



Legislation Text

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Int. No. 338

By Council Members Narcisse, Restler and Hudson (in conjunction with the Brooklyn Borough President)

A Local Law in relation to a pilot program requiring the department of small business services to implement and report on small business incubators located within public housing facilities

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Public housing small business incubator pilot program. a. Definitions. As used in this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Adult. The term “adult” means any person who is 18 years of age or older;

Commissioner. The term “commissioner” means the commissioner of small business services;

Department. The term “department” means the department of small business services;

Housing authority. The term “housing authority” means the New York city housing authority;

Pilot program. The term “pilot program” means the public housing small business incubator pilot program established by this local law;

Relevant agency. The term “relevant agency” means the New York city economic development corporation, the department of youth and community development, any successor of an agency specified in this definition, and any other office or agency that the commissioner deems relevant;

Small business incubator. The term “small business incubator” means any comprehensive set of programs, training, or assistance meant to promote and support formal entrepreneurship.

b. Public housing small business incubator pilot program. 1. No later than December 31, 2023 the department, in coordination with any other relevant agency, shall develop and implement a three-year pilot

program which establishes at least one small business incubator located within a public housing facility in each borough.

2. The department, in partnership with the relevant agencies, shall conduct studies and engage directly with residents of public housing to determine the types of trainings and services offered at each incubator with a special focus on the following factors:

(a) the types of informal businesses already established by residents of such public housing facility or, at a minimum, the types of informal businesses commonly established by residents of public housing, in general;

(b) whether there are existing small business incubators available to support the needs of residents who own informal businesses, where availability is determined by an incubator's:

(i) distance from the relevant public housing facility;

(ii) whether the existing programs, trainings, and service offerings align with resident interest and demand;

(iii) programmatic capacity and average length of time spent on waitlists, if any; and

(iv) diverse scheduling options, including evening and weekend offerings; and

(c) public housing resident interest in areas of business not commonly served by existing small business incubators, including, but not limited to, creative industries such as graphic design, fashion, music, and media.

3. At least half of the trainings and services provided through the pilot program must:

(a) occur during evening hours and/or over the weekend; and

(b) be offered in English,

(c) be offered in languages other than English.

4. At a minimum, each participating incubator must:

(a) engage in outreach efforts targeting a diverse range of public housing residents, through efforts including, but not limited to, hosting information sessions, advertising in common areas like a building lobby or laundry area, visiting tenants' association meetings, as well as through social media, email communications,

and radio advertising;

(b) inform program participants of the federal Family Self Sufficiency Program and assist eligible participants with enrollment;

(c) seek to establish and grow a mentorship network of residents who have, at any point, engaged with a small business incubator, with a special focus on building connections between participants of programs offered by incubators located within a public housing facility.

(d) seek to establish and grow connections between program participants and local nonprofit small businesses assistance organizations;

(e) explore opportunities for participants to expand their business beyond their homes, including by encouraging increased participation in fairs and markets, as well as identifying and securing commercial space made available for participant use; and

(f) identify, advocate for, and/or create opportunities to expand participants' access to capital through credit funds, microloans, or other means intended to support low-income small business entrepreneurs.

c. Annual Report. No later than one year after the commencement of the pilot program, and annually thereafter, the department shall submit to the speaker of the council and the mayor a report regarding the status of the public housing small business incubator pilot program. Such report shall include, but is not limited to, the matters listed below, disaggregated by public housing facility:

1. demographic information, where applicable, for program participants, including, but not limited to age, gender, country of origin, primary or preferred language, English proficiency, highest level of education completed, and employment history, disaggregated by public housing facility;

2. demographic information, where applicable, for public housing residents who participated in programming offered by city-run small business incubators that are not part of the pilot program, including, but not limited to age, gender, country of origin, primary or preferred language, English proficiency, highest level of education completed, and employment history, disaggregated by the participant's public housing facility;

2. information regarding the type of business each program participant sought to establish or grow and an analysis of whether small business incubators established outside of the pilot program offered the necessary programs, trainings, and services to support such business initiatives;

3. information regarding the challenges that residents of public housing face when starting a small business;

4. information regarding the challenges that residents of public housing face when attempting to seek services from small business incubators which exist outside of the pilot program, including, but not limited to challenges associated with the incubator's location, program and training schedules, and relevance of programmatic offerings;

5. information regarding the pilot programming's capacity to meet public housing residents' demand for the pilot program's services in a timely manner, including information about the average amount of time spent on waitlists, if any, and recommendations on how to reduce or eliminate such wait times, disaggregated by training program or service;

6. information regarding the types of small businesses that program participants intended to create or grow, disaggregated by the training program or service, including, but not limited to:

(a) how many participants were starting new businesses and how many sought to grow existing businesses;

(b) whether participants had previously received training or services relating to the creation or expansion of small businesses and whether such services were offered by city agencies, nonprofit organizations, or private entities, and a description of such services; and

(c) whether participants who wished to establish or grow a small business were able to do so after participating in the incubator pilot program, as well as whether such participants remain engaged with the incubator and its offerings after meeting initial goals;

7. information regarding whether incubators were able to offer program participants with direct

financial assistance and, if not, whether they were able to connect program participants with entities that did ultimately provide financial assistance;

8. information regarding the pilot program incubator’s partnerships with existing businesses, minority and women owned businesses, and city agencies, and whether such partnerships were beneficial in terms of providing training, mentorship, employment, and/or contracting or partnership opportunities for program participants;

9. information regarding which trainings and services were most popular among program participants and why;

10. recommendations about additional or alternate training opportunities and services that could strengthen or expand the pilot program’s offerings and further support residents of public housing seeking to start or grow a small business; and

11. an analysis of the pilot program’s overall strengths and limitations, including recommendations about how to increase program participation and completion rates, increase partnerships with both public and private entities, and how best to expand the pilot program’s offerings to public housing facilities citywide.

§ 2. This local law takes effect immediately.