

April 12, 2023

New York City Council Committee on Small Business  
Hearing on Tourism and Small Business



**TIMES  
SQUARE  
ALLIANCE**

Good morning, Chairperson Menin and members of the City Council Committee on Small Business. My name is Tom Harris, and I am the President of the Times Square Alliance, the business improvement district that exists to make Times Square clean, safe, and desirable for all.

I am sure no one needs reminding that Times Square is the center of tourism in New York City, and indeed one of the most famous tourist destinations in the world. We represent 40 hotels and almost 15% of New York City hotel rooms. What is perhaps less well-known is that our district is also home to over 700 storefront businesses, many of which are independently owned and operated. Walk any side street in Times Square, and you will witness an amazing variety of unique restaurants, musical instrument stores, small barbershops, and busy delis. What all of these businesses share is a reliance on the millions of visitors who come to our neighborhood to stay in our hotels, attend Broadway shows, and experience the unmatched spectacle of the Times Square Bowtie.

In 2020, domestic and international travel spending (per data from Visa) plunged by 81% from the prior year. Our retail businesses and restaurants were hit particularly hard; total retail spending declined by 67.7%, and total restaurant spending declined by 72% that year. In 2021, with domestic tourism still at the start of its return and international travel restrictions in place, retail and restaurant spending both remained around 50% below 2019 spending levels. It wasn't until international visitors returned in the latter part of 2022 that we saw a real boost in overall retail and restaurant spending. In the last quarter of 2022, spending by international tourists reached \$160 million, just 9% below the same quarter in 2019. Times Square is trending upward, but we cannot afford not to grow significantly.

Between 2020 and 2022, the notable absence of visitors contributed to the loss of nearly 150 ground floor shops and restaurants. New business openings have bounced back, but continue to trail closings over the same period by about 10%. Our current ground floor vacancy rate has remained fairly steady at 19% over the past year. To ensure that we keep our current small businesses thriving, and attract new ones to fill our vacant storefronts, we need to do everything we can collectively to support a vibrant tourist economy.

For the small businesses of Times Square to grow and thrive, we must bring travelers back to New York City at the levels we saw in the years before the pandemic. To do this, we ask that the Council fully fund and support the critical work that New York City Tourism and Conventions does to market the city domestically and overseas. Further, we would like to continue to partner with city agencies and the Council to ensure that the experience of coming to Times Square, and New York City overall, remains the best it can possibly be. We must continue to prioritize public safety, fully fund services for people in need, and increase support for DSNY's cleanliness efforts. We look forward to working with the Council to make sure the entire world makes New York City, their next travel destination so they can eat in our restaurants, shop in our stores, see our theater productions, and, yes, share in the unique spectacle that is Times Square.

Tom Harris  
President  
Times Square Alliance

New York City Tourism + Conventions Testimony to the New  
York City Council Economic Development Committee & Small  
Business Committee

*April 20, 2023*

Good morning, Chair Fariás, Chair Menin, **and** members of the  
Committees on Economic Development and Small Business.

I am Dr. Donna Keren, Executive Vice President of Research &  
Insights, and I am joined today by Nancy Mammana, Chief  
Marketing Officer, at New York City Tourism + Conventions,  
testifying on behalf of our CEO, Fred Dixon.

We thank you for this opportunity to share the current status of  
the City's tourism and hospitality industry and New York City  
Tourism + Conventions' efforts -- along with our government and  
private sector partners – to revitalize the industry as we work  
towards full economic recovery.

I would like to provide a quick background on who we are and  
what we do as an organization. New York City Tourism +  
Conventions (formerly NYC & Company) is the official destination

marketing organization and convention and visitors bureau, for the five boroughs of New York City. Our mission is to maximize inbound travel and tourism opportunities throughout the City, build economic prosperity, and spread the dynamic image of the five boroughs around the world.

We are a 501(c) 6, not-for-profit, member organization and represent the interests of nearly 2,000 member businesses and organizations from across the five boroughs.

