

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES  
  
Of the  
  
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

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January 22, 2021  
Start: 10:11 a.m.  
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HELD AT: Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 1)

B E F O R E: Mark Gjonaj  
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Stephen Levin  
Bill Perkins  
Ydanis Rodriguez  
Helen Rosenthal  
Peter Koo

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

Jonelle Davis, Commissioner  
Department of Small Business Services

Jackie Mallon, Deputy Commissioner  
Department of Small Business Services

Susannah Koteen, Owner  
Lido

Jennifer Tausig, Executive Director  
Jerome Gun Hill BID  
Cochair  
New York BID Association

Arthur Nichols, Owner  
Bronx Masks

Yin Kong, New York City Resident

Jennifer Sun, Co-Executive Director  
Asian American for Equality

Ahyoung Kim, Assistant Director of Small  
Business Programs  
Asian American Federation

Yasmin Familia, Owner  
Caribe

Aashna Singh  
Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A

Kathleen Sforza, New York City Resident

Jan Lee, New York City Resident

Kamilah Hanks, Founder  
Minority Women and Business Owner

Don Christian Jones  
Public Assistance

Jaclyn Tacoronte, Owner and Manager  
JMT Median

MJ Okma  
Human Services Council

Leticia Remauro, New York City Resident



2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: I just want to let  
3 everyone know that we are live streaming now. Chair,  
4 when you are ready.

5 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you,  
6 sergeant-at-arms. We're ready?

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: I just wanted to make  
8 sure you are good before we started our recordings.  
9 Sergeants, we are going to start with our recordings.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Recording for the  
11 computer all set.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Recording for the cloud  
13 also.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: John, you may begin with  
15 your opening now.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and welcome  
17 to today's remote New York City Council hearing on  
18 the Committee on Small Business. At this time, would  
19 all panelists please turn on their video for  
20 verification. Once again, would all panelists please  
21 turn on your video for verification. To minimize  
22 disruption upon testimony, please place all  
23 electronic devices on vibrate or silent mode. If you  
24 wish to submit testimony, you may do so at  
25 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again, that is

2 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Thank you for your  
3 cooperation. Chair Gjonaj, we are ready to begin.

4 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you,  
5 sergeant-at-arms.

6 [gavel]

7 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Good morning. I am  
8 Council member Mark Gjonaj, Chair of the Committee on  
9 Small Business and I would like to welcome you to our  
10 hearing today on the Mayor's Recovery Agenda. The  
11 Covid 19 pandemic has disproportionately affected  
12 certain boroughs and neighborhoods, highlighting  
13 health and economic disparity in our city. From  
14 total Covid 19 infectious and mortality is too small  
15 business closures and unemployment numbers, lower  
16 income communities and communities of color have  
17 experienced the worst of this pandemic and its  
18 economic devastation. Unfortunately, New York City's  
19 minuscule relief efforts intended to help struggling  
20 New Yorkers have also failed to help the highest need  
21 communities. During the first round of paycheck  
22 protection program, for example, New York State  
23 received one of the lowest amounts of PPP funding in  
24 proportion to its total eligible payroll. The city's  
25 relief program also failed to equitably disburse

2 needed financial relief to the struggling small  
3 businesses. As the previous SBS Commissioner  
4 acknowledged at a small business committee hearing  
5 last year, SBS's Employee Retention Grant Program and  
6 small business Continuity Loan Fund predominately  
7 benefited businesses in Manhattan. SBS's report on  
8 the breakdown of the loan and grant issue by the city  
9 Council District, ZIP Code, and industry type further  
10 revealed failures of those relief programs.

11 Businesses in Council District 11 qualified for more  
12 total grant money than business is in and any other  
13 Bronx Council District, but CD 11 still received the  
14 37th lowest amount of grant money. When discussing  
15 the creation of the employee retention grant program,  
16 Mayor de Blasio described to the purpose of the  
17 program was to benefit our smallest small businesses  
18 with under five employees. A lot of mom-and-pop  
19 neighborhood based stores. However, attorneys'  
20 offices, physicians, and dentists were the three  
21 professional groups that received the most amount of  
22 money through the program. If you think that small  
23 business Continuity Loan Fund also failed to disburse  
24 loans to seven Council districts, five of which are  
25 in the Bronx. I understand that these programs are

2 created on the short notice and the former  
3 Commissioner at SBS employees worked tirelessly to  
4 launch them. Nonetheless, for the city to recover,  
5 outer boroughs must cover and the outer boroughs were  
6 not given a fighting chance to recover under SBS's  
7 previous relief efforts. We all recognize New York  
8 City's engine is Manhattan, but the outer boroughs  
9 are the fuel that operate that engine. I was glad to  
10 see the Mayor and the Commissioner and else in late  
11 November the creation of three new programs to  
12 benefit small businesses in low to moderate income  
13 communities. The LMI storefront loan, interest rate  
14 reduction grant, and the strategic impact Covid 19  
15 commercial district support grant our steps towards  
16 reviving the economy of outer borough communities. I  
17 want to thank the Commissioner and his staff for all  
18 their hard work in launching these programs.

19 Unfortunately, we have seen reports of a number of  
20 issues related to these programs. ZIP Code 10013,  
21 which includes parts of Chinatown, was excluded from  
22 the LMI storefront loan program because SBS used that  
23 Department of Housing and Urban Development 2020  
24 median income with the New York City Legion to  
25 determine which ZIP Codes qualify as low and moderate



2 income. This dataset overlooks certain lower income  
3 neighborhoods in the city that are part of the same  
4 ZIP Codes as neighborhoods with more affluent  
5 residents which exclude certain businesses from  
6 applying to these programs. To qualify for the LMI  
7 storefront loan business program, we are also  
8 required to provide a personal guarantee on the loan  
9 which actually contradicts recent protections past by  
10 the Council that protected business owners from  
11 personal guarantee and rent the property owners,  
12 double standard. As a small business in the city of  
13 New York, experiencing decreased revenues without a  
14 clear idea of when the city will resume its normal  
15 economic activity requiring all applicants to agree  
16 to a personal guarantee may depress applicants to the  
17 program as the purpose of the loan program is to  
18 benefit businesses in low income neighborhoods. The  
19 possibility of low income business owners losing  
20 their personal assets may cause further harm in  
21 certain communities in the future. So, I look  
22 forward to the Commissioner's testimony today and his  
23 explanations on some of the issues I just outlined,  
24 as well as explanations on insufficient and  
25 inadequate dollar amounts offered to Covid 19 rescue

2 loan and grant programs, more equitable distribution  
3 of the limited funds, and what this administration  
4 will be doing in the future to assist our struggling  
5 small businesses which built this city and, without  
6 which would not survive. With that said, I want to  
7 thank our Chief of Staff, Reggie Johnson, legislative  
8 aide Morstan Sackler [sp?], our senior legislative  
9 counsel, Christopher Sartori, our policy analyst,  
10 Noah Miksler, and financial analyst, Aliya Ali, for  
11 their hard work in preparing for this hearing. I  
12 want to turn it back to the committee counsel. Thank  
13 you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair  
15 Gjonaj. I am Chris Sartori, senior counsel to the  
16 Committee on Small Business and I'll be moderating  
17 this hearing. Before we begin, I would like to  
18 remind everyone that you will be on mute until you  
19 are called on to testify, at which point you will be  
20 on muted by the host. During the hearing, I will be  
21 calling on panelists to testify, so please listen for  
22 your name to be called as I will periodically be  
23 announcing who the next panelists will be. At this  
24 hearing, we will be hearing testimony from the  
25 Department of Small Business Services followed by

2 testimony from members of the public. During the  
3 hearing, if Council members would like to ask a  
4 question of the administration or of a specific  
5 panelist, please use the zoom and raise function and  
6 I will call on you in order. We will be limiting  
7 Council member questions to five minutes which  
8 includes the time it takes to answer your questions.  
9 For remaining panelists, we will be limiting your  
10 time to three minutes to accommodate all who have  
11 come to testify today. Also, for all panelists, when  
12 called on to testify, please state your name and the  
13 organization you represent, if any. We will now be  
14 calling on representatives of the administration to  
15 testify. We will first be hearing testimony from  
16 Jonelle Doris, Commissioner of the Department of  
17 Small Business Services. He will be joined by Deputy  
18 Commissioner Jackie Mallon who will be present to  
19 answer any questions. At this time, I will  
20 administer the affirmation to Commissioner Doris and  
21 Deputy Commissioner Mallon and I will call on you  
22 individually for a response. Please raise your right  
23 hands. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole  
24 truth, and nothing but the truth for these committees

2 and to respond honestly to Council member questions?  
3 Commissioner Doris?

4 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I do.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner  
6 Mallon?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MALLON: I do.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. At this  
9 time, I would like to invite Commissioner Doris to  
10 present his testimony. Before we begin-- sorry,  
11 Commissioner-- I would just like to acknowledge the  
12 different Council members who have come to-- who are  
13 present so far. It is Council members Powers,  
14 Rosenthal, Koo, Perkins, and Lander. Thank you.  
15 Commissioner Doris, you may begin.

16 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Good morning,  
17 Chair Gjonaj, and members of the Committee on Small  
18 Business. I am Jonelle Doris, the Commissioner of  
19 the New York City Department of Small Business  
20 Services. I am joined by SBS first Deputy  
21 Commissioner Jackie Mallon. We are grateful for the  
22 opportunity to testify today on SBS support services  
23 to small businesses and jobseekers under the  
24 continued impact of the Covid pandemic. 11 months  
25 after New York City's first confirmed Covid cases,

2 New York City's small businesses are still reeling.  
3 The impact continues to be devastating to our small  
4 businesses and especially to our immigrant majority-  
5 owned businesses. At SBS, we have worked tirelessly  
6 to provide a backstop for businesses and want the  
7 most severe damage from this health and economic  
8 crisis. Agencywide, we have delivered over 108,000  
9 services to businesses across the city. Small  
10 business recovery hotline fielded over 52,000  
11 individual calls and we have posted 275 webinars and  
12 nearly 50,000 individual participants. We have  
13 walked in over 70 commercial corridor towards,  
14 meeting businesses where they are and we have  
15 connected with over 100 business advocacy groups to  
16 support outreach. We have launched for grant  
17 programs and to loan programs dispersing vital direct  
18 aid to businesses. We recently launched three new  
19 mentorship programs for businesses in the hardest hit  
20 communities. MWBEs and a new initiative for black  
21 entrepreneurs. SBS launched the Shop Your City  
22 campaign, a multi-phased advertisement and social  
23 media campaign to encourage consumers to shop  
24 locally. This campaign, which includes resources to  
25 help consumers find local businesses will continue

2 indefinitely. With unemployment still a challenge,  
3 our workforce team has assisted more than 69,800  
4 individuals referred over 36,300 people to jobs and  
5 worked with over 980 businesses on over 25,000 job  
6 opportunities. We have connected more than 8600 New  
7 Yorkers to jobs with an average wage of \$17.44. We  
8 have launched a career discovery NYC to provide  
9 online no cause training that prepared New Yorkers to  
10 pursue an in demand career. A primary goal over  
11 these 11 months has been to confront the stark  
12 inequality the pandemic has exasperated in our  
13 communities. After the first round of stimulus under  
14 the Cares Act, we all so large portions of the  
15 community did not have the same access to aid.  
16 Analysis of the first round of PPP showed that  
17 businesses led by people of color in New York were  
18 less likely to receive a loan and, when they did,  
19 were more likely to receive less funding. We knew  
20 that we had to design programs that reached these  
21 small businesses had we had to do it creatively and  
22 with limited resources. A mixture of grants and  
23 loans is an ideal way of getting funding and fast and  
24 also leverages the limited dollars that are  
25 available. The New York City LMI storefront, the

2 interest rate reduction grant, and strategic impact  
3 Covid 19 commercial district support grants were  
4 designed as a two grant, one loan, three-part program  
5 to target those that did not get their fair share.  
6 We know that immigrant and minority communities and  
7 businesses all too often shut out of traditional  
8 credit markets. CDFI's have historically played and  
9 continued to play a vital role and fill in this gap.  
10 With the interest rate reduction grant, we worked with  
11 CDFI partners to target these boroughs directly with  
12 the grant to pay off the interest and reduce to that  
13 for those clients. To date, the interest rate  
14 reduction grant has removed interest costs for over  
15 290 small businesses across the city. 88 percent of  
16 these grants have gone to minority owned businesses  
17 and LMI communities. Our continued work with CDFI's  
18 has also deepened and opened new opportunities for  
19 collaboration and partnership. Additionally, our  
20 CBO's, our vital and trusted community partners, they  
21 provide unparalleled cultural competent outreach,  
22 build trust, and bring resources to the communities  
23 that needed them most. The second grant, the  
24 strategic impact Covid 19 commercial district support  
25 grant, was designed to bolster these community

2 support systems. We have simplified the application  
3 process and reduced programmatic red tape to maximize  
4 impact. We also announced the awardees of our  
5 strategic impact Covid 19 commercial district support  
6 grant. We have awarded over 750,000 to 24  
7 organizations across the city. They will use these  
8 resources to conduct outreach and provide technical  
9 assistance and support for small business is in the  
10 targeted LMI communities. The LMI storefront loan  
11 was designed to directly target reports that showed  
12 LMI community received disproportionate federal  
13 funding. This program expands our reach to  
14 leveraging private dollars to provide 35 million zero  
15 interest loans to these hardest hit areas. Our LMI  
16 storefront program has worked diligently to reach  
17 potential borrowers and support them in determining  
18 if a loan is the right solution for their business.  
19 To date, we have approved over 5.5 million to the  
20 businesses and over 80 percent of these are minority  
21 owned small businesses. The path forward for many of  
22 our small businesses is through federal aid. The  
23 latest round of stimulus funding can be a real  
24 lifeline that our cities small businesses, but we  
25 must make sure they get their fair share. We



2 launched the fair share campaign NYC to help  
3 businesses take full advantage of this opportunity.  
4 For many of our businesses, this funding will be the  
5 difference between surviving through the pandemic and  
6 closing their doors for good. Fair share NYC  
7 leverages what we learned in the first round and  
8 provides information, one-on-one support, and direct  
9 connections to lenders when needed to ensure  
10 businesses are not left out. With over 284 billion  
11 on the table, to get the word out on the program, we  
12 have launched a webpage, created daily webinars,  
13 created flyers in 15 languages, and have shared  
14 contact with over 100 business organizations, BIDs,  
15 CBOs, and community partners citywide to create the  
16 train the trainer content that any interested party,  
17 advocacy group, or individual can follow and be, and  
18 outreach ambassador for small businesses. Businesses  
19 will learn about PPP forgiveness loans and economic  
20 injury disaster loan events, known as IDLE, that  
21 gives grants to-- grants of, I'm sorry, 10,000 to  
22 microbusinesses and businesses in low income  
23 communities. Then, we provide direct one-on-one  
24 support to businesses to understand what product is  
25 best suited for them. We then get to work on details

2 and help them review and put together their loan  
3 documents, calculate loan repayment terms, connect  
4 them with our network of 40 lenders, including  
5 CDFI's, banks, credit unions, nonprofit lenders,  
6 small business administration, and we help prepare  
7 SBA loan forgiveness documents and help them  
8 understand loan payment and deferment options. With  
9 these services and up to 15 languages, we are much  
10 better positioned to support businesses through this  
11 round of funding. With the new administration in  
12 Washington, we are also hopeful that we will not be  
13 the la-- this will not be the last opportunity for  
14 our small businesses. We continue to advocate for  
15 more aid to our hardest hit businesses, direct  
16 liquidity to our CDFI's, more funding for deeper  
17 outreach and rule changes that help ensure that no  
18 businesses in need are left behind. SBS will also  
19 remain dynamic and adaptive to the needs of small  
20 businesses. We will continue to be innovative and  
21 bring more programs like career discovery NYC,  
22 mentorship programs, BNYC, We NYC, Fair Share NYC,  
23 Open Restaurants, Open Storefronts program to show  
24 our businesses. And if and when additional funding  
25 becomes available, we will build on what we have

2 learned and continue to find new ways to directly  
3 support our small businesses in a way that's fast and  
4 easy and equitable. Thank you for your partnership  
5 through this crisis and I look forward to your  
6 continued support and feedback as we get to the other  
7 side of this pandemic. And I'm happy to take your  
8 questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

9 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you so much,  
10 Commissioner. Your commitment and passion is  
11 recognized and known to me personally and the  
12 importance of these hearings is not only so that we  
13 educate New Yorkers, but we also get an opportunity  
14 to hear from them on their struggles and their  
15 issues. And, collectively, we address them. You and  
16 I have spoken so many times since the start of Covid  
17 and the impact that that has had on our small  
18 businesses and New Yorkers from loss of life to the  
19 devastation of our economy. We have the same  
20 commitments to help restabilize New York.  
21 Commissioner, so that it's easier for us to follow,  
22 there were six programs: four grants and two loan  
23 programs that were offered by the city. Is that  
24 correct?

25 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Correct.

2 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Can we go through  
3 them one more time, please? The two loan programs,  
4 what are they and what was the total dollar amount  
5 allocated?

6 COMMISSIONER DORIS: So, the one loan  
7 program was the business continuity loan fund which  
8 we did earlier on last year and, out of that, that  
9 program was about-- we had 20 awards-- 400 for  
10 approvals totaling about 23 million. The other loan  
11 program was the recently announced LMI storefront  
12 loan program which is a \$35 million dollar zero  
13 interest loan program.

14 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you. And the  
15 four grant programs?

