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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES SHOP YOUR CITY: BE NYC TO SUPPORT
BLACK-OWNED BUSINESSES**

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio and the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) Commissioner Jonnel Doris today announced Shop Your City: BE NYC, a targeted campaign to encourage New Yorkers to shop from the city’s Black-owned businesses.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every small business in our city – but our Black businesses have been hit especially hard,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “BE NYC is part of our commitment to create a recovery for all New Yorkers and help our small businesses succeed in this pandemic and beyond.”

“Black businesses have taken a tremendous hit because of this pandemic. BE NYC, the City’s first initiative to fight the racial wealth gap, will continue to find new and creative ways to support these businesses,” said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives J. Philip Thompson**. “The Shop Your City: BE NYC campaign will urge New Yorkers to shop local and help our small businesses come back stronger than ever.”

“Black businesses aren’t just places to purchase goods and services. They serve as cornerstone centers for communities across the City and resource hubs to share critical information with neighbors,” said **Jonnel Doris, Commissioner of NYC Department of Small Business Services**. “Now more than ever, shopping locally can make or break a business. Shop Your City: BE NYC, will encourage New Yorkers to shop at local Black-owned businesses during Black History Month and beyond.”

Launching during Black History Month, Shop Your City: BE NYC is a targeted campaign that aims to generate attention and support for Black businesses – which constitute 3.5% of all businesses in New York City. The Shop Your City: BE NYC campaign will:

- Spotlight Black businesses on social media that have continued to operate and serve their communities throughout the pandemic.
- Post online resources to help New Yorkers discover and shop at the City's Black-owned small businesses.
- Encourage New Yorkers to tag a small Black-owned business they’re supporting, using our Instagram story template.

In addition to the campaign, SBS will host a [Black History Month roundtable](#) event on February 25, highlighting past and present examples of resilience, resourcefulness and reimagination within the Black business community and overall lessons for NYC’s economic recovery.

Studies show that Black businesses have been severely impacted by the pandemic and are twice as likely to shut down during the pandemic. Black businesses as a whole saw a 41 percent decrease in business activity between February and April of 2020 alone. BE NYC, a first-of-its-kind model in a major American city to help address the racial wealth gap, is actively working to address the needs of struggling Black business owners during the pandemic and beyond.

For more information on the Shop Your City: BE NYC campaign visit nyc.gov/benyc.

"The pandemic has exposed long-standing disparities and inequalities in our city, and Black-owned businesses have suffered disproportionately over the past year," said **State Senator Zellnor Y. Myrie**. "I am grateful to SBS for spearheading this effort to encourage all New Yorkers to shop at our local Black-owned businesses, and look forward to additional supports from the City and State to help our business owners recover."

"Black Owned Businesses have been the backbone of our community for generations. The Shop Your City: BE NYC is a great initiative that will promote our local businesses to ensure their existence as we move through the pandemic and into rebuilding our city," said **State Senator Kevin Parker**.

"Before COVID-19, Black-owned business growth was on the rise. But today, many Black small-business owners in New York City are facing unique challenges because of COVID-19. Despite seeking financial assistance at much higher rates, Black business owners were significantly less likely to receive government and private funding. Black-owned small businesses depend on their community for survival," said **State Senator Robert Jackson**. The Shop Your City: BE NYC campaign is a great initiative that will encourage new waves of support from New Yorkers who will shop locally and help fuel the survival and resurgence of our small businesses."

"Black businesses matter – and healthy Black businesses are the backbone of healthy Black families and communities. The Shop Your City: BE NYC campaign is a powerful initiative that will help to spotlight excellent Black businesses; this is and has always been important but is more critical now than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic," said **Assembly Member Khaleel Anderson**. I am encouraged to see that the NYC Department of Small Business Services has worked to lead this initiative and will ensure that our office amplifies the launch of the campaign throughout Assembly District 31."

"Black-owned businesses are the backbone of the economic vitality of our communities. Before the pandemic, the racial gap in black entrepreneurship was stark— since the start of the pandemic, our black-owned businesses have been hit particularly hard and we are losing them every day," said **Assembly Member Robert Rodriguez**. "This initiative starts to bring recovery and support to their doors so they can survive and thrive."

"Our city has many great small businesses. Be sure to spend your dollars with local black businesses and entrepreneurs," said **Assembly Member Clyde Vanel**. "Let us keep more of our dollars circulating in our communities."

"Our city's COVID-19 recovery plan must emphasize Black-owned businesses. Through the Shop Your City: BE NYC initiative, Black entrepreneurs who were disproportionately hard hit as

a result of the pandemic, will be elevated and offered a citywide platform to market goods and services,” said **Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn**. “This initiative will also provide New Yorkers with more options to shop local. I thank the Mayor and Commissioner Doris for spotlighting our city's Black-owned businesses during this trying time for MWBEs.”

“Supporting Black-owned businesses is essential in generating generational wealth within communities of color,” said **Council Member Kevin C. Riley**. “It is important that New Yorkers are encouraged to spend our dollars within our communities. The Shop Your City: BE NYC campaign is the start to supporting and encouraging the patronizing of Black-owned business as well as black entrepreneurship. As a regular consumer of Black-owned goods, I applaud Mayor DeBlasio and Commissioner Jonell Doris on the launch of this campaign. Their support will ensure the viability of Black-owned businesses in NYC.”

“It is imperative that we support the sustenance of Black businesses in our city,” said **Council Member Adrienne Adams, co-chair of the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus of the NYC Council**. “The launch of Shop Your City: BE NYC, happens during Black History Month- a most significant time of the year. It will surely help boost the profile of essential small businesses. Be they local or virtual, the amplification of entrepreneurs via this initiative, will increase visibility and operating power.”