We are governed by an 85-member board of directors representing a diverse range of businesses from across the City. Our members range from hotels, cultural organizations, restaurants and attractions to BIDs and Chambers of Commerce. The majority of these businesses fall into the small business category with entrepreneurial owners, limited staffs and revenues. Together, their memberships fund about half of our operations. We also hold a procurement contract with the City of New York to provide tourism marketing services.

Travel and tourism has long been a driver of economic prosperity for New York City with direct and indirect impacts in all five boroughs.

Prior to the pandemic, 2019 was the **tenth** consecutive year of growth in the number of visitors and, importantly, in visitor spending, business revenues, job creation, new investments and city tax revenues. Growth was halted as businesses shut down operations, borders were closed, and convenings of any size became impossible. The pandemic crippled the tourism and hospitality industry bringing normal operations to a virtual halt in March 2020.

That first year hit the travel and tourism industry harder than any other sector in the City's economy. Combined domestic and international visitation dropped by 65%, hotel demand fell by 69%, visitor spending fell by 66%. This translated to a 50 percent loss in jobs and a \$2 billion decrease in local tax revenues from our industry. More industry jobs were lost than all the losses in

Finance, Information, Real Estate and Professional & Business Services sectors combined.

In the second year of the pandemic our industry fared only slightly better. International and business travel were stalled and safety regulations limited activities across all sectors. Our breakthrough began in Q4-2021 when the US reopened to international visitors from Europe and elsewhere.

Just a few weeks ago, on March 15<sup>th</sup>, we passed the third anniversary of the pandemic disruption. For the City's tourism and meetings sector, we are still working to return to pre-pandemic levels of visitors, spending, jobs and tax revenues.

In a typical pre-pandemic year, 2019 for example, travel and tourism supported a little over 400,000 jobs in the private sector in New York City. This was about one-in-ten jobs, an impressive number in our tech, finance, real estate and bio-med driven economy. At the end of 2022, industry jobs were still down about 35% in key sectors supported by visitor spending. Most of those

jobs, are in services and small businesses that directly interact with the visitors from the moment they arrive by land, rail or air, to where they stay, what they eat, what they buy, what they do, and how they move around town.

Our estimates for 2022 suggest that the industry will have recovered to about 270,000 jobs, including many in the services, wholesale and retail businesses that provide for the industry as well the visitor accommodations, attractions, shops and dining options across the five boroughs. As you may know, a significant proportion of the tourism workforce also lives in neighborhoods throughout the City. Many of them work in small businesses that provide key inputs to the visitor experience – from wholesalers to event specialists to local tour guides and start-ups. The tourism ecosystem spreads benefits at every level. There is a benefit every New Yorker can feel – without the tax contributions coming from the tourism and conventions we host, the average New York

City household would be on the hook for another \$2,000 in state and local taxes.

While the private sector in the City has surpassed the employment levels of March 2020, many of the businesses that rely upon visitor spending are still lagging, however.

Restaurants and bars, which rely on visitors for about one-third of their patrons, remain below peak employment as remote and hybrid work reduces the weekday population around the central business and entertainment districts.

On a similar trajectory, though smaller in numbers, the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation sector is also pacing back to – but not yet reaching -- prior levels. Given the attraction of the city's cultural community to visitors, six in ten jobs in the sector are supported by visitor spending.

As of February 2023, the BLS estimates there are 42,700 people employed in the city's accommodations sector – 80% of seasonal benchmarks .

Active hotel inventory – the combination of new properties and re-openings – is nearly at 2019 levels, with just over 125,000 rooms serving travelers to New York City. Seasonal occupancy patterns have returned to form, with mid-week business travelers joining the growing international visitors and domestic leisure travelers to keep occupancy rates rising month after month. Average daily room rates are continuing to increase, reaching \$214 on average for Q1.

Nevertheless, hotels in major cities across the country are – like New York City – still performing below their pre-pandemic levels. In the first quarter of this year, 2023, New York City hotels averaged 71.8% occupancy, 7% below our 2019 benchmark (77%).

Looking out to the remainder of this year and into next, New York City is facing increasing competition for all our visitor markets. Domestic visitors are looking to travel internationally again, business travelers are still hyper-cautious as concerns about recession swirl, and other first tier meetings cities are making attractive offers to meeting planners to bring their events to Los Angeles, Dallas, Las Vegas, Orlando, Atlanta and even Chicago. New York will remain the most popular international destination, but challenges still remain.