16 COMMISSIONER DORIS: The NYC employee  
17 retention grant program, that is 3400 business is  
18 approved, about 25 million there. We have the three  
19 programs-- the two program, grant programs we  
20 discussed your which is the interest rate reduction  
21 grant program. And the Covid community grant program  
22 we talked about for CBO's, community-based  
23 organizations.

24 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: What was the dollar  
25 amount for the interest rate reduction grant?

2 COMMISSIONER DORIS: That one we have  
3 allocated so far to that program about \$1.5 million.

4 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: And for the  
5 strategic to impact Covid 19 commercial district  
6 support grant?

7 COMMISSIONER DORIS: That grant and was  
8 originally allocated at 700,000. We have awarded  
9 about 750,000 and they are slated to be another phase  
10 of that program for additional funding that we will  
11 be announcing shortly.

12 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: I think were  
13 missing one of the grants. The employee retention,  
14 the interest rate, the strategic impact. What is the  
15 other grant that we are missing?

16 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I believe that is  
17 all the programs that we should be. Maybe there was  
18 a typo there, but that is all the programs. Those  
19 are the five programs.

20 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Okay. Three grant  
21 programs and two loan programs. You may be  
22 referring to--

23 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Oh, I'm sorry.  
24 I'm sorry. We didn't mention it in the test--  
25 that's why. I'm sorry. The emergency-- our small

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2 business emergency grant program for businesses that  
3 were looted. And so, that program is about \$1.3  
4 million or so.

5 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: In total, right--  
6 I just want to make sure I get my--

7 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Yeah. Yeah. I'm  
8 sorry. We didn't mention that. Sorry about that.  
9 Yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: So, 23 million,  
11 correct? 35 million. 25 million. 1.5 million.  
12 750,000. In 1.3 million. My correct all those  
13 numbers?

14 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Correct.

15 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Roughly  
16 \$86,550,000. What is the acceptable number of small  
17 business as that we recognize existing New York City?

18 COMMISSIONER DORIS: We normally go by  
19 about 240,000 small businesses that are in the city  
20 with employees.

21 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: That number varies  
22 between 230 and 270, so 240 is right in the middle  
23 somewhere. I'm grateful to you, Commissioner. You  
24 and I agree that this is the-- in our lifetime, this  
25 Covid 19 has been the most devastating factor in

2 small business, let alone the loss of lives and all  
3 the other devastation. I don't know of, and my  
4 lifetime, and the other impacts so devastating. Do  
5 you agree?

6 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Oh, absolutely.

7 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: My question is do  
8 you think the programs you just outlined and the  
9 dollar amounts are sufficient to meet the challenges  
10 that our small businesses could not possibly prepare  
11 for, nor was it in their control.

12 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Mr. Chair, you  
13 know how I feel about this question. This is a very  
14 important question. One that we grapple with in  
15 making sure that, from our perspective here at SBS,  
16 we know that the need is great. We know that the  
17 need is greater than the resources that the city has  
18 and that we have. And, in part, why do we, on top of  
19 what you see here, we have also connected our small  
20 businesses to additional funding and support, be at  
21 the federal government, philanthropic, others that  
22 are not listed here, but certainly we do here you on  
23 that concern.

24 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: You agree that the  
25 amount of funds that were allocated are not

2 sufficient? That, provided we had a magic wand, I'm  
3 sure that you had have the desire to do much, much  
4 more for our struggling small businesses.

5 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Yes. Certainly,  
6 we are and will take any additional resources that we  
7 can get to help small businesses. Absolutely.

8 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: With that being  
9 said, obviously, we know that this wasn't enough and  
10 certainly much, much more is needed, do you feel the  
11 limited funds that were provided, that \$86,550,000  
12 was dispersed equitably throughout the city of New  
13 York?

14 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I believe that,  
15 you know, some of the lessons that we have learned  
16 from the earlier investments that were made in small  
17 businesses and, by the way, we were the first city in  
18 the state, or in the country, really, to do anything  
19 for small business sense. I just want to say that,  
20 before the federal government acted, the state acted.  
21 Any other state in the union acted, New York City  
22 acted. And we acted and released the small business  
23 retention grant and the loan fund. The continuity  
24 loan fund. So, certainly, we were ahead of the curve  
25 there and, certainly, with the fact of a \$9 billion



2 deficit which, I believe, our Council members also  
3 concerned there with the deficit , the city did come  
4 up with a program and initiated that program and got  
5 that funding out the door to small businesses.  
6 Certainly, we have learned a lot from that exercise.  
7 We have learned a lot from how the federal resources  
8 came to bear in the city, as well, and we have  
9 developed our new programs that we mentioned here,  
10 particularly on what we talked about the emergency  
11 grant for businesses that were looted and businesses  
12 that went through significant turmoil during the  
13 times of protest and etc. How those programs are  
14 designed, how the three design programs, the LMI  
15 programs, they are all in response and making sure  
16 that we are making movement in the right direction  
17 when it comes to how we administer the funds. And  
18 so, you know, I would go back to say that earlier  
19 program was 50 percent of minorities and/or women  
20 program and, certainly, the other programs are  
21 [inaudible 00:27:51] as a matter fact, we just said  
22 today that on the three LMI programs, we are over 80  
23 percent minority and LMI. Very low income  
24 communities. So, I believe we are moving in the  
25 right direction and distributing these funds

2 appropriately. I think we are learning from the  
3 lessons of the past and we are administering the  
4 funds the best we can in this climate.

5 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you for that  
6 answer, Commissioner, but it's a pretty  
7 straightforward question. Do you feel that the  
8 money, the limited money, was distributed equally and  
9 equitably where needed most? That is a yes or no.  
10 I'm not sure they gave me a--

11 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I'm not sure if it  
12 is a yes or no. I mean, I think we are showing  
13 progression and I think we believe that, you know, in  
14 some instances, we do see that and I think we are  
15 seeing ways that the new programs that we absolutely  
16 believe that we have seen tremendous amounts of  
17 movement in that direction and we will continue to  
18 sharpen at every turn and every chance we get. And I  
19 think that is what government does. That is what we  
20 have to do. We have to change. We have to adapt and  
21 we have to make changes, but, certainly, you know,  
22 the majority of businesses receiving funds are low  
23 income. The majority are women and minority groups.  
24 The majority are in districts right now, so I believe

2 that, yes, we can do more there, but, certainly, that  
3 is-- those are the facts.

4 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: So, Commissioner,  
5 based on that statement, then I would be-- what you  
6 are saying is the grant program-- one of the grant  
7 programs were the three recipients of the highest  
8 dollar amounts to professions and industries were  
9 physicians, dentists, lawyers. Do you think that  
10 they are the groups that needed the most help during  
11 this devastation?

12 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Well, you're  
13 talking about the earlier programs, correct?

14 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: I am referring to  
15 all of them.

16 COMMISSIONER DORIS: [inaudible  
17 00:29:27]

18 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: I wrapped them all  
19 up into one ball of wax. \$86 million for 240,000  
20 businesses. I am looking at this across the board  
21 and its numbers. Math matters here. There are six  
22 programs. For grant programs, two loan programs.  
23 The total amount we discussed, the number of  
24 businesses we discussed, and I find out that even in  
25 the earlier program that three professions, the three

2 industries that received the most amount of money  
3 were lawyers, physicians, and dentists. Without even  
4 getting into the geography of where they are located.

5 COMMISSIONER DORIS: So, I'm not sure.  
6 From the report here, we have for the small business  
7 continuity loan fund, about 15 percent went to  
8 restaurants and bars. 13 percent to the professional  
9 services. I am assuming that is along the lines of  
10 what you are mentioning about those particular  
11 professional services. In the existing program LMI  
12 storefront program, we actually have the majority of  
13 those industries are retail and restaurants. So,  
14 maybe you are mentioning on the business continuity  
15 loan fund data that I am looking at here that we  
16 submitted to the Council. The professional,  
17 scientific, and technical services. Architects,  
18 graphic designs, and, I believe, the lawyers would  
19 fall under professional services, as well. That is  
20 around 13 percent and accommodation and food is about  
21 15--

22 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: No. Commissioner,  
23 I am referring to--

24 COMMISSIONER DORIS: [inaudible  
25 00:31:36]

2 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: I am referring to  
3 appendix C. New York City's SBS Covid 19 employee  
4 retention grant. The three--

5 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Employee retention  
6 grant.

7 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: The three top  
8 recipients are lawyers, physicians, and dentists.

9 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Oh. The grant  
10 program. Okay. Yes. Thank you. I thought you were  
11 referencing the loan data. Okay. Yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: It's the largest--  
13 Well, the largest grant that we have offered. The  
14 employee retention grant was \$25 million. It's the  
15 largest grant program that was offered by the city of  
16 New York.

17 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Thank you. Thank  
18 you for the clarification of that. That is the  
19 program we were looking at. Okay. Sure. Yes. So, we  
20 do have-- Yes. That is correct, I believe.

21 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: So, that is not a  
22 WMBE, the women or minority owned business. That is  
23 not the restaurant industry. That is not the nail  
24 salons or nightclubs that qualified the most for this  
25 much needed financial assistance. Correct?

2 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Well, I mean, if  
3 it is a-- I don't believe we have all of the-- that  
4 particular breakdown of who is minority or not. I am  
5 saying that that grant program and Malone Graham we  
6 did see that the majority that went to that first  
7 program was two women and minorities. That is what  
8 we saw in that particular program.

9 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: I'm looking-- I  
10 don't have a breakdown, so if you have a different  
11 breakdown on the grant program on the grant program  
12 that identifies those three industries, I would like  
13 to see that grant. I don't see those numbers  
14 anywhere. But the lawyers, the physicians, and the  
15 dentists of that fund are women or minority owned?

16 COMMISSIONER DORIS: For those  
17 particular professional services, yeah. We would  
18 have to figure out a look at that closely. I'm  
19 speaking of the broader overarching, you know, that  
20 encompasses all of the grants that were put into that  
21 program. Yes. But, yes. If you want to go deeper  
22 into that particular section, we will have to look  
23 into that and get back.

24 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you for that,  
25 Commissioner, but I'm going to guess that the

2 minority owned and women-owned companies were not the  
3 major recipients of those funds for those three  
4 specific industries which now begins the question of,  
5 okay. If we know that the dollar amount was  
6 inadequate, we know that the industries that needed  
7 the most aid that were in dire straits-- which I  
8 think we can all agree were not lawyers, doctors, and  
9 dentists. We are thinking of mom-and-pop shops. We  
10 are thinking of local restaurants, grocery stores.  
11 We are thinking of nail salons. Where that money  
12 should have really gone did not go. Did not get  
13 there. If we look at that breakdown of the \$86  
14 million, total 86 million, how much of that was  
15 broken down by-- or the recipients of that funding  
16 went to Manhattan owned businesses versus the outer  
17 boroughs?

18 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Okay. So, we  
19 can-- I mean, you're asking six programs and I don't  
20 think we've done that analysis. We certainly can go  
21 through the programs one by one. We have a combined  
22 and put them all together like you are mentioning.  
23 However, with the loan and grant program, happy to  
24 talk to you about those. So, one second. I'm sorry.  
25 We are just getting all that data for you. We will

2 pull it up. So, for the loan and grant program, the  
3 first one that we put out we have the borough  
4 breakdown of those programs--

5 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Just the  
6 continued-- you're talking about the loan program  
7 from the continuity or the LMI?

8 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I'm going to talk  
9 about the two programs-- the continuity loan program  
10 and the retention grant. That is the first one.

11 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Okay?

13 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Yep.

14 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Those two. So,  
15 for the grant program, three percent Bronx, 24  
16 percent Brooklyn, 54 percent Manhattan.

17 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: I'm sorry. One  
18 more time, Commissioner. Three percent Bronx.

19 COMMISSIONER DORIS: 24 percent  
20 Brooklyn. 54 percent Manhattan. 17 percent Queens.  
21 Three percent Staten Island. For the loan program,  
22 that earlier program-- again, these are the first  
23 programs the city put out in the middle of the  
24 pandemic when nobody in the country had anything



2 happening. Two percent Bronx. One second. One  
3 second.

4 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: One percent.

5 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Not one percent.

6 It was two percent Bronx. 21 percent Brooklyn. 60  
7 percent Manhattan. Four percent Staten Island.

8 Okay. Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: And that--

10 COMMISSIONER DORIS: And correct.

11 Thank you. Sorry about that. Just wanted to--

12 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: That leaves the LMI  
13 loan program. Do you have a breakdown for that one?

14 COMMISSIONER DORIS: The current LMI  
15 loan program? Sure. So, we want to caution that  
16 this program is early on. We just started to do  
17 awards, but from what we currently have, the  
18 breakdown--

19 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: What is the total  
20 that you have awarded thus far of the 35 million?

21 COMMISSIONER DORIS: We have awarded  
22 about 5.5 million thus far, so we are awarding  
23 businesses every day, so that number goes up by the  
24 minute, but so far, as of this hearing, we have  
25 awarded to about 57 businesses in a total of \$5.5

2 million to date. The breakdown for that program is  
3 11 percent Bronx so far to date. 26 percent Kings.  
4 26 percent Manhattan. 37 percent Queens. That is  
5 the breakdown as of--

6 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Staten Island?

7 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Staten Island, we  
8 have no awards yet for Staten Island, but we do have  
9 applications in the hopper. Again, this is very  
10 early on. We are going to award at least 350 of  
11 these loans. At least. And were barely passed 50,  
12 so, you know, this is very early on, so we want to  
13 just be mindful of that reality, as well. On the  
14 other programs, the grant-- the LMI--

15 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: No. We did the  
16 LMI, so it is the grant--

17 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I mean the--

18 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: The interest rate  
19 reduction.

20 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Yes. So, the  
21 particular program-- we will pull that up for you,  
22 as well. Interest rate reduction grant program  
23 borough breakdown. The Bronx 37 percent. Brooklyn  
24 19 percent. Manhattan 26 percent. Queens 19  
25 percent. And we don't have any grants get to the

2 Staten Island as the CDFI's are working to get those  
3 paperwork in. So, that is what we have so far.  
4 Again, all very early on.

5 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: And the strategic  
6 impact Covid 19 commercial. Do you have those  
7 numbers?

8 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Yes. We do. And  
9 just flagging for this particular grant, you know, it  
10 went to community-based organizations based upon what  
11 we-- communities that need at the most and also that  
12 were high Covid impact and where we did not have  
13 significant SBS either Avenue NYC or other grants in  
14 there. So, in the Bronx, we have-- I'm sorry.  
15 It's not breaking down the same way as the others,  
16 but we-- I will just list it for you. So, there  
17 were one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight,  
18 nine, 10, 11, 12 communities. These are \$20,000  
19 grants to community-based organizations to do support  
20 business services. In Brooklyn--

21 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: What was the 12,  
22 though? For which borough?

23 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Bronx.

24 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Bronx.

2 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Again, I would not  
3 look at these as in the same light. If you remember,  
4 resources that we have already deployed to these  
5 areas, we are trying to fill some gaps and just  
6 support some of these smaller businesses in Brooklyn.  
7 The Bronx Chamber, for instance, have fought for  
8 communities that they are going to work with that  
9 they applied for, etc. So, Brooklyn. So, that's  
10 nine-- 12. And nine, I believe, and Brooklyn.

11 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Same dollar amount?  
12 20,000 grants?

13 COMMISSIONER DORIS: All 20,000 grants.  
14 These are all \$20,000 grants for community  
15 organizations to work with LMI communities where  
16 there were not a lot of assistance and so they would  
17 have to apply and then we will award to them and they  
18 will go ahead and continue doing the work they are  
19 doing. Communities in Manhattan and LMI communities--  
20 - we are talking East Harlem, lower East side, etc.  
21 So, there are eight there. Queens have three awarded  
22 so far. The neighborhoods, again, we did not get  
23 some applications from some neighborhoods and so we  
24 started up the second phase to get the various  
25 communities that did not get an award because no one

2 applied. And so, we put it back out again starting,  
3 I believe the application called on Monday on which  
4 we are going to try to get additional community-based  
5 organizations to apply for those \$20,000 loans. I'm  
6 sorry. Grants.

7 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Sorry,  
8 Commissioner. Because I understood that, originally,  
9 that program was 700,000 and then you bump it up to  
10 750.

11 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Correct.

12 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: The numbers that  
13 you just gave me: 12 for Bronx, three for Queens,  
14 eat for Manhattan, nine for Brooklyn-- 32 businesses  
15 that 20,000 each. That is 640,000.

16 COMMISSIONER DORIS: There is-- oh,  
17 let me make sure. Sorry. It's not businesses.  
18 These are community based organizations.

19 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Community based.  
20 Right. Uh-hmm.

21 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Okay. 12 for the  
22 Bronx.

23 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Uh-hm.

24 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Nine--

25 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Brooklyn.

2 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Brooklyn.

3 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Eight Manhattan,  
4 three Queens, none for Staten Island.

5 COMMISSIONER DORIS: There's a citywide  
6 grant to help these organizations with their back  
7 office supports, so that was \$100,000. And--

8 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Okay. Which entity  
9 received that?

10 COMMISSIONER DORIS: That grant was  
11 distributed to the neighborhood housing organization  
12 that is when help us to do that. It is ANHD.

13 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: ANHD. Where are  
14 they located?

15 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I think they have  
16 offices around the city, so it's and \$86,000 grant.  
17 Jackie, do you know whether located? Their primary  
18 office. I believe they are located-- you know,  
19 there across the city.

20 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Jackie is muted.

21 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Where's their  
22 headquarters?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MALLON: Sorry. I  
24 think it is downtown Manhattan, but I am not 100  
25 percent sure to be honest.

