

# NYC Neighborhood Revitalization Program Aims to Boost Small Business Corridors

By Madina Toure • 01/31/17 11:00am



SBS Commissioner Gregg Bishop leads a storefront improvement tour with elected officials in the Rockaway. Madina Toure/Observer

The Department of Small Business Services has kicked off the application process for the second round of its Neighborhood 360° Fellows program that pairs neighborhood development professionals with community-based organizations to help complete commercial revitalization projects across the five boroughs.

The fellowship program connects the fellows with the organizations to boost small business corridors and their larger neighborhoods. The fellows—who have a full-time,

paid position—are placed in New York City community-based organizations for roughly 10 months to execute significant commercial revitalization projects and better connect their stakeholders to city resources.

“Vibrant neighborhoods help make New York a dynamic and exciting place to live,” Small Business Services Commissioner Gregg Bishop said. “These fellows will lead impactful commercial revitalization projects in small business corridors across the five boroughs that will benefit our communities and our residents.”

The fellowship program is part of Neighborhood 360°, an initiative that SBS launched in October to strengthen and revitalize commercial districts across all five boroughs. The \$3 million annual grant program, a partnership between SBS and community stakeholders, creates customized, commercial revitalization programs geared toward neighborhoods’ specific needs. Those needs are determined through a series of Commercial District Needs Assessments conducted across the city.

The fellowship program is currently finishing up a pilot period that will conclude in March and is now accepting applications for its second cohort through March 12. The new cohort of fellows will begin leading projects in June 2017. Host sites develop a project for the fellow to carry out over the course of the 10 months.

The fellows carry out projects around business attraction and retention, which involves drawing and/or retaining businesses to sustain the retail mix of a commercial corridor to better serve the community and lower the retail vacancy. Projects also center on rate as well as merchant organizing—spearheading the strategic planning, outreach and organizing efforts to establish a new merchant’s association or reinvigorate an existing one. And projects also focus on place-making: promoting a sense of place that makes the most of the distinct features of the commercial corridor, including key traits of the neighborhood and initiating a public space for the community.

The new cohort will be working with Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District and the Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco) in the Bronx as well as the Fulton Area Business Alliance, the Local Development Corporation of East New York and Park Slope Fifth Ave Business Improvement District in Brooklyn. They will also work with Chinatown Partnership and Lower East Side Partnership in Manhattan, along with Asian Americans for Equality and Sunnyside Shines Business Improvement District in Queens and the Northfield Community Local Development Corporation on Staten Island.

Earlier this month, SBS announced that it was taking applications until January 27 from so-called minority- and women-owned businesses and enterprises looking to learn from established entrepreneurs in supportive mentorship groups for its 28-week Corporate Alliance Program/Entrepreneurs' Organization initiative.

Participating companies must be in the categories of professional services firms (like advertising or marketing), accounting and legal, standard services firms firm (such as janitorial or building maintenance), catering and security services and goods firms (everything from information technology equipment to office supplies to energy-saving light bulbs).

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