As you will hear from my colleague Nancy Mammana in a moment, we have come through these past few years through strategic government investment in our work that allowed us to maintain our presence and messaging in key global markets ready to pivot to welcoming domestic & international visitors back into the city. This much-needed government funding has expanded our marketing reach and research capabilities.

Now Nancy will share our 2023 marketing campaigns and programs that continue to revitalize the travel and hospitality industry.

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to share our work. I would like to start by thanking our many city partners we collaborate with and look to continue partnering with moving forward, especially our close work with Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer's Office as well as other various city agencies.

Today's hearing comes almost exactly a month after we unveiled our new brand and name change to now become NYC Tourism and Conventions. This doesn't change our mission or our portfolio of programs to drive visitation to NYC but we want to better define what work we do. We created our new brand after embarking on a tremendous amount of research which included in-depth stakeholder interviews across our staff, global offices, board of directors and City Hall in addition to over 1,000 surveys with our member businesses, residents and visitors, we concluded that the name "NYC & Company" wasn't clearly and immediately conveying the breadth and depth of the critical

work this organization does to power the City's economy. Our goal is to position this re-brand as a milestone for the organization which is an evolution in our strategy and builds upon the work we've always done: showcasing authentic, aspirational, five-borough stories to the world now under the banner of New York City Tourism and Conventions to lead the industry forward. We've had a very positive reception to the new brand and logo and hope you all share our excitement about how it positively positions the five boroughs. We also created a color palette that reflects NYC – with black as the primary color which provides the basis for the secondary color palette, which is a survey of New York City icons and associations: Thank You Red, Brick Red, Ferry Orange, Lox Pink, Taxi Yellow, Rockaway Sand, Subway Green, Liberty Green, Coffee Cup Blue, and Skyline Blue with more added as the system develops in the future. Happy to answer any questions around this rebrand at the end – but want you all to know that the look and feel of the marketing for the programs we produce will

change while the content will largely be similar to past years.

In September of last year, we launched the refresh of our global **It's Time for New York City** campaign, which is the largest multi-phased global tourism marketing and advertising campaign ever created for New York City.

**It's Time for New York City** was initially rolled out as restrictions began to lift, more people were getting vaccinated, and travel resumed in the United States and beyond. The campaign reminds visitors of the City's unrivaled energy, excitement, and the abundance of endless experiences and resiliency that make NYC the most iconic destination in the world. Designed to create urgency and FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), **It's Time for New York City** campaign has three phases and includes television, digital, outdoor media and partnerships. The goal of this campaign was to encourage visitors to explore the five boroughs. This latest phase ran in 18 countries with 17 unique travel partners including Porter Airlines in Canada,

Havas Voyages in France, Aeroméxico in Mexico, Asiana Airlines in South Korea, Mastercard in Hong Kong, and United Airlines in Sweden, the US, and the UK. The results have been impressive – we had an external research firm called SMARI conduct an analysis on the marketing and the ROI on the domestic campaign was \$352 dollars for every dollar spent and \$241 ROI for every dollar spent internationally. The campaigns to date has run in two phases and as it continues the results continue to compound. So far, cumulatively it has resulted in close to over \$8B in visitor spending, over \$820M In Tax Revenue to NYC and influenced over 3.5M Trips from July 2021 through July 2022. The SMARI data has been a major boost to understanding spending and the impacts of our marketing campaigns. Funding is a crucial component of conducting this research and this was the first time we were able to do so because of the Federal Aid from COVID. In the years ahead due to the PEG, we will not have funds to do so and will not be able to build momentum. I'm happy to further discuss this in the

Q&A.

