 2025,
SBS has dispersed nearly \$20 million in grants to
fund similar merchant organizing, BID formation, and
community revitalization initiatives. SBS grants have
also supported efforts to beautify New York City's
public realm through creative neighborhood
wayfinding, innovative lighting fixtures, and other
activities to increase foot traffic in our commercial
corridors. In Council Member Morano's district, the
South Shore BID used its fiscal year 25 small bid
grant to host its sold-out Taste of the Town's
Restaurant Crawl event for the 8th consecutive year.
In Council Member Salaam's district, the Harlem's
Congregation for Community Improvement leveraged a

three-year SBS Avenue NYC grant to create the Bradhurst Summer Festival, bringing together local vendors and community members to celebrate the neighborhood and its small businesses. We are excited to release applications for our next round of grants in the coming weeks. We look forward to partnering with you to not only share these grant opportunities with local stakeholders, but also to continue supporting neighborhood development projects that create economic opportunities for businesses and communities. In closing, we are excited to continue building our partnership with the City Council to support small businesses, job seekers, and commercial corridors. In the coming months, we are excited to expand SBS's NYC Business Express Service team and build our new Office of Street Vendor Services. Just this— over the weekend, SBS announced the appointment of Carina Kaufman Gutierrez, formerly Co-director of the Street Vendor Project, as the inaugural Executive Director of the Office of Street Vendor Services. Her appointment comes four months ahead of schedule because we know our street vendors, the smallest of small businesses, cannot wait any longer. We also look forward to advancing economic justice for small

businesses through Mayor Mamdani's Executive Order 11, which created the first-ever comprehensive inventory of small business fines and fees, and charges us to streamline regulation, eliminate initial fees, reduce fines, and for SBS and DOF to explore an amnesty program for small businesses that pay their original fines. SBS is working closely with Deputy Mayor Su and our sister agencies to support this critical work, which can fundamentally reset the relationship between small businesses and city government. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and speak about our work. We look forward to continuing our partnership, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have about the agency. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you. I'd like to point out that we've been joined by Council Member Avilés, Maloney, Salaam, and Council Member Santosuosso on Zoom. Commissioner, my first question—you're in my borough this week. Where's that job event on the 27th of March?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: I believe that's in Jamaica, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Yeah, if you can get us the details, that'd be great. Any opportunities for anyone to get employment, we love to help out and help get the word out for you guys.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: So, NYC Business Express Service Teams, NYC BEST, the Preliminary Plan includes \$2 million in fiscal 2026 and baselines \$4 million starting in 2027 for NYC BEST. The funding supports 30 new positions and is anticipated to support and assist over 2,500 businesses per year. Have any of the newly added positions been filled to date?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Not to date, Chair. As I mentioned in my testimony, we have an upcoming hiring hall on March 31st at our offices at One Liberty Plaza here in downtown Manhattan to fill those roles. The jobs are posted and we're looking to hire aggressively.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And how will the funding support the 2,500 businesses this year if the positions aren't all filled?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Well, we hope to fill those positions as soon as possible. Currently

we have 14 staff dedicated to the NYC BEST program, so we are serving businesses as we speak. The additional lines would help us serve more businesses.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And what is the cost per business served, like, when you serve each of those businesses?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: I believe that the average cost per business served is about \$430.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: How do you measure success with the program when you are serving these businesses?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Absolutely, Chair. Our biggest measure of success, one of our biggest measures of success is the number of businesses that we're providing services to. So far this fiscal year, we've managed to serve 3,000 businesses. We also look at fines and fees saved. You know, our compliance advisors, visit businesses, point out any issues that may be a violation of a local law, and then we calculate how much is saved by correcting that infraction before a summons is actually issued.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And is any portion of that dedicated specifically to MWBE firms?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Any portion of?

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: The budget dedicated for— through this program? Like, do you— is it any business or any portion of the businesses? Is it designated that any percentage of the businesses have to be MWBE certified, or is it just any small business across the board?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Any small business across the board, but our NYC Best Advisors make cross referrals to the MWBE team as well to ensure that they have access to our capacity building and technical assistance services as well.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, let's talk about vacancy rates.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: So SBS has a 23 percent vacancy rate, more than four times the citywide average. Any idea what the primary causes of the high vacancy rate is?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: I think one of the primary causes there, Chair, is the pass-through funding that we receive as mentioned at the top of today's hearing. You know, since we're just a pass-through, we don't control the hiring efforts of our sister agencies like EDC and talent and Brooklyn

1 Navy Yard and so forth. At SBS, the vacancy rate is
2 actually closer to 10 percent, which is closer in
3 line with the city average.

4 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: So that's
5 Speaking on behalf of the pass-through agency, are
6 there any particular barriers that slow down the
7 hiring or not allow you guys to fill these vacancies?

8 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Yeah, I think the
9 main barrier is the two-for-one hiring freeze, which
10 SBS is still subject to and has been since October
11 2023. But despite the two-for-one, we've managed to
12 retain a lot of our staff and keep the vacancy rate
13 leveled at 10 percent. Unlike some other city
14 agencies, SBS is not a revenue-generating agency, so
15 we don't benefit from exemptions for
16 revenue-generating lines the same some of our sister
17 agencies do.

18 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And then once
19 you are able to hire individuals, how long is that
20 onboarding time to get them started?

21 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: On average, from the
moment we identify a candidate to when they are in
our offices serving New Yorkers, it's about four to
five weeks.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay. What additional resources may be required to increase headcount from your perspective?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: It's not so much a question of resources, Chair. For us, it's really the two-for-one hiring freeze that it kind of built into that regime is that there's an understanding that there will be some vacancies at the agency. With the resources we have, we are very aggressive about hiring up for our positions, and that will be on full display on the 31st when we have our hiring hall at One Liberty.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay. Let's talk about commercial vacancies. And before that, I do want to acknowledge that Council Member Brooks-Powers has joined us on Zoom. How is SBS supporting small businesses in neighborhoods where storefront vacancies remain high?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: There are two ways that we support small businesses in neighborhoods where storefront vacancies remain high. I think the first is through our commercial lease assistance program. Through this program, we make legal resources available to small businesses that are

1 looking to lease out space, so we help them with
2 their initial lease, or small businesses that have
3 leases and are looking to renegotiate or renew their
4 leases. Um, another way that we help small businesses
5 is through our commercial corridor revitalization
6 efforts and the grants that we provide to attract
7 foot traffic to those corridors and help make
8 stronger pairings between small businesses and those
9 vacant storefronts.

10 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Through the
11 commercial lease program, how are those businesses
12 usually chosen? Do they come directly to SBS or do
13 you guys do outreach in specific areas?

14 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: It's both. We do
15 outreach and they visit our Business Solution Centers
16 where they're connected to the services.

17 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Gotcha. Do you
18 have a breakdown of the commercial vacancies by
19 borough?

20 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: I do, Chair. So the
21 overall vacancy rate is 11.1 percent. And then by
borough, we have the Bronx at 8.31 percent, Brooklyn
at 12.17 percent, Manhattan at 13.25 percent, Queens
at 9.45 percent, and Staten Island at 7.52 percent.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: What funding is dedicated to revitalizing commercial corridors in underserved communities specifically?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Give me one second there. We don't have any dedicated funding for that purpose, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: But what I can say is that we do have the NYC grant program which funds community-based organizations that will execute commercial revitalization activities in low and medium income neighborhoods.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And that's the NYC grant program?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Yes, the Avenue NYC grant program.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Gotcha. And under that program, is it focused on targeting more nonprofits or is that open to any type of—

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: This is only for nonprofits, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Got it. Okay. So I want to talk about the commercial lease assistance, and I'll turn it over to some of my

1
2 colleagues for questions. So SBS submits a report to
3 the council detailing the number of small businesses
4 served through the agency's commercial lease
5 assistance program. Your report documented 113
6 businesses assisted in the Bronx, 264 in Brooklyn,
7 299 in Manhattan, 117 in Queens, and 18 in Staten
8 Island. The support that SBS has given these
9 businesses, what are the common issues that you
10 normally assist these businesses with?

11
12 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you for the
13 question, Chair. So, as I mentioned earlier, the
14 scope of services include assistance negotiating a
15 lease. If they already have a lease, assistance
16 renewing that lease and other pre-litigation
17 services.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: At this- I'd
20 like to mention that we've been joined by Council
21 Member Hanif. At this time, I'll turn it over to
Council Member Avilés for any questions.

22
23 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: So, first,
24 congratulations, Chair, on your first Preliminary
25 Budget hearing. Doing fantastic job. Congratulations
26 to you, Commissioner. You didn't see me waving when

you said you were the first Dominican to be the SBS Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you, Councilmember.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: We're so proud and delighted to welcome you.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you to your extraordinary team. Haris has been quite incredible, an incredible partner. So, I'd like to ask just a couple of questions in particular. I represent District 38, which has a very large industrial business. Much of my work has focused on preserving and supporting our industrial manufacturing business zones, which, as you will know, over the decades, uh, the city has, you know, made a dance around it. And what we see is a sector that is decreasing in landmass and really needs support. When emergencies happen, we turn to that sector, and it just underscores how important they are to hold in New York City. So in particular, I want to talk about the new RFP that SBS has put out and particularly why we are so concerned about the new structure of the RFP and the terrible impact that it's going to have on

1
2 our providers who have decades of experience. So can
3 you confirm for the record that SBS intends to end
4 the Industrial Business Service Provider program and
5 transition it to this new Business Solutions Center
6 RFP that it released earlier this month?

7
8 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you for the
9 question, Council Member. So, SBS's intent is not to
10 end the IBSP program. In fact, our intent is to make
11 sure that those services are available at all Small
12 Business Solution Centers across the city, an
13 expanded array of Small Business Solution Centers
14 across the city. So that is not our intent.

15
16 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay. I think we
17 may not be aligned then. It sounds like- it looks
18 like the structure of the program actually waters
19 down and may lead to very unintended consequences.
20 Can we- did SBS at all engage with the industrial
21 service providers to get their feedback around what
22 could be done to support and improve outcomes?

23
24 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Unfortunately,
25 Council Member, this is a competitive solicitation,
26 and we're unable to engage with entities that could
27 potentially apply to the RFP before issuing that RFP.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay. But as a matter of—

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: [interposing]
Because of procurement rules.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: As a matter of practice, do you normally convene businesses that are potentially impacted by an RFP to solicit their feedback to understand the corners of the possibilities of negative impact and/or positive impact?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Okay. So my colleague has informed me we did receive feedback from businesses before I arrived at the agency.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: And, and when did you receive that feedback?

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: Council Member, so on the approach and the design of this new program, there was feedback received from businesses. It was a— really a year-long process of exploring, understanding, researching, and analyzing the data and the outputs that the system generates. It is also informed by the industrial plan that the city issued last year, where one finding is that three out of

four industrial business jobs are located outside the industrial business zones.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah, there's a lot of problems with the industrial business plan in its draft, which I think for the record that has been well documented. We're still struggling around what some of the findings have been. If the businesses have been working with a trusted organization for decades, why would they suddenly reach out to a different unfamiliar entity for assistance as in, as is proposed in this new RFP?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So certainly our intent is to continue to leverage the expertise that exists in the city. Within the RFP, we're explicit that entities that apply must possess either five years of demonstrated experience working with industrial businesses or partner with an entity that has at least five years of demonstrated experience working with industrial businesses.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you. We definitely have that experience and expertise with our current providers, but it appears that under the RFP, there's a significant reduction in staffing dedicated to industrial businesses. We saw a similar

1 trajectory happen with actually our Action NYC in the
2 immigration space where the RFP actually watered down
3 quite heavily staffing structure, and we see the
4 outcome of that, right? So how does a single FTE per
5 borough serve the 400 or so businesses in Brooklyn's
6 IBSPs that they currently serve this current- in-
7 within this contract each year?

8 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So our intent,
9 Council Member, is to make the services available
10 citywide. You know, right now we have about, I think
11 it's 16 centers available, and only nine of them
12 serve industrial businesses. Our goal is to have at
13 least 20 locations across the city with all of them
14 serving industrial businesses. So that's certainly
15 our intent, is to make these services available
16 across the board.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: I'm certainly out
18 of time, but you're going to hear certainly more from
19 us. I will say we are very concerned with what was
20 put forward and would like a commitment from you to
21 look- have a conversation with us and the providers,
and try to find a place where we have some common
agreements, because right now we are very far apart.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Absolutely, Council Member, and I look forward to meeting with you on the 3rd.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: I know, we have time [sic].

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: We'll be walking the district with you. So-

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: And lastly, just one budget-related- if, Chair, if I may. I cannot go without saying this. I noticed in the budget charts that the Brooklyn Marine Terminal Corporation operations allocation in fiscal 26 was \$128,000, which I understand that to be. Fiscal 27 shows \$518,000. Could you tell me what that substantial increase is for?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So that is an EDC- those are EDC funds. I'm not able to speak to those, unfortunately.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay, they had their- they had their stuff earlier. Thank you, and I look forward to working with you.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you, Council Member.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you,
Council Member. Council Member Maloney.

COUNCIL MEMBER MALONEY: Thank you, Chair,
and thank you, Commissioner, for testifying. The
Preliminary Budget plan includes \$43 million in
anticipated federal funding, which is nearly 40
percent of SBS's standalone budget. The Trump
administration has been signaling that there might be
clawbacks, particularly to cities like New York and
federal assistance. So my question is, have you
modeled various scenarios in which either partial-
partially or all of that federal funding is withheld,
and what would the impact be on specific programs?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you for the
question, Councilmember. So all indications are that
the funding will remain as is. It's been allocated in
the bills, the preliminary- I mean, the budget bills.
And so we expect to continue to work as is.

COUNCIL MEMBER MALONEY: And I also wanted
to dig into workforce development stats where we see
some metrics like system-wide hires and promotions
that are down by 17 percent this fiscal year. How do
you plan to sustain and promote the workforce
programming? Particularly, I know we're- the budget

1 is allocated, but if there were something to shift
2 there.

3 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So with respect to
4 the Workforce One stats, we were very proud of the
5 fact that we were able to re-serve 100,000 New
6 Yorkers and connect them to 22,500 jobs this fiscal
7 year. We expect to continue that strong work.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MALONEY: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you,
10 Council Member. Next up, Council Member Salaam.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Thank you, Chair,
12 and thank you for your testimony. I want to start
13 with Workforce One, as well, performance gap.
14 Workforce One walk-in traffic increased 12 percent,
15 but hires and promotions declined 17.5 percent. From
16 7,787 to 6,424. Why is more traffic not translating
17 into more employment outcomes, and has staffing
18 vacancies impacted job placement capacity?
19 System-wide hires remain below the 25,000 target.
20 What changes are needed to improve conversion rates?

21 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you for the
question, Council Member. So vacancies have not
impacted service delivery. I think, you know, we're
very proud of the 100,000 New Yorkers we served and

1 the 22,500 jobs we were able to connect them to. What
2 you're seeing in the data there is this historic lag
3 in the reporting, and we expect that to even out by
4 the end of the fiscal year. We had a similar lag last
5 year and the increases evened out at the end of the
6 fiscal year. Yep, I think that's- yeah, that's it.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: And so training
8 enrollment- we've seen that the customer enrollment
9 in SBS training programs has collapsed 33.7 percent
10 in the first four months of fiscal year 26. This is a
11 critical metric for workforce development. What
12 explains this severe decline, and is there- is this
13 related to programming changes, staffing gaps, or
14 reduced outreach? And how will the fiscal year 2027
15 budget address training enrollment recovery?

16 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So you're seeing a
17 similar dynamic play out there as well, Council
18 Member. To be more specific, the decrease is a lag
19 in the reporting. just because we're taking a
20 snapshot, a very tight window, and we expect that to
21 even out at the of the fiscal year.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Regarding the, the
federal funding crisis, 37.7 percent of SBS fiscal
year 2027 standalone budget, \$43.4 million depends on

1 federal support, including \$32.6 million in federal
2 workforce development funds. The Trump administration
3 has signaled potential withholding of federal
4 assistance to New York City. What contingency plan
5 has begun, and if federal funding is cut, what
6 programs would be reduced or eliminated, and should
7 the city begin budgeting for federal funding
8 shortfall?

8 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So as it stands,
9 Council Member, the funding is not as in doubt as it
10 was in, in the past. All indications are that the
11 funding will be renewed at the same rates as they
12 were previous fiscal years. And we look forward to
13 doing the work to serve New Yorkers with that funding
14 once we receive it.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: I'm hopeful too.
15 Yeah, but we got to have some— we got to, just in
16 case, we gotta definitely have a contingency plan
17 because, you know, as we've seen, hope is not enough.

17 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Agency— the agency
18 administration budget collapse. We've seen the agency
19 administration OTPS decrease from \$4.6 million in
20 fiscal year 26 to \$2.3 million in fiscal year 2027. A
21 \$43.3 million reduction in contractual services. What

1
2 services are being eliminated? Are these pass-through
3 reductions related to EDC changes, and how will this
4 affect administrative capacity at SBS?

5 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you for that
6 question, Council Member. So what you're seeing
7 reflected there is the pass-through funding we
8 mentioned earlier, but what we didn't mention earlier
9 that's also included there is the council
10 discretionary. That usually comes in at the end of
11 the fiscal year, right around the adopted budget for
12 the next fiscal year.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Thank you. And I
14 just have one last one, right in time. The New York
15 City Tourism Investment, NYC and Co., received an
16 increase from \$21.6 million to \$23.1 million in
17 fiscal year 2027, plus separate World Cup marketing
18 allocations. What is the expected return on
19 investment from tourism spending, and how does the
20 NYC and Co. support small businesses, particularly in
21 tourism, hospitality, and the retail sectors?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So I can't speak to
the funds that are allocated to other entities, the
pass-through entities, but what I can tell you,
Council Member, is that we're very excited about the

1 World Cup. We want to make sure that it's an
2 opportunity for our small businesses to benefit from
3 the influx of economic activity that the city's
4 expecting. So in addition to previous outreach
5 efforts before I got to the agency, on Wednesday,
6 we're connecting all of our small business partners
7 for a briefing with the World Cup czar, Maya Honda,
8 for additional information on how they can leverage
9 the World Cup. We also have a landing page for small
businesses: nyc.gov/gameready, as well.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Thank you. Thank
11 you, Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you,
13 Council Member. And I'll turn it over to Council
Member Hanif.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you, Chair,
15 and welcome Commissioner Minaya and Haris. I'm sorry,
I don't know—

16 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: Michael.