2 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Okay. But I know,  
3 you know, they serve the whole city. So--

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MALLON: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Maybe you will have  
6 the staff look it up in the meantime to see how many  
7 offices they have throughout the city, how many are  
8 in the different boroughs. Because obtaining a  
9 picture here and I think you all see where I am  
10 heading with this. So, that would be your 740. That  
11 leaves on the table 10,000 more which isn't enough to  
12 find any organization. Okay. And that leaves one  
13 more program that we haven't discussed. The  
14 emergency grant program of 1.3 million. The  
15 breakdown by borough.

16 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Well, we-- This  
17 program, I believe, over 65 percent went into the  
18 Bronx. I'm in, we went where there was-- the  
19 looting was and where there was, you know, challenges  
20 for those small businesses.

21 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: But do we have  
22 those--

23 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Primarily those  
24 went to the Bronx because, as you know, we had some  
25 real challenges there.

2 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Yeah. So it all  
3 went there or you have those numbers? All 1.3  
4 million?

5 COMMISSIONER DORIS: We can get that  
6 for you today. Right now. So, I don't have it in  
7 front of me because I didn't think we were going to  
8 talk about that grant, but we can get that for you as  
9 we speak. So, that's not a problem. So will get  
10 that for you now.

11 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: I only have one  
12 other question and thank you for that whole  
13 breakdown. All right. I'm looking at appendix A and  
14 it shows the breakdown by Council District which  
15 business received a loan from the city of New York  
16 employee retention program. In the top three which  
17 would be Council District four, three, and one which  
18 cover the Upper East Side, Battery Park, Chelsea  
19 areas, received-- it looks like-- five, 11-- over  
20 \$12 million. The last three Council districts. The  
21 bottom three of that program which would be Council  
22 District 14, 12, and 16 which cover Fordham Road,  
23 Kingsbridge, Morris Heights, Waitsfield, Amonville  
24 [sp?], Claremont received what it looks like here--  
25 about 70,000 dollars in total. The hardest hit



2 neighborhoods, the poorest neighborhoods, real mom-  
3 and-pop shops-- no Fortune 500 companies there.  
4 Very few doctors, dentists, lawyers. Council  
5 District 16 received a total of \$11,833.39 and,  
6 before I make my question, these are the facts. The  
7 numbers unless you want to dispute them,  
8 Commissioner.

9 COMMISSIONER DORIS: No. I do not want  
10 to dispute--

11 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Okay. Great. So  
12 then let's look at the data based on receiving grants  
13 on New York City's employee retention program. The  
14 three top Council districts are four, three, and one  
15 which cover Upper East Side, Chelsea, and Battery  
16 Park. Roughly 4, 10-- 11 million dollars. The  
17 bottom three which are 12, 21, and 16 which is Co-op  
18 City, Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, Claremont, Grand  
19 Concourse received less than \$100,000 including the  
20 lowest Council District 16 which covers Claremont,  
21 Concourse, Concourse Village, Kingsbridge, Morris  
22 Heights, Mount Eden, and Morrisania received a grand  
23 total of \$3000. Do you remember the question I asked  
24 earlier? Was the funding distributed equitably? The  
25 answer was we are trying, we have made headway. We

2 are balancing the scales. Commissioner, whether it  
3 be industry or outer boroughs which are much more  
4 significantly poor than the Manhattan, the money was not  
5 distributed fairly or equitably. \$3000 versus 4.3  
6 million. The two differences on the opposite scales.  
7 Council District four received 4.274 million.  
8 Council District 16 \$30,000. If that is not a red  
9 flag, I don't know what is. That is on the retention  
10 grant money. And on the continuity fund, Council  
11 District four-- same Council District but received  
12 the most from that retention employee program  
13 received \$5,432,819. Council District 16 received a  
14 total of \$11,833.39. Does that sound equitable to  
15 you, Commissioner?

16 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Thanks for the  
17 question. You know, one, I think what we submitted,  
18 and I just want to be mindful, because I'm not sure  
19 we did that analysis that you are mentioning, but  
20 certainly I think the bigger question and continued  
21 question for us-- you know, I think you have earlier  
22 on in the program when-- again, I want to say for  
23 everyone listening that I think this is important to  
24 note and again I will keep saying it. This was the  
25 first program in the country, you know, and the first

2 program that was released by SBS to help quickly do  
3 something while we waited for the federal government  
4 and others to really do something. And so the city  
5 took a step forward and really pushed out a program  
6 at rapid pace. Within weeks, the money was already  
7 sucked up because, you know, the need was so great  
8 earlier on in the crisis once the shutdown started.  
9 So, I wanted to contextualize it. The second portion  
10 is certainly I think, as we look at all the programs  
11 we have instituted since these first two programs  
12 were put out, I mean, you know, they were very clear  
13 distinctions as to how we want to approach this and  
14 once the data came in and we understood what was  
15 happening in the reports were out, we reviewed where  
16 the resources were going. You had businesses that  
17 were better equipped, quite frankly, to go after  
18 these types of resources. You had communities, you  
19 know, for this type of work, you know, this type of  
20 effort was not may be as heavy as a lift. I think,  
21 initially, when we put out something, those who can  
22 respond the quickest, they came and they responded.  
23 We addressed that. We addressed that even in the  
24 emergency grants and looking at different communities  
25 across the city who were impacted by looting and

2 impacted by a lot of what was going on and unrest  
3 around the city, but we focused in and narrowed our  
4 program to a point where 52 percent of the loans that  
5 we awarded were in the Bronx and then, of course, in  
6 lower Manhattan where we had some challenges, as  
7 well. And the list goes on. I mean, every time we  
8 put out a program, the LMI storefront program is  
9 helping LMI communities across the city addressing  
10 exactly the points you are raising. So, sir--

11 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Commissioner--

12 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I respect that,  
13 but I just want to make that clarification everybody  
14 about that, as well. So, I hear you on those points  
15 and the analysis, but I also want to say, you know,  
16 whatever we put out and whatever else I have the  
17 first-ever in the country assistance for small  
18 businesses, we have addressed a lot of those concerns  
19 that you are mentioning.

20 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Commissioner, thank  
21 you. And this is about clarity and that was a long  
22 roundabout answer to a question that is very simple.  
23 Based on the graphs, charts, the facts, I asked is  
24 this equitable distribution? And numbers matter.  
25 Percentages matter. So, when you say, yes, emergency

2 grant program, we gave 72 percent to the borough the  
3 Bronx, you forget to indicate that that was only \$1.3  
4 million.

5 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Well, I said 52.  
6 And, no. I hear you on that, sir, and, again, we--  
7 I'm also trying to clarify for everyone and I hear  
8 you on that there is no one saying that it was  
9 perfect. If it was perfect, we wouldn't have changed  
10 the way that we went about approaching funding. We  
11 said that it was an emergency help. We released the  
12 program. At that time we saw as they were coming in,  
13 right? The requirements were coming in and the  
14 applications were coming in. Those who were more  
15 able, those who were able to do it upfront were  
16 getting it in fast and so, all we are saying is that  
17 we saw that and there was certainly correction on  
18 every other program that we have instituted since  
19 that time and, in a way, to make sure that we give  
20 opportunities for those who were hit the hardest.  
21 What perfect example is on the loan fund that we  
22 currently have, or LMI loan fund, we staggered the  
23 rollout so very, very low income communities,  
24 primarily ZIP Codes in the Bronx and other parts of  
25 the city that are very, very low, are able to have a

2 head start about a week or two to actually get in  
3 more-- to get the paperwork together and assist them  
4 in that before we open it up to the second phase  
5 which includes other LMI communities across the city.  
6 And so, we certainly saw that as a lesson learned.  
7 We certainly saw that as the change in which we  
8 implemented in respect the concern there, but also  
9 the fact that it has been addressed and, certainly in  
10 our programs now that is how we are, you know,  
11 administering the resources that we have.

12 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Commissioner, and  
13 say long around answer to a very simple question that  
14 the answer should be no. The money was not  
15 distributed equitably. That was the second question.  
16 The first question was is this money enough? And the  
17 answer should have been no. These are  
18 straightforward questions. But I am going to get to  
19 my third question. I guess we could say the right  
20 thing, but generally don't do the right thing. Does  
21 New York City consider itself to be a partner to our  
22 small businesses? Do we value our small businesses?

23 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Well, sir, I think  
24 the city has an entire agency dedicated to small  
25 businesses. I would say absolutely. Yes. We do

2 value our small businesses. They are the backbone of  
3 our economy. The backbone of our city. Their  
4 uniqueness that brings character to all of our  
5 neighborhoods and so I believe we do value very much  
6 so our small businesses.

7 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you for that.  
8 And I believe you mean it when you say that, but  
9 saying it and showing our small businesses are two  
10 different things. I love the \$86,550,000 in the six  
11 programs, I want to focus on the breakdown. On the  
12 LMI program of \$35 million, can you tell me how much  
13 New York City, New York City taxpayer dollars, went  
14 into that program?

15 COMMISSIONER DORIS: is \$31 million  
16 from our private sector and another \$4 million given  
17 to the city through stimulus dollars and actually  
18 another 9 million because we are buying down the  
19 interests to zero for the borrowers, so there is an  
20 interest rate reduction grant program also looped  
21 into that program and also the loan of what we would  
22 call the loan-loss reserves. So, if any of these  
23 particular businesses, God forbid, default or have an  
24 issue and paying, there is a backstop there and those  
25 are the funds that the city provided.

2 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: These hearings are  
3 important for transparency and clarity. You stated  
4 the total LMI storefront loan program was \$35  
5 million. Is that correct?

6 COMMISSIONER DORIS: The funds that  
7 will be-- Yes. That is a \$35 million fund.

8 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: And \$31 million of  
9 that money came from private capital, 4 million came  
10 from the EDC budget. So, if I asked the question  
11 again, how much of the \$35 million came from New York  
12 City taxpayer dollars coffer? What is the answer? 4  
13 million?

14 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I would say that  
15 the dollars that the city received in the dollars  
16 that the city repurposed-- so, I'm not sure how you  
17 call it. Were all taxpayers. We all pay federal  
18 taxes, so I'm not sure what-- how the--

19 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: But the city's  
20 contribution-- I asked for--

21 COMMISSIONER DORIS: The city received  
22 those dollars and they allocated those dollars to  
23 this program, so there is \$4 million on the interest  
24 rate reduction piece, as well, because we are buying  
25 it down to zero. There are additional dollars there,



2 but for the purposes of the fund itself, how funds  
3 work, yes. It is \$4 million.

4 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: New York City  
5 taxpayer dollars, not what came from the federal  
6 government. What came in from the state government.  
7 I understand it is part of the budget, but the  
8 overall budget was what was the dollar amount that  
9 New York City contributed into that loan fund? This  
10 is important to me and all of those that are  
11 participating in this hearing.

12 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Yeah. I see where  
13 you are going. I don't agree with your assessment,  
14 but there is \$4 million that the city put into the  
15 funding. And I'll just leave it at that. There's 4  
16 million--

17 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER DORIS: dollars that the  
19 city put into the fund.

20 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you for that  
21 honest answer. Now, I'm going to ask another  
22 question. On the continuity fund program of \$23  
23 million, how much did the city put in?

24 COMMISSIONER DORIS: That fund was also  
25 through our federal stimulus funding--

1 COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS 50

2 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Federal.

3 COMMISSIONER DORIS: the city received.

4 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Okay. So, federal  
5 funding provided the funds for that program. Not  
6 city taxpayer dollars.

7 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I would say yes.  
8 The stimulus fund that we received we allocated it--

9 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Uh-hm.

10 COMMISSIONER DORIS: accordingly.

11 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Right. Right. So,  
12 federal stimulus money was applied to that loan  
13 program. So, city contribution, direct city  
14 contribution is zero.

15 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I do not agree  
16 with that assessment. We could have done anything in  
17 the city. We chose to invest it in small businesses,  
18 so I would say that's the same--

19 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Well, was given for  
20 that specific use from the federal government for the  
21 city to do so, but the cost to taxpayers in New York  
22 City, those that pay income tax, real estate taxes,  
23 water and sewer, that pay sales tax to the city of  
24 New York, of that money, zero dollars came from the  
25 city taxpayer's coffers? The answer is yes,

2 Commissioner. That's the truth. And then I'm going  
3 ask the same-- well, Commissioner, if the federal  
4 government gave the stimulus to Covid for New York  
5 City, that is not New York City taxpayer dollars.  
6 That was the stimulus program that we keep referring  
7 to that the government, federal government is not  
8 doing enough, that we need more. So, we received  
9 some funding and that funding the city distributed  
10 through programs. I asked the question again because  
11 there is a difference between city tax dollars, state  
12 tax dollars, and federal tax dollars and how they are  
13 spent and we had this whole conversation about how  
14 New York City values small businesses. They are our  
15 backbone. They are partners. We went through the  
16 whole thing about saying the right thing and doing  
17 the right thing. That is the direction I am headed.  
18 And the answer to that, if we peel it all down, the  
19 layers, New York City taxpayers contributed zero from  
20 our coffers for that program. Would you be surprised  
21 that none of those city funds either went to the  
22 retention grant program which was also funded  
23 federally? So none of the initial funding came from  
24 the city of New York with the exception of 4 million  
25 dollars for the LMI storefront loan program. If we

2 used a number that is acceptable of \$4 million-- and  
3 if I'm wrong, please tell me. Divide that by the  
4 number of small businesses in New York City which is  
5 240,000, equals \$16.66 per small business. In the  
6 time of devastation, economic destruction, closing  
7 down businesses, forcing small businesses to fend for  
8 themselves. In the 1970s, this administration and  
9 every elected official has used the words of when New  
10 York City needed the federal government the most,  
11 they told New York City to go to hell. New York  
12 City, our partner to small businesses that could not  
13 possibly survive without the small businesses that  
14 make New York City such a vibrant place, told are  
15 small businesses not go to hell, but drop dead. You  
16 don't matter. By contributing \$4 million-- not only  
17 that, but they turned the city, this administration  
18 turns around and says, not only don't you matter and  
19 that you can drop dead, but don't forget to pay your  
20 real estate taxes, your water and sewer fees because,  
21 if you don't, you will come after you. This is the  
22 bleakest day in my life while in politics to have to  
23 reveal that New York City does not give a damn about  
24 small businesses and all of these men and women that  
25 are partaking in this hearing that are going to

2 plead, share their stories and tears as they explain  
3 what they have gone through and continue to go  
4 through is a tragedy for our city. In an \$89 billion  
5 budget, New York City gave \$4 million to 240,000  
6 businesses which was not even equitably distributed.  
7 This is criminal, Commissioner. It is an  
8 embarrassment. I am ashamed to be a part of the  
9 government that could not do the right thing for New  
10 Yorkers in their most dire time of need. If there is  
11 any response that contradicts these facts,  
12 Commissioner, please correct me. I'm not perfect.  
13 But I do know how to do math. And I didn't question  
14 my math because I used a calculator. Where am I  
15 wrong?

16 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Well, all I have  
17 to say, sir, is that, you know, walk. You know, we,  
18 at SBS, we leverage the private sector--

19 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Yes.

20 COMMISSIONER DORIS: and I think that  
21 is smart. We leverage federal dollars. I think that  
22 is also smart. We do all that we can. We have  
23 already helped over 5000 businesses connect to over  
24 \$125 million in support. That is our work. We are  
25 facing the biggest budget deficit since the 1970s.

2 As you know, \$9 billion. So, I would say that we  
3 know we needed to do more. We understand from our  
4 analysis when we looked at the federal PPP program  
5 and we understood about 18 billion plus dollars came  
6 to businesses in the city. We helped facilitate that  
7 through our programs and we helped facilitate that  
8 through the work of SBS. And so, I will stand by our  
9 work here of helping businesses connect wherever the  
10 funding is and certainly with the city where it is  
11 budget wise and as a Council member and the Chair,  
12 you know where we are on the budget side and where  
13 those deficits are. As a Commissioner, I'm going to  
14 go wherever I can find resources and certainly we are  
15 doing that for our small businesses. We've got 40  
16 lenders we work with. We've got a program we just  
17 launched with 11 CDFI's where we are helping them to  
18 survive because we know they also lend to small  
19 businesses. So there is a multiplier effect. We are  
20 doing all we can to make sure that we're getting to  
21 these businesses. So, you know, while I appreciate  
22 and I definitely understand, I think more than most--  
23 I live this every day and certainly going out. I'm  
24 not in an office stuck behind a desk. I am in the  
25 field. I am speaking a small businesses, as you

2 know, regularly. 30 something in the height of the  
3 pandemic. I walk in the corridors, you know, every  
4 time to speak with hundreds of small businesses, if  
5 not thousands by now that our team has done in the  
6 field and so we know what they're going through. We  
7 have seen the devastation. So, I hear you on your  
8 concern there. I am just going to speak to the fact  
9 that when a business comes to us and they ask for  
10 support, we give them support and we will continue to  
11 do that.

12 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Commissioner, the  
13 numbers speak for themselves. They are real. Unless  
14 you can show me that I am wrong on my math and the  
15 way I have broken down the total dollar amount, it  
16 costs New York City, when it came in a New York City  
17 taxpayer pockets, the total of 4 million. New York  
18 City, this administration spends more than that a  
19 year on copy paper and pens and pencils. That is how  
20 much we have done for New York City businesses.  
21 Unless you can show me I am wrong, that is the number  
22 and that is today's--

23 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I--

24 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Right?