We have continued our engagement with locals and tri-state visitors and commuters through our annual “Vibrancy” marketing campaigns, designed to help promote the energy and attractiveness of our local tourism and hospitality businesses during need periods, which historically include Q1 and July and August timeframes. Since its inception in Summer 1992, [NYC Restaurant Week](#), has been a celebration of dining, bringing people together to experience the City’s fine dining and generate business for our restaurants. On the heels of Restaurant Week’s continued success, New York City Tourism + Conventions has relaunched seasonal vibrancy marketing programs including the twice-annual [NYC Broadway Week](#) and [NYC Off-Broadway Week](#), with 2-for-1 tickets to some of Broadway’s hottest shows as well as shows featured at smaller theaters across the boroughs; and [NYC Must See Week](#), offering 2-for-1 tickets to over 40 attractions, museums, tours and performing arts. These

programs have attracted visitors from the tri-state region and beyond, and are economic drivers during what are typically slower travel seasons and help ensure that a visit to the City remains accessible and to a diverse range of visitors. In October 2021, we added “It’s Time for Culture” campaign supporting our performing arts and cultural organizations in every borough; we also just announced the second year of “It’s Time for Culture” last week with nearly 100 organizations participating across the five boroughs – more on that shortly.

In January 2023, New York City Tourism + Conventions brought back **NYC Winter Outing**, a combination of NYC Restaurant Week, NYC Broadway Week, NYC Must-See Week, and the second year of including NYC Hotel Week. By combining all programs on a broader platform and under one messaging umbrella, we expand the reach of the message to daytrips and valuable overnight visitors and drive traffic and spending to businesses and organizations across the city. This year’s program outperformed both 2022 and 2019 traffic and

conversion benchmarks, even though we had lower budgets to market the program than in 2022. We had over 700 participants in the program which includes over 500 restaurants across the five boroughs, over forty cultural institutions, Broadway shows and hotels. Through this program we partnered with various City agencies including NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) and the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME). We'd especially like to acknowledge the support of MOME as they once again sponsored NYC Winter Outing. Their support helped to offset participation fees for the program as part of ongoing efforts in tourism recovery. In conducting our outreach for participants for the Winter Outing program in addition to the agency partners, we worked with the Chambers of Commerce, BIDs across the five boroughs and also sent emails to all City Council members. We're always looking for new participants for these programs and hope we can partner with both of your Committees and all of your Offices to get the word out about these programs in the future.

Earlier this month we announced the return of **It's Time for Culture** with offerings at nearly 100 cultural organizations across all five boroughs, available next month from May 9<sup>th</sup> to May 21<sup>st</sup>. The program, comprising seasonal events, concerts, tours, classes, family-friendly programs and more, kicks off the unofficial start of the New York City summer cultural season driving traffic to participating locations across all five boroughs. A full list of organizations and offerings are available on our website and we are excited to support this sector and cultural tourism.

As we focus on marketing, we have also expanded our social media campaigns to focus on different sectors. We remain focused on celebrating New York City's diversity—not only in terms of our neighbors and neighborhoods but also in the never-ending variety of things to do in the five boroughs. As we amplify New York City to our audience of over 2.7 million

followers across our platforms, we have launched a variety of different series – I'd like to highlight a few: #CheckInNYC spotlights hotel properties across the City, #MusuemMondays highlights different cultural institutions and #SavorNYC in which different influencers visit restaurants across NYC to taste their food. In this series we have Among our most recent collaborations was a visit to New Asha Sri Lankan Restaurant on Staten Island; a look at the Venezuelan Christmas staple of hallacas at Patacon Pisao in Elmhurst, Queens; and a feature on 97-year-old Holocaust survivor and S&S Cheesecake founder Fred Schuster in the Bronx—which went viral with 495K video plays.

A major focus of our work is connecting small businesses to the tourism industry – and for many this is not an easy task. To remove the barriers to understanding the industry we have two major initiatives – one is the Tourism Ready which is a free educational program. The courses provide an Introduction to the Tourism Industry and Working with the Travel Trade for any

businesses or entities in NYC that are interested in learning more. Tourism Ready 101 looks at how to bring these visitors to your neighborhoods and businesses. The program places a particular emphasis on working with the travel trade which are third party travel sellers, packagers, and event planners. The program guides businesses through the steps to effectively work with the travel trade and help them identify methods to engage with these resellers to promote their business or neighborhood. **We'd love support from each of your offices in identifying businesses in your districts that might be interested in this free opportunity and happy to connect with them and add them to our mailing list. There are workshops scheduled for almost every month of the year so there's still a lot of opportunity for participation.**