17 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Michael.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Great to see you
19 all, and thanks for being here. And Haris, happy Eid.
20 Hope Eid was special. Okay. So, I want to start with
21 some questions on accessibility as the Disabilities

1
2 Committee Chair. Could you share how SBS is
3 coordinating, or not, with the Mayor's Office for
4 People with Disabilities to ensure that business
5 owners with disabilities are aware of the available
city resources?

6 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you for the
7 question, Council Member. So that is a very close
8 partnership for us, in addition to our partnership
9 with CCHR, to make sure that business owners are
10 aware of their responsibilities with respect to
11 accessibility laws. And also, obviously, on the
12 contracting side, we make sure that all of our
partners have accessible sites for New Yorkers.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: How are you able to
14 assess that, or how are you evaluating that small
15 businesses are accessible infrastructure-wise and
also worker protection-wise?

16 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So, Council Member,
17 we make available information that the agencies make
18 available to make sure that business owners are aware
19 of their responsibilities under the law. We are not a
20 regulatory or enforcement agency ourselves, so we are
21 unable to—

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: [interposing] got it.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: to enforce the law, but we make sure that they are aware of their responsibilities under the law.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And then, are SBS's online resources, portals, application systems compliant with web content accessibility guidelines?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Yes, they are, Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Great. And then, has SBS conducted any recent audits of its digital tools and portals for accessibility compliance, and what were the findings?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: We do it regularly through the course of our work.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Meaning quarterly, annually?

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: Thank you, Chair Hanif. Our team works closely to make sure that any documents that we put together on the internet is accessible to all, including our social media. And so that work is built into our SOPs, and it's work that is standard across our teams.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And then for businesses— business owners with disabilities and workers with disabilities, do they come to SBS for resources or small business support? And could you share what the extent of that looks like?

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: Yeah, so on both fronts, we serve New Yorkers with disabilities. On the workforce side, we're proud to share, even in the Commissioner's testimony, 1,300 New Yorkers with disabilities were served through our programming. And last year when City Hall put out a number on the New Yorkers that were connected to jobs that are people with disabilities, it's the city's Workforce One system that does the lion's share of that work, making sure New Yorkers can get those opportunities to have a meaningful career here. And then on the businesses side, our work is also accessible. And we really are proud of this partnership with MOPD and CCHR to ensure every year we make sure there's webinars specifically targeted to businesses on the requirements to comply with ADA in ways that could be easier for them to understand those rules and then comply with those rules.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And then for the 1,000 businesses you just highlighted, what services were specifically provided, and do those programs have any funding cuts?

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: Those were— I'm sorry, those were 1,300 New Yorkers connected with jobs.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Okay.

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: And so that reflects a partnership with employers who we really want to get even more employers that are interested and focused on this area. We want to partner with everybody. And then on the worker side, if a New Yorker with disability approaches us, we're scanning the market, trying to connect them to the jobs that they'd be interested in. And through that work, it's 1,300 New Yorkers that were served in the last fiscal year. We're already on track, and I think we've already connected 600+ New Yorkers to jobs this fiscal year before the end of the fiscal year.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: That's great. Love to hear that.

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: Yes.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: For CC— the
2 partnership with CCHR, my understanding is CCHR has
3 done incredible work to reach settlements for
4 employment facilities that are not accessible and
5 have supported workers with disabilities to ensure
6 that their workplace is accessible. Have— how do you
7 all participate in that? Do you— is there funding cut
8 out for the disability-related infrastructure work
9 and settlement work?

10 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: We haven't had
11 resources to support compliance and physical
12 infrastructure upgrades. There's also state and city
13 laws that make it harder for government to pass
14 funding to private entities to conduct that kind of
15 infrastructural upgrade. But it's because we know
16 that there's this challenge in understanding and then
17 complying with these laws, we— that's exactly the
18 reason why CCHR and MOPD and SBS work together. Just
19 last year, when we organized the city's largest ever
20 small business gathering, we had 3,000+ businesses in
21 the room. At the NYC Small Business Month Expo, a
particular workshop where we had 30 business owners
in attendance. It was solely focused on this issue
and where New Yorkers could understand and really

1 speak to the leadership at CCHR, MOPD, and SBS
2 directly to understand how these laws can impact them
3 directly and how— ways to comply and understand that
4 it's not impossible, that there are ways in which
5 they can meet the need that the law set out.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Chair, could I have
7 a— and that expo that you just talked about does that
8 have a— does— is that funding already baked into SBS,
9 or is that—

10 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: The funding to put
11 together the expo?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Yeah.

13 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: Sure, yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Okay.

15 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: Yes.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Small BIDs in my
17 district have benefited greatly from the small BID
18 grant. Would SBS expand this grant to increase the
19 impact of this work, and what resources would SBS to
20 expand the impact? Could you speak to how else SBS is
21 supporting small BIDs?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So SBS serves as an
oversight function for small BIDs to help them get
started, and grants like the small BID grant, the

1 applications are actually opening up soon, right, in
2 a couple of weeks. So we look forward to dispersing
3 those funds and assisting BIDs.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And have those— are
5 those funds increasing or are they remaining the
6 same?

7 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: They remain stable
8 for this fiscal year.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Got it. We can come
10 back to that later.

11 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you,
12 council member. I'd like to recognize Council Member
13 Morano has joined us and he has a question.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Thank you very
15 much. I appreciate your testimony. Good to talk with
16 you, Commissioner.

17 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Likewise.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: You mentioned SBS
19 has helped connect businesses to over \$120 million in
20 financing and saved \$60 million in fines. Can you
21 break down how much of that actually went to
businesses in my borough of Staten Island?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: We'll have to follow
up with borough-specific data, Councilmember.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: We have a lot of
2 great small businesses in our- in our borough, and
3 you highlighted success stories in Queens. I'm
4 wondering if you can share a comparable example of an
5 industrial business on Staten Island that benefited
6 from SBS in the same way.

7 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: Thank you,
8 Councilmember. So we've got our partnership with the
9 business improvement districts on the districts- so
10 separate from our work with the Staten Island Chamber
11 of Commerce, separate from our in-house outreach
12 team, we also work closely with the BID network in
13 Staten Island. And as we shared in our opportunity to
14 brief you on the work that's happening on the ground
15 in the borough, it's the partnership with the BIDs
16 where one of them is specifically focused on
17 industrial businesses in the West Shore working with
18 manufacturers and other industrial businesses. You
19 also know there's the Amazon presence there. And so
20 there's a whole set of actors there that we're
21 supporting through our BID work in the borough of
Staten Island.

 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: In terms of that
industrial BID and the West Shore, there's a March

1
2 9th RFP that restructures the Industrial Business
3 Zone program. I'm wondering if you can explain why
4 SBS is moving away from a dedicated industrial
5 service model to a consolidated one?

6 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Sure, Council
7 Member. So the intent of the RFP is to make the
8 industrial business services available citywide, not
9 just within the IBZs.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: So was Staten
11 Island's existing IBSP model, which has been in place
12 for years, I think over a decade, evaluated as
13 ineffective before making this change?

14 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: That's right, right.
15 Our intent is to reach more New Yorkers. It's not
16 anything specific to the current service delivery.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: So you spoke about
18 partnership with communities, which is great. Were
19 Staten Island industrial stakeholders, including
20 existing providers, consulted before this RFP was
21 released?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So procurement rules
limit the amount of contact we can have with
potential applicants to the procurement, but we did
contact and engage with business stakeholders leading

up to the program design before the procurement was issued.

COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: And, obviously Staten Island's current provider has decades of relationships with the industrial community. What safeguards are in place to ensure that institutional knowledge isn't lost if a new entity is awarded the contract?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: I appreciate the question, Council Member. The RFP requires that awardees either possess at least five years of demonstrated experience serving industrial businesses or partner via subcontracting with an entity that possesses that experience. So we value that experience as well and bake that into the RFP.

COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Does SBS have the flexibility to adjust the targets that you're focused on now based on borough-specific conditions, or is this a one-size-fits-all model?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: To answer your question, Council Member, the issue of targets, that comes later after we have selected awardees, and that's part of the contract negotiation.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: This contract
3 expands expectations significantly, more outreach,
4 more services, a satellite location, which is
5 terrific, but it only funds three staff members. Do
6 you believe that staffing level is sufficient for a
borough like Staten Island?

7 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So three is the
8 floor. That's the minimum, Council Member.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Got it. Okay,
10 thank you. Lastly on the RFP for me. The RFP was
11 released March 9th with an April 17th deadline.
12 That's a very tight turnaround to design a completely
13 new service model. Why such a compressed timeline?

14 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Yeah, so we want to
15 make sure that there isn't a gap in services. The
16 contracts expire June 30th, 2026, so that was the
17 intent there.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: So, and at the end
19 of this three-year contract, how are you going to
20 measure whether this new model actually worked better
21 than the current IBSP structure?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So, metrics and
outcomes, those are things that we'll discuss during

the contract negotiation process once we've selected the vendors.

COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Thanks very much.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you, Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER MORANO: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you, Council Member. I'd like to say we've been joined by Finance Chair Council Member Lee. So, I have a couple more questions. First, as it relates to the minority and women-owned businesses. So SBS supports minority and women-owned businesses by certifying them to compete for city contracts and increasing their visibility to agencies and private partners. It also provides training, one-on-one advising, and mentorship to help these businesses navigate procurement and growth. Overall, its work focuses on expanding access to contracts capital and opportunities to promote a more equitable local economy. So SBS exceeded its target of minority and women business awards, yet actual awards have declined from 1,903 in FY23 to 1,844 in FY25. Do you know the reason for this decrease in awards?

1
2 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you for the
3 question, Chair. So, as you mentioned, SBS's role is
4 focused on the registration, the capacity building,
5 technical assistance, and connection to funding.
6 With respect to actual awards that occur, we would
7 have to defer to the Office of MWBE, who sets
8 citywide policy on MWBE and engages agencies on their
9 MWBE contracting efforts.

10 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Do these
11 agencies often reach out or coordinate with SBS when
12 they are looking for MWBE providers?

13 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: Yes, Chair. So we
14 have our buyer services team, which supports city
15 agencies but also private sector actors when they're
16 interested in working with MWBE firms. And we
17 maintain the city's Get Certified list. So it's a
18 publicly available list where you can find the kind
19 of business that might make sense for the need that
20 you have in the work that you're conducting.

21 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: I've found
through practice that oftentimes when different
agencies put out a procurement, they'll do like a
mass blast to various companies that don't even

1
2 provide the service they're looking for. Does SBS
3 assist in any way in helping really weed out-

4 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: [interposing] yes.
5 Yeah. So what happens, if an agency chose to work
6 with us, they would reach out to our team, they would
7 tell us, hey, we're looking for X, and then our team
8 will conduct an analysis, first scanning the industry
9 codes in the MWBE system where vendors have already
10 identified themselves as vendors that could deliver
11 that work. But then on top of that, they'll look at
12 past performance, they'll look at any other
13 information and really the description. There's a
14 profile that our system builds in where a business
15 can describe the kinds of work that they do. So the
16 team, the buyer services team will look at all of
17 that and then give the agency a curated list of
18 vendors that could be responsive to the need that the
19 agency has.

20 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Do you know
21 offhand which agencies don't use your services in
that regard?

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: I think it's hard to
tell which agency don't, but many agencies do and
even private sector partners. So when we first

1 started engaging with the host committee for FIFA, we
2 asked them to consider working with the city's MWBE
3 businesses. And we— they've asked a couple questions
4 last year, and we followed up with curated lists of
5 MWBE businesses that could support them in their
6 work.

7 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Oh, you opened
8 up another question. Do you know, have they actually
9 engaged any of those businesses, and how many
10 businesses are being— are we working with for the
11 upcoming World Cup?

12 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: We haven't heard
13 from them on if they've engaged with the city's
14 certified MWBEs, or have received any metrics from
15 them on that regard.

16 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: I'd encourage
17 you to give them a nudge. What, 80 days away? What
18 percentage of certified MWBEs are actively receiving
19 city contracts to your knowledge?

20 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So in fiscal year
21 25, the MWBEs that won contracts represent 16 percent
of the certified pool. And that reflects a trend
that's been steadily increasing over the last five
years.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: So 16% of MWBs certified through SBS are currently receiving city contracts?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: That's correct, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay. And since you do work with private entities as well, do they often report back when they use or engage any of the MWBEs or work with them?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: No.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: At this time, I'll turn it over to Chair of Finance, Council Member Lee.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Good afternoon. Sorry,

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: My time is warped. And thank you so much. I want to say to your Chief of Staff, Haris Khan, because he's been very helpful with our office on a bunch of different issues. So you have a great Chief of Staff.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: And just had a couple questions. So I noticed the— for example, from FY26 to 27, the headcount is largely the same. However, it

1 seems like there's a pretty big drop in the overall
2 budget. So just wanted to know if you could get some
3 clarity on that. I see there's contract services
4 decreases. So I just wanted to get a better sense of
5 where that's coming from and then workforce
6 development decreases, and how is that going to
7 potentially impact services, which hopefully it
8 won't? If you could go into that a little bit?

9 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Sure. So, the
10 decrease in the budget that you're seeing reflects
11 pass-through funding that passes through SBS to other
12 entities.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Like CDBG block grant
14 funding, that kind of funding or?

15 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: No. This is for EDC.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Oh, I see, within the
17 city.

18 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Yes, correct. You're
19 also seeing there the council discretionary, which
20 has not yet been added to the budget, but we will
21 expect that to be added in the adopted budget.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay, so will we see
that increase go back into the budget for exec?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: It's adopted budget.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Adopted. Okay. And do you— is the assumption that it's going to be similar?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay, and then also, is that the same reason? Because I noticed that for the contracts, the numbers of the contracts from FY26 to 27, for example, for contractual services, it's the same number, actually. There's only one contract that's different, but then the amount is pretty— the delta in the amount is \$129,000 versus \$58,000. So I was just wondering why that decrease is happening and which contract. And then also same thing with economic development. It went from \$61.6 to \$42.9 with the same number of contracts. And so just wanting to know what that difference is.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you for the question, Chair. So, in the fiscal year 27 prelim plan there's a difference of three contracts overall, three contracts less, and these are all EDC contracts. The single largest drop is an EDC contract.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay. Because the number of contracts are the same according to the OMB sheet

here. That's why I'm wondering where the difference in funding is.

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: Yeah, what we're showing is that there are three less contracts overall, and the single biggest drop is an EDC contract for \$31.2 million. We also have some SBS program contracts that are ending this year, but will be— they're in the procurement pipeline to be put back into the plan. So there's really no— you know, at the end of the day when analyzing this, there's no change regarding SBS contracting for our core services.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay, and then those will also be put back in during adopt— during the adoption process. Okay. And then, I see here for new needs it went up from FY26 to 27. So new needs in FY26 was about 2.7, and then in FY20— sorry, FY26, 2.7, and then FY27, it's about 5.3. So just wanted to know— I know that there's some things you highlighted including New York City BEST and some other increases, and just wanted to know if you could go into a little bit more of the new needs portion?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Sure. So \$4 million baseline for the new needs is for NYC BEST to hire

those 30 staff lines. There's some small OTPS associated with that as well. There's about \$430,000 licensing software for CRM system that we use to track service delivery. And then there are smaller grants for several bids. I think the Long Island City BID, Jamaica as well-

CHAIRPERSON LEE: [interposing] Right.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: In addition to a cost of living adjustment at \$400K.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay, and that's for all of the staff currently, correct? That are line item? Okay.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Perfect. So for- I know that you guys all submitted your savings plans last Friday and just wanted to know, because there were 92 vacancies and 300 active staff at SBS at the end of January for 23 percent vacancy rate. So just wanted to know how that's changed, maybe if you have updated numbers and how much anticipated accruals you're looking at for that.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Sure. So the number of vacancies at SBS excluding like, talent and another pass-through entities is 38 to date. And you

1 know, we were actively recruiting and trying to hire
2 up those vacancies. SBS is still under the
3 two-for-one hiring freeze, so that poses a challenge.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay, got it.

5 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: But the-

6 CHAIRPERSON LEE: When is that going to
7 be, you know, turned off, I guess, or lifted?

8 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Hopefully soon.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay, got it. Okay. And
10 then in terms of the grant loans- grants, loans, and
11 financial assistance- and apologies if you went over
12 this already in your testimony. How much funding is
13 allocated for grants, loans, or financial assistance
14 programs to small businesses for FY27?

15 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So just last week,
16 together with the mayor, we announced the NYC Future
17 Fund. It's a brand new loan initiative, first in the
18 city to provide businesses who experience seasonal
19 revenue changes with a loan product that fits their
20 needs and helps even out their revenue. And that's an
21 \$80 million fund.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay, perfect. And then
how- I think, you know, obviously we're worried about
the recent news that the Trump administration had put

1 out ending SBA loans to immigrant-owned businesses,
2 and how do you anticipate that having an impact on
3 the economic growth of our city?

4 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Yeah, I think any
5 time you- you know, over half of the businesses in
6 New York City are immigrant-owned and operated, so
7 any time you remove a significant financing source,
8 that there will be an impact there. At SBS, we don't
9 receive SBA loan funding, so we're focused on
10 directing businesses to the loan products we do have
11 available, such as the Future Fund, and to our Fund
12 Finder resource where we partner them with
13 responsible lenders to find a loan product that suits
14 their needs.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEE: And I'm assuming you
16 partner with all the CDFIs.