2                   COMMISSIONER DORIS:       again, I disagree  
3 with your assessment and the way that you are looking  
4 at that. I think no government will say to anyone  
5 that, if we can't leverage resources outside of the  
6 government itself that is in a \$9 billion budget  
7 deficit, I think it is a reasonable assessment to  
8 believe that we will go wherever the money is to help  
9 small businesses. And so, we have helped, again,  
10 over 5000 businesses-- I want to make this clear for  
11 the record-- of \$125 million. And that is what we  
12 have done then we will continue. We also, the 18  
13 plus billion dollars that came to the city through  
14 PPP was because of the work we have done with 100  
15 community partners, our 76 BIDS, our five Chambers,  
16 and the list goes on. That work is because of the  
17 intentionality of what we're doing here. It's 18  
18 billion. So, we are talking multiplier effect and  
19 when we are in a deficit situation-- I appreciate  
20 the analysis. I don't agree with the assessment and  
21 or the premise of it. I think that it is important  
22 for us to go where the resources are right now in the  
23 middle of the pandemic where there is very, very  
24 scarcity and I'm not saying that it is enough.  
25 Clearly, it's not enough, but we still believe that



2 the city needs to get additional resources in from  
3 the federal government and we say that because that  
4 is the only place that has money right now and so we  
5 will keep plugging away for that to make sure that  
6 New York City gets its fair share. That is why we  
7 launched at campaign. And, again, I mean, I hear you  
8 and I certainly appreciate the concern there and we  
9 will continue, as I have always said, and when a  
10 business comes to us and when we go to a small  
11 business, we never come empty-handed. We come with  
12 resources. We help them connect to resources and we  
13 link them to those resources and it has been proven  
14 throughout this pandemic-- 108,000 services to small  
15 businesses. Look, we're not there yet. We're still  
16 not out of the woods yet, but certainly this agency  
17 is working tirelessly to help those small businesses  
18 and help as many of them survive this tragic  
19 pandemic.

20 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: And I'm not  
21 attacking the agency because the agency does not have  
22 the checkbook. I am referring to the city of New  
23 York and this administration and the dollar amount  
24 that is committed to helping small businesses and  
25 when we use words like partners, our partners, the

2 banks that lend the money that I actually have  
3 personal guarantees from our small businesses and we  
4 still called them partners and we put those numbers  
5 into, well, look what we have done for the city of  
6 New York, it is all smoke and mirrors. It would be  
7 like me taking credit for the healthcare worker that  
8 risked her life that saved lives because they're in  
9 my district and me saying my partner at Jacoby  
10 Hospital. We are not partners. New York City is  
11 never treated small businesses fairly. I ensure you.  
12 The \$4 million that it actually costs New York City  
13 taxpayer dollars was generated through fees and fines  
14 that were issued to the very same small businesses.  
15 This is a tragedy. This is a sad day for me. I wish  
16 this was not the truth. I wish that you could  
17 contradict and correct me because my math is wrong.  
18 The numbers are real. The facts are the facts and it  
19 is a sad awakening for the city of New York. I  
20 apologize for sounding so aggressive, but when I was  
21 made aware of these numbers, I lost sleep. And those  
22 business owners that have been losing sleep for the  
23 last year that we are hoping that the city can be  
24 their life raft that could give them back what is  
25 rightfully theirs, security, aid, funding, we have

2 told them you don't matter and that you are a  
3 business outside of Manhattan. You don't even exist  
4 is what we have told them. And, with that, I'm going  
5 to turn it back to my colleagues for questions. I am  
6 not sure who has questions. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair  
8 Gjonaj. At this point, we will move on to Council  
9 member questions. I will now call on the Council  
10 members to ask their questions in the order that they  
11 have used the zoom hand raise functions. Council  
12 members, if you would like to ask a question and you  
13 have not yet used the zoom raise hand function,  
14 please raise it now. Council members, also please  
15 keep your questions to five minutes. The sergeant-  
16 at-arms will keep a timer and let you know when your  
17 time is up. You should begin once I have called on  
18 you in the sergeant has announced that you may begin  
19 before delivering your testimony. At this point, we  
20 will hear from Council member Koo was questions and  
21 he will be followed by Council member Rosenthal.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you. Thank  
24 you, Commissioner, and thank you, Chair Gjonaj, for

2 this very important discussion about small business.

3 So, Commissioner, how are you?

4 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I'm doing well.

5 Thank you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yeah. So, as the  
7 Commissioner of Small Business Service, I believe you  
8 are the chief advocate for small businesses, right?

9 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I would hope so.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yeah. But I have  
11 heard this economic recovery talk. I didn't hear  
12 anything about an economic recovery agenda besides  
13 some figures, no? So, my point is that city  
14 administration has to listen to the people when they  
15 set certain policies, right? Yeah. They cannot  
16 vehemently impose some policies in New York City,  
17 especially in the Queens area. My district, as you  
18 know, if a very important [inaudible 01:18:02] is a  
19 really important downtown area where there are  
20 hundreds of small businesses that depends on people  
21 from around the area-- not just the people taking  
22 the bus. So, recently, the city imposed a ban on  
23 cars coming into downtown Flushing. Only buses and  
24 trucks can travel on main street in the seven or  
25 eight blocks area which is the most important area of

2 Flushing, right? So, the economy is already bad  
3 because of the pandemic. Now you put on this ban--  
4 travel car ban. People from around the area, whether  
5 it's Bayside, [inaudible 01:18:47], or the Tristate  
6 area, they cannot come to downtown Flushing shopping.  
7 And we have lunar new year next month on the 12th.  
8 Lunar new year is the most business season for Asian  
9 families that come to Flushing to buy all these  
10 special stuff to celebrate for the new year. So, now  
11 businesses are complaining and their business  
12 decreased 30 to 40 percent and, meanwhile, the city  
13 insists on carrying on this plan. Why do you have to  
14 do this? The [inaudible 01:19:21] to go to court to  
15 stop it, but the judge didn't listen to the small  
16 businesses because they don't know how to do a group  
17 presentation of the argument. So, I hope, as the  
18 chief advocate for small businesses, you can go talk  
19 to the Department of Transportation or the Mayor,  
20 right? Tell them, hey, now is not a good time to do  
21 this. No. Wait till maybe four months later after  
22 the pandemic and after everybody goes to work maybe  
23 you can try it. We cannot lose businesses for the of  
24 bus time. They insist on, oh, if the ban on this,  
25 the bus can travel maybe two minutes faster. Two

2 minutes faster has millions of sacrifices in downtown  
3 Flushing. That's one point, right? So I hope you  
4 will go talk to them because I now believe that you  
5 are the chief advocate. I don't want you just to be  
6 a talker. You have to do something, right. The  
7 second thing is I have talked to you about for.  
8 Downtown Flushing has so many illegal street vendors.  
9 I talked to you for months ago. I talked to you-- I  
10 forgot. The mayor. Two months ago and the worst  
11 thing is he says NYPD is not taking care of this.  
12 So, if NYPD is not taking care of this, who is taking  
13 care of this? Consumer affairs is not taking care of  
14 this. Nobody comes to enforce this law. Last Friday  
15 we had a sweep with NYPD and sanitation and they only  
16 do something to the guys who sell fish or sausage,  
17 the obvious breakers. The policeman go tell the  
18 vendors, hey, you're not supposed to do business  
19 here. This is the sidewalk. It's illegal. Nobody  
20 listens to the police. They laugh at them because  
21 the Mayor or police NYPD is not taking care of this.  
22 So you have to tell the Mayor. I told the Mayor  
23 already that if NYPD is not taking care of this,  
24 someone has to take care of it. There can not be  
25 lawlessness on the streets. People don't--- they

2 take advantage of the situation. Everyone comes out  
3 to sell on the streets. The sidewalk is so crowded.  
4 You cannot even walk. The sidewalks are for  
5 pedestrians. This is not like 1930s, no, where  
6 everybody sells on the streets. New York City is one  
7 of the most [inaudible 01:21:53] city in the world  
8 and we're supposed to have law and order. So, those  
9 are simple things.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: And government  
12 cannot do it. So I hope you can answer that. Yeah.

13 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Thank you, Council  
14 member. Thank you for that. I certainly will look  
15 into the street closure issue. I wasn't aware of  
16 that particular issue. As you know, I was in  
17 Flushing not too long ago and Small Business Saturday  
18 and walked up and down and also met and spoke with a  
19 lot of businesses there and heard the concern around  
20 the vending challenge. I think the last time we  
21 spoke, we did talk about that. We did convey that to  
22 our colleagues at City Hall and also--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: But nothing has  
24 changed since we talked last time.

25 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Yeah.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: It's even getting  
3 worse.

4 COMMISSIONER DORIS: It's getting  
5 worse. We'll circle back. I know our team-- some  
6 of our team members were with you out there on the  
7 vendor sweep, as well. The walk that you recently  
8 did with the other agencies and so we did get a-- I  
9 did get a read out from our team on those efforts.  
10 So, certainly, happy to circle back with you and come  
11 back out and see what additional resources we can  
12 give. But certainly I know that our colleagues at  
13 DCWP, they all are working diligently to resolve some  
14 of those matters, as you know. So I've written them  
15 down here and it will be--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: And the bus route.

17 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I will circle back  
18 with you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yeah. Please do  
20 something, otherwise it's just all talk and no  
21 actions.

22 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Yeah.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: You know, people  
24 have lost confidence in the city.

25 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Thank you.



2 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I mean, why do we  
3 have to pay so much tax? Like Chair Gjonaj already  
4 said, we pay the most burden of taxes and we hire  
5 people with benefits and paid holidays and all this  
6 stuff, but the city doesn't do anything. And also,  
7 another thing is the homeless people and the mental  
8 health problems. Those are real things the city has  
9 to take care before we go back to normal. Otherwise,  
10 people are afraid to go shopping. They are afraid to  
11 take the subway and being pushed onto the platform,  
12 right? Or being on the street and being shot in the  
13 back. There's so many crazy people. The minute  
14 [inaudible 01:24:23] to do these quality of life  
15 issues to bring back confidence. Quality of life  
16 issues are very important, but so far the city hasn't  
17 done too much or not much at all. So I hope you will  
18 relay those messages to the Mayor even though he only  
19 has like 11 months to go, but if he wants to build a  
20 legacy, he has to do something for our small business  
21 owners. Thank you. Or the citizens.

22 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Thank you. Thank  
23 you, Council member.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council  
3 member Koo. We will now hear questions from Council  
4 member Rosenthal.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you  
7 much, Commissioner. Good to see you. How are you  
8 doing?

9 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I'm doing well.  
10 Thank you, Council member.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Great. Great.  
12 Really appreciate all your work in the most difficult  
13 of times that we've experienced in our lifetimes. So  
14 thank you for that. I want to just sort of clarify  
15 for the record a couple of things. So, districts--  
16 city council districts one, three, and four were  
17 brought up as getting, you know, a lot of the loan  
18 and grant funding. Do you think it's possible that  
19 the employees of those firms work in the Bronx,  
20 Queens, Staten Island, Brooklyn?

21 COMMISSIONER DORIS: You know, I think  
22 that's part of the analysis there. When you think it  
23 through, we didn't do a full employee analysis, but  
24 we do know that folks who work in the city, such as  
25 myself, who live in Queens but work in the city--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Right.

3 COMMISSIONER DORIS: There is traffic  
4 that comes from the outer boroughs. Correct.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah. For my  
6 small businesses, as well. One of the reasons I  
7 support my small businesses on the upper west side is  
8 because they employ people who live in the Bronx, who  
9 live in Queens and Brooklyn. And then, just another  
10 quick question. Do you think that there could be  
11 some overlap? Some sort of-- do you think it's  
12 possible that the doctors, lawyers, and the dentists,  
13 they, too, are small businesses in our local  
14 communities who could be people of color and women?  
15 Is that something on your radar?

16 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Yes. Sure. And,  
17 you know, a perfect example is that we've worked with  
18 the organization SOMOS, as you know, when we launched  
19 our emergency grant. And they were the first to step  
20 up, but that's a consortium, as you know, of doctors  
21 and healthcare professionals, and the like who are  
22 people of color, primarily, and do have their offices  
23 all across the city. Our doctors who are our  
24 support. And so, certainly, we believe the  
25 significant portion-- again, we haven't done that

2 sort of in depth analysis there, but we can and we do  
3 believe that we have a good representation of  
4 minority businesses in those professional services--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah. I know  
6 a lot of the small businesses in my district are  
7 doctor's offices and dentist offices and I can  
8 imagine that every community wants to have people who  
9 look like them or, you know, have the same languages  
10 as they-- their doctor in their own community. I  
11 just want to not that is a valued small business.  
12 And then, lastly, I just want to put it on your  
13 radar, for upcoming grants, specifically-- not so  
14 much loans-- if you could be mindful of the worker  
15 cooperatives, sort of the alternative non-traditional  
16 small businesses which are throughout the district,  
17 not primarily in Manhattan had all, but whose  
18 employees are among the lowest income employees and  
19 people of color. One of the things that our worker  
20 cooperative initiative partners have been able to do  
21 is access the federal PPP. Between all those  
22 partners, I think they were able to access over \$10  
23 million in federal emergency funds, as well as nearly  
24 400,000 in private grants and donations to help keep  
25 these worker cooperatives alive and, you know, I am

2 just sort of hoping that in your next round of-- as  
3 you continue with your loan program, I am hoping you  
4 will be open to the nontraditional businesses.

5 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Well, Council  
6 member, you know this is something very dear to us  
7 here and, of course, to our Deputy Mayor Thompson who  
8 oversees SBS and, you know, from the employee  
9 ownership NYC program, we recently launched, you  
10 know, 70 percent of those worker cooperatives--  
11 those businesses. Sorry. Who were going out--

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

13 COMMISSIONER DORIS: don't have a  
14 succession plan, right? And we are saying, hey, come  
15 over. We want to talk to you a little bit about what  
16 it means to sell your business to your employees,  
17 right? Which majority 85 percent of them or so are  
18 people of color and women. And so, you're absolutely  
19 right about what-- you know, here at SBS, we manage  
20 the program the Council has instituted. And it has  
21 been really successful. So, as part of the Fair  
22 share campaign, we are not focusing on, you know,  
23 just one type of small businesses, but worker  
24 cooperatives are also part of that. So, we  
25 absolutely agree with you on strengthening the

2 opportunities there for worker cooperatives and we  
3 are committed to that and we certainly would like to  
4 talk to you more about how we can deepen that work,  
5 but certainly we are absolutely committed to that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Oh, that is so  
7 great to hear. Yeah. I'm really excited about that  
8 ESOP program. It's extraordinary. Thank you so  
9 much for, you know, I think the administration was  
10 really on the right track with that, but just to sort  
11 of make sure that we're all clear, so for worker  
12 cooperatives which are more fragile, oftentimes,  
13 small business, what they really need access to our  
14 loans. Sorry. Are not the loans, but the grants so  
15 they can continue employing, you know, people who  
16 need it most and who are doing God's work. You know,  
17 home health aides, many of our cleaning workers, but  
18 also, as you know, dog walkers. One of the small  
19 business is being used by the city during this time.

20 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Yeah. Thank you.  
21 Thank you so much. And absolutely that is logged and  
22 we will continue to follow up on the grants  
23 component. I think working with our CDFI's who also  
24 worked with our worker cooperatives, particularly a  
25 some of the debt reduction programs and grants that I

2 mentioned earlier, we certainly are going to deepen  
3 our conversation there. And also I can get back to  
4 you on a little bit of what we are doing in that  
5 space, as well.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Great. Great.  
7 Great. Great. Thank you so much.

8 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Thank you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you,  
10 Chair.

11 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you, Council  
12 member Rosenthal. And I just want to piggyback on  
13 this because I just want to make sure that we  
14 understand that New York City, as a whole, is  
15 suffering. All small businesses are suffering, but I  
16 don't think anyone will agree that, that of all of  
17 the industries, doctors, lawyers, and dentist needed  
18 the help the most during the Covid 19 devastation.  
19 And anyone that has a business in Council District  
20 four, three, and one-- God bless my Council members,  
21 my colleagues for the districts that they represent--  
22 to thank that anyone from the upper Eastside that has  
23 a business in the upper Eastside-- [inaudible  
24 01:33:29] Hall, Yorkville, Central Park South,  
25 Middletown East, Times Square would be living in the

2 Bronx as a whole majority or the poorest section like  
3 Council District 16 that received \$3000 as a whole  
4 compared to 4.274 million in Council District 14  
5 would not be an argument I would want to make.  
6 Claremont, Concourse, Concourse Village, Highbridge,  
7 Morris Park, Mount Eden, and Morrisania of the  
8 poorest in our city and received a total of 3000  
9 dollars compared to the most wealthiest dataflow at  
10 neighborhoods in Manhattan. I want to make that  
11 clear. I'm arguing and passionate and fighting for  
12 all small business, but I want to make sure that the  
13 limited help that we have goes to those that need it  
14 the most and it's not lawyers and doctors that have  
15 offices on Carnegie Hill or Times Square. Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will  
17 now hear from Council member Rodriguez who has  
18 questions and he will be followed by Council member  
19 Levin.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you,  
22 Chair. As everyone knows, like when I approach  
23 anything, questions, concerns from a small business,  
24 I always come from a perspective of understanding  
25 that no Mayor has done more to the small buildings



2 than Mayor de Blasio. And I feel that, you know,  
3 it's tough to be the Mayor. We don't have to agree  
4 on anything, but it's more easy just to focus on the  
5 negative things than comparing where was the city  
6 before and after this administration. So, with that  
7 in mind and that understanding, I do have, as  
8 everyone knows, as a city, we have inherited  
9 something about what the chairman has said: lack of  
10 fair share to all communities and, with that,  
11 Commissioner, can we agree that, when we look at who  
12 benefits from those loans in Manhattan, if you do the  
13 breakdown, the number of loans that people are being  
14 able to obtain to get in not in Manhattan; Washington  
15 Heights, community Board 12 is also similar to the  
16 number the Bronx? And that when we look at  
17 Manhattan, that number reflects the whole borough  
18 that most loans were given to not necessarily the  
19 underserved communities?