Another initiative is through visits we coordinate with global travel partners which we call reverse travel missions. Typically travel missions entail traveling to destinations with high visitation and businesses selling their products and sell

packages to tour operators. Many small businesses do not have the time, capacity or funds to go on travel missions with us to destinations across the world so we coordinate reverse missions where travel partners come to New York City. Through these coordinated visits, qualified small businesses gain access to the global market with no or very little investment along with receiving the guidance and support they need. Last year we had our first reverse mission which had 17 small businesses and cultural institutions participating. For the remainder of this year into Q2 2024 we plan to have at least two of these reverse missions. Additionally we continue to operate Borough Development **familiarization trips** for local receptive tour operators. We coordinate these by borough to give tour operators an in depth handful of experiences and usually coordinate a day of visits encompassing 8-10 different sites. Today in fact we are hosting one of these visits in Queens and it includes close to twenty small businesses and cultural institutions. These visits are critical to highlight the diversity of

experiences in New York City and help tour operators better communicate all we have to offer.

While we celebrate the successful return of Broadway, performing arts, nightlife, music and sports venues, the industry is still challenged as not all international borders have reopened, business meetings and conferences have not fully returned. New York City Tourism + Conventions will continue to support our industry by stimulating demand from hyperlocal, regional, national, and international visitors. For example, we continue to book future meetings and conventions anywhere from 10 days to 10 years out, depending upon the size of the event, to foster the return of business travel as much as possible. However without a stable, long-term funding strategy, we will fall behind our competitors in generating inbound travel from around the world – and the spending and tax revenue associated with it – for all five boroughs. We hope today's conversation is the continuation of a shared interest to ensure New York City's remains one of the world's leading destinations.

Thank you for inviting us to testify. As always, we appreciate the Council's support of the industry and being partners with us in this work. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.



**Testimony to the New York City Council  
Committee on Small Business**

*April 20th, 2023*

Thank you Committee Chairs Farias and Menin, the Economic Development Committee, and the Small Business Committee for holding this hearing. My name is Riva Shang and I am the Senior Coordinator of Small Business Programs at the Asian American Federation, where we proudly represent the collective voice of more than 70 member nonprofits serving 1.5 million Asian New Yorkers.

Through our Small Business Program, we have worked directly with hundreds of Asian-owned small businesses in Queens. Our small businesses were the first to be pitched into crisis in 2020 at the start of the COVID pandemic. Since then, as the city works towards economic recovery, the commercial corridors we serve in neighborhoods like Flushing, Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, and Sunset Park are still struggling.

This is why we urge the committee to devote resources to promoting tourism in the city's ethnic commercial corridors, especially in outer boroughs like Queens and Brooklyn.

We propose that the council do this **first, by promoting inter-borough travel to local New Yorkers**. Similar to SBS' "Shop Your City" Campaign, the city should advertise its immigrant neighborhoods as exciting local day trip destinations for New Yorkers. As global cuisines and cultures become more popular than ever, New York City's abundance of authentic ethnic businesses should be recognized as one of its greatest resources.

Moreover, SBS' work on campaigns such as "Shop Your City" show that the agency has already produced relevant marketing materials. The Asian American Federation, for example, collaborated with SBS on a promotional video featuring Murray Hill, Queens, a neighborhood east of Flushing that is home to the last, truly authentic stronghold of the Korean diaspora. Ten total videos were made, featuring similarly far-flung neighborhoods with lesser known ethnic commercial corridors. Yet, the videos remain almost completely unused, averaging around 200 views each on Youtube.

We hope to see SBS devote more resources to creating and better leveraging such marketing materials like these videos, which capitalized on the local knowledge of community-based organizations like ours that know ethnic neighborhoods in and out. The benefits of such a marketing effort would flow directly to these iconic immigrant neighborhoods and commercial corridors.

Such a campaign can also be conducted in coordination with the efforts to boost the city's still-lagging MTA ridership, by encouraging local New Yorkers to get back on the train, and to take advantage of cross-borough bus routes. For example, bus shelter and train ads can feature the neighborhoods that are accessible by various routes.