17 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: All the CDFIs, yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEE: Doing great work in the
19 community. So- especially the immigrant community. So
20 that's great to hear. Have you asked for additional
21 funding from the state also during the budget
process?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: No, we're city
funded.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay, so there's nothing there that the state would be able to help with in terms of economic development or MWBE programs?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: No, not that we're aware of.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay. And then what programs have seen increased funding without proportional outcomes and improvements?

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: I don't think that we have programs that have gotten increased funding and have lower outcomes, but we certainly did an analysis across the board of all of our programs to kind of look to optimize and look for efficiencies and ways to serve more people and more small businesses as part of the savings plan exercise.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Okay, great. That's good to hear. And then on the flip side of that, were there examples where the funding was decreased but the outcomes remained the same because you were able to hold the line, so to speak?

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: I think some of that kind of ties into some of the questions that have been asked about the vacancy rate. So I

1 think that that's a way to look at it, and I think
2 across the board, even though we've been subject to
3 and challenged by the two-for-one hiring. I think by
4 and large, our program outcomes are very, very good.
5 And if you kind of factor out- I think the other kind
6 of theme of some of the questioning is the PMMR
7 indicators are hard for us because many of our
8 indicators measure outcomes, and outcomes don't
9 happen in the four-month PMMR period. So when you get
10 to the end at the MMR, and like, if you look at the
11 last MMR, you'll see pretty much across the board,
12 we're hitting all of our goals, all of our metrics,
13 even though we haven't been able to fully hire all of
14 the staff that we're allocated for.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEE: But I'm assuming that
16 you are able to track that and predict those things
17 along the way throughout the fiscal year, correct?
18 Based- yeah.

19 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: Yeah,
20 we're monitoring- we're monitoring the outputs of the
21 programs.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Right.

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: The MMR and the PMMR, monitoring the outcomes. And that's why when you do the four-month look-

CHAIRPERSON LEE: [interposing] Right, you're not yet seeing all of the outcomes.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Right, yep. Yeah, trust me, on the nonprofit side, I had to deal with that all the time where our contracts wouldn't get registered, but we had to sort of juggle all of that stuff around. And then for the Future Fund that you just mentioned, do you have the capacity for the new workload? How are you sort of gearing up for that?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Absolutely. We have the capacity. We're doing a lot of outreach. I think in the last week, we've received over 200 applications since the announcement.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Great to hear. And what businesses most need, from your vantage point, SBS support? And what type of research has SBS done to prioritize directing its resources? And I would just like to add in there, including, you know, outreach to a lot of the different languages spoken for the business owners. Because I know that even in my district alone, there are so many dialects and

languages spoken. So if you could speak to that as well.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Sure. As far as language access at the agency, we have multilingual outreach staff. We also— I think we speak 16+ languages among our outreach team alone. You know, and then we also have access to a vendor that can provide language access services for the languages that we don't cover.

CHAIRPERSON LEE: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you. I have a couple of questions. I want to follow up on the vacancy. How many positions are associated with the NYC Office of Talent and Workforce Development? In FY26 and FY27?

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: It's— I believe that's about 40 positions.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: 40 positions that are accounted for, and how many of those are vacant?

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: I'm not sure exactly that breakdown.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: We'll follow up with you, Chair. I think it's over 10.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, thank you. Moving on to Executive Order 11. On January 14th, the mayor issued Executive Order 11 directing city agencies to identify ways to cut costs and simplify regulations for small businesses. You are one of seven agencies under the direction of Deputy Mayor for Economic Justice Justice working to cut red tape for small businesses. The deadline to create a full inventory of the fees and civil penalties collected by the agencies and whether they could be reduced was due in late February. Did SBS have any fees or penalties that could be reduced?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: No, we're not a regulatory agency, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Are you aware of any fees to-date or penalties that have been identified that could be reduced for small businesses across the board?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: We have the inventory of fees and penalties from the partner city agencies. We are currently reviewing that and hope to

1
2 come to City Council with legislative proposals for
3 how to move forward.

4 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, thank
5 you. Going into— and Council Member Lee alluded to
6 the funds, the New York City Future Fund. So on March
7 17th, the Mamdani administration announced a
8 city-backed loan program aimed at improving access to
9 affordable financing for small businesses. Funding of
10 \$80 million is expected in a future financial plan.
11 The program lowers barriers by reducing minimum loan
12 sizes, cutting interest rates, and offering more
13 flexible repayment terms tied to business revenue. It
14 specifically targets underserved entrepreneurs,
15 including immigrant, minority, and women-owned
16 businesses. With the New York City Future Fund lowers
17 minimum loan sizes to \$25,000 and eligibility revenue
18 to \$50,000. How many additional businesses does SBS
19 project will now qualify for these loans?

20 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: We hope to serve
21 1,000 businesses, Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Over what
19 timeframe?

20 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: 100 businesses
21 annually. So over a 10-year time period.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And how does this fund differ from existing grants that SBS provides to businesses?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: This is the first loan product that is specifically tied to revenue.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Speaking of revenue, the new fund reduces the monthly repayment rates from a flat 9.5 percent of revenue to as low as two percent of monthly revenue depending on loan size and business needs. Can you tell a little more about how that criteria will be used and how the department is managing the risk of these loans?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So we work in partnership with CDFIs, and there's our underwriting team that's at the lender that's monitoring this closely.

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: And also, we had piloted it, and that's part of what- of the analysis that took place in the pilot program that preceded the launch.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Is the pilot specific to any particular type of business, any particular area of the city?

1
2 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: No. The
3 thing that makes the program unique is for businesses
4 that don't have an even revenue stream. So like a
5 seasonal business. So that's what makes it different.
6 Typically when you're getting a loan for a small
7 business, you're gonna have a fixed monthly repayment
8 rate, and there's a certain segment of businesses.
9 The easiest example, I think, is the seasonal
10 business where in the high season you're making a lot
11 of revenue, but in the low season you're not able to
12 pay that fixed rate. So what makes this program
13 unique is that the payment that the small business
14 makes back every month is calibrated to the revenue
15 that they're taking in. And so that's kind of- there
16 was- that was part of the pilot. That was part of
17 kind of the buildup to this was to kind of design
18 that underwriting, design the technology, design the
19 program components so that every month that payment
20 gets calculated based on how much the business is
21 actually making.

18 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And then will
19 any part of this fund be issued in the term- as
20 grants versus a loan?
21

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: No, it's all- it's all loan.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay. And speaking of technology, how easy is it for a business to get access to these loans? Like, today, some loan products, you can go online and in two minutes, you know, if you're approved and the funds are in your account in 48 hours. How- what is the time frame for a business in need to request and receive funding?

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: There is an application process. It can be done online. We also strongly, strongly encourage and connect anyone applying to the loans- for the loans- to a small business advisor. And what we found is the success rate of businesses applying for the loans is much, much higher when they work with an advisor that we provide them. So that adds, you know, that adds a little bit of time to the process, but it's time well spent because it makes sure that, you know, the finances are right so that the loan is appropriate for the business and it positions them for success.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And then are these advisors all- advisors, underwriters all under SBS or are you partnering with different CDFIs?

1 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: They
2 work with our partner CDFIs and then also you can get
3 this assistance at our Business Solution Centers as
4 well.

5 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay. Now,
6 given the broader concerns about budget gaps, how
7 will SBS ensure this program is financially
8 sustainable over multiple years?

9 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: There's about \$10
10 million of city seed funding in the program as well,
11 in addition to our partnerships with private- with
12 CDFIs and other private institutions.

13 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And the program
14 prioritizes immigrant, minority, and women-owned
15 businesses. What specific outreach and eligibility
16 safeguards are in place to ensure that these groups
17 actually receive the funds?

18 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So I think
19 primarily, we're relying on our partnership with
20 CDFIs who are in the community, know the businesses,
21 and have those longstanding relationships in addition
to other outreach that we at SBS are doing to inform
the business owners about the program.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Going to other business assistance- financial awards to businesses dropped 10.4 percent year over year and significantly since fiscal year 2023. What are the primary drivers of this decline?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So we're very proud of the fact that we've served 488 businesses and facilitated over 563 awards in fiscal year '25, totaling \$46 million. These are great results for small businesses here in New York City. The decrease you're seeing there is reflective of the reduced availability of low-interest lending capital, as federal COVID recovery funds have expired at the end of fiscal year 24. And I just want to point out, we're also meeting our targets as well.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, at this time I will turn it over to Council Member Avilés.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Very, very kind Chair, thank you. So, just to follow up on the IS- on the IBSP's contract. My understanding is that the contract is in total worth \$1.2 million. Is that correct?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Yes, that's correct.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah. And, and so
3 in fact- I guess following up also on Council Member
4 Morano's points is the whole change in structure, and
5 you know, I think the thing that you had mentioned,
6 that the desire is to move beyond industrial
7 manufacturing providers. Is your intention to add
8 additional resources to that contract, or will it
9 remain the same?

10 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Well, our intent is
11 not to move beyond industrial providers, it's to
12 ensure that those services are available at all of
13 our sites, and we encourage industrial providers-

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: [interposing] And
15 outreach, change the structure, but not add any new
16 resources.

17 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: We encourage them to
18 apply to the RFP.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: For sure. And make
21 sure that their services are available.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay. I think the
23 point, the point that want to drive here is this is a
24 critical, very complex group of provide- of
25 businesses, and if there is an interest in expanding

1 to touch more businesses, I think it wouldn't be
2 counterintuitive to say we need additional resources
3 rather than watering down the actual structure
4 through the RFP. But I think we're going to— I have a
5 list of questions that I want to follow up with you
6 specifically about this. I wanted to ask a little bit
7 about— congratulations on our— on the appointment of
8 Carina Kaufman-Gutierrez and talk a little bit about
9 street vendors. How much funding is allocated in
10 fiscal 27 Preliminary Budget for the new Division of
Street Vendor Assistance?

11 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: We're currently
12 discussing with OMB funding and the resources needed
13 as part of the exec plan, and those conversations are
ongoing.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: And how much are
15 you anticipating in terms of staffing and resources
16 that will be needed to launch this program?

17 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So I think our
18 previous fiscal impact statement right around the
19 time when the bill was passed had it at eight staff
20 lines totaling about \$2.5, \$2.8 million.
21

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Are you targeting
3 to expand the office meet the new mandates of
4 increasing licensing?

5 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Well, the mandates
6 of increasing licensing, the resources we're
7 requesting are to serve vendors. The licensing
8 resources that would be needed to issue additional
9 licenses would be at the agencies, at the licensing
10 agencies. Here it would be DOHMH and DCWP.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Right. You hold
12 another part of- a piece of the puzzle. In terms of-
13 how much of the portion of SBS's budget will be
14 dedicated in particular to street vendor outreach,
15 given kind of the new licenses, which is really
16 important?

17 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So our intent is to
18 use all the resources at SBS's current disposal,
19 including the outreach team to make sure that folks
20 are aware, the NYC Best team and others, to make sure
21 that street vendors are aware that the licenses are
available and to also hear from street vendors about
what are the regulatory burdens that they're facing,
right, that we can help tackle as part of EO 11 as
well?

1 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Great. This is,
2 you know, important to us as another community that
3 has so many immigrant— small business owners and our
4 smallest business owners. It's important that we set
5 it up for success and provide the resources really
6 that it so desperately needs. Lastly, what is the—
7 do you know what the per license administrative cost
8 might be? And if SPS is ready to increase the volume
9 of that?

10 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: We would have to
11 defer to DOHMH and DCWP on what the administrative
12 cost is per license and their capabilities to take on
13 the additional volume. Just one more item that I
14 wanted to point out with respect to street vendors is
15 our new \$750,000 challenge procurement that we're
16 issuing to try to tackle some of the issues and
17 provide additional services to street vendors.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Can you tell us a
19 little bit more about it?

20 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Sure.

21 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: Council Member, so
 this is a Venture Forward, which was our first
 challenge procurement. So unlike typical procurements
 where we lay out specifically what we want from

1
2 responders, this was an opportunity for us at the
3 agency to listen to community stakeholders and others
4 about innovative solutions that could help address
5 some of the gaps we're seeing in street vendor
6 services. So we were proud to issue that RFP in late—
7 I think it was December of last year, and we're at
8 the final stages of announcing the recipients of that
9 work. And that work will be \$750,000 spent this
10 fiscal year with the opportunity to leverage that
11 funding into the early months of the next fiscal
12 year.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Great, thank you
14 so much. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you,
16 Council Member. Council member Hanif?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you. Could
18 SBS confirm if the MENA community has been added to
19 the disparity study?

20 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you for the
21 question, Council Member. So, the study has
concluded, and we're ready to brief you and any other
council member in the next coming weeks on the
results of the study.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Are you able to share anything as a preview right now?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: No, unfortunately not right now.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Could you share what percentage of business—

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: Chair Hanif, can we share a little bit, a preview of something?

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Love that.

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: So, one challenge, and we'll talk about it at our briefing as well. One challenge that came out of this initial work was the lack of citywide data, available data on the MENA community. And so we were proud that to address this for future analyses, we announced on January 14th the first ever self-identification option for businesses that register in the city's Passport system that unlocks a whole series of data points that previously did not exist, which hampered some of the analysis last year.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Well, that'll go a long way. Are you able to share what percentage of businesses are currently enrolled in SBS programs that are certified MWBEs?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: What I can share is that, um, 75 percent of the businesses that received an MWBE contract benefited from SBS programming.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And the total number of businesses that are MWBEs?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: It's about 11,000.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And is that a increase or decrease? What are the five-year goals or annual goals?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: To increase, and it's a steady increase over the last five fiscal years.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Got it. Okay. And what targeted outreach does SBS do to reach minority and women-owned businesses in underserved communities?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So, one of the things we highlighted earlier was our contracting summit just two months ago where we brought MWBE businesses and contracting agencies together under one roof to help folks connect, and make sure that MWBE businesses are aware of the services that are—I'm sorry, of the contract opportunities that are available. That is in addition to our regular suite

of outreach offerings, which include webinars and, and our outreach team. I'm pounding the pavement and connecting with business owners.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And in events like that, how many businesses participate would you say?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Yeah, we- so we had 1,700 businesses participate, which is an all-time high for us.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And is there specific outreach and engagement funding associated with this work? No, no, this is built into our suite of programming.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Built-in, got it. What is SBS's relationship with Dining Out NYC?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So certainly through our Office of Nightlife and our food and beverage partnerships, we engage with restaurants here in New York City, and we're certainly supportive of the rumblings we've heard about extend- expanding the program and making it available year round. That's wonderful. Do- and I know that DOT manages the program and interfaces with the businesses. How does SBS participate?

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2 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: So through the
3 initial creation of the, you know, program, we advise
4 DOT not only on the program guidelines, the
5 requirements, but also on the user experience when a
6 small business would approach the dining out
7 application program. How are they experiencing the
8 information that they're receiving? So we provided,
9 um, our advice and consultation to the partners at
10 DOT when they set up that initial program. And
11 currently really excited at the mayor's support, the
12 speaker's support, and DOT commissioner's support for
13 an upgraded program that's year-round that would
14 solve a lot of the application requirements and other
15 burdensome challenges that some businesses have been
16 complaining about, which has impacted participation
17 throughout the city, including in your district.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Exactly. And so
19 that means you all are assessing and evaluating what
20 DOT might be hearing about the challenges in the
21 program.

18 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: We've been sharing
19 some of the challenges that we hear from our
20 stakeholders to DOT, and also really excited to
21 leverage this Executive Order 11 opportunity that the

1
2 mayor has laid out to cut fines and fees, to further
3 evaluate if there are items that we can advance
4 before the larger legislative proposal process on
5 outdoor dining.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Got it. And I want
7 to ask about BIDs. I don't know, have they been
8 asked? Does the agency believe that there are enough
9 positions to carry out the agency's goals when it
10 comes— oh wait, not BIDs, BID containerization is
11 what I wanted to ask about. Has SBS been in contact
12 with DSNY regarding the BID containerization
13 requirements, and what concerns are you hearing?

14 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: We've been in
15 contact with DSNY through the policymaking process
16 and made sure— connected them very early on to the
17 bid association and BID leaders so they could
18 understand the operational impacts on businesses and,
19 and BIDs to comply. We know that the City Council and
20 the administration last year, the former
21 administration last year, committed funding for
containerization for bids. We've heard that bids have
leveraged that funding to attempt to comply with the
rules of DSNY on containerization.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And you all believe that the \$5 million that's allocated is substantial?

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: We haven't heard any BID suggest to us that they've now had a funding challenge in containerization with the availability of those DSNY grants.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Great. And then when complaints arise or challenges arise, do they interface with DSNY or SBS?

CHIEF OF STAFF KAHN: So the Bid Network has always been able to reach out to us. We're— we sit on the board of directors for each of the bids, so we definitely hear complaints throughout their experience working with city agencies. But we also are proud that DSNY has really built really strong relationships with the BID partners, and have their own open lines of communication. Wonderful. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you. I do have a quick follow-up in terms of MWBEs, um, being awarded contracts. How do you set your targets? Because you guys have set targets at approximately 1,200— a little over 1,200, but exceed them quite frequently. So how are those targets set?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: I think it's based just- I think those are historical and they're set in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Operations the PMMR targets. So yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: So do they kind of carry over year to year, or is there disparity study or some type of assessment every few years to see if the goals need to be increased?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Well-

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: [interposing]
Decreased.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: I mean, our goal is always to surpass and exceed the targets. The targets themselves and the p.m., they do carry over year to year. But for us, you know, we look at previous year's performance, and that's the number we try to exceed. And that's why we've seen that steady increase over the last five fiscal years.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: I would like to acknowledge that Council Member Brewer has joined us. And while we are speaking of MWBEs, Council Member Brooks Powers, who is on Zoom, has a question. According to this year's comptroller's report, only 5.3 percent of the city's contract value was directed

1
2 to MWBEs. How is SBS working with the city to promote
3 further MWBE utilization?

