

Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams, SBS Commissioner Kim Kick off National Small Business Week

May 2, 2022

Commissioner Kevin D. Kim, Small Business Services: We are so excited to be launching National Small Business Week right here in Bed-Stuy. We are launching a five boroughs in five days tour of New York City resources for small businesses. We are here today because we are fulfilling one of Mayor Eric Adams' visions of bringing New York City government to the people, and we are going out to meet where small business owners and New Yorkers are. So, today I truly want to thank the sister city agencies that are all here. We also want to thank all of our elected officials, and of course, we have a small business owner herself who will be speaking. She's the real guest of honor today. So thank you for that.

Commissioner Kim: I do want to acknowledge all the partners here today. We have from a number of the city agencies and we have our FDNY Commissioner Laura Kavanaugh. We have our DCWP Commissioner Vilda Mayuga. We have our elected officials, Council Member Julie Menin. We have our council member whose district this is right here, Chi Osse, and then all our partners who've set up tables to really provide the resources that small businesses need, the Bridge State Development Corporation, the Bed-Stuy Restoration Corporation, Bed-Stuy Gateway Bid. I know Dale Charles is here, Tompkins Avenue Merchants Association, and last but not least the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, Randy Peers, the president, is here as well, and then a real special thank you to APO working with the Street Vendor Project that donated 500 meals for everyone who's volunteering here today. Let's give them a warm round of applause, please.

[Applause]

Commissioner Kim: So as I mentioned, this is a critical time for small businesses. They are the backbone of our economy, and this administration under Mayor Adams has put them at the center of the Equitable Economic Recovery Plan. As a son of immigrant small business owners myself, I personally know what it means to help a

small business succeed, what it means for a family, what it means for a community, and what it means for the city. So please know that small business owners around the city, SBS, are at your disposal. We are here to help you, whether it's trying to access capital, whether it's trying to get commercial lease assistance, whether it's trying to connect you with great employees coming through our Workforce1 Centers.

Commissioner Kim: There are so many services that we can provide. Please reach out to us. That's the purpose of today's goal. Tomorrow we are out in Staten Island at Borough Hall. Wednesday, we're in Chinatown, also celebrating AAPI Heritage Month. Thursday, we're in Jackson Heights in Little Colombia, celebrating Cinco de Mayo. Then on Friday, we cap off this week in Little Yemen and Boogie Down Bronx, so we hope that all of you will come out and enjoy and have fun with us those days. Thank you.

Commissioner Kim: I'd like to first introduce the city council member who has always welcomed us into his district. We did an event a couple of weeks ago as well over at CUP, Angela Yee's coffeehouse in Bed-Stuy, Chi Ossé.

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Commissioner Kim: Thank you, Council Member Ossé. Now I would like to introduce Shawanda Clarence, a business owner right here in Bed-Stuy who partnered up with SBS, and she'll tell the story herself. So Shawanda.

[...]

Commissioner Kim: Thank you, Shawanda.

[...]

Commissioner Kim: I think she says it better than I do, everything that SBS does, but we really do want you to know we're here for you, and we want to be your continued partner. So thank you so much. We are now joined by Deputy Mayor of Economic and Workforce Development Maria Torres-Springer. She's a true champion of small businesses. She herself was a former Small Business Services commissioner and is really leading the fight alongside Mayor Eric Adams for an equitable economic recovery. I'd love for her to come up and say a few words, Deputy Mayor.

Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer, Economic & Workforce Development: Thank you, commissioner. Good afternoon, everyone. It is fantastic to be here in Bed-Stuy. It's fantastic to be kicking off National Small Business Week, which we, of course, in the Adams administration, really across government, really do believe that National Small Business Week is an opportunity for every New Yorker to show just a little bit more appreciation, some extra love to our small businesses across the five boroughs.

Deputy Mayor Torres-Springer: Now, we all know that when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, it really posed a historic challenge to New York City's small businesses. But in every borough, small business owners and workers demonstrated remarkable courage and resilience and really stepped up to serve their communities. So that's why in the Rebuild, Renew, and Reinvent Economic Blueprint that Mayor Adams and I released just a few weeks ago, we wanted to make sure that we put small businesses front and center. Our goal across the many different agencies of government is to make sure that small businesses have the resources they need to open, to reopen, to stay open, and really to flourish.

Deputy Mayor Torres-Springer: We do know that the best way to do that, the best way to make a difference for our small businesses is meeting them where they are and doing the type of outreach within communities that most need our support. So what you see here today is really New York City mobilizing. We're working to live up to that economic blueprint, which really calls for fortifying commercial corridors across the five boroughs and providing resources like the ones that are being shared by my colleagues right here and working with business improvement districts and so many community stakeholders.