This also ties into **our second, related proposal: that SBS work directly with other city agencies, like NYC & Co, the city's official tourism promotion agency, in order to better promote outer-borough and immigrant neighborhoods to both locals and visitors.**

NYC & Co last year ran a campaign called "NYC Like a New Yorker," which aimed to spotlight outer boroughs, by featuring one borough per month in a press release which featured local attractions. The campaign, like "Shop Your City", primarily targeted local New Yorkers. While any effort to spotlight the other four boroughs is appreciated, a campaign which features only one borough per month, in press releases that the average New Yorker has never heard of, let alone seen, speaks to the campaign's low effectiveness.

The co-existence of the SBS "Shop Your City" campaign, and NYC & Co's "NYC Like a New Yorker" campaign, speaks to a ripe opportunity for cross-agency collaboration. While NYC & Co highlighted artistic institutions in Queens and Brooklyn, we believe that our immigrant commercial corridors are also integral components of NYC's status as a cosmopolitan cultural destination.

We believe that a collaboration between SBS and NYC & Co could be extremely fruitful to advancing the goals of both agencies. Widely-publicized ad campaigns like "We <3 NYC" may aim to bring about a "renaissance" of New York City by better engaging its residents, but such campaigns will be most effective when the city itself can encourage its residents to visit other neighborhoods and learn about other New Yorkers.

Additionally, promotional materials focusing on immigrant commercial corridors should be added to NYC & Co's advertising targeted towards national and international visitors. Our ethnic commercial corridors represent one of our greatest cultural treasures, featuring microcosmic versions of global destinations like Thailand, Pakistan, Nepal, Korea, et cetera.

Such advertising would not just be a matter of paying lip service to diversity and inclusion initiatives, but a real potential economic boon for the city. NYC & Co increasingly is targeting Asian markets, as travelers from this region spend increasing amounts of money on tourism. For these tourists, the diasporic strongholds of NYC represent a fascinating kind of cultural tourism. Travelers from Korea may be interested to see the last genuine diasporic strongholds, and the authentic cuisine and experience they offer, in addition to Manhattan's Koreatown. The same may be said of visitors from China and Sunset Park; or of India and Jackson Heights. As travelers from these countries look to NYC more as a tourist spot, we hope to see the city's definition of its tourist attractions expand accordingly.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony. We look forward to continuing to work closely with you.



**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEES ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT + SMALL BUSINESS  
TOURISM & THE NEW YORK CITY ECONOMY  
APRIL 20, 2023**

Thank you to Committee Chairs Amanda Farias and Julie Menin, members of the Committees on Economic Development and Small Business, and the New York City Council for holding this hearing and for your work to support New Yorkers. I am speaking on behalf of Hot Bread Kitchen, an organization that promotes economic mobility for immigrant women and people of color through job training and placement, food entrepreneurship programs, and an ecosystem of support in New York City, using our city's vibrant food industry as a catalyst for career growth.

Over the past 15 years, Hot Bread Kitchen has supported a community of over 450 program participants, who we call members, in launching 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. Our community, which includes residents of 50 City Council districts, consists primarily of women of color (98%), immigrants (76%), and parents with children under the age of 18 (63%). More than 66% are non-native English speakers, and 89% were unemployed and below the poverty threshold before enrolling in our program. Our members are dedicated, hard-working New Yorkers seeking opportunities for meaningful careers, sustainable income, and long-term wealth generation for their families.

Since the onset of the pandemic, the small businesses that make up the lion's share of New York City's food industry have struggled with a talent shortage, and have yet to recover all of the jobs lost in the early days of 2020. From both sides of our programming, providing culinary training for people launching careers in the food industry and small business incubation for food entrepreneurs, we have seen that the industry requires additional investment to make a full recovery from the closures and job losses of the early pandemic. Food and beverage accounts for nearly 22% of visitors' total spending, contributing \$10.5B to New York City's economy each year. And yet, despite this contribution, there is no designated workforce funding specifically for connecting people with roles in the food industry. Additionally, there is insufficient support for small business owners, and MWBEs in particular, that continue to struggle with staffing challenges and exceptionally tight margins. It is imperative the City invest in the businesses and workers that contribute so enormously to New York City's overall economic well-being.