20 COMMISSIONER DORIS: If you're  
21 referring to the earlier program, the fund, that is  
22 an earlier loan program that we did the first one--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER DORIS: The breakdown,  
25 yeah. I mean, the breakdown we had-- I don't think

2 we sort of went down to the community level like  
3 that. I did say that there was about 24-- I'm  
4 sorry. 54 percent and 43 percent grant and loan  
5 respectively for Manhattan. We did get the most  
6 applications from Manhattan. Almost 3 times the  
7 amount of anywhere else, but certainly I do hear you  
8 on the equitable distribution within the various  
9 communities and, again, I said, as I mentioned  
10 earlier and I am committed to doing we have done  
11 that. You know, part of the challenge, I think, is,  
12 you know, previous programs and exhausting programs  
13 and what we have learned from previous programs and  
14 how we rolled it out and now we have programs that  
15 are focused on LMI communities, specifically. And we  
16 are, you know, working again to make sure that those  
17 particular programs get in those low to moderate  
18 income communities and I think that was a very  
19 deliberate--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: But what will  
21 happen, Commissioner-- As you know, I want for you  
22 just to see and I want for you to leave your  
23 fingerprint something new bringing innovation to the  
24 city. I know where our heart is, but there's also  
25 things that the dynamic in our city sometimes is

2 beyond us because there's already mechanisms that  
3 allow certain communities in certain groups to have  
4 more access. You know, and to be able to get and  
5 apply and take advantage. Like, you know, as we have  
6 been going through the small business is something  
7 that we are going through [inaudible 01:38:17. Like  
8 that's what I've been working with the Brooklyn  
9 borough president, Eric Adams, to be sure that we  
10 resolve the issue of equity.

11 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Yeah.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: I know in  
13 Manhattan, we know that the [inaudible 01:38:27] is  
14 open for the vaccine. 90 percent of people getting  
15 the vaccine, their white and I don't want no whites  
16 to get the vaccine, but I have issues when you look  
17 at the line and you can look and see who is black or  
18 Latino. It's because most people who know how to  
19 navigate the system with the Internet and the  
20 [inaudible 01:38:49] people that can make the  
21 appointment by phone and that is been happening for  
22 years and over and over where we can-- we are  
23 working to resolve those issues, but in the-- for  
24 the meanwhile, people are dying and those people,  
25 they are colored and they belonged working class.

2 So, when it comes to this, you know, in my 11 years  
3 at the Council, you inherit that mass when income to  
4 what is going on. Why are the black and Latino, the  
5 working class, the small businesses, the mom-and-pop,  
6 the bodega owner, the multi service, they are black  
7 and their year and they get so excited when they  
8 hear, yeah. You have access to this loan. But when  
9 it comes to who are approved, for many reasons and  
10 for many red tapes, we are at the same level in  
11 northern Manhattan as we are in the Bronx, Chairman.  
12 And I think that this is something that we need to  
13 resolve it as yesterday. And second question is on  
14 the loan given to the not-for-profit, the strategy  
15 impact grant-- I'm sorry. No. Not loan. Grant.  
16 You say 12 given to the Bronx, so you can see the  
17 name of the institution--

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Did any group  
20 in northern Manhattan get one of those grants?

21 COMMISSIONER DORIS: We did not get any  
22 applications from Morningside, Washington Heights.  
23 We did put it out, as I mentioned, in the first  
24 phase, so it was listed there as-- The communities  
25 in Manhattan, again, we're talking low to moderate

2 income communities. Central Harlem, Chinatown, East  
3 Harlem, the Hamilton Heights, Inwood, lower East  
4 side, Morningside Heights, Washington Heights. We  
5 intend to fund all those communities. I think we  
6 didn't get--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah. But,  
8 you know, that thing is that I cannot believe, you  
9 know, going and sleeping and peaceful nights knowing  
10 that we intended when some people drain the clean  
11 water, so some people already got the [inaudible  
12 01:40:50]. You know what I mean?

13 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Yeah. I--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: So, for me, I  
15 want to work with you and your team to be sure that  
16 as soon as you have it ready to go out to at least  
17 [inaudible 01:40:59]. Send it directly to my email,  
18 that information, so that we can be helpful to also  
19 spread that information in our communities.

20 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Absolutely, sir.  
21 And it will be live on Monday, again, and we intend  
22 to fund it. There's no scenario where it won't be  
23 funded. We just did not get an application. We  
24 already reached out to folks out there, as well, we  
25 can tell you who we spoke to. We will send you that

2 information to CBO's out there that we talked to.

3 Once we saw that nothing came in and we will tell you  
4 who we have talked to and hopefully--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

6 COMMISSIONER DORIS: they will--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: One particular  
8 one is the Washington Heights Chamber of Commerce  
9 and--

10 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Yeah.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: I would like  
12 to help for them to also get involved in this and,  
13 again, more than happy. I believe in you. I'm ready  
14 to work with your team, but, you know, this is about  
15 even when we go through those numbers, the there is  
16 other groups already getting those and from the  
17 moment that you can see borough wide who is getting,  
18 one more time, are black and Latino community, for  
19 many reasons. They don't know how to navigate, they  
20 have got the information, they didn't apply, or they  
21 didn't whatever they failed to anything. And we need  
22 to be there to go the extra mile in order for them to  
23 get at. So, I appreciate and, again, like what  
24 happened there is the same thing that happened in the  
25 healthcare. It's happening with the vaccine. It

2 happened with Covid. And that is why, again, I'm  
3 working with the Brooklyn borough president, Eric  
4 Adams, also to deal with the whatever information  
5 everyone should have access to when it comes to what  
6 information and what is available for agencies to our  
7 communities.

8 COMMISSIONER DORIS: So, I just want--  
9 Again, I thank you so much, Council member, and,  
10 again, one port clarification. The new loan programs  
11 that we have are in LMI communities which is, as I  
12 mentioned, 80 percent-- over 80 percent of all the  
13 monies that are going out to minority groups. And  
14 so, I just wanted to make that really clear that we  
15 hear you and we have heard every Council member  
16 before when we came to you and this is what you did  
17 say. And we did create this program which was able  
18 to assist black and Latino and Asian businesses  
19 across the city, you know, to get the support and we  
20 are seeing that. Over 80 percent. And so, we  
21 certainly want to make sure that the community-based  
22 organizations that serve those areas, particularly  
23 Washington Heights, Morningside-- that we get them,  
24 you know, in this so that they can also get the grant  
25 for that and so we are absolutely looking forward to

2 sending that info out to you so you can work with  
3 them so that we can get them this funding. These  
4 communities will be funded. We just need an  
5 application.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.  
7 Thanks a lot.

8 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will  
10 now hear from Council member Levin who has questions.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
12 much, Chair, and thank you, Commissioner. I want to  
13 ask about-- I have been introduced piece of  
14 legislation, 2098, which would require the Department  
15 of Small Businesses to establish a grant program for  
16 those businesses that did not qualify for PPP with  
17 the-- that I specifically on MWBEs-- has SBS taken  
18 a look at this legislation and what is the-  
19 separately, what is the dollar commitment that this  
20 administration is looking at getting out to small  
21 businesses who are not-- who are not been able to  
22 receive PPP thus far?

23 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Thank you, Council  
24 member. So, certainly would review the bill that was  
25 proposed. I am sure to talk with the team reviewing



2 that particular legislation, but I do here at that  
3 point on, you know, PPP not getting to certain  
4 communities. And, you know, we are certainly aligned  
5 there, you know, as I mentioned, in part, we did the  
6 LMI storefront program because we understood the PPP  
7 that came to New York City once you do the analysis  
8 and wants the data was recently made available,  
9 really, about 10 percent went to very, very low  
10 income communities. And so, in part, why we wanted  
11 to do that LMI storefront program and the LMI  
12 strategic grants and so forth that we are doing now,  
13 it is to address that particular challenge and then  
14 we have our fair share campaign to get as much  
15 funding to those communities as possible. As I said  
16 in my testimony, that campaign is a robust campaign.  
17 I mean, we have working with our 40 lenders to make  
18 sure that they-- and our CDFI network-- who are on  
19 the ground with our business solution centers, as  
20 well. We are doing daily webinars and training. We  
21 are connecting, you know, businesses in 15 languages  
22 to this. I mean, this is an all-out push. You know,  
23 we are pushing advertisement out there on the Fair  
24 Share campaign. This is very important. We want to

2 make sure that New York City gets its fair share and,  
3 you know, that--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Can I ask--

5 COMMISSIONER DORIS: So that's what we  
6 are doing.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: With reference to  
8 PPP, I mean, I just have seen examples in the city of  
9 institutions that received PPP that, you know, are,  
10 obviously, not really serving low or moderate income  
11 families and businesses. I mean, just as an example,  
12 Polly Prep got, I think, you know, however many  
13 millions of dollars. My staff told me St. Anne's  
14 school got \$6 million. You know, not being against  
15 these schools. They're private schools. And maybe  
16 they have-- you know, they probably have  
17 scholarships that they give out, but, you know, what  
18 we are seeing is, you know, a-- My question is does  
19 SBS see the distribution of dollars the PPP dollars  
20 in 2020 as a success or not a success?

21 COMMISSIONER DORIS: I wouldn't say that  
22 it is been a success. I mean, we have been vocal. I  
23 have been vocal about, aggressively so, about the  
24 disproportionate impact on the way that that assist  
25 job was constructed. I think the challenge is that,

2 nationally, we remember large financial institutions  
3 were only dealing with their existing clients and  
4 customers. On top of that, they have to have special  
5 accounts. I mean, in how it was rolled out, you  
6 know, it certainly was a problem additionally and  
7 what happened when those who are able and capable to  
8 get to this money fast and quick, thank God is,  
9 right? And a lot that the smaller institutions and  
10 businesses did not. And so, we pushed real hard to  
11 do several things. One included making sure that  
12 CDFI's had some set aside dollars that they can go to  
13 help with the liquidity that they needed to lend to  
14 businesses. And so, I absolutely agree with you that  
15 we think that, you know, out of the 18 billion that  
16 the city's small businesses received and 160,000  
17 businesses received PPP, we certainly didn't think  
18 that was enough for the city. That is why we  
19 launched the Fair Share campaign.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. Well, if you  
21 could take a look at 2098 which I realize has a  
22 fiscal impact for the city--

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: where we're-- and  
25 I'll just conclude. Where the PPP program is

2 insufficient, somebody has to step in and, you know,  
3 this is where, you know, I think there can be some  
4 consensus that across the city that these are the  
5 types of programs that are worthy of city tax  
6 dollars, especially is the federal programs are not  
7 going to the places that are really needed. And,  
8 again, I like St. Anne's school. It is in my  
9 district. I don't think it is, you know, has is  
10 greed and need for those dollars as small businesses  
11 and low and moderate income communities who are, you  
12 know, on a knife's edge. So, with that, thank you  
13 very much, Commissioner. I appreciate your time.

14 COMMISSIONER DORIS: Thank you very  
15 much, Council member.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. At this  
17 point, I will turn it back over to Chair Gjonaj, who,  
18 I believe might have one more question before we turn  
19 it over to public testimony. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Counsel, thank you,  
21 but I wanted to-- this hearing is gone too long will  
22 ready and I know that there are many small businesses  
23 that are with this today that want to testify and be  
24 heard. I'm hopeful that the Commissioner will stay  
25 and listen in here first and what is actually

2 happening and I know that you have a good sense and  
3 [inaudible 1:50:37] what is happening, Commissioner.  
4 This is no reflection towards you as an individual,  
5 but what passionate is not for myself. It is for  
6 those small businesses that call me, literally, in  
7 tears crying asking for help and assistance in their  
8 times of need and the justice that they are receiving  
9 is not justice. It is unfair in dollar amounts and  
10 in distribution. Commissioner, I know that we have a  
11 good working relationship and it is no reflection on  
12 you. You don't control the checkbook. Someone else  
13 does. And that money is not making it into the  
14 communities that need it most. So, please understand  
15 my frustration, but it is a sad day for me to be an  
16 elected official in part of this process and, as the  
17 Chair Small Business, if I wasn't fighting for every  
18 small business-- and I mean every small business--  
19 in a perfect world, doctors, lawyers, dentists, they  
20 all deserve help, but not before the poorest of the  
21 poor. Not before my commercial corridor that are on  
22 the outskirts. And I often say this that, yes,  
23 Manhattan may be the economic engine, but the fuel of  
24 that engine is the outer boroughs and we are either  
25 going to be one city or were not. We can't have the

2 tale of two boroughs, so if we can have some of the  
3 small businesses that have signed up to testify so we  
4 can hear firsthand. I want to thank you all for your  
5 patience and I'm grateful to you for allowing me to  
6 express myself so openly. Thank you. Thank you,  
7 Commissioner.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council  
9 member and Commissioner. At this point, we will now  
10 turn to public testimony. Before we do so, I would  
11 like to acknowledge that Council member Lewis has  
12 also joined this hearing. We would like to remind  
13 everyone that, unlike our typical Council hearings,  
14 we will be calling on individuals one by one to  
15 testify. Each panelist will be given three minutes  
16 to speak, so please begin once the sergeant has  
17 called you and started the time. Council members who  
18 have questions for a particular panelist should,  
19 again, use the zoom hand raise function and I will  
20 call on you after the panelist has completed his or  
21 her testimony. For panelists, once your name has  
22 been called, a member of our staff will unmute you  
23 and the sergeant-at-arms will give you the Q to go  
24 ahead and begin upon setting the timer. So, again,  
25 please wait for the sergeant to announce that you may

2 begin delivering your testimony. At this time, we  
3 will hear testimony from Susannah Koteen. She'll be  
4 followed by Jennifer Tausig followed by Arthur  
5 Nichols.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

7 SUSANNAH KOTEEN: Hi, there. Including  
8 me on this call. My name is Susannah Koteen and I  
9 have owned Lido in Harlem for 10 years. Lido  
10 employees 40 people. December we opened a new Asian  
11 restaurant called Bixie on the same block which  
12 employs 15. I serve as the copresident of the  
13 Frederick Douglass Boulevard Alliance and I sit on  
14 the board of the New York City Hospitality Alliance.  
15 Please note that the following are not just my  
16 thoughts and opinions. Every day I speak with  
17 restaurant owners and we have the same conversations  
18 over and over again. While I have loved owning and  
19 running my restaurant, my largest hurdle for success  
20 has always been, by far, the New York City government  
21 red tape. It is excruciatingly frustrating to be  
22 running one's business and have a constant stream of  
23 surprise inspections. I would happily be inspected  
24 and adhered to health and safety standards, but  
25 surprise inspections from multiple departments makes

2 us feel like we are teenagers being caught by  
3 teachers that doing something wrong. It is  
4 incredibly stressful, disruptive, and always-- almost  
5 always incurs a fine. To add insult to injury,  
6 literally every inspector, including those that come  
7 from the same department will tell us different rules  
8 to follow. During Covid and the current zero  
9 percent indoor occupancy, we have tried to keep Bixie  
10 open. We were using our outdoor pods for individual  
11 parties and we were using the structures we built in  
12 the parking lanes which have very large openings on  
13 both sides that can remain open. Two weeks ago, the  
14 health department came by and said that we had to  
15 stop using all of our outdoor seating immediately.  
16 They said that without a full wall completely open,  
17 it cannot be used for dining. They threatened us  
18 with a large fine and a revocation of our liquor  
19 license. Without any seating for guests, the  
20 businesses are not economically viable, so we closed  
21 them both. My entire team of 55 are out of work.  
22 Now, I see restaurants all over the city seating  
23 people and outdoor structures that did not even come  
24 close to following these guidelines. This brings me  
25 to my second point. The rules are enforced wildly



2 differently from inspector to inspector, as well as  
3 from neighborhood to neighborhood. Just this week I  
4 had a notice shoved under my door from the DOT that  
5 said if we did not put up more reflective tape on our  
6 ponds within 24 hours, we would incur a \$1000 fine.  
7 The surprise inspections, constant punitive fines,  
8 and rules that are always shifting under our feet,  
9 this does not sound like a city that supports small  
10 businesses. What can be done to help small  
11 businesses survive in New York? Make the parking  
12 lane structures permanent. Allowing restaurants to  
13 use the same space for service keeps people employed  
14 it is an amenity for our city, provides tax revenue,  
15 and is much more useful to New York than allowing  
16 one--

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

18 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: You can finish,  
19 Susannah.

20 SUSANNAH KOTEEN: Oh, thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: You can finish your  
22 statement.

23 SUSANNAH KOTEEN: I have 30 more seconds.  
24 Thank you. I appreciate it. Get rid of the fees for  
25 sidewalk cafés. The SLA needs to be streamlined. It

2 took us seven months to get our liquor license  
3 approved at Bixie. We had to start paying rent  
4 before we knew if we would get our liquor license  
5 granted. Get rid of that 200 foot rule. Does anyone  
6 know why this is still a law? That Department of  
7 Buildings is everyone's worst nightmare. I could  
8 spend an hour telling you our experience trying to  
9 get permits for our new restaurant. Lastly, make one  
10 task force and streamline the rules. Truly, the  
11 number of rules for restaurants that needs to follow  
12 to keep customers safe is not infinite. One  
13 department could make one or two yearly scheduled  
14 appointments with the restaurant for inspection and  
15 go down the checklist. Again, what good does it do  
16 for an inspector to come in and spring upon an  
17 operator in the middle of a busy shift? Covid is  
18 brought something that is already been a real pain  
19 point to the forefront. We need to make these  
20 changes now. Small businesses are failing and  
21 leaving the city at an alarming rate, taking jobs,  
22 tax revenue, and the culture individually owned small  
23 businesses with them. Thank you for extending my  
24 time.