4 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So, I can't speak to
5 the comptroller's numbers, but for us we- you know, I
6 think the number of registrants year over year
7 increased leasing speaks to our commitment to making
8 sure that there are more MWBEs registered with the
9 city. I think in the last fiscal year, we directed-
10 was it two point- I'm sorry, \$6.9 billion in
11 contracts to MWBEs, which we're very proud of.
12 That's where our focus is, is to making sure that the
13 businesses are able to register, have what they need,
14 and can access the city funding.

15 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And to help
16 with that, is part of that to work with more of the
17 agencies to make sure that they're using or reaching
18 out to the MWBE community?

19 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Certainly we try to
20 do our part, but we also rely on the Office of MWBE's
21 within the mayor's office to communicate to the city
agencies and set the citywide policy. I mean, just
this last fiscal year, I believe the- we achieved the
36 percent MWBE utilization, which is a new record,

and we're very proud of that work. And kudos to the Office of MWBEs as well.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: What system, or how do you guys- what data is used, like, which system is used to track the data, and is it consistent across the agencies?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: We use the Passport system.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Are you familiar with B2G at all? Okay. Is that something that you guys get data from, or-

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: OMWBE, the Office of MWBE at City Hall, is in the process of rolling out B2G to city agencies to also track other layers of data in addition to Passport.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay. Just trying to figure out how we can make sure that we're getting consistent data across the city of New York, where some numbers are here, some numbers are there. We're trying to figure out if we're in line to use one cohesive system that tracks everything across

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Yes. So, the existing systems were Passport, and there's efforts

being made to also adapt B2G as an additional tracking mechanism.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay. And I see that certification rates have increased slightly since last year. What does the agency do— plan on doing to keep increasing the number of firms certified?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Yeah, we want to make sure that businesses are aware of the MWE program. So far in fiscal year 26, we've held 60 webinars and presentations just to get the information out there, you know, with our community partners across the city. And then that's really our focus. We think that, you know, the merits of the program are strong, that, you know, once we can bridge that gap and get the information to the businesses that it'll increase participation.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay. And one last question from Council Member Brooks-Powers. This administration has committed to cutting red tape and reducing unnecessary fines and fees for small businesses. What specific requirements or measure is SBS looking to change in the coming months?

1
2 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: We're taking a kind
3 of all of the above approach. I mean, we're looking
4 at time spent to- from business initiation to
5 obtaining a license. You know, Dining Out NYC is
6 another one that we're looking at just to ensure
7 that, you know, especially in time for the summer
8 season, that businesses are able to get the permits
9 that they need to be able to partake in that program.
10 So we're taking it across the board approach and look
11 at city regulations.

12 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you.
13 Council Member Brewer?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
15 much. I have a couple questions just on vacant
16 stores. I know XYZ, you have a contract with them
17 thanks to Blaze, I assume. And so my question is,
18 does that continue? My district- I mean, there's so
19 many vacant stores, and I assume it's across the
20 city. So my question is- we can have the data, which
21 is what we have, but what are we doing about it, if
anything? Now, you know, we can- it's good to have
opportunities for new stores, but if they can't do
the rent or there's no- what are we doing about
vacancy? That's number one. Number two is, is there

1 something that can be done with AI in terms of- I'm a
2 big supporter of it- in terms of some of the work
3 that you're doing? It seems to me that there is, but
4 I'd love to hear from you. I'd like to also know the
5 federal changes to the- federal SBA are horrible in
6 terms of those who are immigrants not able to get a
7 loan. So what are you doing to be able to support
8 them? That's the backbone of our city in terms of
9 replacing lost SBA financing. And then finally, I
10 have a bill that passed a while ago, just making sure
11 language- when I go talking to business, there's
12 always a language issue, and it's even more prevalent
13 around the city. So how are you making sure that you
14 have all the different languages? Because if you
15 don't understand something and you're getting a fine
16 or fee in a language you don't understand, then
17 that's going to be a problem. So my vacant stores, I
18 have hundreds and hundreds and they're all across the
19 city.

17 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Sure. So let me
18 tackle those, attempt to tackle them in order. So
19 first with the vacancy data, we do still continue to
20 contract with XYZ. I believe that's an OTI contract.
21 As far as, as what can be done to try to, you know,

1 get business owners into those vacant storefronts,
2 there's a couple of things that come to mind. I think
3 first is our commercial lease assistance program.
4 You know, we seek to help business owners by
5 providing legal services to help them negotiate their
6 lease, or if they're already in a storefront to just
7 to remain there, providing assistance on renewing
8 their leases. I think Executive Order 11 also is key
9 here, just to ensure that businesses can quickly go
10 from idea to actually being able to open their doors
11 to business and doing what we can to cut the red
12 tape. So those are some of the approaches that we're
13 taking to make it easier for businesses and make sure
14 that those vacant storefronts don't remain vacant for
15 long. On AI, definitely something that we're looking
16 at. Just last week, we launched an AI Unlocked
17 training series. This is designed for businesses that
18 are seeking to adopt, expand, or optimize their use
19 of AI. These courses include introduction to AI
20 skills that can help businesses streamline daily
21 operations, automate tasks, and boost overall
efficiency. I think there's more that we can do
there, but that's just a snapshot of our approach
here. On federal SBA loans, we share your concern,

1 Council Member. You know, over 50 percent of small
2 businesses in New York City are immigrant-owned and
3 operated. I think at SBS and under the leadership of
4 Mayor Mamdani, we're taking a completely different
5 approach. Just last week we announced the launching
6 of the NYC Future Fund, right? Which is an
7 affordable loan product for businesses whose revenue
8 fluctuates seasonally, to ensure that a bad season
9 doesn't mean that they have to then shutter their
10 doors. We also continue our efforts to connect
11 businesses to responsible and affordable financing
12 with the NYC Funds Finder, initiative that we have
13 here. And I think I answered all the questions.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah, I think- I
15 mean, the issue- language, language.

16 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Oh yes, of course.
17 So, you know, we mentioned earlier, among our
18 executive team, we speak over 16 languages. So
19 language access is huge and top of mind for us. And
20 then we also tap into citywide resources through
21 vendors to make sure that we're able to provide-

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] And
in terms of tourism, this maybe hasn't been answered,
but what we're doing is we're bringing all the

1
2 concierges from the hotels to the Upper West Side so
3 that they get a sense when somebody says, what should
4 I do today? I know you all want them to go to Queens
5 or Brooklyn. Hell no. I want them in Manhattan. So,
6 I'm just saying, what else are we doing for the
7 tourism in general, but obviously the big ones this
8 summer, for the business?

9
10 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So, definitely I
11 think that the highest leverage opportunity upcoming
12 this summer is the World Cup.

13
14 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right. No, that's
15 what I mean, World Cup on this and the boats, those
16 are the two things.

17
18 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Yeah.

19
20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: You got the boats
21 too.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So-

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing] Sail
250. Yep.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Right. So we are in
close contact with our community partners, including
the BIDs, to make sure that small businesses can
partake in these opportunities. Actually, this
Wednesday, we have a briefing to which we've invited

1
2 all of our small business partners with the World Cup
3 Czar, Maya Honda, to discuss other opportunities. We
4 have a landing page for small businesses that are
5 interested in learning more about how they can
6 leverage the World Cup, the nyc.gov/ready— game ready
7 NYC.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: We have an Intro
9 90 to talk about these vacant stores, just so you
10 know. You could look at it, right? Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you, Council
12 Member.

13 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you,
14 Council Member. Going back to the NYC Future Fund for
15 a moment. Will the \$10 million in seed city money be
16 in the Executive Budget?

17 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: It— we
18 already have it. It was funded a couple of plans ago.

19 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, and then
20 the \$70 million in— is that all private money? Will
21 that be—

22 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE:
23 [interposing] It leverages other lending capital,
24 yes. So that's the City seed money that leverages the

remaining funds. And we also have \$1 million in philanthropy.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And which plan will that be in?

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: No plan, because the \$1 million is from philanthropy. The other lending capital does not flow through the city. It's through our partners.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: So the \$70 flows through-

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: [interposing] the \$10 million that enables the whole program.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, so \$10 million city. The \$70 flows through the CDFIs, and the \$1 million is philanthropy.

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay.

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: And look- you know, it's completely scalable on that \$10 million investment. If there are other lending partners out there that want to come in, if there are other philanthropy that wants to come in, we can

1 support it off of that base \$10 million investment.
2 So the program is completely scalable.

3 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, thank
4 you. You mentioned the website, Game Ready. How has
5 this been promoted? Council Member, that's why I
6 asked. It's— this is my first time, too.

7 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So definitely we've
8 been promoting it to all of our partners, BIDs, and
9 anytime we have a briefing with folks we've been
10 promoting the website to help drive traffic to there.

11 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: One of our most
12 common ways where businesses reach and access some of
13 our programming is email marketing. It's been one of
14 the most successful way that businesses sign up. So
15 we've also promoted Game Ready NYC across all of our
16 email marketing campaigns to the business clients
17 that we work with. And the plan is to host webinars.
18 We've been coordinating with the World Cup Czar team
19 and also the host committee to try to land on a
20 cadence and schedule that works for a lot of those
21 partners. But once they do, the plan is for three to
four webinars right leading up to the World Cup.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: I told you
about those emails earlier. Businesses get inundated

1 with so many random emails that I guarantee you a
2 large number have never seen it and don't know it
3 exists. And again, I want to reiterate, we're about
4 80 days maybe now from the World Cup and- Council
5 Member Brewer's shaking-

6 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: On our end- yeah.
7 Chair Thomas-Henry, so I think it's true businesses,
8 many businesses struggle with the inundation of
9 emails. The emails that we sent out at SPS- so we
10 track how folks hear about us at the completion of a
11 service or transaction or engagement. And for them,
12 for many of our clients, they rank our emails as one
13 of the things that they've seen. And we have an open
14 rate for SBS of 48 percent, which is almost double
15 digits higher than the industry average open rates.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Mine is higher.

17 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: Oh, yours is higher.
18 I believe it. I believe it.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: You should send it
20 to all the newsletters for the elected officials. You
21 have to hear about it from different places.

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: We'll make sure to
do it this month.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And since- how long has the website been up?

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: Should have been up two months, a month and a half, two months.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: So have you been able to see if any businesses have taken any advantage of any of the services? Like, what do the services entail?

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: It's really a connection to information on how they can take advantage of the World Cup. So there's public viewing permitting guidelines that the city has on how you can set up an event where you're watching- you're streaming the World Cup. There's also connections to the host committee's materials. The host committee has shared really robust materials on how businesses can take advantage and what makes the most sense for the type of business that you're at. So it's really a one-stop shop, single landing page to connect you to all the resources that exist. And what we're excited about adding to it is the webinars that we want to organize with the host committee and other partners so businesses can directly also benefit from

one-on-one conversations with the key stakeholders here.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: When will these webinars be?

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: It's really a coordinating effort between us, the host committee, and the World Cup team. So as soon as we land on that cadence, it'll be public and we'll make sure everybody hears about it. What we're really excited for is as the administration onboarded the city's first ever World Cup Czar, we've got this briefing set up in two days from now to address one of the key areas of concern that the BIDs were flagging for us, which was related to the SEPO [sic] embargo on event planning. And so in direct response to that key initial barrier, we made sure that the World Cup team and us partnered on a briefing, and that's happening in two days.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, we're less than three months away. Okay. I want to go over to workforce, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Realignment provides job training, career counseling, and placement services to adults, youth, and dislocated workers. It connects

1 participants to high-demand industries and helps
2 employers find and train qualified workers. The
3 program's goal is to strengthen the city's workforce
4 and improve economic mobility. But the Preliminary
5 Plan reflects an additional \$31 million in federal
6 funds associated with the grant award. The total
7 funding is \$72 million. What percentage of the budget
8 is allocated to admin versus actual participant
9 services?

10 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you for the
11 question, Chair. So since this is a federal grant,
12 there's a cap on how much of the grant can be
13 dedicated to admin services, which is about 10
14 percent. At SBS, we've managed to keep those admin
15 costs down and reallocate those savings back into the
16 program.

17 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: So is yours at
18 10 percent or less than the 10 percent?

19 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Less than 10
20 percent.

21 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay. And what
is the average cost per participant for training and
placement services?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So the average cost per training is \$1,463, and then the average cost of placement service is \$1,314. The benefit-cost ratio for workforce participants is 6.94, meaning that for every dollar invested in the program, we're seeing a return of \$6.94 over 10 years. To put this in investment terms, this is a 21 percent annual return on investment, which compounds to reach a total of 594 percent over 10 years.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: So what are some of the largest barriers SBS sees when helping youth gain meaningful employment in high-quality jobs?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So— just one second, Chair. So SPS manages the adult workforce system, and within that system we offer support through our Bronx Workforce One Center in the West Farms to out-of-school New Yorkers aged 18 to 24. We help them obtain their high school equivalency certification, and this is facilitated by co-locating with NYC Public Schools. And we often make referrals to SBS's 350+ community partners on ESL classes and skills trainings. As you can imagine, the barriers they're facing is that they're often disconnected. They're

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: Yeah, we're- basically, we're measuring. We have a bunch of different metrics that we use. Some of them, you

1 know, are on kind of the front end, the input end,
2 the traffic, which again, we have over 100,000 people
3 that we've served, which is the highest that we've
4 served in the past five years. We track- you know,
5 the people that come in meet with a staff member. We
6 figure out what their work experience has been up to
7 this point. We do career advisement. We offer them
8 different services. They can participate in
9 workshops. There are resources in the centers.
10 There's a computer lab there. We- the centers serve
11 as the front door to our training programs, our
12 occupational training programs that we touched on a
13 little bit today, and then on kind of the back end,
14 we're tracking the placement outcomes. So how many of
15 the people that we've touched have gotten a job, how
16 much, you know, at what salary, what kind of job, all
17 of those things are things that we look at and track.
18 Also, as the Commissioner mentioned, you know, it is
19 the federal funding, it is WIOA [sic] funding. It's
20 very, very heavily regulated. There are a lot of
21 compliance issues and requirements that we have to be
mindful of. So we're subject to quarterly
assessments. We're subject to audits. We're subject
to kind of WIOA metrics and goals that we have to

1 meet. And as of right now, we're in full satisfactory
2 compliance across the board. And in some cases we're
3 exceeding those requirements.

4 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: What tool do
5 you use to do that tracking?

6 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: We have
7 a specialized proprietary system that we built within
8 the agency called Work Source One, and that tracks
9 all of the activity, and it's all of the client
10 database for the workforce services.

11 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Which- now we
12 talked about tracking, but in SBS most recent job
13 training, and of the over 12,000 individuals who were
14 assisted across multiple zip codes, most of the job
15 categories being hired could not be traced to a known
16 industry. So what accounts for that unknowing if with
17 this tracking system?

18 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So the, the number
19 of unknown designations is due to data we receive
20 from the New York State Department of Labor, and they
21 pass the data along to us. The job category is
unknown.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: So wait a
minute. So what type of employers use Workforce One

1 sites to do their hiring, and when they hire, they
2 hire for specific positions. So I'm confused on what
3 the unknown is, like, because when you hire someone,
4 you're hiring them to fill a specific job.

5 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: The
6 hiring— every hire that we're reporting, so of the
7 22,500 and change hires that we've reported is
8 validated. And one of the ways that we validate that
9 data is through W4 matching with the New York State
10 Department of Labor. So if it's someone that we have
11 provided meaningful services to and they are employed
12 within the period of time from us having provided
13 those services, that is a hire. But on that W4 data,
14 it does not tell us the industry. So this is one— you
15 know, this is one of the most challenging aspects of
16 the work, I would say probably second to actually
17 helping getting the person the job is actually
18 tracking it. And one of the challenges that we have
19 is as strong as we have very strong employer
20 relationships, but once they get the person hired,
21 they're not so good at getting back to us and working
with us to validate that hire. So one of the
mechanisms that we use is this matching process with
the State Department of Labor. And for those matches,

1 it doesn't tell us the industry. That's really what
2 the issue is. Whereas if it's someone where we're
3 actually— when we're able to get the confirmation
4 directly from the employer on the hire, then we know
5 exactly what job the person was hired into, and
6 that's where you're seeing the matches on your
7 report. But if we're getting— if the hire is
8 validated through a W4, it won't tell us what the
9 industry is. So it's a limitation of the data. But
10 again, given the circumstances, it's verification and
11 validation that there was a hire, and that's why we
12 depend on it.

13 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: So do you
14 think not being able to validate with the employer is
15 a result of the vacancies? Like, is it more staffing
16 that's needed to stay on top of the employer to say—
17 to follow up and follow through on?

18 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: That
19 hasn't really been our experience in the sense that
20 we are able to get out the requests to the employers,
21 you know, to give us back the information. But again,
it's very uneven, the responses.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: From experience
in workforce development, I've found that it's the

1 follow-up, because once they fulfilled and have their
2 hire, then they no longer need your services per se.
3 So they're- the onus isn't necessarily on them to
4 comply and say, hey, we hired this person. It then
5 becomes the onus back on SBS and workforce
6 development to stay on top of them. Because I think
7 this data is very important when we're talking about
8 what type of jobs we're getting, because a lot of New
9 Yorkers may be underemployed. So going back to what
10 type of employers are using Workforce One to hire and
11 what type of positions, predominantly top five, are
being hired in Workforce One facilities?

12 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So just this past
13 fiscal year, we've partnered with over 730 different
14 types of employers. You know, the types of positions
15 that are hired vary. As far as a top- we'll have to
get back to you with the top five.

16 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And through the
17 training at these centers, are you specifically
18 training for the jobs that are available, or are you
19 working with- going back to innovation- training
20 individuals who come through these sites for jobs
21 beyond- for better jobs?

1
2 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: I think we're doing
3 both, Chair Thomas-Henry. So we're looking at jobs
4 that are existing in the market that are— that we
5 have job openings for that our partners can get
6 connected to, and then separately, we are also
7 deploying occupational training where we think
8 there's high demand.

