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**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**NYC DEPARTMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES & NEW YORK STATE  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF STORM RECOVERY ANNOUNCE NEW PROGRAM TO HELP  
SMALL BUSINESSES PREPARE FOR FUTURE EMERGENCIES**

*City and State provide more than \$7.5 million in federal Sandy aid to strengthen small business resiliency*

*Business PREP services will include in-person expert advice, business continuity planning, on-site consultations, and micro-grants – **learn more at [nyc.gov/businessprep](http://nyc.gov/businessprep)***

**New York** – For the third anniversary of Hurricane Sandy, the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) and New York State Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) today announced an increase in funding for small business resiliency and the launch of the NYC Business Preparedness and Resiliency Program (Business PREP) to provide opportunities and resources for small business owners to better prepare for future emergencies. Building on the City's initial investment of \$3 million in funding for Business PREP that was first announced last December, GOSR has provided an additional \$4.51 million, more than doubling initial investment in the program and bringing the amount of total funding to more than \$7.5 million. Next week, SBS will launch the first component of Business PREP programming, a citywide series of workshops where small businesses can receive in-person expert advice to create a basic business continuity plan. Future programming will include resiliency assessments conducted directly on site at businesses and complementary micro-grants to implement specific recommendations, as well as an online tool to learn more about resiliency and planning, which will launch in 2016.

"Small businesses are a vital part of our City's economy, especially in the wake of an event such as Hurricane Sandy," said **Daniel Zarrilli, Director of the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency**. "Business PREP will provide small businesses with the tools and know-how to protect their assets and operations. We're pleased to launch this program in partnership with the State – Business PREP continues the administration's commitment to strengthening the resiliency of our small businesses, so that entire communities can withstand and emerge stronger from the impacts of climate change and other 21st century threats."

"Small businesses are the backbone of our city's neighborhoods – offering important goods and services, generating jobs, and contributing to the vibrancy and character of our communities. Emergencies like Hurricane Sandy demonstrate that small businesses face unique risks and challenges when it comes to emergency preparedness, which is why we have partnered with the New York State Governor's Office of Storm Recovery to invest in small business resiliency," said **Andrew Schwartz, Acting Commissioner of the NYC Department of Small Business Services**. "Through Business PREP services like in-person advising, online tools, and micro-grants, we will ensure that New York City's small business owners have the resources and opportunities they need to plan ahead and recover quickly from emergencies, thereby strengthening the resiliency of our neighborhoods and our city."

"Small businesses are at the heart of communities throughout New York – serving as a critically-important source of jobs, contributing to a stronger local identity, and always being among the first to offer essential services and support during times of crisis," said **Lisa Bova-Hiatt, Interim Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery GOSR**. "Complementing assistance being provided to small businesses through NY Rising, Business PREP will equip business owners with the tools they need to further grow and thrive in their sectors. We are pleased to collaborate with the City on

this initiative, and implement yet another proposal developed through our grassroots Community Reconstruction Program."

Funding for Business PREP comes from the U.S. Housing & Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program, with the State contributing \$4.51 million and the City providing \$3 million. Business PREP programming to enhance the resiliency of small business operations, assets, and physical space will be targeted primarily to small business owners impacted by Hurricane Sandy, although workshops and online resources will be available to businesses across New York City.

Registration is now open for Business PREP workshops, which will begin in November. To register for courses and learn more about Business PREP, visit [nyc.gov/businessprep](http://nyc.gov/businessprep).

"If Sandy taught us anything, it is that preparation can help businesses and communities recover faster and better from disasters," said **Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez**. "That's why I organized a series of roundtables where local New York businesses described what would be useful to them in disaster preparedness. By providing some of those tools, this initiative helps entrepreneurs in our communities prepare for future emergencies and I'm pleased to see it launch."

"Our recovery from Sandy depended greatly on the hard work of our small, family-owned businesses. As we mark the storm's third anniversary, the sight of reopened storefronts and new businesses across southern Queens and Rockaway is a testament to our community's resiliency," said **Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder**. "The launch of the NYC Business PREP program and renewed investment in resiliency by Small Business Services and the state will help ensure the continued success of our local businesses, and the community as a whole, in the years ahead."

"New York City's economy relies on the strength of small businesses, and in the wake of Superstorm Sandy, too many of our neighborhood storefronts were forced to close their doors in the face of prohibitive recovery costs," said **NYC Public Advocate Letitia James**. "As natural disasters grow more frequent and severe, we must educate New Yorkers about resiliency efforts and provide incentives to prepare in advance of the next storm. Through Business PREP, small businesses throughout the City will have access to important resources that ensure they are better protected and able to continue to thrive."

"More extreme weather is the new normal, but our city isn't going anywhere – so it's critical that our businesses get the support and resources they need to be prepared," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "Initiatives like this one will help our businesses prepare for future emergencies so we can keep our neighborhoods strong and vibrant, no matter what comes our way."