Deputy Mayor Torres-Springer: Truly, events like this one are part of what we believe really needs to happen to restart our economic engines, because it's about getting services to businesses. It's about connecting New Yorkers with quality jobs. It's about leveraging technology in every way possible. So we want to make sure that we see New Yorkers, entrepreneurs, job seekers in every borough, that we're getting resources to them, and we're going to do just that. This week and every week, I know as part of this week's activities, we'll be in so many different neighborhoods in the city, St. George in Staten Island, Chinatown in Manhattan, Jackson Heights in Queens, and Morris Park in the Bronx and many, many others. So thanks to all of you for being here. What we know is that in order to accelerate the recovery of our small businesses and by extension our entire economy that we have to stay focused. We have to be hands-on. We have to be deep in partnership with communities across New York City. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Kim: Thank you, deputy mayor. Before I bring up the chair of the Small Business Committee and the City Council, I do want to acknowledge Ralph Bumbaca, who is the New York City Market president for TD Bank. Look, there's a TD Bank right behind him. But thank you for coming with the team, and thank you for your support for small businesses in the city. Now I'd like to bring up the Small Business Committee chair from the City Council, Julie Menin. She's been a strong advocate and a great partner to the administration. Thank you so much, Council Member Julie Menin.

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Commissioner Kim: Thank you, Chair Menin, and as Chair Menin said, eight million New Yorkers, if you just go out one time every day, shop local, it makes a big, big difference. Now, for the moment you've been waiting for, the man who needs very little introduction, but the man who runs around New York City just getting stuff done. He gets stuff done for Brooklyn, he gets stuff done for small businesses, and he gets stuff done for all New Yorkers, Mayor Eric Adams.

[Applause]

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you. You were the man we were waiting for, commissioner. This was just really your idea, and just really getting on the ground and dealing with inspiring, opening our small businesses. We have some real partners. I cannot say enough about Julie Menin, the councilwoman, just really understood. As a small business owner, she understands the bureaucracy and navigating the bureaucracy and our amazing Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer. We are going into the agencies and look at how are we getting in the way of small businesses operating. Far too often, instead of becoming an ally, we become the person that's bringing the adversity to get your businesses open. We want to look at how do we cut the red tape, how do we stop the duplication of the same forms, and just really help our small businesses get up and operating.

Mayor Adams: If our city agencies are not on the same page with you, then they would never turn it around. We could run as many policies that we want, but if you don't have the support from city agencies, the Department of Buildings, the Department of Consumer Affairs, the police department, all of these entities play a role in making sure your businesses can open and operate in the right way and that is what we committed to do. So this is a great day where we are kicking off Small Business Week with the big

announcement this morning, I signed an executive order on a Small Business Advisory Commission made up of who? Small business people. And it's going to be a collaboration of the core part of our blueprint for New York City's economic recovery that we revised and released in March thanks to the deputy mayor, putting in place that blueprint, we want to rebuild, renew, and reinvent in a real way.

Mayor Adams: The commission will be made up of small business leaders throughout the five boroughs and will focus on cutting red tape, improving business services, and we're going to take the show on the road, because what good is a good proposal if you have to come downtown to get it done? We need to be mobile, and we need to come to your business districts, your bids, and other locations. That's what we are doing. Big city, but we are run by small businesses, and I see some small business owners that are here, from the artists to those who sell goods. It's good to see many of you because I patronize your business all the time.

Mayor Adams: This afternoon, I was up in Washington Heights, walked into a salon that does nails and pedicures, and I got my first pedicure done. My feet feel good. My feet feel good. So from coffee shops to cleaners to barber shops to bodegas, it's all here. We want a vibrant, resilient, and reliable city, and we have to be here on the ground to get it done. We lost far too many businesses. We see the gates were closed during COVID. These strips have been decimated through COVID. So we are saying to people, not only shopping online that so many people did during COVID, but come and wait in line in one of your local businesses, because they hire locally. The dollars move throughout your community and it plays such an important role. So as we celebrate the National Small Business Week by taking the right steps with an amazing commissioner, I'm so excited about the commissioner and what he's doing. We're going to be bringing services, support, and the SBS mobile unit to all five boroughs five days of the week, starting right here in BK, Brooklyn.

Mayor Adams: So we're excited about what we're going to do, and each event in each borough will feature neighborhoods, specific themes, and entertainments and giveaways. There's going to be resource fairs, as well as learning about what services we have in SBS, because oftentimes we leave too much on the table, because we are not aware of what services are available. I want to reach the point that when a businessperson is open, that you see a city person, an agency comes in. You should not have [inaudible]. You should be welcoming them walking in, because they're figuring out how to keep your doors open, how to make sure you keep seats in your restaurants, how do you expand by using social media to draw people into your business? We want

to give you the tools to get it right, so the opportunities to meet representatives from a variety of city agencies so we can inform you how not to be fined. If you want to start a business, why should you wait until you start a business to try to navigate how to get the business open?

Mayor Adams: So we're doing a lot of things about the suspension of startups, just really going on the ground, hearing from you one-on-one on what you would like to see us do as a city to keep our small businesses operating. And we are communicating in various languages. This city is a city of many languages and culture, so we're going to be focusing on everything from Spanish to Chinese, Arabic, Korean, Haitian, Creole, Sak Pase, Bengali, all of these different communities that we are going to do to boost our small businesses, cut bureaucracy and the red tape, and have this place to be a welcome mat for small businesses in our city. So commissioner, thank you for doing this. This is so important. Let's keep our small businesses up, operating, and continue to thrive and grow the city. Appreciate you, appreciate you all for being out here.

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