2 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you,  
3 Susannah.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And we  
5 will now hear from Jennifer Tausig followed by Arthur  
6 Nichols.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

8 JENNIFER TAUSIG: Thank you, Chair Gjonaj  
9 and Commissioner Doris. My name is Jennifer Tausig  
10 and I'm the executive director of the Jerome Gun Hill  
11 BID in the Bronx and serve as cochair of the New York  
12 City BID Association. The BID Association represents  
13 the 70s six individual BID's throughout the five  
14 boroughs that serve as stewards of our diverse  
15 commercial corridors and neighborhood public spaces.  
16 Our mission has always been to support the nearly  
17 100,000 local businesses we serve, to keep our  
18 neighborhoods clean and safe, and to bring prosperity  
19 for communities. Never has our work been more  
20 essential than it has been during the Covid 19  
21 pandemic. Our members have worked tirelessly through  
22 the crisis, educating, and delivering resources to  
23 our small businesses and workers. This pandemic is  
24 created historic health and economic crisis in our  
25 city. It is the situation with no easy answers or

2 silver bullet solutions. However, the New York City  
3 BID Association released a call to action last summer  
4 for the survival of small businesses in New York City  
5 in partnership with a broad coalition of Allied  
6 stakeholders. The document included a nine point  
7 action plan to provide some support for our  
8 struggling businesses in our workers. There are some  
9 areas where we have made progress, but many were more  
10 work is necessary. The full proposal is attached,  
11 but I will highlight a few items in a quick progress  
12 report. While the Mayor has made positive efforts in  
13 such areas as establishing programs like Open  
14 Restaurants, the rollout of open Storefronts was six  
15 months too late. He is not appointed in interagency  
16 business recoveries are, as requested to coordinate  
17 the triage and lead us through the recovery. Direct  
18 financial assistance has been in short supply and  
19 unequally distributed with the Bronx receiving less  
20 than one percent of grants from the city. Outer  
21 borough and small businesses, as you will hear from  
22 Yasmin Camelia, whose restaurant Caribe, which is in  
23 my BID, are unable to take on more debt which is all  
24 the financial assistance the city is offering to  
25 those in need. There has not been any coordination

2 with the state, and significant rent or mortgage  
3 relief. The city Council now appears poised to pass  
4 legislation that would add over 4000 new street  
5 vending permits without adequate protections or  
6 support for storefront businesses. We have not seen  
7 any sales tax holidays. We have not seen any real  
8 commitment to reducing boundless red tape for small  
9 business owners. In fact, the city Council and Mayor  
10 continue to pass antibusiness legislation such as the  
11 Just Cause Bill signed a few weeks ago that will  
12 surely hurt independently operated franchises. We  
13 know financial resources are hard to come by these  
14 days, so we ask that the Council Mayor put our small  
15 businesses at the top of their priorities and to  
16 carefully consider any additional legislation that  
17 would actively hurt businesses and scare away  
18 investment from our city just when we needed the  
19 most. We are grateful for our partnership with the  
20 city and you, Chair Gjonaj, and will continue to  
21 support our businesses it worked to bring our city's  
22 economy in neighborhoods back from this dark time in  
23 history. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Jennifer, thank you  
25 for always being such an advocate for small business.

2 Your statements are valid and your points are well  
3 taken. I agree with them. The city is proven itself  
4 to be anything but a good partner and value our small  
5 businesses. In fact, especially in the outer  
6 boroughs, Covid was a knockout punch for many of our  
7 small businesses. The city now is kicking those  
8 small businesses they are down instead of helping  
9 them get back out. So, thank you very much.

10 JENNIFER TAUSIG: Thank you for your  
11 support.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will  
13 now hear testimony from Arthur Nichols followed by  
14 Yin Kong.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

16 ARTHUR NICHOLS: Good afternoon,  
17 everyone. Good afternoon. My name is Arthur  
18 Nichols. I am the owner of Bronx Masks. We are in  
19 the Bronx. We are located in the Bronx. There was a  
20 few things that had my concern as far as funding and  
21 everything. There was a lot of things that we have  
22 never gotten. I didn't know about a few loans. I  
23 didn't know about a few grants. Nonetheless, we were  
24 in business for about two years. We are doing  
25 excellent. Everything was going well. Covid head.

2 Once Covid hit, I had a few contracts from New York  
3 State Department of Corrections, the nursing, and  
4 EMS. I've been an EMT for a few years and masks help  
5 everyone. With that, we were out here providing-- I  
6 had a staff of 10 people. I am now down to a staff  
7 of three. My business is doing horrible. You know,  
8 we are dead center in the Bronx. I am trying to help  
9 the people around us and we can't even do that.  
10 We've been reaching out. Bronx Chambers has been  
11 helping me a lot now. You know, as far as grants and  
12 everything, there was grants that I wasn't aware of.  
13 There were loans that were put out that I wasn't  
14 aware of. Like I said, the people in the Bronx  
15 really do need help. We are here helping and I can't  
16 help if I don't have the help. You understand? We  
17 don't mind doing it, but, at this point, with just  
18 three of us, there has been a lot of jobs that I've  
19 even turned down because I don't have the manpower to  
20 do, so I have to turn down a few of the jobs because  
21 I can't hire more staff. Again, we went from doing  
22 well, very well, to now. If my business makes eight  
23 grand a month, I am lucky with that. You know? And  
24 it is shameful and I am just asking for a way to help  
25 small businesses. You know, we are still here. We

2 are still doing what we have to do. I am going to  
3 fight until the end and still provide for the people  
4 year. You know, like I said, my masks, they are for  
5 everyone. I've been helping everyone, but I can't  
6 help them if I don't get the help. That's all--

7 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you. What  
8 areas your business located in?

9 ARTHUR NICHOLS: I'm on Third Avenue on  
10 161st--- on 165th. My location was on 165th and  
11 Simpson and I had to close it down. So, now I base  
12 out of my house and doing everything out of my house.

13 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Arthur, survive.  
14 Survive. We are going to do what we can to help you  
15 survive so that you can drive later. I hear your  
16 pain and it is heartfelt. You're not alone. We are  
17 all in this together and we hope that we can get our  
18 compass back again to make sure that you and so many  
19 other businesses that are part of the city get the  
20 help that they need. You are a priority, Arthur.  
21 The Bronx Chambers a great resource for you.

22 ARTHUR NICHOLS: Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will  
24 next hear testimony from Yin Kong followed by  
25 Jennifer Sun followed by Ahyoung Kim.



2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

3 YIN KONG: Thank you so much to the  
4 Chair and to the committee. I really appreciated a  
5 lot of the questioning that Chair Gjonaj had this  
6 morning. I'm here to talk about the exclusion of  
7 Chinatown, 10013, and the LMI storefront program. As  
8 we have already discussed, you know, Chinatown is  
9 right next to affluent areas and have been excluded  
10 from this program. I invested a lot of my time and a  
11 lot of other communities, community members, as well,  
12 to have discussion with SPS and then, finally, as  
13 part of a sort of task force that was able to speak  
14 with Commissioner Doris. And through that, I have a  
15 few things I would like to share. First of all,  
16 funding for relief programs such as these interest-  
17 free loans really need to be disbursed by our local  
18 CDFI's. We really need to empower them to have the  
19 capital to make the loans. As Commissioner Doris  
20 pointed out today, the most diverse program, I think  
21 we discussed today was actually the ones that was  
22 administered by the CDFI's and I think that is proof  
23 that that is the way we should move forward. CDFI's  
24 are the institutions that have the language capacity  
25 and understand the business practices of our

2 communities. And, two, we really need to just  
3 commute the use of ZIP Codes as an indicator for need  
4 or eligibility for future relief programs. Census  
5 track data is a finer tuned mechanism to determine  
6 which businesses have this need. I want to talk  
7 about the discontinuation of the first come first  
8 served approach. We totally understand relief is  
9 needed quickly, but in language outreach takes time.  
10 Immigrant communities need more time to understand  
11 what the resources are. Outreach needs to happen.  
12 And if you want to talk about equitable distribution  
13 of resources, we need to stop this practice. Rounds  
14 are phase things would be more appropriate. And also  
15 we need to think about seeking corporation feedback  
16 from the communities that SBS is determi-- aims to  
17 serve while they are developing and designing these  
18 programs. I think the larger picture here is that  
19 Chinatown has been excluded before. It is not the  
20 first time our community members have had this  
21 discussion with SPS and it is because representation  
22 needs to be more broad in understanding needs and how  
23 to disburse these funds. And so I really push SBS to  
24 build a standard operating procedure so that in the

2 future--- we've Artie talked about these issues and  
3 we don't want to lose this headway--

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

5 YIN KONG: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Again, I want to  
7 thank you for your testimony and for your patience.  
8 And I know that Chinatown suffered the most early on  
9 as the virus became apparent in the fear of the of  
10 facts and you never recovered. Back in early  
11 February while the rest of the city was still  
12 operating, Chinatown was nearly shut down. So, I  
13 know the hardships in this has been conveyed to the  
14 administration and to SBS time and time again. We  
15 have a lot more to do with Chinatown, so thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,  
17 we will hear from Jennifer Sun followed by Ahyoung  
18 Kim.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Jennifer, please  
21 hold. You are still muted. You may begin again.  
22 Please.

23 JENNIFER SUN: Thank you. Good  
24 afternoon, Chair Gjonaj, and members of the  
25 committee. My name is Jennifer Sun and I am co-

2 Executive Director of Asian Americans for Equality,  
3 or AAFE, a community-based organization serving  
4 immigrant neighborhoods in New York City for nearly a  
5 half-century. In my testimony today is informed by  
6 AAFE's experience spanning 25 years as a small  
7 business advocate and lender. Throughout affiliate  
8 Renaissance Economic Development Corporation, we are  
9 dedicated to providing access to capital for  
10 communities historically excluded from mainstream  
11 small business lending programs. Renaissance is a  
12 CDFI and the only CDFI serving the multifaceted Asian  
13 American and Pacific Islander communities in New  
14 York. As Chair Gjonaj just acknowledge, small  
15 businesses and Chinatown and other Asian American  
16 enclaves began feeling the impact of Covid months  
17 before businesses and other parts of the city. In  
18 response, AAFE and Renaissance established an  
19 emergency small business relief loan fund in March.  
20 Applications were accessible in English, Chinese,  
21 Korean, and Spanish. Raising funds almost  
22 exclusively from the private sector, we are able to  
23 close more than 150 loans totaling nearly 3 million,  
24 helping many immigrant small businesses survive an  
25 economic catastrophe. We also provided \$1.5 million

2 in PPP loans. We recognize that the scale of this  
3 disaster is immense and that the city has too few  
4 financial resources at its disposal to rescue small  
5 businesses across the five boroughs. That said, we  
6 believe there is a lot the Department of Small  
7 Business Services could have done to more effectively  
8 support our most vulnerable businesses. As Yin just  
9 testified, there was great disappointment about the  
10 exclusion of the 10013 ZIP Code from SBS's LMI  
11 storefront loan program. This decision made it  
12 impossible for many businesses in the commercial  
13 heart of Chinatown to apply. To Commissioner Doris's  
14 credit, SBS has been working to rectify the situation  
15 through a community task force, increase community  
16 outreach, and through discussions about a possible  
17 new loan program that could help Chinatown  
18 businesses. But these are all potential solutions  
19 that only materialized after SBS rolled out its  
20 programs for LMI communities in November. In the  
21 future, we urge SBS to reach out to grassroots  
22 communities' organizations the four programs are  
23 designed and take their feedback to heart. I also  
24 echo Yin's point that we not use eligible ZIP Codes,  
25 but instead use census tract data to determine where

2 LMI businesses are located. We also urge SBS to  
3 continue to partner with a broad range of CDF eyes  
4 who are serving all of New York's diverse community  
5 of color. Rather than relying on a small number of  
6 select lenders who lack the language skills and  
7 cultural competency to deliver loan programs where  
8 they are most needed. Finally-- and this is a  
9 recommendation that should be acted on immediately--  
10 convene a capital--

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

12 JENNIFER SUN: Convene a capital access  
13 Roundtable including banks, CDFI's, other community-  
14 based organizations with government officials, to  
15 coordinate small business needs during and after the  
16 pandemic. Thank you and we look forward to our  
17 continued partnership with you all.

18 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you so much--

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,  
20 we will hear from Ahyoung Kim who will be followed by  
21 Yasmin Familia followed by Aashna Sing.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

23 AHYOUNG KIM: Thank you, Chair Gjonaj, and  
24 the Committee on Small Business for this opportunity  
25 to testify on this important topic. My name is

2 Ahyoung Kim. I am the assistant director of the  
3 small business programs at the Asian American  
4 Federation and in the face of this dire economic  
5 challenges in front of us and our need to recover as  
6 soon as possible, I am here to talk about three major  
7 needs for our community and the viability of our  
8 economy. Mr. Chair, we want to ask that you  
9 recognize the need for better metrics for the  
10 eligibility of city assistance programs and then need  
11 to mandate community implied and make sure that the  
12 Council has that kind of oversight on SBS and to make  
13 sure that the need to empower your organizations and  
14 the programs that directly cater to the most  
15 vulnerable and hard to reach communities are actually  
16 realized. In terms of the metrics to deliver  
17 equitable and meaningful small business support, I  
18 think I do not have to emphasize more about how the  
19 LMI ZIP Codes are not a good representation because  
20 the in catchment area is too large and arbitrary.  
21 This is not only an issue in Chinatown Manhattan.  
22 This is especially a big issue in outer boroughs, as  
23 you yourself now. But, more importantly, apart from  
24 this issue, we believe that the access -- that the  
25 LMI ZIP Codes don't actually assess the individual

2 businesses needs and the fact that non-LMI regions  
3 also actually faced higher rent and service fees and  
4 etc., business operations costs in general, so the  
5 whole idea that that is housing standard is being  
6 used for an economic recovery is something that is  
7 very faulty and we need to look back to ourselves on.  
8 We believe that this LMI standard excludes the  
9 commercial corridors with distinct identity and the  
10 culture that contributes to the diversity and  
11 economic stability of our great city. The legacy of  
12 businesses and the culture and connect centers of the  
13 city where people travel to New York City from outer  
14 boroughs, other states, and other countries, Chair  
15 said, the ones that are suffering and are the one  
16 that have been told honestly, I think you're doing  
17 better compared to other regions, so we are not going  
18 to prioritize. We want to bring attention to this  
19 issue and make sure that the Council does practice  
20 oversight and make sure that the small business  
21 services actually implement a better standard. But  
22 with that said, I think that the community input has  
23 to be put into these programs with the help of the  
24 Council, as well. The explanation we are hearing  
25 from the administration that they don't have enough



2 funding and there is not enough money to go around.  
3 If that is the case, the feedback that we are given  
4 from the community organizations should be better  
5 heard and better implemented before these programs  
6 are rolled out. The issue about LMI ZIP Codes has  
7 been pointed out by us, the Federation, and our  
8 members and the stakeholders in the region multiple  
9 times--

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

11 AHYOUNG KIM: May I please for just a few  
12 more seconds?

13 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Yes. Please  
14 finish, Ms. Kim.

15 AHYOUNG KIM: Thank you. Multiple times on  
16 different programs, not just the LMI storefront  
17 loans, but the way that the SBS conducts outreach on  
18 programs like that CLA program that is very helpful  
19 for business owners who need that kind of legal  
20 representation, but don't have access. And people  
21 don't and the outreach itself should not be based on  
22 a ZIP Code that is used for postal services. So,  
23 with that, we want to say that the Council, please  
24 look into making sure that there is this kind of  
25 oversight on the standard of these eligibility

2 programs and that there is a mandated public feedback  
3 and commentary before these programs are rolled out  
4 to better ensure outreach and informational access.  
5 Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you, Ms. Kim.  
7 I agree with you fully. Not only the metrics and the  
8 standards that we use, but the outreach. There is  
9 plenty of room for improvement. It is abysmal, at  
10 best, and I apologize that we were not able to reach  
11 out to those nooks and crannies of the communities  
12 that needed the help of the most. You are not alone  
13 in this. Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will  
15 now hear from Yasmin Familia who will be followed by  
16 Aashna Singh.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

18 YASMIN FAMILIA: Hello. Good afternoon,  
19 everyone. My name is Yasmin Familia, owner of Gun  
20 Hill Road Caribbean restaurant located 2 East Gun  
21 Hill Road, Bronx, New York, 10467. I have been open  
22 with this business for 18 years and I had employees  
23 and many workers throughout decades that I couldn't  
24 afford to keep right now. Another big challenge for  
25 me is to continue maintaining bills, especially rent.

2 It is still the same. The landlord is unwilling to  
3 negotiate. I paid an amount over \$16,000 of rent,  
4 plus LSA tax is almost \$30,000 a year. Water is  
5 about \$1200 a month. If you have that up, it is like  
6 about \$20,000 a month that I'm paying over there just  
7 on those three bills. My sales have decreased 50  
8 percent and never had, you know-- never had alone or  
9 didn't have any debt before. Now that I have the SBA  
10 loan and the PPP, it has helped, but the future is  
11 uncertain for me and I could not afford any more debt  
12 at this point. With the takeout and deliveries, it's  
13 not enough to keep the staff and to pay rent and  
14 other bills. Now there is many people unemployed and  
15 running out of unemployment benefit. No school and a  
16 lot of people closing out stores. Less people around  
17 the area. No foot traffic. All the people around  
18 the area are very important to our neighborhood  
19 because they bring business around our area, too.  
20 Like here in hair salons, clothing stores, bank  
21 tellers. There also customers. We are also  
22 customers from each other as a business. Many  
23 vendors like our [inaudible 02:19:28] around the  
24 street outside in front of my store competing for  
25 customers not only for me as a restaurant, but also

2 for those stores that are around the area leaving  
3 trash which I get my violations from sanitation.  
4 They don't have to pay the taxes that I pay and the  
5 fines that I have to pay. You know, like I have  
6 applied for many grants before and never got approved  
7 for one and the one that I applied, it was like seven  
8 months ago and just recently this week I just heard  
9 from a not big amount, but a small amount which is  
10 going to help a little bit, but it is not going to  
11 make me survive. Like when you guys-- like the  
12 Commissioner says, we will do after what would--  
13 when you guys--

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

15 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: You can finish,  
16 Yasmin. Please.