"A community cannot fully bounce back until the local businesses that residents rely on for food, supplies, jobs, and connection are back in operation. The launch of the Business PREP program is a meaningful way to mark the third anniversary of Superstorm Sandy and to support New York City's coastal and flood-prone communities in the future," said **Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr., Small Business Committee Chair**.

"It has always been my belief that small businesses are part of the lifeblood of any community. Small businesses are an economically integral element of a neighborhood, providing residents with employment, goods, and necessary services. But extreme weather events like Hurricane Sandy threaten the survival of small businesses in coastal communities. Small business owners have invested their time, energy, and savings into their enterprises, and it should be the responsibility of government to do everything possible to provide entrepreneurs with the resources necessary for them to continue contributing to the prosperity of our communities. Three years after Sandy, there are still small businesses in neighborhoods affected by the storm that are struggling to come back, if they have even managed to come back at all. The workshops offered by this new program offer small business owners the opportunity to learn about every step they can take to make sure that, in the event of another Hurricane Sandy, they are ready and able to ensure the survival of their business," said **Council Member Mark Treyger, Recovery and Resiliency Committee Chair**. "I applaud the Department of Small Business Services and the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery for taking steps to safeguard our local businesses."

“One of the tough lessons we’ve learned in the aftermath of Sandy is the longer a business shuts its doors after a disaster, the less likely it is that it will ever open them again. Small businesses need resources and support to withstand a disaster, which is one of the reasons I worked with local businesses in one of the communities hit hardest by the storm to form the Midland Beach Merchants Group,” said **City Council Minority Leader Steven Matteo**. “I commend the city and state for creating Business PREP, and I urge all of the businesses affected by Sandy to take advantage of the resources and expertise it offers.”

“Creating real resiliency in our communities requires an integrated approach – one that considers the needs and obligations of many constituencies. The Department of Small Business Services’ announcement is made in that spirit. Small business owners were greatly affected by Hurricane Sandy, and they remain vulnerable to natural disasters in the future. I am hopeful that this newest commitment from the city and the state will help these businesses to be better prepared to deal with our changing climate, and to have structured and business plans that will ensure their success in the long term,” said **Council Member Carlos Menchaca**.

“Unfortunately, I have seen first-hand the disastrous effects on small businesses caused by Sandy, which caused damage and displacement from which many New Yorkers are still struggling to recover, said **Council Member Margaret Chin**. “Through these Business PREP services, we are making sure that small business owners from the Seaport in my district and throughout the city will have the tools they need to plan ahead and recover from future storms.”

“So many small businesses were devastated by Superstorm Sandy back in 2012 and many of them are still struggling to get back to where they were before the storm destroyed their livelihoods,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. “Now that many business owners are aware of the dangers we face as a coastal city, it is crucial that they are all aware of the opportunities and resources available to them through the Business Preparedness and Resiliency Program. I would like to thank Small Business Services for their continued support of local business owners and the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program for providing additional funding to ensure that SBS can provide these services on a larger scale.”

“After Sandy closed many local businesses in the Rockaways, we knew the faster those establishments were able to re-open their doors, the greater the economic development for the entire peninsula” said **Thomas J. Grech, Executive Director of the Queens Chamber of Commerce**. “By working with Small Business Services, along with Rockaway business and property owners, the number of people who came to the Rockaways tripled this past summer, generating a much needed economic boom for the community. While we cannot stop the next Hurricane Sandy from occurring, we can take positive steps to ensure these businesses are prepared and will be able to re-open even faster the next time a natural disaster comes our way. The Business PREP program will help to ensure businesses affected by natural disasters are prepared and we look forward to continuing to work with Acting Commissioner Schwartz, Acting Director Bova-Hiatt, and their teams to prepare small businesses for the future.”

“The Manhattan Chamber of Commerce applauds SBS and the Governor’s Office in their continued quest to support our city’s small businesses. This new preparedness and resiliency program promises to offer further education and tools to help owners run their businesses more effectively, thus affording growth opportunities and further job creation,” said **Nancy Ploeger, President of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce**. “We look forward to working with SBS and the Governor’s Office to reach small businesses in Manhattan and encourage them to take advantage of this terrific educational program.”

“Small businesses are vital to our economy, so we must ensure that they remain resilient in the face of emergencies – and that is exactly what this new programing will do,” said **Carlo Scissura, President of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce**. “Superstorm Sandy ravaged New York’s neighborhoods, but our city and our businesses came back stronger than ever. Thanks to the Department of Small Business Services and the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery, we will now be even better prepared in the future.”

"Be prepared is more than just a slogan. Small businesses need to be ready for any event that can impact their operations. Business PREP will give local businesses in Rockaway important information on how to prepare for a future emergency or natural disaster," said **Seth Bornstein, Executive Director of the Queens Economic Development Corporation**. "The Queens Economic Development Corporation incorporates business resiliency planning in many of our business education programs. I welcome the opportunity to work with the NYC Department of Small Business Services in helping our community through Business PREP."