"Supporting black-owned businesses supports not only local entrepreneurs, but the long-term goal of fostering generational wealth in communities of color. I am grateful for the expansion of the BE NYC program and look forward to connecting Southeast Queens businesses to these new resources and highlighting some of our local black-owned businesses that have been diligently serving the community during this pandemic," said **Council Member I. Daneek Miller, Co-Chair of the Black, Latino, and Asian Caucus**.

"We cannot afford to lose our local restaurant and shops who contribute to our economic and cultural growth year-round, especially in Council District 45. The Shop Your City: BE NYC initiative is a lifeline and the catalyst that we need to change the future outlook for Black-owned businesses," said **Council Member Farah N. Louis, Vice Co-Chair of the New York City Council Black, Latino, and Asian Caucus**.

"Buying a scarf at your local Black-owned store might not seem like a world-changing activity. But individual actions add up. I started the Chamber On The Go as a way to support local businesses in Bed-Stuy and Crown Heights. Now this has become a City-wide model on how to support Black and minority-owned businesses. I am thrilled that the City is taking the next step of this philosophy. I urge you to run, as safely as possible during the snow, to your local Black-owned business. Please do your part in supporting the diversity that makes New York great with Shop Your City: BE NYC," said **Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.**

“Small business is the lifeblood of this great city,” said **Kenneth Ebie, Executive Director of Black Entrepreneurs (BE NYC)**. “In addition to providing wonderful goods and services for all New Yorkers to enjoy, Black businesses tend to employ from and invest in the Black community, so their success is critical to an inclusive economic recovery. We're excited to kick this off during Black History Month and look forward to sustained support for this initiative 365 days of the year.”

"New Yorkers investing in New Yorkers is how we beat the pandemic' said **Gayle Jennings-O'Byrne, Co-Founder, WOCstar Fund**. "And the Shop Your City: BE NYC campaign, is the easiest and best way to invest in the City's recovery."

"In the 90's, the fledgling entrepreneurs from Queens gave us FUBU - For Us By Us. Today, we need For Us, With Us. When you shop with a small Black-owned business (in or outside) your neighborhood, you make surviving, recovering, and thriving a collective endeavor. This makes the community, in the largest sense of the word, more resilient and hopeful," said **Jacquette M. Timmons, President + CEO, Sterling Investment Management, BE NYC Cabinet Members**. "Shop Your City: BE NYC will encourage New Yorkers to shop small Black-owned businesses."

"It's encouraging to see the Shop Your City: BE NYC campaign amplifying voices of Black entrepreneurs," said **Sekou Kaalund, Head of the Northeast Division for Chase Consumer Bank and BE Cabinet Member**. "By ensuring the visibility of Black-owned businesses, BE NYC is leading an important and necessary effort to support Black entrepreneurs on their road to success."

"The Shop Your City: BE NYC initiative is an important step in supporting and growing the City's Black-owned small businesses, both physical and virtual," said **Siddiq Bello, Principal Investigator of Social MBE and BE NYC Cabinet Member**. "The online guides and promotional spotlights, make finding and supporting these business easier than ever. This initiative is an important part of unlocking the economic potential of the City's Black-owned brick-and-mortar and e-commerce businesses."

"The Shop Your City: BE NYC campaign will help New Yorkers use our buying power in a smart way," said **Paul T. Williams, Jr., Attorney and Business Strategy Consultant, Co-Founder of Brown Hatchett & Williams, LLP and Williams Strategy Advisors and BE NYC Cabinet Member**. "Your economic support of Black businesses will save jobs, support families and keep neighborhoods strong in these tough times."

"The only way we are all going to make it out of this pandemic and recession is by working together," said **Donnel Baird, Founder of Bloc Power and BE NYC Cabinet Member**. "It's time to come together. Shopping at local minority owned businesses during this difficult time is a critical part of that, and we are proud of the City of New York for leading the way on preserving Black businesses."

"Throughout Black people's history in this nation, Black communities have been established when we support local Black businesses. From Greenwood in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to Hayti in Durham, North Carolina -- families, educational institutions, and cities thrived when Black people supported the businesses that formed our communities' foundation," said **Wole Coaxum, Founder and CEO of Mobility Capital Finance, Inc. and BE NYC Cabinet Member**. "This is the history that we must share with future generations. These will be the new foundations upon which our legacies flourish and prosper."

"Small Businesses are vital to the economic stability and rebuilding that is necessary in the communities in which they operate. During this time of continued political division, racial strife, and economic recession, Black communities and Black-owned businesses are being hit the

hardest,” said **Arva Rice, NYUL CEO & President**. “Shop Your City: BE NYC is exactly the type of initiative needed to ensure support for Black businesses, so they remain open, hopeful, and prepared for post-pandemic recovery and expansion”.

“Entrepreneurship is a key pathway to closing the racial wealth gap, and yet the pandemic’s devastation of small businesses has disproportionately impacted Black-owned shops, restaurants, contractors and service providers,” said **Valerie White, Executive Director of LISC NYC**. “LISC NYC is proud to support this important initiative launched by NYC Department of Small Business Services and Mayor de Blasio to support Black-owned business and attract the customers and sales they need now more than ever. So many of these businesses have been community anchors for generations, and losing them means losing generational wealth in communities steeped in history and culture. The faster relief and support is delivered to these small businesses, the sooner New York City will be on its way to recovery.”

"The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce enthusiastically supports the Shop Your City: BE NYC initiative,” said **Lloyd Williams, President and CEO of the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce**. “We feel that, to a large extent, it is up to the surrounding communities to support their local businesses so as to keep them alive, maintain local employment opportunities at these businesses, and create a local circular economy. It is a fantastic and important economic initiative. We strongly encourage all to participate and pass the word."

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