In the face of these challenges to our industry, Hot Bread Kitchen has a proven track record of success connecting women, immigrants, and people of color to opportunities for economic mobility. We are distinguished by our expertise in understanding the needs of hourly wage workers and their families, particularly needs beyond a salary and steady employment, and by our deep partnerships with **over 250 food industry employer partners, 200+ community organizations**, and the **260+ small businesses we have incubated** in our 15-year history. Unique in our

city's nonprofit landscape, we are the largest and one of the only workforce programs focused on the food industry, which offers a wide range of job opportunities—from entry-level positions to management roles—that allow individuals to work their way up the career ladder, regardless of their background or experience. We understand this industry and the people who power it, and we know there is insufficient investment to get the sector fully back on its feet.

On behalf of Hot Bread Kitchen, I respectfully urge the Committees on Economic Development and Small Business to consider increasing funding for workforce development and small business support in the food industry. We believe that investments in the field are investments in the future of New York City. Thank you for your attention to this important issue and for your investment in Hot Bread Kitchen's work and community.

Leslie Abbey, CEO  
Hot Bread Kitchen



Good Morning Council Members and all New Yorkers present for this hearing.

I am here to offer testimony on behalf of Mothers on the Move / Madres en Movimiento (MOM), a grassroots organization in the South Bronx building power with people of color for housing, education, environmental and economic justice since 1992.

I was happy to see Council member Salamanca opening the testimonies this morning, as we consider him an honorary member of MOM, coordinating with us to organize and educate hundreds of low-income tenants to defend our rights to prevent the illegal harassment and evictions that have facilitated the gentrification of so many of our historic communities of color.

Our work to improve the South Bronx goes beyond tenant rights and into economic justice. Our families need housing, environmental and economic stability.

MOM is committed to creating cooperative businesses that pay living wages, build generational wealth, and contribute solutions to the environmental and economic injustice that characterize the South Bronx. As is well proven across the world, worker cooperatives contribute to individual and collective economic stability and survival, in direct contrast to the growing disparities and exploitation that has come to define our economy otherwise.

We are also here this morning to advocate for increased funding for the Worker Business Cooperative Development Initiative. We congratulate the Council on its visionary support for grassroots organizations across the City who are introducing this concept to our neighbors and providing technical assistance to the creation of these shared businesses. We are committed to learning from our collective experience and continuing to create opportunities for economic stability and empowerment for low-income people of color in this City.

MOM was recruited as a sub-contractor to this initiative 4 years ago because of our visionary economic justice work with people of color. We support NYCHA tenants and others interested in "greening" their buildings, recycling and saving energy. We listened to our young adults and began to advocate for social equity and reparations for the Drug War for our neighbors interested in building coops in the emerging cannabis and hemp economy. We also launched a cooperative for new and existing home daycare providers to work together to improve services to the diverse families seeking culturally competent child care services.

Especially during and post Covid, home daycare providers are ensured our City's youth stay safe and developed healthy social skills while their parents, often frontline workers, serve our City. Hundreds of such providers have shut down, overwhelmed by confusing regulations and high demand. MOM stepped into this space to empower experienced providers to train and mentor new providers, including recent immigrants, to raise the next generation of diverse New York children.

Today we are asking the Council to award us a direct contract to continue this important work.

Thank you for your attention today

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DONNA J KEREN, PhD

Address: HANOVER SQ. NY NY

I represent: NEW YORK CITY TOURISM + CONVENTIONS

Address: 810 7<sup>th</sup> AVE NY NY

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 4/24/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: NAWEN HIRAMMANA

Address: UNIONLAND TRC, NYC 10030

I represent: NEW YORK CITY TOURISM + CONVENTIONS

Address: 810 7<sup>th</sup> AVE 3<sup>rd</sup> FL NY, NYC 10019

**THE COUNCIL  
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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 4/20/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kitty Chuan

Address: Liberty Plaza

I represent: SBS, Small Business Services

Address: Liberty Plaza

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Riva Shang

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Asian American Federation

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 4/20/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Raul Rivera

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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