9 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Now, the
10 average hourly wage of the placements that were
11 placed was \$19.86. Does SBS believe that under \$20
12 an hour is a wage that will seriously help struggling
13 New Yorkers?

14 COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you for the
15 question, Chair. So on average folks— the average
16 wage of job seekers we're seeing is about \$3 above
17 the minimum wage. Of course, you know, the living
18 wage in New York City is much higher, and we
19 certainly strive to connect New Yorkers to jobs that
20 provide or get closer to that higher living wage. I
21 will say that, you know, some of the opportunities
that we're offering are entry-level opportunities,
which while initially, the wages that aren't as close
to living wage as we would like to see provide a
pathway to that and that's in addition to some of the

other work we do at our Workforce One Centers as far as connecting New Yorkers to union jobs as well.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: How do you think- kind of piggybacking off that, how do you think Workforce One Centers can be transformed into a place where New Yorkers can go to get better careers and higher paying jobs?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: I think it's multifaceted effort there. I mean, I think, you know, we have to make sure that we are building strong partnerships with employers that provide access to those higher-paying jobs. We also have programming available to employers where we offer training grants to employers where they can- to upskill their workforce and a commitment to pay a higher wage as well. So those are a few of the ways that we think, you know, we can continue to increase the wages that are available to New Yorkers that come through the Workforce One centers.

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: And if I could just also add too, you know, again, being familiar with the work, this is, you know, meeting people where they are. So for a lot of people, this is the entry point. Go ahead.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: You just brought me to another question.

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: With meeting people where they are. How often, if ever, do the staff of Workforce One Centers actually go out to meet people where they are? Because as of now, there's not a number of centers throughout all the boroughs. So, for a person who may be on a fixed income, who may be— have a hard time— I'm going to just take the center we have in Queens is nowhere near my district. How are you out there meeting individuals throughout the boroughs where they actually live?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Absolutely, Chair. So as I mentioned at the top, we have hiring halls. We have one coming up in Jamaica. We've done 60 just in the last fiscal year. You know, we have another one coming up on the 31st. So those are examples of how we meet people where they are. And then also just through our strong community partnerships. And I have some data in response to a previous question as far as the top industry. Thank you to the team. So some of the top industries are admin support and waste

management, healthcare, social assistance, and the accommodation and food services sectors.

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: And if you look at it from, you know, looking at some data from our training programs, for food services, you know, it's an average wage of \$18.12 an hour. But then when you look at some of the other sectors that we're working in, healthcare, we have people coming out of the training programs getting \$32.82 an hour. Technology, \$34.82 an hour. So I think it's, you know, it's a range and we're trying to operate a system that has something for everyone. The Workforce One system is primarily the 18 place-based centers, and there are different opinions out there in the world. From SBS's perspective, we think that that's a critical anchor to provide the services, even though they're not in every single neighborhood of the city. But we've also complemented that with the Jobs NYC initiative, and that's where we're out there running those hiring halls. Started out as one a month. Now we do at least three a month. They target high unemployment neighborhoods in the city. They're out there partnering with CBOs. And we do a lot of times when we can get the employer partners to do it with

us at those events, we're actually doing onsite interviews. People are getting on-the-spot offers. We're also connecting people. It's kind of an outreach mechanism for the place-based centers because a lot of times, even for people who have one in their neighborhood, they may not know it's there. They may never walk in there. So it's really only when we get out there in the trenches, into the communities through an effort like Jobs NYC, that also makes the connection back to the center.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Can you tell me a little bit more about these hiring halls? Like, what does that entail exactly? What does that look like?

CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: So, thank you. Thank you, Chair. So we've got— we served over 6,000 New Yorkers through these hiring halls— 16,000 New Yorkers through these hiring halls, and we've placed 5,000 more in jobs. These are opportunities where we'll feature more than two dozen, a dozen employers on site. The employers will conduct in many cases on-site interviews, and many times we hear candidates that will get an on-site job offer, conditional job offer. And so we bring roughly 200 to 500 depending

1 on the hiring hall, the capacity of our venue, the
2 time of the year, and also a dozen to two dozen
3 employer partners. And we also feature city agencies.
4 We really believe that public sector and public
5 service work is another opportunity to enter the
6 middle class. And so it's not just focused on private
7 sector employers, but also public sector employers,
8 and also ties into our own SBS-focused hiring hall
9 that we're doing on the 31st to make sure New Yorkers
can also benefit from these opportunities.

10 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: So they're job
11 fairs?

12 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: They're job fairs.
13 They're large-scale events. We welcome everybody. We
14 usually can't- we can't even keep those events up
15 live for too long because they get filled up. They
get booked up pretty early in advance.

16 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, thank
17 you.

18 CHIEF OF STAFF KHAN: Which is why we
19 moved to three events per month.

20 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: 730 employers
21 are- that's a large number of employers. How many

account managers are staffed at each Workforce One site?

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: It varies. We have- in total there are about 200 and change staff across the 18 centers in total that do direct service work.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Approximately how many are strictly, like, account managers who are, like, those individuals who would connect- who work with specific employers to- on an ongoing basis, who develop or would have that relationship to help get the data?

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: It's a- we can get back to you with the exact number. I mean, in terms of business development, it's a small number of that 200 to be able- that's managing those relationships. Most of the staffing is tied to serve the people who are coming into the centers.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, I'm going to turn over to Council Member Brewer.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. I just have a question also about workforce. So how many agencies also do workforce, and how are you all coordinated? I know HRA, for instance, Parks does.

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: I think, you know- many of the things are separated by function. So as kind of came up in some of the

discussion that we've had here today, SBS's primary role is the adult workforce system-

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [interposing]

Corect.

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORTE: versus DYCD, which focuses on youth. I think Jobs NYC is a great example where we've coordinated and partnered with agencies. We just about two weeks ago worked with DFTA on a hiring hall for older adults. So there is coordination going on. And relative to your question about CUNY, we partner with them on a number of our occupational training programs. LaGuardia in particular, we have some very, very strong partnerships with them. The Commissioner referenced the NCLEX program. We have two different partners on that. LaGuardia is one of those partners.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. So what you're saying is you think that there's enough coordination going on? Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, I'm going to ask a couple more questions and then turn it over. I know we have quite a few people in the room that have some testimony. SBS partnership with Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, MOME, focuses on

growing and supporting the film, television, theater, music, advertising, and digital media sector in NYC. It acts in media production such as issuing permits, coordinating filming, and promoting NYC as a production center. It is closely linked with SBS because the creative sector has a large percentage of small business and freelancers. \$1 million was added to fiscal 2026 budget for MOME to support a partnership to fund post-production training. What formal mechanisms exist for coordination between MOME and SBS?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you for the question, Chair. So, as you mentioned, SBS and MOME work closely together to deliver workforce support in the arts and theater industry. We meet monthly to provide programmatic updates, review data, and collect feedback on events and overall program implementation. These meetings are attended by SBS program leadership and MOME's Associate Commissioner of Workforce Education and Policy. In addition, our teams are in regular Communication through ad hoc meetings and working sessions tied to key milestones such as program launches, recruitment, and reporting.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And does MOME and SBS share data on businesses served, jobs created, and the economic impact?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Yes, that's right, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: How does permitting- MOME's permitting process intersect with SBS role in helping businesses navigate any regulations?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: So SBS offers support in navigating MOME's permitting process through our My City Business site which provides a suite of resources where businesses can find information on the licenses, permits, and supports they need to do business in New York City. The site also hosts a step-by-step wizard which provides personalized information on government business licenses and permits, including those involved in MOME's permitting processes.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And does MOME work with SBS to identify any small businesses throughout the different communities where production may be set up, say, for- to procure their services,

be it catering, providing food on site, hiring locally?

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: No, but we're always happy to do that.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, thank you.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Any council members have any additional questions? Thank you for your testimony.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: And once—

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: [interposing] Thank you, members of the committee.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Once again, congratulations and welcome to the team.

COMMISSIONER MINAYA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: You may now be excused. While they're getting together, those who are in-person, we will call up to join. Please excuse me in advance if I mess up your name. Tsetan Dekyi, are you in the room? Okay. Please come forward. Charles Debonet [sp?], Rebecca Laurie [sp?], and Laura Rothruck [sp?]. You will each have two minutes.

Is Charles still in the room? Charles from Bach [sp?]. I'll just give him a minute. We'll begin. Please, tell me how to pronounce your name. I don't want to mispronounce it.

TSETAN DEKYI: Not a problem. It's Tsetan.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Tsetan.

TSETAN DEKYI: Tsetan.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, I'm sorry, I apologize. You will have two minutes. You can begin when you're ready.

TSETAN DEKYI: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair Chanel Thomas-Henry and members of the Small Business Committee. My name is Tsetan Dekyi and I am the Development Associate at Accompany Capital, a certified community development financial institution established in New York City in 1997. Over the past 25 years, we have expanded economic opportunities for BIPOC-owned businesses, dispersing more than \$76 million in loans. We have supported over 10,000 businesses through training and technical assistance, helped create more than 3,000 jobs, and saved over 11,000 jobs citywide. Most of our staff are immigrants, and we understand firsthand the

challenges of building credit and starting a business while adapting to a new country and culture. We thank the City Council for creating the CDFI initiative, and we respectfully request \$330,000 in grant- in restored grant funding to enable Accompany Capital to continue creating economic opportunities for entrepreneurs across New York City through the Emerging Microentrepreneur Hub program. Through this initiative, we will support up to 350 microentrepreneurs in starting or formalizing their businesses, establishing items, and accessing the capital they need to grow. We are also requesting \$150,000 through the Speaker's Initiative to launch a commercial gate compliance loan program. This initiative will help small business- small businesses comply with Local Law 75 of 2009, which requires security gates to maintain 70 percent visibility by July 1st, 2026. Many immigrant and minority-owned businesses lack access to affordable financing for these upgrades. This program will help them avoid penalties while maintaining safe and compliant storefronts. At the same time, federal policy changes are creating real uncertainty, recent executive order has raised concerns about the future capacity of the

CDFI fund, and new SBA microlending restrictions tied to citizenship will significantly narrow access to capital.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for your testimony. Next?

REBECCA LURIE: Thank you. Thank you, Chair. My name is Rebecca Lurie, and I work at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies with the Community and Worker Ownership Project. Our work focuses on advancing worker-owned cooperatives, economic democracy, and community-based development to build a more inclusive economy. New York City's small business ecosystem is vital to creating an economy that works for all residents. As the city faces rising costs of living and prepares for future economic and climate challenges, it is critical to invest in infrastructure that is both resilient and community-centered. I want to focus on food affordability and its connection to small businesses and healthy communities. In collaboration with community food advocates, we have been working to design a more just food system, building on the mayor's proposal to establish municipal grocery stores. The proposal to create five municipal grocery

stores is strong and an important start, but it should be viewed as an initial step rather than a complete solution. These stores can act as anchors for a broader system. With the Department for Small Businesses, we recommend expanding the vision to include at least 20 cooperatively rooted stores across neighborhoods, supported by buying clubs, partnerships with local vendors, and decentralized distribution networks. Many of these elements already exist in small, locally owned, and cooperatively run businesses. Addressing food access effectively requires investing in systems, not just individual locations. Success will depend on thoughtful policy design and coordination across city agencies. Aligning food access efforts with small business support and other public priorities can reduce costs, improve efficiency, and increase impact. New York City already has valuable assets that can support this broader system, including commercial systems, commercial kitchens, workforce training centers, street vendors, delivery workers, worker cooperatives, and emerging sustainable supply chains. Community gardens, food pantries, and mutual aid networks also play a critical role in feeding

1 residents and strengthening communities. Many of
2 these models are rooted in shared governance and
3 community engagement, key components of long-term
4 economic justice. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
6 your testimony. Charles?

7 CHARLES DILONE: Thank you. Thank you,
8 Committee Chair Thomas-Henry and members of the
9 Committee on Small Business for the opportunity to
10 testify on the small business-related proposals for
11 their fiscal year 2027 Preliminary Budget. My name is
12 Charles Dilone, and I am the Industrial Business
13 Account Manager at Business Outreach Center Network.
14 We support and strengthen Bronx industrial businesses
15 through direct services, access to capital, and
16 strategic advocacy to drive job growth and economic
17 stability, including our work supporting and
18 strengthening industrial business zones in the Bronx,
19 home to some of the city's most critical industrial
20 corridors, such as Hunts Point, Port Morris,
21 Bathgate, Sariga, and East Chester, which
collectively anchor food distribution, logistics,
manufacturing, and essential services that power New
York City's economy. We are also members of the

Industrial Jobs Coalition, a citywide coalition of business— of industrial business service providers, nonprofit developers of the industrial space and industrial policy advocates fighting to protect and grow the industrial sector in New York City and the good-paying jobs that it provides. I'm here today to speak specifically on the importance of the industrial business service providers, IBSPs, and the roles they play in the industrial sector in boroughs like the Bronx, where industrial jobs are a primary pathway to economic mobility for working-class residents. IBSPs are often the only culturally competent place-based support system that businesses can rely on. This is especially pressing given our concern that the New York City Department of Small Business Services is looking to dismantle the only business support program for small and mid-sized industrial firms through their newly released RFP, which would eliminate funding for IBSPs. This approach would be incredibly harmful to the industrial sector and the educable and good-paying jobs that it provides. And in the Bronx, this would directly impact thousands of small industrial businesses.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for your testimony. Laura?

LAURA ROTHROCK: Good afternoon, Chair Thomas-Henry and members of the Council. My name is Laura Rothrock. I'm the President of the Long Island City Partnership, the local nonprofit economic development organizations serving Long Island City. We work closely with SBS because we manage both the LIC Business Improvement District, the BID, and also the Industrial Business Zone. I'm here today to urge the Council and the administration to protect New York City's only dedicated support program for industrial businesses, the IBSP program. The current proposal to fold this program into the Business Solutions Centers, it's not a reorganization, it's a dismantling. Replacing a network of trusted place-based organizations with a single industrial specialist per borough will significantly weaken the city's ability to serve industrial businesses where they actually operate. For more than 40 years, this program has helped retain and grow industrial jobs. Eliminating it now would come at exactly the wrong moment. Industrial firms are facing rising rents, shrinking space, labor shortages, and increasingly

1 complex regulations. They need specialized hands-on
2 support, not a generalized one-size-fits-all model.
3 Industrial businesses are foundational to an
4 equitable New York City. They support over 500,000
5 jobs and generate more than \$1.7 billion in annual
6 tax revenue. These are accessible, good-paying jobs
7 for working-class New Yorkers, especially immigrants,
8 people of color, and those without college degrees.
9 What makes the IBSP program effective is its local
10 expertise. These are not generic service providers.
11 They're embedded in industrial zones, helping
12 businesses secure leases, access financing, navigate
13 compliance, connect to workforce pipelines, and plan
14 for growth. A single rotating staff member per
15 borough cannot replicate this level of service across
16 geographically dispersed industrial corridors. This
17 proposal also contradicts the city's own NYC
18 Industrial Plan, which calls for sustained
19 place-based industrial support. Thank you for your
20 time and continued support of New York City's
21 industrial workforce.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
your testimony. Thank you all. You're excused. Have a
great day. Next up, call Emma Myers, Leah Archibald,

1 Allison Eden, and Gary Goldenstein. And while they're
2 coming up, I'd like to remind everyone that testimony
3 can be submitted to testimony@council.nyc.gov up to
4 72 hours at the close of the hearing, where it will
5 be reviewed in full. And I'm missing— is Gary still
6 in the room? Oh, are you together? I'll start with
7 Emma.

8 EMMA MYERS: Hello. Thank you to the City
9 Council, Chair Thomas-Henry, the Committee on Small
10 Business for their attention to the 2027 fiscal
11 budget cycle. My name is Emma Myers. I'm the Senior
12 Director of Small Business Programs at Hot Bread
13 Kitchen. I'm speaking on behalf of Hot Bread Kitchen,
14 an organization that promotes economic mobility for
15 New Yorkers who face barriers to economic
16 opportunities through job training and placement,
17 food entrepreneurship programs, and a wraparound
18 ecosystem of support in New York City. Over the past
19 18 years, Hot Bread Kitchen has supported a community
20 of over 2,700 program participants in launching
21 careers in the food industry. Starting and growing
their small businesses, and accessing the resources
they need to succeed at work and in the world. We
offer our members a diverse array of programs and

services to help them reach economic mobility, workforce development, job placement, wraparound support services, and small business incubation. We are grateful to have received funding from the City Council previously and are seeking the Council's support again in FY27 to ensure we expand access to our programs and deepen our impact in our members' lives. Hot Bread Kitchen's small business programs, HBK Incubates, supports food business entrepreneurs through three programs: Seed, Start, and Scale. Seed is our pre-incubation program that supports aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs in designing a viable business model and provides a roadmap to launch a food business. Start is our incubator. It connects ready-to-launch and recently launched food businesses with subsidized shared commercial kitchen space, market opportunities to grow sales, and technical assistance with the goal of reaching breakeven and creating a strong foundation for business success. Scale is our accelerator, which supports growth-ready businesses in accessing capital across lending, equity, and grants to fuel continued growth. In 2026, Hot Bread Kitchen will reach over 190 small business owners across New York City. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you,
Leah?

LEAH ARCHIBALD: Hello, my name is Leah Archibald. I'm the Executive Director of Evergreen, and we're the local development corporation that works with businesses in industrial North Brooklyn to help them grow so we can keep working-class jobs in our community. And we believe that eliminating the industrial business service provider program, which by the way serves industrial businesses in every zip code of the city, not just industrial business zones, is a big mistake. For more than 40 years, my organization has partnered with the city to be their front door for industrial businesses in our community. We build trust, we know these companies, and we help navigate everything from financing to real estate. We've been connected with these businesses in our community for years, sometimes for generations of ownership. I want to talk a moment about what the city stands to lose by dismantling this program. It not only withdraws investment from our community and disenfranchises small manufacturers and their high-quality working-class jobs, it undercuts the city's ability to achieve its own

goals, particularly in Mayor Mamadani— in light of Mayor Mamdani's goal of creating a more equitable city. The city is gonna lose its pipeline to its own incentive programs. Businesses don't know about them, and they don't have the capacity to apply without our help. The city is going to lose its emergency response network for businesses. After Hurricane Sandy, we brought the mayor out to flooded businesses. During COVID we connected our manufacturers to produce hospital gowns. The city is gonna lose capacity when it matters most. When SBS needed help during COVID we took on hundreds of businesses outside of our own service areas to help them apply for PPP and other emergency funding. We helped Department of City Planning survey 300 businesses. We helped the Department of Transportation do outreach about the BQE redesign and the new Grand Street redesign. If we lose this funding, we are not going to have the capacity to do this in the future. So please—

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: [interposing]

Thank you for your testimony.