"The Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation (SBIDC) is excited for the launch of Small Business Services' new Business PREP," said **Andrea Devening, Director of Economic Development at the Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation**. "Today on the three year anniversary of Sandy as small businesses continue to recover, new tools and resources dedicated to small business resiliency and emergency preparedness are as important as ever. SBIDC understands firsthand how Southwest Brooklyn's small businesses were absolutely vital to community-wide recovery in the aftermath of Sandy. Despite devastating conditions, these businesses were in operation as soon as possible to provide necessary and everyday goods and services to the community and to maintain jobs for its employees. We are reminded that ensuring small businesses' quick recovery in the event of an emergency is absolutely crucial. Business PREP will help achieve these goals of emergency preparedness while strengthening small businesses and contributing to the overall resilience of New York City."

"RDRC is very excited about the potential impact Business PREP will have on businesses located in areas such as the Rockaways. Unfortunately, many of our businesses were not prepared for Superstorm Sandy but it does not mean they should not be prepared for future disasters. As the local development corporation focused on commercial revitalization, business and economic development, RDRC is a vested partner with the City of New York and SBS in making our businesses more resilient by bringing services to those most in need, and where needed most," said **Kevin Alexander, President and CEO of Rockaway Development and Revitalization Corporation**.

"That Business PREP is focused on technical assistance and grants is spot on. The very small businesses that drive our economy are often not in a position to take on additional debt when they confront unexpected challenges like those Sandy posed," said **Jessica Lappin, President of the Alliance for Downtown New York**. "I know the workshops and grants Business PREP will provide will be of great interest to a wide array of Lower Manhattan entrepreneurs."

"For areas such as Chinatown, Little Italy and the Lower East Side that are full of small businesses, this new initiative is welcome news to all the merchants as the memories from Superstorm Sandy and tropical storm Irene are still fresh in our mind. We want to thank everyone involved for extending a helping hand as we all need to prepare now for the next one," said **Wellington Chen, Executive Director of the Chinatown Partnership**.

"Three years after Sandy many small businesses are still struggling. Being a witness of the difficult recovery and the tremendous amount of money and effort businesses invested to restore operations, I realized that the lack of knowledge and ability to prepare for disasters placed an additional burden on local business owners," said **Yelena Makhnin, Brighton Beach BID Executive Director**. "Business PREP is designed to educate and prepare businesses to face any kind of disaster by helping them create a business continuity plan and make informed decisions on insurance policies. I strongly believe that this program is an important tool and will benefit businesses, non-profits and other organizations across New York City. I commend SBS for launching this program that in my opinion is a necessity. I am proud to be part of it and encourage all business owners, civic leaders and heads of non-profits to participate."

"Here in the historic Old Seaport district of Lower Manhattan, we're very encouraged by initiatives like SBS' Business PREP program, which focuses on immediate-term emergency preparedness by small business owners. There are many great, long-term visionary efforts underway, aimed at preventing the kinds of large-scale, catastrophic impacts we experienced with Sandy. But in the meantime, it is vital to our local economy and to the future growth of our businesses that they are always prepared should something happen in the immediate future," said **Whitney Barrat, Executive Director**

**of the Old Seaport Alliance.** The Old Seaport Alliance is grateful to SBS for their work on this program, and we look forward to participating and helping to spread the word."

Under the de Blasio administration, SBS also worked to turn around the Hurricane Sandy Business Loan and Grant Program (HSBLGP) to help get more money out to impacted small businesses – providing more grants, making approval guidelines more flexible, and offering one-on-one guidance directly in impacted neighborhoods. Last week, the administration marked the successful completion of the program, which has now awarded more than \$54 million in support to nearly 350 businesses across the city, up from just seven awards at the start of the administration. The City is still accepting any appeals.

#### **About the Department of Small Business Services**

The Department of Small Business Services helps unlock economic potential and create economic security for all New Yorkers by connecting New Yorkers to good jobs, creating stronger businesses, and building a fairer economy in neighborhoods across the five boroughs. For more information on all of SBS' services, go to [nyc.gov/sbs](http://nyc.gov/sbs), call 311, follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), or visit our [blog](#).

#### **About the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program**

Announced by Governor Cuomo in April 2013, the NYRCR Program seeks to empower storm-impacted communities throughout the State, helping them to build back better and stronger than before. Altogether, more than 650 New Yorkers served on 66 NYRCR Committees, which have collectively proposed approximately 700 locally-oriented projects. Throughout the eight-month planning process, the program has held more than 650 Planning Committee meetings and more than 250 large scale Public Engagement Events. Funding for both planning and project implementation comes from HUD's CDBG-DR Program.

#### **About the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR)**

Established in June 2013, GOSR coordinates statewide recovery efforts for Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. Through its NYRCR Program – as well as its NY Rising Housing Recovery, Small Business and Infrastructure programs – GOSR invests \$4.4 billion made available through HUD's CDBG-DR Program to better prepare New York for future extreme weather events.

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