17 YASMIN FAMILIA: Okay. Thank you. When  
18 you guys will do or want to do something after 11  
19 months of pandemic, after all the small business runs  
20 out of business, at this point, I am very  
21 disappointed and distressed by the situation. You  
22 only see the situation from your side, but the  
23 situation that we have to spend at like myself spends  
24 like entire days and nights working very hard to  
25 raise my family, provide my employees a stable job,

2 and now every effort has done with my staff is going  
3 down the hall. I cannot afford any more loans. I  
4 only can get grants if it's going to help. But right  
5 now like it is like I am falling behind every month  
6 and every month because I have debt right now.

7 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Yasmin, what was  
8 the grant that you just received notice from?

9 YASMIN FAMILIA: The--

10 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: What was the dollar  
11 amount?

12 YASMIN FAMILIA: It's from a-- It's  
13 called a Small Business Relief Grant Program. I  
14 applied for at that grant since June.

15 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: What was the dollar  
16 amount that you received?

17 YASMIN FAMILIA: 10,000 dollars. For  
18 rent and when I said that, it was like over \$60,000.  
19 I just got \$10,000. Now I am in debt almost 70  
20 something thousand dollars and the landlord has an  
21 even given me \$100 less out of my payments. I'm not  
22 using the whole entire corner which is a very  
23 expensive corridor and just take out and deliveries,  
24 I'm not going to be able to make it or survive. I'm

2 trying and I'm trying every effort that I can, but it  
3 is not enough.

4 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: How-- And I just  
5 want to get an overall idea of what's happening to  
6 your particular business and how important it is for  
7 the service that is, and the product that you offer  
8 to this community on Gun Hill Road. Very busy.

9 YASMIN FAMILIA: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: A lot of tenement  
11 buildings that rely on your restaurant if they can  
12 even afford to eat out which is mostly pickup and  
13 delivery. How much are you losing each and every  
14 month? Your deficits.

15 YASMIN FAMILIA: Well, the percentage is  
16 50 percent out of my sales.

17 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: So, what does that  
18 dollar amount come out to every month? You are in  
19 the hole. The hole is getting deeper and bigger.  
20 How much is that every month on average?

21 YASMIN FAMILIA: We're going to say  
22 like about \$20,000.

23 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: A month in the red  
24 that you're losing. Every month that you stay open  
25 you are losing \$20,000.

2 YASMIN FAMILIA: Yeah. Or more you could  
3 say because sometimes when it snows, winter rains,  
4 sometimes you cannot do the same deliveries. So, you  
5 know, like people won't be able for the driver won't  
6 be able to deliver, so your sales go all the way  
7 down. People don't want to go outside. So, if  
8 you're already home and your kids are working and  
9 your kids are home, what are you going to do? You're  
10 going to do cooking. Nobody is going to order  
11 deliveries. You understand? So like I have done the  
12 outdoor dining area for when they allow me to do  
13 that. They came over and measured everything, send  
14 everything and like Susan was saying, they came over  
15 and said I needed some reflective tape. Okay. I  
16 need that. I will do that. But they just gave me 24  
17 hours. They came yesterday and they wanted that to  
18 be done today in 24 hours and if it is not, I'm going  
19 to get fined. So, they are pressuring you when you  
20 have this pressure with your payments into the bills,  
21 with keeping employees-- because sometimes they  
22 don't want to stay working with you because you're  
23 not giving them enough hours. But you cannot give  
24 any more hours because you can't have them working  
25 for you over time.

2 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Yasmin, how many  
3 years are you in business?

4 YASMIN FAMILIA: 18 years in that same  
5 right corner. So I have provided many, many, many  
6 people with employee at that location.

7 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Before Covid,  
8 before February, you were thriving. You were doing  
9 okay? You were--

10 YASMIN FAMILIA: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: providing for  
12 yourself.

13 YASMIN FAMILIA: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Can you survive  
15 another five months?

16 YASMIN FAMILIA: I don't think so. I  
17 told you. I am already deep in-- \$70,000 to the  
18 landlord, plus I owe the SBA now the loan that they  
19 already gave me. I already spent it. So how do you  
20 think?

21 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: How about your real  
22 estate taxes? Did you pay your real estate?

23 YASMIN FAMILIA: Yes. It's like almost  
24 30,000 dollars a year.



2 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Did you pay that in  
3 January?

4 YASMIN FAMILIA: No. I was paying like  
5 1000 dollars or 2000 dollars a month and sometimes I  
6 couldn't even send anything. Like right now I'm  
7 behind on real estate taxes from last year almost,  
8 what, 16 or 20,000 dollars and now in January, I  
9 believe I am supposed to get the real estate taxes  
10 again and that is something that I feel like I am not  
11 going to be able to make it. And if it was me in  
12 business for 18 years that was being stable in the  
13 area, imagine those businesses that just started and  
14 probably were not as stable in the area. I don't  
15 know how they are doing it, but I think they are  
16 already closing their doors because, to tell you the  
17 truth, I have been there 18 years, so I have offered  
18 my employees a stable job and whenever they come to  
19 work. Because I worry. I work days and nights for  
20 18 years to make sure that I my family depends on  
21 that. My daughter my son work with me, so many  
22 people, too, around the area.

23 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Yasmin, I hear your  
24 pain and you are exactly the business that we are  
25 supposed to be helping. A women owned business. A

2 minority owned business and I promise you-- and if  
3 you heard today my passion, I am fighting for you.  
4 And I will continue to fight for you to make sure  
5 that you can't survive this. Survive. Survive.

6 YASMIN FAMILIA: Thank you. Thank you  
7 very much. Thank you. That is what I'm trying to  
8 do.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,  
10 will hear from Aashna Sing who will be followed by  
11 Jan Lee followed by Kathleen Sforza.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

13 AASHNA SINGH: Thank you. My name is  
14 Aashna Singh. My pronouns are she, her, hers and  
15 Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A. In short,  
16 Brooklyn A. Thank you for giving our office the  
17 opportunity to provide testimony today. BKA,  
18 Brooklyn A, was founded in 1968 with a focus on  
19 providing services and low income neighborhoods where  
20 our clients live, developing programs and staff that  
21 are a part of and responsive to those communities.  
22 Collaboration with the city, state, and federal  
23 officials to enforce laws that uphold the rights of  
24 our communities and develop legislative solutions and  
25 is also an integral part of our strategy. In 2017,

2 Brooklyn A recognized the common and significant  
3 hurdles facing commercial tenants to address leasing  
4 issues that are foundational to their business  
5 including that there are minimal rights for  
6 commercial tenants on the state level, making leases  
7 the only form of protection for small business  
8 owners. We joined with the United for Small Business  
9 New York City Coalition which is a coalition fighting  
10 to protect small businesses from the threat of  
11 displacement to advocate for public funding to adopt  
12 a citywide approach to provide support for small  
13 business owners through attorneys who could help them  
14 understand and exercise their rights and options  
15 during their lease. The city Council and Small  
16 Business Services also exhibited leadership and  
17 vision in creating the nonresidential tenant  
18 harassment law, the commercial lease assistance  
19 program, and securing funding to implement these  
20 initiatives. Brooklyn A has had the honor to serve  
21 as the lead organization to implement the program in  
22 close collaboration with volunteers of legal service  
23 and Take Root Justice and partnership with many  
24 community-based organizations throughout the city.  
25 Since its inception, the CLA program has addressed

2 over 1200 legal matters. The demographics of whom  
3 consisted of business owners from all five boroughs  
4 in every city Council District and who are 99 percent  
5 lower income, 75 percent individuals of color, 64  
6 percent immigrants, 51 percent women, 33 percent non-  
7 native English speakers, 20 percent sole proprietors,  
8 and the majority with five or fewer employees. Legal  
9 representation and lease matters level the playing  
10 field. Even before the pandemic, nearly 50 percent  
11 of new businesses did not make it the past five  
12 years. Throughout our assistance, we found that the  
13 represented businesses were more likely to stay open  
14 and see lower rent increases. This program is the  
15 only city funded source of free legal assistance for  
16 small business owners. Recently, a fitness business  
17 owner came to our program facing hundreds of  
18 thousands of dollars in rental arrears from the time  
19 of the New York State pause in lockdown of all  
20 nonessential businesses and, due to reduced business  
21 revenue, was unable to afford rent even following  
22 reopening. Fortunately, the landlord wanted to keep  
23 our client has attended and was willing to work with  
24 our client to forgive some arrears and possibly  
25 reduce the rent, however, the lease with our client--

2 the lease amendment provided by the landlord can  
3 obtain several provisions that could have exposed our  
4 client to serious financial risks, including a  
5 provision that could have allowed the landlord to  
6 terminate the lease at any time with very little  
7 notice without returning the security deposit. We  
8 are currently helping the client negotiate fairer  
9 terms. After our last call with the client  
10 discussing issues with the lease amendment, the  
11 client thanked us for alerting them to these  
12 provisions and said that, without legal  
13 representation, he would have likely signed whatever  
14 agreement the landlord sent. Many small business  
15 owners like our client do not have access to a  
16 readily available legal advice or attorneys to advise  
17 them, leaving them in a vulnerable position to assign  
18 potentially unjust commercial leases. An Asian  
19 restaurant owner reached out to CLA because they were  
20 unable to pay their rent due to the pandemic. We  
21 were able to negotiate 50 percent rent abatement  
22 agreement through the end-of-the-year. The client  
23 agreed to leave the space and save over \$25,000  
24 through the rent abatements. Our client also  
25 received their security deposit upon vacation.

2 Having legal representation when communicating with  
3 landlords or property management companies provides  
4 small business owners who may otherwise experience  
5 intimidation or lack of clarity and asking for what  
6 is just and fair. In addition to the devastating  
7 losses of their businesses, many business owners  
8 and/or large amounts of debt from the back payments  
9 expected and enforced by their landlords, despite the  
10 inability to operate in a pandemic. While the impact  
11 of Covid 19 is unprecedented territory for small  
12 business owners and most of our communities at large,  
13 the small business community has always been  
14 vulnerable.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

16 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Do you have much  
17 longer, Ms. Singh?

18 AASHNA SINGH: Two more paragraphs.  
19 Maybe 30 seconds.

20 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Go ahead. Finish  
21 it, please.

22 AASHNA SINGH: Thank you. In 2020, we  
23 saw our city's most marginalized communities suffer  
24 as the Amazons of the world have broken records and  
25 profit and revenue. Our cities a small business is

2 not only need consumer support, but legal government  
3 and structural support to compete with larger  
4 businesses that have access to a plethora of  
5 resources. Last year, the CLA program and a business  
6 that represents was put in a hard position. The  
7 approved FY 21 city Council budget cut funding for  
8 the commercial lease assistance program due to the  
9 reality that was New York City's government facing  
10 its worst budget crisis since the 1970s. After  
11 advocacy by many elected officials, city agencies,  
12 small business owners, and community-based  
13 organizations, Mayor De Blasio restored public  
14 support for legal representation on behalf of small  
15 business owners fighting to keep their businesses  
16 alive. We thank the Administration for this  
17 decision. The reversal of this decision to cut  
18 funding for the program at this pivotal moment of  
19 crisis, despite budgetary constraints, is a testament  
20 to the critical need for services for New York City's  
21 small businesses, as well as the programs successful  
22 track record. Our small businesses not only for the  
23 local economy, but our local communities, as well.  
24 They define the neighborhood we all live in and love.  
25 Legal support for our small business owners keeps

2 their businesses open, saves them from debt, and  
3 creates opportunities for intergenerational wealth  
4 for their families and for our communities. It is  
5 critical that the city continue to support the  
6 commercial lease assistance program that provides  
7 essential services to save small businesses which  
8 will be crucial for the recovery of New York City.  
9 Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,  
11 we will hear from Jan Lee who will be followed by  
12 Kathleen Sforza.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Is Ms. Lee still  
15 here? Please hold on for a second. We are just  
16 trying to get unmuted. Can you please, Ms. Lee,  
17 click unmute on your end? Are you able to do so?  
18 Okay. We will move onto the next panelist right now  
19 while Jan Lee works-- while we try to figure out the  
20 issues with Jan Lee. So, I believe we are going to  
21 hear from Kathleen Sforza and-- yes. You are  
22 available. So, Ms. Sforza, you may begin when the  
23 sergeant gives you the cue.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.



2 KATHLEEN SFORZA: Okay. Thank you. Hi.  
3 Thank you for allowing me to speak today. I was the  
4 owner of a small business for 25 years. I closed in  
5 2013, but this pandemic has made me feel for all the  
6 small businesses out there. When it comes to how New  
7 York City treats its small businesses, NYC will soon  
8 be an acronym for nanny city. Why? Overregulation  
9 and taxes on small businesses do not encourage  
10 entrepreneurship. It discourages it. Government  
11 bureaucracy puts a stop on every step of the way.  
12 Business owners do not know the rules of the game.  
13 Why? Overregulation by government agencies cause  
14 rule changes. Business owners can never truly know  
15 if they are doing the right thing. As I said before,  
16 I owned Town and Country on Staten Island for 25  
17 years from 1987 to 2013. I was a business owner who  
18 feared every time I got a visit from one of the  
19 government agencies. The first thing I thought was,  
20 what did I do wrong? It would take a massive amount  
21 of education to keep up with the rules and  
22 regulations of every city, state, and federal agency.  
23 I have family and friends who work in the restaurant  
24 business. A visit from that Department of Health can  
25 end up with an unfair grade. Sanitation is quick to

2 ticket a store owner for improperly disposing of  
3 garbage or not sweeping 18 inches from the curb.  
4 This pandemic has shown the small business community  
5 just what the government thinks of them: disposable.  
6 Big-box stores were all open, but small businesses  
7 that can control their crowds needed to be closed.  
8 Where is the logic in all that? I don't understand.  
9 Unfortunately, years of government regulations cause  
10 innovative entrepreneurs to throw their hands up in  
11 the area and give up. Let's change from the  
12 government-- let's change from government the great  
13 discourage or to government the great encourager.  
14 Post pandemic recovery will need to involve  
15 individual cash grants without all the red tape to  
16 assist more businesses with back rent and utility  
17 bills. No fining. It is not needed. We need to  
18 open the city and build it back. Thank you very  
19 much.

20 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: that are afraid to  
21 speak up because they are afraid of retaliation.  
22 Thank you.

23 KATHLEEN SFORZA: Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Mr.  
25 Lee, are you available? Are you able to speak?

2 Thank you. Please unmute yourself. Thank you. Mr.  
3 Lee, you may begin and you will be followed by  
4 Kamilah Hanks. So, please begin once you get the  
5 cue.

6                   JAN LEE:       I so appreciate the time  
7 given to us to speak, Chair Gjonaj and to the  
8 Commissioner. My name is Jan Lee. I am a third-  
9 generation resident and property owner here on Mott  
10 Street. Historic Mott Street in Chinatown. You  
11 know, Mott Street is so well-known. My family has  
12 been you're going on 96 years and Rodgers and Heart  
13 immortalized Mott Street in a song and I'm going to  
14 spare, out of respect to the Council, speaking the  
15 verses from that, but we all know what they say.  
16 They talk about the pushcarts in Chinatown. They  
17 talk about what street compares to Mott Street? And  
18 so, for 100 years, people have been humming that so  
19 long as they walked down my street and the pride that  
20 we feel as property owners and as people who are  
21 supportive of small businesses, I have three of them  
22 in my building, we feel on the one hand that we are  
23 supported it times by the city of New York. You  
24 know, we saw during the pandemic a parade of  
25 politicians walking down our streets. The Mayor ate

2 noodles here. He had ice cream here. Shortly, with  
3 that kind of exposure, we would understand that we  
4 would get recognition from the city of New York, but,  
5 actually, the opposite is happened. When you use ZIP  
6 Codes, you bisect Chinatown and we are lumped in on  
7 10013 with Tribeca which has a median income of  
8 \$879,000. We cannot be lumped in using ZIP Codes, as  
9 my colleague, Yin Kong, who I've been working with,  
10 has said. Instead, we really should be looking at  
11 census tracts. If you did look at census tracts, you  
12 would understand that over a third of the people who  
13 are over the age of 65 in my neighborhood are living  
14 under the poverty line. They rely on small  
15 businesses in their community for sustenance and so  
16 we have to be careful when we start to look at our  
17 communities and-- and I'm not the only community  
18 that was bisected who lost out on the zero interest  
19 loan program. We have to start looking at local  
20 grassroots groups to help before the rollout and I do  
21 want to say that we did have a meeting with the  
22 Commissioner, but it was five weeks after the  
23 rollout. My community reached out to our Council  
24 member who was helpful. We reached out to the local  
25 Business Improvement District and we reached out to

2 Small Business Services. But five weeks to have a  
3 meeting on New Year's Eve was late and, in that five  
4 weeks, that \$35 million, that pot of money was  
5 diminishing and there is only so many times when I  
6 can interview businesses only to have them burst out  
7 into tears, crying in front of me. This is taking an  
8 emotional toll on us. We are starting to become very  
9 disenfranchised with this government and I am so  
10 happy that the Chair has alluded to the damage  
11 psychologically that this does to communities of  
12 color. How are we to trust our government if we  
13 raise the flag--

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

15 JAN LEE: We tell you when things are  
16 going wrong. We tell you that we've been left out.  
17 We have mixed messages of the Mayor and politicians  
18 walking on historic Mott Street and then say, we  
19 forgot you. . How do we repair this  
20 disenfranchisement that we are feeling now? The  
21 mixed messages that were getting from our government,  
22 we have to do better. Thank you, Chair.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you, Mr. Lee.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will  
3 now hear from Kamilah Hanks. Hanks will be followed  
4 by Don Christian Jones followed by Jaclyn [inaudible  
5 02:41:24].