LEAH ARCHIBALD: Please, please reinstate the programming and can help us— work with us to build a stronger program.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you.
Allison?

ALLISON EDEN: Good morning and thank you for hearing me. My name is Allison Eden and I am the founder of Allison Eden Studios, a creative manufacturer of glass mosaic tile in Brooklyn for over 35 years. We handcraft our own work right here in New York City, and we employ New Yorkers whose livelihoods depend on this business. I am here today to say this as clearly as I can: eliminating funding from the IBSP program and for organizations like Evergreen is a direct threat to small businesses like mine. Evergreen didn't just help us, they saved us. When we were pushed out of Manhattan, we were at a breaking point. We could not find affordable industrial space. We were facing the very real possibility of leaving New York City altogether. And without Evergreen, that is exactly what would have happened. They found us space that we could actually afford. They gave us access to education, real tools, marketing, finance, and business strategy. They gave

us a community. They gave us a fighting chance.

Because of that, we are still here in New York City.

We are still creating, we are still employing, and we are still contributing to the city that we all love.

And let me be very clear, this is not about my business. This is about every small manufacturer, every artist, every maker who is hanging on by a thread in New York City right now. You talk about supporting small businesses, but this program is the support we need. Without it, you are not just cutting funding, you are cutting lifelines. I could leave.

Many of us could go. I could go somewhere else, somewhere where it's cheaper, be in the Florida sun right now. But I chose New York City to fight to stay here because this city matters. But staying here requires partnerships. It requires infrastructure. It requires programs like Evergreen. If you eliminate this funding, you are forcing businesses like mine out, and once we're gone, we're not coming back. So I am asking you, not politely but urgently, do not take this away.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for your testimony. Gary?

GARY GOLDSTEIN: Hi, I'm Gary.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Please turn your mic.

GARY GOLDSTEIN: Hey, I'm Gary, husband of Allison Eden. We work together every single day. So she's the boss. I'm like the gift with purchase. No one really wants to see me, but I'm here to say hi. Yeah. So we make custom glass mosaics in New York City. When you're on the subway, you see custom glass mosaics. That's what we do, but we don't get any business from the city. We never did any subway work. And that's what it's like competing on the world stage these days. It's very hard for a US manufacturer. It's even harder for a manufacturer in New York City, but we've managed to hang in there with a lot of help from Evergreen. When we were losing our lease in Manhattan, they found us a beautiful space at a good rent and kept us being employers in Brooklyn. Over the years, we probably employed 100 young artists from all over the world. And there have been a lot of challenges along the way, including, COVID, where we were shut down and didn't think we were going to make it, but Evergreen helped us out. They got us PPP money, helped us fill out the forms, and they've given us education, helped

1 us stay compliant through HR classes. And, they've
2 really held us together. So, I'm here speaking. Some
3 of my friends are here. They have a paint company,
4 the company that makes displays for store windows,
5 museum displays. We're owners of businesses and we
6 employ people and give them a shot and good paying
7 jobs, which without us they might not have. And we
8 probably wouldn't be here without the help of
9 Evergreen. So I'm here advocating for Evergreen and
10 the important work that they do that allows us to
keep people employed locally.

11 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
12 your testimony. You're excused. Call up the next
13 panel. Franco from TwoSeven Inc., Miguela [sp?] from
14 Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corp. Seven
15 Murray [sp?] and Ligia Gualpa [sp?]. Thank you. You
each have two minutes. Franco [sic], you can begin.

16 FRANCO GOETTE: Good afternoon, my name is
17 Franco Goette. I'm the CEO of TwoSeven Incorporated,
18 a design and fabrication studio at 221 McKibbin
19 Street in East Williamsburg. Together with my partner
20 Martina Salisbury, I employ over 50 New Yorkers who
21 design and build right here in Brooklyn custom window
displays, retail environments, and installations for

1 fashion brands, luxury retailers, museums, and
2 cultural institutions. Everything we make is proudly
3 made in New York City. I'm here to strongly oppose
4 the elimination of the Industrial Business Service
5 Provider program. Evergreen, your North Brooklyn
6 Business Exchange is exactly what this program is
7 meant to create. They serve over 200 businesses
8 annually in the Greenpoint, Williamsburg, and North
9 Brooklyn industrial business zones, offering
10 networking, workshops, and technical assistance,
11 helping businesses navigate grants and financing, and
12 advocating for the preservation of industrial space.
13 TwoSeven's survival is a direct result of that work.
14 When rezoning forced us out of Greenpoint in 2008, I
15 seriously considered closing the business. Evergreen
16 made us aware of a city grant that covered our moving
17 expenses. Without it, during the financial crisis, we
18 would not have made it. They also helped us become a
19 qualified Empire Zone enterprise. Those state tax
20 credits allowed us to grow from 15 employees to over
21 50 over the next 15 years. Fabricators, artists, and
artists all based right here in New York City.
Without the IBSP program, Evergreen cannot do this
work, and without that support, businesses like ours

and the hundreds of others Evergreen serves are at risk of leaving the city entirely. Please preserve funding for the IBSP program.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for your testimony. You may begin. 15433

MICHAELA CRATER: Hi, thank you, Committee Chair Thomas-Henry and members of this Committee on Small Businesses for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Michaela Crater. I'm the interim Executive Director for SBIDC, Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation. And for over 40 years, we have served the industrial businesses and workers of Sunset Park, Red Hook, Gowanus, and South Brooklyn. Across these neighborhoods, more than 2,000 industrial firms power the working waterfront, from food production, garment manufacturing, to film and TV, fabrication, wholesale, and logistics. We have deep, decades-long relationships with these businesses, and we know the pulse of these sectors. We are the local intermediaries, like our peers have testified before you, that connect these companies and small businesses to government. And each year, SBIDC supports over 250 businesses through direct services

and advocacy since 2017. We've helped place more than 2,000 New Yorkers into quality family-sustaining jobs. But I'm here today because all this work is now at risk. The city is proposing to eliminate the only public program dedicated to supporting small manufacturers and industrial businesses, this IBSP program. For SBIDC, this represents a nearly 20 percent cut to our budget. For the sector, it means a loss of a critical specialized support that no generalist program is positioned to replace. This is being framed as streamlining. It is not. It is policymaking in the name of efficiency with very real and very foreseeable consequences. Industrial businesses operate within highly specialized systems, land use, logistics, workforce, and regulation. A generalized approach cannot replace the trust, expertise, and relationships that have been built over decades, and that trust matters. When Workspace 11, a Gowanus-based fabrication firm, faced displacement due to eminent domain, SBIDC was the first to inform them and the partner that helped them navigate and what came next. We guided them through negotiations, financing, and relocation, helping them stay in the neighborhood and preserve over 30 jobs.

1 That is what specialized place-based support looks
2 like, and it cannot be replicated by a program that
3 does not know the block, the business or history.
4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
6 your testimony. Again, a reminder, any testimony can
7 be submitted online by emailing
8 testimony@council.nyc.gov. You can begin.

9 SEREN MOREY: Good afternoon. My name is
10 Seren Morey and I'm a co-owner of Guerra Paint and
11 Pigment Corp, a small business founded 40 years ago
12 in the East Village and now located in Maspeth,
13 Queens. I'm happy to be here today to give testimony
14 in support of Evergreen Exchange, who stands to be
15 negatively impacted by the defunding of the IBSP. I'm
16 going to begin with a brief backstory. In the year
17 2000, my husband and I decided to save a dying
18 specialty artist paint and pigment business in New
19 York City in the East Village. It specializes in rare
20 and extinct colors. We entered the deep end of the
21 pool without knowing how to swim. We knew nothing
about business or chemistry and were unprepared to
face the incessant collection notices that were
coming through the door. Through grit and steadfast

effort, we somehow survived 9/11, the 2008 stock market crash, Hurricane Sandy, COVID, and the ensuing inflation. In 2021, we were told by a new landlord of our storefront that they would be tripling our rent. We decided to abandon our location of 35 years and consolidate to our warehouse in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. We did this through great effort and successfully relocated the retail store to Williamsburg. Six months later, our warehouse landlord said they would have to be selling their property and that we would have to move. My husband had become very ill, and I was in my darkest hour asking anyone and everyone for help and asking for prayers and guidance at church. My pastor connected me to someone in the Department of Cultural Affairs who then referred me to Evergreen. Evergreen became my support system. I knew that as a small business we had to purchase a small warehouse or we would be priced out of New York City. With a child at LaGuardia High School, we knew that we could not leave the city. We set about trying to find a realtor. Prior to working with Evergreen, I was unable to make any headway with a realtor. Anyone I spoke to needed pre-approval for a mortgage. Through

1
2 Evergreen's referral, I met Eitan Hakami [sp?] at
3 Greiner Malts. Eitan understood our position and
4 worked for us diligently to locate a suitable
5 property while we simultaneously worked on financing,
6 again with the help of Evergreen and their referrals.
7 There were multitudes of emails back and forth to
8 Steven Fabian and Natalie Vishnevsky, for words of
9 advice and support throughout the entire seven-month
10 process in a market with little to no small ware-
11 gosh.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: No worries.
14 Thank you for your testimony.

15
16 SEREN MOREY: I should have timed myself
17 better.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Please email
20 it. You can email it to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

21
22 SEREN MOREY: Thank you.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: No problem.
25 Next?

26
27 LIGIA GUALLPA: Yeah, thank you. My name
28 is Ligia Guallpa. I'm the Executive Director of the
29 Workers Justice Project. Thank you for the
30 opportunity, Chair, for- to testify today. I'm here
31 to emphasize the importance of supporting the worker

cooperatives. Particularly, we are seeking support for the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative, which we're part of it as a coalition of organizations that are seeking \$5.09 million. This particularly supports worker cooperative. WJP has been supporting and incubating house cleaning cooperatives as an alternative for workers to have opportunities to run their own businesses that are mostly run by women, immigrant women. In addition to Worker Cooperative, also Workers Justice Project operates workforce development programs, particularly a day labor hiring hall, which connects skilled, reliable workers from the community with responsible employers. This is small businesses that hire locally, pay fair wages, and also provide safe working conditions. Just this fiscal year, we have connected domestic workers and day laborers to 600 jobs with small businesses, contractors around the district— I mean, around Brooklyn particularly, and also we have been supporting about 400 day laborers to be reinstated into their jobs after they were unfairly deactivated, which is a form of being fired by delivery companies. So with that, the reason I'm here is because we want to make sure that the council

1 considers supporting the Worker Cooperative, but also
2 key initiatives that support our work, which is the
3 Day Labor Workforce Initiative. That is a coalition
4 of worker centers across the city with 4.9 million,
5 and also reinstating- restoring our funding for legal
6 services and day laborers for domestic workers. And
7 also we recently started a new initiative that is
8 Workers' Rights Organizing and Education along with
9 other organizations, seeking \$5 million for worker
10 organizing. Thank you for the opportunity to testify
today.

11 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
12 your testimony. This panel is excused. Next up, I'd
13 like to call Matt Shapiro, Christopher Kasex, William
14 Joyce, and William Greenberg. Matt? Okay. Christopher
15 Kasex? Okay. Kason? Okay, my apologies. And then
16 William Joyce. Okay. Alright. Thank you. We'll start
with Matt. You have two minutes.

17 MATTHEW SHAPIRO: Good afternoon. My name
18 is Matthew Shapiro, and I'm the Legal Director of the
19 Street Vendor Project. I'd like to thank the Chair
20 and the committee members for the opportunity to
21 testify today. The Street Vendor Project is the only
organization that exclusively serves street vendors

in New York City. We are the centralized hub for this underserved population and provide critical small business and legal services to vendors since our founding in 2001. We respectfully request support from the New York City Council to sustain and expand our essential small business empowerment program and community outreach and education for street vendors. Additionally, we ask for the City Council to fully resource the new Office of Street Vendor Services within SBS to ensure this office has the necessary funding and staffing to accomplish the goals of establishing educational services for vendors. Earlier this year, the City Council passed a historic landmark package of legislation, including Local Law 54, that will create a total of 21,500 new licenses for vendors. This will create a legal pathway for the tens of thousands of vendors to move out of the shadows and become fully licensed, regulated businesses. However, this legislation will only be impactful if the city's 23,000 vendors understand the new vending system, know how to access these licenses, have access to multilingual, accessible, comprehensive, and relevant resources to support them. We are seeking funding to create and implement

1 a comprehensive outreach and education campaign to
2 help vendors navigate the complex vending laws in
3 seven languages— Arabic, Bangla, Spanish, Mandarin,
4 English, French, and Wolof— and offer trainings to
5 build their skills and to grow their vending
6 businesses. We already conduct weekly street outreach
7 in seven languages, meeting vendors where they work
8 to educate them on the rules, teach them their legal
9 rights, and connect them to our free legal and small
10 business services. In FY27, we will create and
11 distribute multilingual multimedia materials to
12 educate vendors about the new vending system to
13 ensure they are ready to join the waiting list and
14 apply for the new licenses as soon as they are
15 available. Via our Small Business Empowerment
16 Program, we support vendors to establish financial
17 independence, self-sufficiency, and small business
18 growth by providing them with the tools, resources,
19 and skills to grow their business, including setting
20 up bank accounts, taking e-payments, marketing, and
21 one-on-one consultations.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
your testimony.

MATTHEW SHAPIRO: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Question- you asked for funding. What is the amount?

MATTHEW SHAPIRO: So we have two different- I have it in the application. I'll tell you in a second. Sorry. So for the community outreach and education program, it's \$700,000, and for the small business consultation program, it's \$500,000.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you.

MATTHEW SHAPIRO: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Christopher?

CHRISTOPHER CASEY: Thank you, Committee Chair Thomas-Henry and the members of the Committee for Small Business, for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Christopher Casey, and I am the senior campaigner for land use at the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development, or ANHD, for short. We're also proud members of the Industrial Jobs Coalition, many of which of our members spoke today, like Evergreen and SBIDC, whom I am incredibly proud of. I'm here today to urge this council to support two key programs critical to ensuring our communities maintain small businesses while speaking to one in particular. One you mentioned earlier, the Commercial Lease Assistance Program, and then the

Industrial Business Service Provider Program, or IBSPs for short. Regarding the Commercial Lease Assistance Program, we ask this council to work with us to ensure that the Department of Small Business do two things: expands the Commercial Lease Assistance Program so more businesses can assess legal help before signing risky leases, and then two, increase the funding to community-based organizations that do on-the-ground organizing and outreach. In our written submission, which we'll be submitting today, we lay out in more detail why this funding is so critical to assisting our small business, small merchants. And now to the IBSP program, which you heard a lot about today, and I'm going to continue to bound the payment for you to hear. For nearly 40 years, IBSPs have provided essential place-based support to small and mid-sized industrial businesses, helping with financing and real estate and compliance and workforce needs, and just generally navigating the city bureaucracy. This is a highly effective cost program. It's just \$1.2 million that supports a sector with 500,000 jobs. That's like \$2.40 a job. We also strongly believe this program needs to remain distinct from the other SBS programs that are more

targeted to other types of small businesses.

Industrial businesses are not the same as other small businesses. They have unique needs that you've heard about today in, like, personal testimony that require specialized support, and treating them as the same risks undermining a sector that is critical to the working-class communities, immigrants, and people of color across New York City. We urge you to please support these two programs, and thank you so much for your chairmanship.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for your testimony. William?

WILLIAM JOYCE: Oh, thank you. Hello, Chair Thomas-Henry and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is William Joyce. I'm the Director of the Community and Economic Development Program at Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A, now doing business as Build Up Justice NYC. We are the provider of the Commercial Lease Assistance pProgram that's been referenced today by the commissioner. And we're—so the CLA contract, along with discretionary funding from the City Council, funds our team's— all of our work serving small business owners on commercial

1 lease matters, including negotiating new leases,
2 lease renewals, terminations, and protecting against
3 landlords' harassment. The city's funding also
4 supports our work serving nonprofits and community
5 organizations. Last city fiscal year, we handled more
6 than 1,400 cases for small businesses and nonprofits
7 or community groups across the entire city. BUJNYC
8 has been administering the CLA program for nearly a
9 decade, and we've seen firsthand how important this
10 work is to keeping businesses open. We believe that
11 expanding the scope of these services funded by the
12 CLA program would help us to significantly improve
13 outcomes for the businesses we serve. Many small
14 businesses face landlord-initiated lawsuits after
15 falling behind on rent, sometimes by just a few
16 hundred dollars. However, the CLA program doesn't
17 allow us to appear in court or litigate on behalf of
18 our clients. We are asking for assistance in opening
19 up a pilot program that would allow our team to
20 appear in limited amounts of litigation on behalf of
21 small business tenants across the city for the
purpose of finalizing and signing stipulation
agreements. Currently, while we negotiate the same,
we are not permitted even to sign on to these

1
2 settlement agreements in court, causing our clients
3 to face additional funds, and they have to go find a
4 new attorney just to sign on to that. This initial
5 pilot that we're proposing could focus on allowing
6 our counsel to appear in court and finalize these
7 agreements or represent very limited, specific
8 categories of issues faced by vulnerable small
9 business owners. Thank you for your time.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
12 your testimony. You're excused. Next up, we have Doug
13 Yang— Young, sorry— Khalif Nunnally-Rivera, Gregory
14 J. Morris, and Adrian Smith. Doug had to leave? Thank
15 you. So I have Khalif, Gregory, and Adrian. Okay.
16 Khalif, you may begin. You have two minutes.

