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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 4, 2021

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**CITY LAUNCHES TRAINING PROGRAM TO HELP SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS
BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE**

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio and NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) Commissioner Jonnel Doris today announced the launch of “Training for Your Employees,” a new resource that provides business owners and their employees with training in digital literacy, marketing tools, online security, and COVID-19 safety.

“As our city fights back COVID-19, every business deserves access to the tools it needs to serve its customers virtually,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “These free training courses will help New Yorkers stay safe while shopping local, and help businesses attract new customers and keep their teams safe. I urge every small business owner to take advantage.”

“The pandemic has altered the way we conduct business,” said **J. Phillip Thompson, Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives**. “This program will help train small business employees to get the digital skills needed to thrive in a post-COVID 19 business environment.”

“The pandemic accelerated the need for small businesses to make better use of technology for their everyday activities and to adopt new safety protocols. The digital divide remains an obstacle for many, particularly those in underserved communities,” said **Jonnel Doris, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Small Business Services**. “The Training for Your Employees program is designed to address that divide by helping small business owners and their employees navigate digital tools and operate safely to optimize their operations and reach new levels of success.”

The online, no-cost training will prepare small business owners and their employees to use digital platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Office 365, and Google Workspace. Live instruction will be provided by Lehman College. Select training programs will also be available in Spanish and Chinese (Mandarin). Training courses include:

- Communication: Google Meet and Gmail
- Document Creation: Google Docs, Sheets, Slides
- Scheduling and Managing Zoom Meetings (for Hosts)
- Microsoft Office Basics
- Cloud Storage: Microsoft OneDrive and more.

Businesses can learn more about the program’s eligibility criteria and access the application at [NYC.Gov/TrainingEmployees](https://nyc.gov/trainingemployees).

“I’m excited Lehman’s School of Continuing and Professional Studies will be able to offer this free program to give our small businesses and their employees the opportunity to learn new technology skills for their future success,” said **Lehman College President Daniel Lemons**.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has produced an urgent need to help struggling workers and small businesses adapt through this difficult time and beyond,” said **Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity Executive Director Matthew Klein**. “We are pleased to partner with Small Business Services and build on our track record of successful workforce development programs to provide free training to employees to get vital digital skills that will help them in their careers, and also help their businesses meet pressing needs.”

“The ‘Training for your Employees’ program will help local businesses adapt to an increasingly digital business world,” said **Council Member Mark Gjonaj, Chair of the New York City Council Committee on Small Business**. “By empowering owners and employees with COVID-19 awareness, online business, cybersecurity and marketing tools, we are giving NYC’s small businesses a fighting chance to thrive in an ever changing landscape.”

"The sudden emergence of the coronavirus pandemic has created a need for all industries and especially cities, to pivot towards digital transformation," said **Council Member Robert Holden, Chair of the New York City Council Committee on Technology**. "Our small businesses have struggled in this rapidly changing world, and need all the help they can get. I applaud the city for offering this resource to business owners and their employees and encourage all to use it."

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