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

7 KAMILAH HANKS: Good afternoon. Thank  
8 you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you so much, members of the  
9 committee and the fellow citizens on the call today.  
10 This is probably one of the most important city  
11 Council hearings of the year. Of our lifetime, to be  
12 honest with you. I have been working in Staten  
13 Island as-- I'm the president of an economic  
14 development Corporation in historic Tappan Park and  
15 I'm also the founder of the Minority Women and  
16 Business Association here. The information that we  
17 got today was staggering and completely unacceptable.  
18 I have been working on the ground for 20 years. I  
19 have been assisting small businesses with the  
20 application process for the PPP loans and I have  
21 found that many businesses are just not familiar with  
22 the process and need assistance to ensure that they  
23 receive the desperately needed funds in which they  
24 are entitled. In addition to the financial resources  
25 of small businesses, it is critical for the city of

2 New York through the small business administration,  
3 increase its efforts to educate small businesses on  
4 the loan process. In the onset of Covid 19, I  
5 personally went door-to-door to talk about the SBS  
6 relief packages. Many of these businesses now simply  
7 don't exist. When I hear three percent of the  
8 funding was allocated to my borough, I think of the  
9 numerous vacancies, the closures, the shuttered  
10 businesses and savings, dreams. They're gone. We  
11 are not applications. We are not ZIP Codes. We need  
12 to be looking at who is opening businesses, who has  
13 businesses, and SBS and the city of New York took the  
14 pathway of least resistance. They didn't do the work  
15 on the ground to engage the people who are doing the  
16 work. The community-based organizations. The SI  
17 EDC, the Chamber of Commerce, the historic Tappan  
18 Park, the Minority Women and Business Association.  
19 We intimately know, just as the people on this call  
20 intimately know our neighborhoods. You know, small  
21 businesses are not an application. They are real  
22 people and nothing was done to make sure that the  
23 funds of landed in those who needed it most. I want  
24 to leave this by saying that, for every dollar the  
25 city of New York helps the small business, that is a

2 job they save. You are doing the Governor of New  
3 Jersey a huge, huge favor because they are leaving in  
4 the droves and after a while you're not going to have  
5 anything left to tax. You are not going to have  
6 anyone left tax. So, my question to SBS going  
7 forward in the city of New York is that at what point  
8 would all the applications come in did you realize  
9 that the Bronx and Staten Island got less than five  
10 percent? What was that trigger? How do we look at,  
11 as the process is going, and say, hey, I haven't  
12 heard from Kamilah Hanks or Jaclyn Tacoronte or  
13 Caesar Claro or--

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

15 KAMILAH HANKS: Linda Barron on what was  
16 being allocated to our district that sorely needs it.  
17 So I really thank you and, especially, Chair Gjonaj.  
18 It was the best hour and a half spent listening to  
19 you because you hit the nail on the head and I hope  
20 that this is not the last conversation, but that this  
21 is the beginning of the conversation to start saving  
22 our small businesses and stop saying that New York is  
23 closed for business. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thanks. Thank you  
25 so much for being a part of this, for speaking up for



2 those that are trying to survive. And I do hope and  
3 agree with you that this should be the start of  
4 something and not the end of something. And I am  
5 sure that you are just as disappointed as the total  
6 dollar amount that was allocated. There are six  
7 programs, it equates to a total of \$356 per business.  
8 That is not financial aid. That doesn't even meet  
9 the utility expenses for our small businesses on a  
10 monthly basis, let alone all of the other overhead  
11 expenses that they have.

12 KAMILAH HANKS: Thank you. And this  
13 issue isn't new. I've been doing this for 20 years.  
14 I get funding from Department of Small Business  
15 Services. This is not new. It's just exasperated  
16 with Covid 19. We have to do everything we can.  
17 This is tragic. It's staggering and tragic.

18 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: I have reiterated  
19 your points time and time again. Every dollar that  
20 we put into small business is a dollar that's going  
21 to give us a return. It's going to give us a return  
22 on our investment. It's going to continue to fill  
23 the taxpayer coffers so that we can provide those  
24 essential services that are needed to all of New York  
25 City. When we lose these businesses, we will lose

2 the ability to fill our tax coffers of vital  
3 services. It's a downwards spiral. God bless you  
4 and thank you, Ms. Hanks.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,  
6 we will hear from Don Christian Jones who will be  
7 followed by Jaclyn Tacoronte.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

9 DON CHRISTIAN JONES: Hello, everyone.  
10 Thank you for all the testimonies and for this  
11 hearing. I am here representing Public Assistance.  
12 Just to give a brief rundown of who we are, we are a  
13 mutual aid network production design and resistance  
14 hub founded on June 6 as an organizing base in  
15 response to the Covid 19 pandemic and global  
16 uprising. Public Assistance has led and partnered a  
17 number of community initiatives since its inception.  
18 We are currently facing eviction as of Monday. On  
19 June 20, the current property owners at our space at  
20 711 Franklin notified us that we have 30 days to  
21 vacate the premises, forcing us to move and  
22 immediately find a new HQ amidst the pandemic. This  
23 is alarming, but not unforeseen. The terms of our  
24 occupancy here had been at risk of sudden termination  
25 due to the systemic prioritization of profit over

2 community. Safe havens for queer black and brown  
3 young people who make up our community are both rare  
4 and fast disappearing, making our continued existence  
5 crucial. We do not wish to further escalate this  
6 conflict situation and relationship that have been  
7 fraught with uncertainty from the start. We have--  
8 We are intent on transitioning from our current space  
9 safely, securely, and with dignity. While this is  
10 not an easy decision to make, and is one we are  
11 coming to grips with. Our roots in Crown Heights  
12 transcend the walls of 711 Franklin. We seek a  
13 stable, hospitable environment in which to flourish  
14 for years to come. That is the gist of my testimony  
15 and I thank you all for listening.

16 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Mr. Jones, there is  
17 an eviction moratorium in place. You cannot be  
18 evicted. I want you to take down my phone number and  
19 I will follow up with you. 718-931-1721.

20 DON CHRISTIAN JONES: Thank you so much.  
21 I have been hearing so much about this moratorium and  
22 I'm just trying to find out if we must apply for it  
23 or the ways in which we can be made eligible.

24 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: You're protected  
25 automatically. No one can be evicted, business or

2 residential tenant can be evicted during this  
3 moratorium. You are protected and I'll go through  
4 those details with you.

5 DON CHRISTIAN JONES: Thank you so much.

6 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: You can sleep well  
7 tonight that you're not going to be evicted  
8 [inaudible 02:49:03].

9 DON CHRISTIAN JONES: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: You're muted.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry. Thank you.

12 Next, we will hear from Jaclyn Tacoronte followed by  
13 MJ Okma.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

15 JACLYN TACORONTE: Thank you. Good  
16 afternoon, everyone. Thank you, Chair, and members  
17 of City Council. My name is Jaclyn Tacoronte and I'm  
18 a small business owner living in the greenest borough  
19 here on Staten Island. I own and managed the largest  
20 marketing and public relations agency, JMT Media. I  
21 am the first official Native American MWBE in New  
22 York City history and I serve proudly serve as the  
23 second vice president of the Minority Women and  
24 Business Association of Staten Island. The first of  
25 its kind led by my colleague, Ms. Kamilah Hanks.

2 It's good to be here. Thank you to all the  
3 delegation working on behalf of all of the small  
4 business communities here on Staten Island. In my  
5 role, I am here to talk about small businesses and  
6 their stories that are coming to me, struggling and  
7 unable to take the time off to speak, so I am sharing  
8 on today's virtual platform. From BE Yoga Studio on  
9 the North Shore, owner Larissa has been physically  
10 closed for 309 days. Directly from her, she says,  
11 the administration has not addressed the indoor  
12 fitness industry since the last week of August.  
13 Under New York City reopening guidelines for gyms, we  
14 were not included. We have not heard a word about  
15 what is next or even a possible reopening. It is  
16 frustrating to not even be considered worthy of part  
17 of the community. New York City is the only city  
18 where indoor fitness classes are not allowed. Enough  
19 is enough. This is an industry that makes people  
20 healthy, physically, mentally, and emotionally. From  
21 Joe at Joyce's Tavern, he states, please open up  
22 small businesses that are closed due to regulations.  
23 Even if we had open indoor dining at 50 percent or  
24 even 25 percent capacity, that could help. We need  
25 support from city Council for accessibility to city

2 funding, adequate and reliable accessibility for  
3 services and outreach which we discussed earlier  
4 today from qualified representatives that understand  
5 the needs of a small business. Small businesses,  
6 locally in New York City need your help with minority  
7 businesses closing brick and mortar commercial spaces  
8 at a staggering 30 percent rate, especially on the  
9 North Shore of Staten Island. We are calling on you  
10 to advocate for additional funding. From the annual  
11 Making the Grade report provided by the New York  
12 comptroller's office between March and August 2020,  
13 the city spent more than 1.5 billion for Covid  
14 related goods and services contracts, yet only 11  
15 percent million went to WMBE's and, as you disclosed,  
16 Chairman, less than three percent went to Staten  
17 Island and MWBE's and, even at that, I would like to  
18 see some data to support that. Straight from the  
19 report, three entities have spent zero dollars and  
20 procurement for MWBE's that needed, especially on  
21 Staten Island, the Office of the Mayor and the  
22 Department of Parks and Recreation. From the  
23 greenest borough in New York City, Staten Island has  
24 yet to see the number to a rough flecked in the  
25 numbers. After reaching out to local small

2 businesses, everyone's goals are very, very simple  
3 and I will make it quick. Provide adequate and  
4 reliable resources, provide--

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time.

6 JACLYN TACORONTE: accessibility-- I just  
7 have one sentence left and I'm done.

8 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Please, Jaclyn.

9 JACLYN TACORONTE: Thank you, sir.  
10 Provide accessibility to city funding. Open up New  
11 York City. I want to thank for the work during  
12 unprecedented times and for showing up and we look  
13 forward to working with this Council to help push  
14 through initiatives to help small businesses to  
15 support and flourish this beautiful city. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you. God  
17 bless you. Very eloquently put and thank you for  
18 fighting for those businesses that are trying to  
19 service right now and you are a great voice for them.  
20 Thank you.

21 JACLYN TACORONTE: Thank you for the  
22 opportunity.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will  
24 now hear from MJ Okma who will be followed by Leticia  
25 Remauro who is our last registered speaker.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

3 MK OKMA: Good afternoon, Chair Gjonaj.

4 My name is MJ Okma with the Human Services Council, a  
5 membership organization representing 170 human  
6 services providers in New York City. To the Mayor's  
7 recovery agenda included the core priorities of  
8 creating high quality jobs and continuing to make New  
9 York the fairest city in America, both have fallen  
10 short due in part to his administration's refusal to  
11 work with local human services organizations on the  
12 front lines. Before the Mayor's agenda was announced  
13 since September 2020, leaders from across the human  
14 services sector were brought together in June as part  
15 of the Man's nonprofit and social services recovery  
16 task force. Members of that task force came up with  
17 a list of core recommendations to support essential  
18 workers in this sector, protect community services,  
19 and amend the procurement process to allow needed  
20 flexibility to meet community needs. 99 of their  
21 recommendations were implemented. At the same time,  
22 the expertise of community organizations out in the  
23 front lines were being ignored. The city cut human  
24 services contracts even more and retroactively clawed  
25 back in direct funding. Cuts in fiscal year 20 were



2 retroactive and not announced until after the fiscal  
3 year was over and the city still has not provided any  
4 information about how fiscal year 21 contracts will  
5 be impacted by cuts to indirect. This means human  
6 services nonprofits are currently operating in the  
7 second wave of Covid with no clear communication from  
8 the city about how much they are going to be paid for  
9 their services. The nonprofit human services sector  
10 employs 200,000 workers in New York City, the  
11 majority being women of color and has seen a net loss  
12 of 44,000 jobs since February with no job rebound  
13 insight. The massive net loss of jobs has devastated  
14 not only to those impacted workers, but also to New  
15 York City as a whole. Our city's failure to have a  
16 strong and fully funded human services sector  
17 undermines the scope and effectiveness of essential  
18 services in a time of desperately growing need and  
19 sets our city's recovery back during the pandemic and  
20 refusal to listen to and then nonprofit social  
21 service recovery task force has deeply harmed  
22 communities in crisis is that the de Blasio  
23 administration claims to support. These actions  
24 obstructed our city's recovery and communities  
25 already impacted the most by Covid 19 due to

2 structural racism, able-ism, and income inequality.  
3 With black and brown New Yorkers suffering the  
4 deepest harm. In order to support the recovery in  
5 the communities that need it the most, and to support  
6 the essential role that community nonprofits play in  
7 our economy, the funding for jobs and services in the  
8 human services sector provides must be restored and  
9 bolstered. Without immediate action, there will be  
10 only more difficult for our city to the red copper  
11 and rebuild. Thank you, Chair Gjonaj, for holding  
12 this hearing and giving me the opportunity to  
13 testify.

14 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you for your  
15 testimony.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will  
17 now hear for Leticia Remauro who, again, is our last  
18 registered panelist.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

20 LETICIA REMAURO: Thank you, Chair Gjonaj,  
21 for getting us and you truly do. And thank you,  
22 Commissioner Doris for really trying to help us  
23 because I know you are. But you have to understand  
24 that, by dividing us up by ZIP Codes you have missed  
25 the mark here and it has hurt us. You know, small

2 business owners take home an average of \$60,000 in  
3 salary a year. That is less than most civil servants  
4 actually take home and you all have been able to keep  
5 your paychecks. But we generate 50 percent of the  
6 employment in the city. At about \$1 billion in  
7 payroll. So, when you don't look at us as a whole,  
8 when you don't help us, the small business owners,  
9 the mom-and-pop shops, then what you do is you will  
10 allow for the corporations, the big corporations who  
11 can sustain these closures and this up and down with  
12 what we are allowed to do. You are helping them and  
13 you are hurting us. Small businesses operate on  
14 about a 20 percent profit margin, so when you cut our  
15 ability to deliver services to 25 percent, you put us  
16 in the bankruptcy. And for most of us we have  
17 mortgaged our homes to live our dream, to employ  
18 other people, and to deliver services. So, if you  
19 put us out of business, not only do you lose our  
20 employees, but you lose our business taxes and then  
21 you also, we become homeless. So, where do we go?  
22 We go to whatever state is going to be business  
23 friendly to us because, truly, small business owners,  
24 if they are not allowed to apply their business, what  
25 incentive do we have to stay? And so I ask you. If

2 you take anything away from this hearing, think of  
3 this. Staten Island's five programs that you have  
4 offered in three of them we have not received any  
5 benefits from, that is not right. That is wrong and  
6 that is because of how you based, you know, the  
7 information. On ZIP Codes. You have to do better.  
8 It is unfair to punish one ZIP Code against another,  
9 as we have seen with Chinatown. Look at us as a  
10 global entity. The entity that is the engine of New  
11 York City. Keep us here. Let us be the rock and the  
12 foundation so that we employ others. Remember, we  
13 are the ones that care about our customers. We know  
14 how to take care of our customers. We know how to  
15 keep them safe. Because if we didn't, then we  
16 wouldn't be in business at all. So, out of \$89  
17 billion budget, \$4.4 million for small business? No.  
18 No. That is so wrong. Remember, we all so, because  
19 of our leases, triple net leases, we are responsible  
20 for property taxes.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

22 LETICIA REMAURO: And so, I just want to  
23 leave you with this is please just think of us as a  
24 whole. We have building owners. We have cab  
25 drivers. We have entertainers. We have restaurants.

2 You can make the difference in our economic recovery  
3 in the future if you help us stay here. We can't  
4 hang on without you.

5 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you so much  
6 and I'm so glad the Staten Island came out in such  
7 strong numbers of participation in today's hearing so  
8 that we can understand the unfair disparity between  
9 counties and boroughs and ZIP codes. Thank you for  
10 sharing your story. Survive. We're going to try to  
11 figure this out and I will continue to be that  
12 advocate for you. Thank you.

13 LETICIA REMAURO: Thank you. Thank you,  
14 Chairman.

15 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Counsel, I--

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yep. Just going  
17 to-- I was just going to say that if we had  
18 inadvertently missed anyone who was registered to  
19 testify today and has not yet been called, please use  
20 the zoom and raise function and I will call on you in  
21 order. Seeing nine, I will now turn it back over to  
22 Chairman Gjonaj to adjourn the hearing and offer any  
23 closing remarks. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON GJONAJ: Thank you, Steve.  
25 I want to thank all of you for being a part of

2 today's hearing. Your testimony has been heard. It  
3 will be reflected on and I promise you that we are  
4 going to do what we can to rectify any of the wrongs  
5 and I'll continue to be that advocate for you and to  
6 all of the small businesses in New York City, the  
7 240,000 small businesses survive. We will thrive  
8 together when we come out of this pandemic and  
9 crisis. God bless you. Thank you.

10 [gavel]

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1 COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

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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 February 13, 2021