17
18 KHALIF NUNNALLY-RIVERA: Good afternoon,
19 Chair Thomas-Henry and distinguished members of the
20 New York City Council Committee on Small Business.
21 Thank you all for allowing me to testify today. My
name is Khalif Nunnally-Rivera. I'm the senior
engagement manager at the ICA Group. The ICA, a
national nonprofit, has been a founding member of the
Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative
since 2015. WCBDI is a City Council-funded initiative
that helps launch and grow worker-owned businesses in

which employees share in profits and make decisions democratically. We help expand worker ownership and combat the succession crisis by identifying business owners ready to exit their business and facilitating sales to employees as worker cooperatives. Based on decades of research, our approach helps stabilize the economic situation of individuals and communities, transforming jobs into meaningful and dignified drivers of a robust economy and transforming workplaces in their surrounding communities. During this fiscal year and last fiscal year, we provided technical assistance to Bike Plant, a bedside bike shop that became a worker co-op. The conversion process involved a financial and operational feasibility assessment, securing financing, educating workers about the co-op model, and working with those workers to design the specifics of decision-making structures. This is just one example of many worker co-ops throughout the last several years. Over the last decade or so, ICA has created 19 worker co-ops across various industries, provided over 3,000 hours of technical assistance and educational support to over 850 businesses and individuals. Our work has also resulted in at least 300 new jobs throughout the

city, and we currently have seven more businesses in incubation. Thanks to continued City Council funding, ICA and the rest of WCBDI has provided pro bono services across the city, helping triple the number of co-ops over the last 10 years. We graciously ask that City Council increase WCBDI funding to \$5.01 million for FY27.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for your testimony.

KHALIF NUNNALLY-RIVERA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Gregory?

GREGORY MORRIS: Thank you very much for this time, Chair. I submitted my testimony online, so I won't bore you with that at this point. I'm the CEO of the New York City Employment and Training Coalition, the largest workforce development association in the country based here in New York City. We represent agencies, organizations, institutions in New York City that are focused on workforce development. I wanted to be here to say something I know you already know, which is small business is a foundation for a strong workforce system in New York City. I thank you for asking all of the right questions today, for everything from

data to retention to outcomes to your place-based question about West Farms and others. All spot on, all thoughtful. And I hope you realize, like I think many of us in the audience did, that the answers perhaps were not as crisp or clear as they need to be. SBS has become a small- has become a Swiss Army knife in New York City, not unlike EDC, not unlike DYCD. And we have to ask ourselves when it comes to workforce development, what are we actually buying? Especially considering now that we've eliminated words like economic development from the Deputy Mayor labels? Now we're talking about economic justice, and we need to think about what that means. Our city has dozens of programs focused on workforce development strategies, and yet there is no common budget for workforce development in New York City. And until we get that, it is going to be very difficult to hold the city accountable for its outcomes. In particular, as was flagged during this conversation, the coordination of the Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development, which I appreciate immensely, but has no budget to coordinate two dozen agencies in New York City that have a hand in workforce development. Specific to Small Business Services, I

1 just want to note for you, the Workforce One system
2 is supported by nonprofit and for-profit providers. I
3 suspect as time goes on, you will be interested in
4 taking a look at both of their results, the majority
5 of which are only resulting in placement that is
6 minimum wage. If it's sectoral-based training, it's
7 going to be closer to \$20 an hour, but it's not
8 enough. You flag the hiring halls— bless your heart
9 for doing so. I've never heard who got hired in
10 hiring halls, but I know they've been wonderful
11 turnouts. The last note to make is this— in FY23,
12 Small Business Services and Workforce Development—

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
13 your testimony.

GREGORY MORRIS: put \$26 million in the
14 budget. In 2026, it was \$34 million. I hope that you
15 make a commitment to growing that.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
16 your testimony.

GREGORY MORRIS: Thank you. Adrian?

18 ADRIAN SMITH: Good afternoon, Chair
19 Thomas-Henry and members of the Committee on Small
20 Business. Thank you. My name is Adrian Smith, and I'm
21 the Director of the Microenterprise Project at

Volunteers of Legal Service, also known as VOLS. For over 40 years, VOLS has partnered with community-based organizations and the private bar to provide free civil legal services to New Yorkers who otherwise can't afford or access representation. Our five core projects serve small business owners, individuals accessing benefits, immigrant young people, incarcerated mothers, and older adults in every borough. The Microenterprise Project's core mission is to help existing and aspiring small business owners access high-quality pro bono legal services. Working closely with community-based partners to reach underserved neighborhoods, we leverage the transactional expertise of volunteer attorneys to help small businesses reduce legal expenses and reinvest those crucial funds into their operations. Pro bono transactional legal services are a critical resource for microentrepreneurs on the often challenging path of starting, maintaining and protecting a small business. I am here today to urge the committee to support both the Department of Small Business Services and legal service organizations such as VOLS that provide transactional legal services to small businesses. Legal issues are

1 business issues, and for small business owners, legal
2 and operational challenges are deeply intertwined.
3 They cannot be addressed in isolation, particularly
4 when so many businesses are operating under real
5 economic strain. According to the NYC EDC, in the
6 second quarter of 2025, about 3,500 businesses opened
7 in New York City, while about 8,400 closed, for a net
8 loss of 4,900 businesses, the weakest quarter of net
9 business formation in five years. At the same time,
10 the city's economic growth has become increasingly
11 concentrated in only a few sectors, adding to the
12 uncertainty facing neighborhood businesses,
13 nonprofits, and workers. Thank you for your time.

14 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
15 your testimony. I do have your written testimony. I
16 want to come back to Khalif and Gregory for a moment.
17 You were giving numbers before you finished. Greg,
18 you have those available?

19 GREGORY MORRIS: Yeah. So, if you look at
20 the fiscal year 23 budget in Schedule C, which is
21 small business services and development initiatives,
the City Council put \$26 million towards small
business and workforce development initiatives. That
was FY23. In 26, it was \$34 million. So as you can

1 see, that is a modest increase over the course of a
2 time period where I think we could argue
3 affordability, economic mobility, workforce
4 development, small businesses needed more supports.
5 So it's a very modest growth in a handful of years.
6 I'm hoping that this council, which has in many
7 hearings talked about workforce development, seeks to
8 make a real commitment within that Schedule C budget-
9 within that Schedule C segment, small business
10 services and workforce development initiatives,
11 there's one particular line that's job placement and
12 training initiatives. In FY23, this council put \$8.25
13 million into that. In FY26, it was \$8.45. Again, in
14 that period of time, how much has this council
15 committed to ensuring that our city is driving its
16 people, its talent, and supports towards the best
17 outcomes? I would argue we need investment.

18 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you.

19 GREGORY MORRIS: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Khalif?

21 KHALIF NUNNALLY-RIVERA: Yes. So the
request that WCB DI, we put in a proposal to increase
our funding to \$5,097,082 for FY27, and that would be
an increase over our current budget, which has been-

1 which was the same over the last three years, I
2 believe, at about \$3.5 million.

3 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, thank
4 you. This panel is excused. Thank you very much for
5 your testimony. Is there anyone else present who
6 would like to testify that I have not called? Please
7 fill out a slip. Slip, yeah, okay. Just give- just
8 give us one moment. Okay, if you can say your name-
9 they'll bring you a slip to fill out, but if you can
say your name, you have two minutes.

10 FRANCESCA FERNANDEZ-BRUCE: Sure, thank
11 you so much. Good afternoon, my name is Francesca
12 Fernandez-Bruce. I am the Executive Director of the
13 Grand Street BID, one of those underserved community
14 small bids that you've been hearing about, and I am
15 urging this body to direct SBS to withdraw this RFP
16 in support of IBSP providers like Evergreen.
17 Evergreen's track record is exceptional over four
18 decades of service, and that is because they offer
19 irreplaceable institutional knowledge, trust built
20 over, as they say, generations, advocacy that fights
21 and wins for this concentrated and high-impact
industrial center against long odds, which you've
heard about today. They and their industrial core

were already being asked to do much more with much less, pressured by an increasingly hostile policy, real estate, and structural landscape. I don't think I need to explain speculation, Williamsburg, or the industrial plan to anyone in this room. But between hostile policy, economic shifts, rising costs, and the erosion of their member base, losing this funding would be fatal, and it would be precisely when this community needs its advocates the most. But even setting that aside, this proposal is flawed on its own terms. The RFP explicitly calls for contractors with deep industrial expertise, trusted community relationships, and on-the-ground presence. It acknowledges that effective service delivery requires embedded community-level relationships. Evergreen is precisely what that description calls for. The proposed replacement routes this community's support through the Business Solutions Center miles away in Fort Greene with no demonstrated presence, no relationships, and no track record in this industrial community. That is not a hub-and-spoke model, as it says. It is a substitution on paper, but a dismantling on the ground. BSCs provide valuable generalist support services. Industrial business

1 support in North Brooklyn is not a generalist
2 problem. To our knowledge, no local stakeholders were
3 consulted in the design of this proposal, and that
4 alone should tell you something about how well SBS
5 understands what it is proposing to replace. Please
6 protect this fragile ecosystem and reconsider the
7 proposal to needlessly destabilize it. Thank you very
8 much.

9 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
10 your testimony. Please, and apologies, fill out
11 another form for us so that we have you on the
12 record. Thank you. Is there anyone else who is
13 present in the room that would like to testify that
14 has not already done so? Okay, we will move on to
15 those on Zoom. First up, I have Tod Greenfield,
16 William Rubenstein, Patricia Robinson and Quincy Eli
17 Kat- Kate, I'm sorry, friend of yours? Raise your
18 hand when you're ready. And do we have Todd?

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

20 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Tod, hold one
21 moment for me, please. We cannot hear you.

TOD GREENFIELD: Thanks for the
opportunity to testify. I'm Tod Greenfield, an owner
of Martin Greenfield Clothiers, an industrial

business located in East Williamsburg. Our company manufactures hand-tailored suits, and we currently employ 50 New Yorkers. I'm writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed reduction of the Industrial Business Service Provider program.

Organizations like Evergreen provide critical support to small manufacturers and individual businesses like mine. Evergreen helped our company apply for our PPP loan, provided us with HR classes, and advocated on our behalf many times over the past 44 years. Without their assistance, it would be more difficult for small businesses like ours to thrive in New York City. Our business provides stable, good-paying union jobs to a mostly immigrant workforce. During COVID we produced desperately needed masks and hospital gowns for city agencies, hospitals, and frontline program. My father, Martin Greenfield, got his first job in New York City at what is now our factory. He worked for the predecessor company for 30 years, starting as a non-English-speaking refugee with only grade school education. His factory job enabled him to put down roots here and provided our family with the means to educate my brother and I. Today, our employees do the same for their families. After the blackout of 1977,

our neighborhood was decimated and businesses that survived the fires and looting were fleeing. Martin Greenfield worked with St. Nick's Alliance to establish Evergreen in 1982. This helped to stabilize and improve our neighborhood. Programs like IBSP ensure that small companies like mine have the support they need to remain in the city and continue employing local residents. I strongly urge the City of New York to preserve funding for the IBSP program and continue supporting organizations like Evergreen that provide essential services to the industrial business community, the livelihood of my business, and that of my-

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired.

TOD GREENFIELD: Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you. Next up is William Rubenstein on?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: He may not be on. Patricia Robinson?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

PATRICIA ROBINSON: Yes, good afternoon, Chair Thomas-Henry and members of the Committee on the Small Business. My name is Patricia Robinson,

Chief Administrative Officer at Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, a nonprofit community development organization focused on economic growth, small business support, and industrial development in Southeast Queens, and a proud member of the Industrial Jobs Coalition. I'm here to speak about the critical importance of the IBSPs and our concern with the RFP that has been presented, which would essentially dismantle the city's only dedicated support system for small and mid-sized business-industrial businesses after more than 40 years of investment, at a time when the businesses face rising costs, land pressures, and workforce challenges. This is not a transformation. It is an erasure. I also want to respectfully acknowledge that Council Member Selvena Brooks-Prowers, a member of this committee, has first seen the impact of the IBSP providers like ours in Queens and her District 31. Some years ago, Bartlett Dairy, a minority-owned trucking company, relocated from Queens to New Jersey. Greater Jamaica worked closely with the company to identify a viable site, guide them through the bidding process, and connect them with programs and incentives that made the project feasible. And as a result, Bartlett Dairy

1 made a long-term commitment to Southeast Queens,
2 investing over \$30 million in a new facility and
3 bringing approximately 200 union jobs back to the
4 community. It is not only the large firms that
5 organizations on the ground can support. In District
6 31, in the MME, a small Black woman-owned
7 construction firm, was experiencing rapid growth
8 after being awarded multiple state contracts. Our
9 organization assembled a series of six loans totaling
10 approximately \$500,000, enabling the firm to
11 successfully perform on \$2.5 million in contracts.
12 These are the outcomes that happen when trusted
13 community-based organizations are resourced to do the
14 work. We respectfully urge the city to remove
15 industrial services from the RFP, extend IBSP
16 contracts for two years, and engage stakeholders-

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

16 PATRICIA ROBINSON: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you. Next
18 up, Quincy Ely?

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

20 QUINCY ELY-CATE: Ely-Cate, thank you.
21

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Kate, thank you. No, your friends were talking in the background. I was— They wanted to make sure I called you.

QUINCY ELY-CATE: I hope they had my back.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Yes, they did.

QUINCY ELY-CATE: Okay. Good afternoon, Committee Chair Thomas-Henry and members of the Committee on Small Business. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Quincy Ely-Cate. I'm Director of Industrial Business Development at the Business Outreach Center BOC Network. We're proud to support industrial manufacturing businesses across Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. Although we serve IBZs and their high concentration of industrial businesses, our services support significant amounts of industrial businesses outside of IBZs as well, regardless of their location in our service area, whether it's Publimax Printing in Ridgewood, Verdugo's General Contractors in Brooklyn, Avelia's Tamales in Corona, which I believe you got a chance to meet this past fall, our services and programs extend far beyond any IBZ boundary. The bottom line is that industrial manufacturing businesses are critical for New York City, and they

1 deserve the specialized support the IBSPs have been
2 refining over decades. Industrial businesses move
3 goods, build our city, provide essential services,
4 and importantly, provide quality jobs for so many
5 diverse and underserved communities in New York City.
6 For 40 years, the IBSPs have been working with
7 industrial businesses and surrounding communities. We
8 have long-established relationships with community
9 stakeholders, including community boards, police
10 precincts, city agencies such as DEP, DOT,
11 Sanitation, DDC, and DCP. We work in partnership with
12 local electeds on issues such as EPA Superfund sites.
13 We're there when critical disasters, natural
14 disasters happen. We stay late at local community
15 board meetings, and we host early morning meetings to
16 get critical information to local businesses. And
17 these are all things that we do that fall outside of
18 our current IBSP contracts. So that is what is at
19 stake today to be lost, in addition to all the
20 services that we do provide under our contract.

Access—

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Your time
20 has expired.
21

QUINCY ELY-CATE: to financing. Thank you, Chair. We really appreciate your support.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you. Next up online, we have Nepal Asatthawasi, Tamika Mapp, Ernie Wong, and Ashley Graper. Nepal, are you on?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

KATIE STANTON: Thank you. Hi, my name is Katie Stanton. I'm here in lieu of my Co-executive Director, Nepal Asatthawasi. For the first decade, Mechanism, which is our organization operated as the Urban Manufacturing Alliance, founded in New York City, where we helped launch the Made in NYC initiative and built the national case for urban manufacturing as a core economic development strategy. Now, as Mechanism, we partner with communities, municipalities, and economic development agencies to fix the systems that have allowed manufacturing to erode, and with it, the economic security and stability of working-class communities. New York City is where this work began. What happens here still matters to us and matters nationally too. We have watched with hope as the Mamdani administration has taken up the question of who New York City's economy is actually working for. We write

1 now because— we write— or here today now, because the
2 proposed elimination of the ISB program would move
3 that in exactly the wrong direction. Eliminating this
4 program would be a mistake that would deepen New York
5 City's inequality, undermine its economic resilience,
6 and abandon the workers and small businesses that
7 need the city's support the most. Instead, we ask
8 that the city take three steps. First, remove
9 industrial businesses from the Business Solutions
10 Center RFP. Two, extend existing ISB contracts by at
11 least one year. Two would be better to ensure
12 continuity. And three, work with the industrial
13 community to co-design a modernized program that
14 addresses rising real estate pressures, connects
15 manufacturers to green economy opportunities,
16 strengthens workforce pipelines, and reinvests in the
17 Industrial Developer Fund. A more equitable New York
18 City is not possible without a strong industrial
19 sector. The IBSP program is one of the most important
20 tools the city has for building the economy this
21 administration claims it wants. We really urge you to
protect it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
your testimony. Is Tamika Mapp—

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

TAMIKA MAPP: Hi everybody, thank you so much, Chair Thomas-Henry, and opportunity for my testimony. My name is Tamika Mapp, I'm the district leader for the 68th Assembly District, Part D and a small business owner with Kindroot Doula Collective. I stand here today on behalf of the small business business owners in East Harlem, the barbers, the beauty shops, the childcare providers, the restaurants, the bodegas, the street vendors, and our online businesses. We are the backbone of our local economy and the heart of our community. Let me be clear, small businesses are not failing because they lack effort. They're being pushed out by a system that makes it harder for it to survive than to close. Every day I speak to business owners dealing with rising rents, higher utility costs, excessive fines and complex licensing requirements. They feel the design to trip them up instead of supporting them. We cannot say we support small businesses while allowing them to be buried in the systems that large corporations can navigate, but small businesses cannot. In East Harlem, small businesses are more than storefronts. They are job creators, our

community anchors, and our safe spaces. They hire locally and support our youth and reinvest back into our neighborhoods. But right now they're struggling. We must address commercial rent stability. Small business should not be at the mercy of unpredictable rent hikes that force them out of the community they help build. We must reform fines and licensing. Too many business owners are being personalized—penalized for minor issues that could be fixed with guidance. We should be educating first and not penalizing first. We must increase access to capital. Too many minority and women-owned businesses are locked out of funding. We need targeted grants, no-interest loans, and real investments that actually reaches our communities. And let's be clear, family childcare providers, home-based businesses, and our online businesses are small businesses, too. They need support, infrastructure, access to resources to grow and compete, and deserve the same level of investment, protection, and respect. Finally, small businesses needs a real seat at the table, not just—

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

TAMIKA MAPP: Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you. Next up, Ernie Wong?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

ERNIE WONG: Hi, my name is Ernie Wong. I'm the owner of Shanghai MKS, a company located at 78 Jerry Street, Brooklyn, New York. We design, build, service, and maintain mobile food trucks and trailers for New York City. I'm writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed elimination of the IBSP. For 44 years, we have benefited from the support and services through this program, particularly through Evergreen, and that assistance has been critical to our stability and growth. I want to ensure that Evergreen continues to receive the essential city resources it needs to carry on this work. I've been a member of Evergreen since 2008. I strongly support Evergreen for its unwavering commitment to the industrial community. They've helped us and many others in countless ways, including advocacy, guidance, education, funding, and securement. On a personal note, 2006, Evergreen provided critical advocacy support when my business faced a major crisis and was threatened by disposition authority under the Broadway Triangle

Urban Renewal Plan. Leah and her team fought tirelessly against entrenched political pressures. Evergreen has been instrumental in our business's survival development and growth. Many more businesses, industrial businesses like ours, need their help. Businesses face a plethora of challenges in New York City, such as regulatory issues, human resource development, capital borrowing, and much more. Evergreen continues to lead the pack, staying ahead of the curve and always punching above their weight. Organizations like Evergreen deliver impact far behind the resources they receive, serving as critical bridge between industrial businesses and city agencies, ensuring that firms can effectively navigate government, access incentives and grow. In North Brooklyn alone, industrial businesses support tens of thousands of jobs, generate billions in economic activity, provide wages that significantly outpace many other sectors, and often without requiring advanced education. This, like my advocacy support, is not abstract. It is fundamental. Their advocacy, guidance, deep connections with industry and government make it possible for companies to operate, expand, and continue to provide the stable,

1 well-paying jobs to our community. I strongly urge to
2 preserve funding to the ISBP program. Thank you very
3 much for your time and consideration.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time's expired.

5 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you, Mr.
6 Wong. I want to let you know you did break up at the
7 end, so I want to remind everyone in the room and
8 online that testimony can— written testimony can be
9 submitted at testimony@council.nyc.gov up to 72 hours
10 following this hearing. Next up we have Ashley
11 Graber.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

13 ASHLEY GRABER: Hi, thanks for your time.
14 I'm Ashley Graber, co-owner of Cool Hand Movers.
15 We're moving company based in District 38. Thanks to
16 the committee and everyone here for your time. I'm
17 concerned about the dismantling of the IBSP program
18 and the potential impact on place-based resources.
19 Generalized programming, typical SBS, may help anyone
20 get something off the ground, but resilience and
21 longevity in manufacturing and logistics requires
more localized support. I want to highlight three of
the ways that the Southwest Brooklyn Industrial
Development Corporation has filled this gap for our

company and helped us push through existential threats to our small business. Compared with the webinars and Fast Track programming we've participated before through SBS. SBIDC programming offers more tailored, in-depth, in-person education, and they provide the individualized support for manufacturing and logistics small businesses that make that education actionable. Two, we received a predatory bill from a national truck leasing company with a track record for squeezing small businesses, and SBS Legal Clinic didn't offer any insight or potential next steps. But within a few days of bringing this to the attention of SBID, they connected us to a legal advisor who helped us dispute this bill and we saved \$23,000. Lastly, our supply warehouse in Red Hook burned down on January 21st of this year. We lost about 85 percent of all of our moving equipment and moving bins. SBIDC proactively reached out, offered resources, and platformed our local community ask for support. This kind of place-based support has been invaluable to maintaining our operations, manufacturing, and logistics businesses will suffer if the proposed

changes to the IBSP program go through. Thanks for your time.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for your testimony. Next up, we have Jeffrey Deasy [sp?], Anh-Thu Nguyen, Malat Siong, and Delasia Foreman.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Is Jeffrey still on? Jeffrey Deasy?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Okay, next up is Anh-Thu Nguyen.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin. Is Anh still with us?

ANH-THU NGUYEN: Yes, just unmuted. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair Thomas-Henry and members of New York City Council Committee on Small Business. My name is Anh-Thu Nguyen. I'm the Director of Strategic Partnerships at the Democracy at Work Institute and founding member of the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative. Thanks to City Council's investment over the last 11 fiscal cycles. In fiscal year 15, WCBDI has provided significant benefit to aspiring business owners, especially immigrant business owners and cooperative

small businesses under NYC Department of Small Business Services. We create and support resilient employment and business ownership opportunities unlike any other in the city, largely to low-wage and contingent workers, majority of them foreign-born and people of color, connecting them to business ownership opportunities, including when traditional routes to employment and business ownership are unavailable. Some key achievements in the past few years have included the successful conversion to worker ownership of small businesses like Simple Brewing and Bike Plant, keeping them thriving and local, the incubation and launch of Afro-Lingual, an interpretation translation cooperative that provides language support in over 10 African languages, the launch of an online school for democratic management that offers free trainings on worker ownership basics and finance, governance, and group dynamics, and the development of a rapid response cooperative toolkit and trainings in English and Spanish for CBOs to make small business ownership more accessible and inclusive to all communities. In fiscal year 25 alone, we've created 112 jobs and pathways of business ownership, served 286 businesses and

1 organizations, and provided 4,500 education and TA,
2 technical assistance services, in English, Spanish,
3 and other languages to existing and aspiring
4 entrepreneurs. We urge City Council to continue
5 investing in worker cooperatives in New York City
6 through enhancing WCDI funding to \$5.09 million in
7 fiscal year 27. This will provide for the start of 30
8 new worker cooperative small businesses, create over
9 100 new jobs, as well as offer technical assistance,
consultations, and education-

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Your time
11 has expired.

12 ANH-THU NGUYEN: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you. Next
up, Melat Seyoum.

14 MELAT SEYOUM: Good afternoon, Honorable
15 Chairperson and distinguished members of the New York
16 City Council on Small Business. My name is Melat
17 Seyoum, and I'm the Director of Policy Advocacy and
18 Strategic Partnerships at the New York Network of
19 Worker-Owned Cooperatives, also known as NYCNOC. We
20 are the member-led trade association representing
21 worker cooperative businesses and democratic
workplaces in New York City. I'm here alongside my

colleagues from the Democracy at Work Institute, Center for Family Life, Workers Justice Project, ICA Group, the Business Outreach Center Network, and our advocacy council representing eight other organizations that make up the Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative, WCBDI. As many of the folks have shared before me, we are here during these unprecedented times to support our immigrant worker owners in New York City, and we're asking City Council to continue supporting the expansion of worker ownership in next year's budget and firmly into the future. Since the inception of our initiative 11 years ago, we've created over 200 new cooperative businesses and over 1,200 new jobs that are not only providing higher hourly wages, but also building wealth and assets for individuals who are overwhelmingly BIPOC women and immigrants. We have seen firsthand how our initiative has served to bolster our sector, strengthening existing cooperative businesses and creating new ones. The initiative partners have worked collectively to create a comprehensive ecosystem of support for cooperative businesses that not only ensures the creation of new worker cooperatives in low-income

1 areas, but also the technical assistance needed to
2 sustain businesses and create jobs, as well as the
3 education and outreach needed for our communities,
4 interested entrepreneurs, and allied organizations.
5 We did a lot of work during the early years of the
6 pandemic and beyond to bring in over \$20 million in
7 grants and loans to cooperatives and keep them
8 afloat, and we did this with a 3.7 million budget.
9 We're asking City Council to enhance our funding to
10 \$5,097,000 in order for our initiative to double down
11 on the essential long-term economic recovery for
12 cooperative businesses that we will need to claw
13 ourselves out of this economic crisis. We thank the
14 City Council for the opportunity to testify, and we
15 hope that you will consider our budget priorities and
16 recommendations during this year's budget negotiation
17 process. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
19 your testimony. Next up, Dalaeja Foreman.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

21 DELAEJA FOREMAN: Yes, thank you very
much. Good afternoon, Honorable Chairperson and
distinguished members of New York City Council
Committee on Small Business. My name is Dalaeja

1 Foreman. I'm a founding member of Breadfruit Co-op, a
2 worker-owned cooperative focused on woodworking and
3 other indigenous maker practices. We co-create and
4 share with purpose furniture, home goods, and skill
5 shares in working-class Black, indigenous, and people
6 of color in New York City. I currently work as a peer
7 advisor with the U.S. Federation of Worker
8 Cooperatives, and I'm also an advocacy council member
9 and former board member at the New York City Network
10 of Worker Co-ops. The Advocacy Council is an elected
11 body of worker owners selected yearly by NYC
12 Cooperative. Members are trained in policy and
13 advocacy for the worker— excuse me, co-op movement,
14 and move on to participate in related policy spaces
15 as well as other movements for social justice. Since
16 being founded in 2021, Breadfruit has received
17 support from NYCNOCC's [inaudible] Co-ops, a
18 sustainability co-op sustainability fund. We were
19 able to have our website developed with the design
20 services co-op, Blue Vision. Being able to keep our
21 needs met in the cooperative community was of utmost
importance to us, and this grant not only made that
possible but made it convenient to support some of
our most pressing needs through— as a new business.

1 In 2020, our co-op was birthed from Green Workers
2 Cooperative Program. This was not only my
3 introduction into the cooperative community, but it
4 also made clear how important supporting the co-op
5 education access was to our work and the overall
6 cooperative movement. Without this program, we would
7 not have been— had the context for this type of
8 economic structure. We ask the City Council to
9 enhance our funding to \$5,097,000 for the Worker
10 Cooperative Business Development Initiative, public
11 banks, racial and immigrant rights support, and youth
12 education programs. Educational awareness, direct
13 financial support for the [inaudible] economy is
14 deeply essential for a city that works for all New
15 Yorkers. It creates opportunities for systemically
16 neglected communities to practice and live into a
17 means of being self-sustained in one of the hardest
18 financial ecosystems in the world. It offers reality
19 where we can not only become financially whole and
20 nourished based on our networks and relationships—

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

19 DALAEJA FOREMAN: but psychologically as a
20 society as a whole [sic]. Thank you.
21

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for your testimony. Is Jeffrey Deasy back? Jeffrey? Just another reminder, you can submit written testimony at testimony@council.nyc.gov up to 72 hours following this hearing. Next up we have Shade Swift Curtis [sp?], Juan Cuddle, Elizabeth Dimitri, and Victoria Karen Alexander. Shade, are you here?

SHADE SWIFT CURTIS: Si.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: you may begin.

SHADE SWIFT CURTIS: [Speaking Spanish]
Buenas tardes. Agradezco la oportunidad de estar aquí con ustedes compartiendo todas las inquietudes que tenemos, algunas de ellas. Mi nombre es Elizabeth Polanco y soy trabajadora dueña de la cooperativa Raríe Consulting. Eh, mi trabajo ha sido una gran fortaleza mantenerme en una cooperativa de trabajadores. Por eso, para nosotros lo otro es importante que se reconozca lo que son las trabajas— las cooperativas de trabajadores y poder tener lo que es el reconocimiento para tener acceso a fondos, así como a través de la iniciativa de WCBDI, que es de gran apoyo para nuestras cooperativas, para las mujeres inmigrantes, la comunidad la minoría. Y para— quisiera saber si están traduciendo el discurso.

2 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Muchas gracias
3 por tu testimonio. Next up, we have Juan Cuautle.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

5 JUAN CUAUTLE: Good afternoon, Chair
6 Shanel Thomas-Henry and distinguished members of New
7 York City Council Committee on Small Businesses. My
8 name is Juan Cuautle and I am the program director of
9 the Cooperative Development Program at the Center for
10 Family Life in Sunset Park, a 48-year-old social
11 service organization serving low-income families in
12 Brooklyn. I'm here today to urge the council to
13 continue supporting the worker cooperative business
14 development initiative by allocating \$5.1 million in
15 fiscal year 2027, including \$675,000 for the Center
16 for Family Life to continue helping low-income
17 families build cooperative businesses. Since 2014,
18 the Center for Family Life has participated in this
19 Council-funded initiative to incubate and strengthen
20 worker-owned businesses. With this support, we have
21 incubated 28 worker cooperatives in the domestic work
industry and developed two online marketplace
platforms, created economic opportunities for more
than 700 low-income women in New York City. With
continued support in fiscal year 2027, we will

1 incubate a new worker-owned cooperative in
2 administrative services, which will create 50 new
3 jobs for young professionals, provide 275 technical
4 assistance services to existing cooperatives, and
5 offer training in business administration, finance,
6 marketing, and domestic industry-specific skills for
7 400 participants. These services expand economic
8 opportunities for people historically excluded from
9 traditional labor markets while helping cooperative
10 members earn an average of \$39 per hour in the
11 cooperatives. These achievements will not be possible
12 without the support of the New York City Council. On
13 behalf of the Center for Family Life, thank you for
14 your time and commitment to economic equity. We
15 respectfully ask for the continued support in fiscal
16 year 2027. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
16 your testimony. Next up, we have Elizabeth Demetriou.

16 ELIZABETH DEMETRIOU: Hi, thank you. My
17 name is Elizabeth Demetriou, and I'm an economic
18 development professional and a member of the Board of
19 Directors at the Southwest Brooklyn Industrial
20 Development Corporation, where I worked on the ground
21 with small businesses from 2005 to 2015. Through this

1 experience, I've seen firsthand what it takes for
2 manufacturing businesses to survive and grow in an
3 increasingly complex and challenging environment.
4 I've also seen the importance of strong local
5 ecosystems, the relationships and coordination
6 between businesses, community-based organizations,
7 and public partners that sustain neighborhood
8 economies. This kind of ecosystem is built through
9 proximity, trust, and long-term presence, and it
10 would not be possible under the more centralized
11 model being proposed. Programs like IBSP delivered
12 through trust-based organizations like SBIDC are not
13 just business services. They're critical
14 infrastructure for our local economies. They're
15 embedded in the communities they serve and understand
16 the unique needs of neighborhood-based and industrial
17 businesses. They provide real-time tailored support
18 that reflects the realities on the ground, something
19 that cannot be replicated through a centralized or
20 one-size-fits-all approach. I saw this most clearly
21 in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. Recovery did not
happen through a centralized model. It depended on
trusted on-the-ground organizations that knew the
businesses, understood the neighborhood, and could

1 coordinate across stakeholders in real time. Without
2 that local presence, recovery would have been slower,
3 less effective, and far less equitable. The model
4 being proposed moves us away from the very approach
5 that provided essential in one of the city's most
6 critical moments. I urge the City of New York to
7 preserve funding for the IBSB program and continue
8 investing in the local organizations that serve as
9 stewards of our industrial business zones. Supporting
10 these organizations is one of the most effective ways
11 to ensure that small small businesses and the
12 communities they sustain can continue to thrive. It's
13 more than small business support. It's helping to
14 analyze truck routes. It's working with workforce
15 partners, and it's being a steward for an industrial
16 community. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for
16 your testimony. Next up, we have Victoria Karen
17 Alexander.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

18 VICTORIA ALEXANDER: Hi, my name is
19 Victoria Alexander. Good afternoon. Thank you so much
20 for having me. I am a community member from Red Hook,
21 Brooklyn, where I work with an organization called

1 Brazilian Red Hook that focuses on climate
2 resiliency, working waterfront advocacy, and
3 environmental justice. I'm here to speak personally
4 about my personal experience with SBIDC over the
5 years. In October 2012, Hurricane Sandy hit our
6 neighborhood of Red Hook, and we were devastated.
7 Businesses lost everything, equipment destroyed,
8 basements flooded, electrical systems wiped out, and
9 residents were facing the most devastating days of
10 their lives, and our community responded. Red Hook
11 showed up for Red Hook. But as we all know very well,
12 the City of New York did not show up in a very timely
13 manner. But who did show up was SBIDC. They were on
14 the ground helping businesses and residents when no
15 one else was. They didn't just help businesses
16 rebuild, they helped keep our community rebuilt. They
17 became members of the governor's New York Rising
18 program, which we helped advocate for resiliency
19 measures for this community. And they made sure that
20 small manufacturers at the warehouses, the maritime
21 operators who are the backbone of the Red Hook's
economy, could stay in this neighborhood so that our
community members still had jobs right here in their
own community. Without SBIDC, we would've lost these

1 businesses to other boroughs and to other states
2 entirely, and those jobs would've gone with them.
3 SBIDC has continuously showed up for working
4 waterfront community of Red Hook. But the reality is
5 that industrial business zones are already
6 underfunded. At a time when we are trying to bring
7 back manufacturing as a nation, we are continually
8 disinvesting in our IBZs and spot zoning throughout
9 our manufacturing communities. These are the jobs
10 that are the gateway for community members,
11 especially immigrants and people of color working
12 without college degrees to build working class
13 careers. These are the jobs that make New York City
14 diverse and equitable. If you eliminate the IBSP
15 program, we lose SBIDC. You are killing this
16 community and- that is still struggling and still
17 needs all the help it can get. Red Hook has not
18 recovered from Sandy and every other crisis since
19 then. We are facing a proposed mega-

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Your time
21 has expired.

VICTORIA ALEXANDER: Okay, thank you very
much.

CHAIRPERSON THOMAS-HENRY: Thank you for your testimony. Once again, is there anyone in the room who has not testified or would like to testify? Or if there's anyone online who would like to testify, please use the raise hand function now. Hearing none and seeing none, this meeting is now adjourned.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date July 28, 2026