



AARON PESKIN

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 3, 2022

TO: Kate Sofis, Office of Economic & Workforce Development Director
Diana Ponce De Leon, OEWD Invest in Neighborhoods Director
Katy Tang, OEWD Office of Small Business Director

FROM: Supervisor Aaron Peskin

RE: Follow up to 5/11/2022 Hearing at Budget & Appropriations – OEWD
Equity Plan & Direct Small Business Relief

Thank you for participating in the Board's May 11 hearing on the Office of Economic & Workforce Development (OEWD) plan for direct financial relief to small business within the larger context of the Department's overall FY 22/23 budget. In addition to requesting the Department's organizational chart, I also asked that the Director respond to the critical need for a clear Equity Plan that would guide the Department's investments and programming.

By way of background, on February 9, 2021, over 20 community-based organizations from across the City submitted a letter (recorded in File No. 210350) to Mayor Breed with recommendations on the hiring of a new OEWD Director in the wake of Joaquin Torres's appointment to the Assessor-Recorder's Office. At the core of those recommendations was a desire to see a department that prioritized true equity and diversity in its workforce investments, staffing, grant allocations and low-barrier access to loan programs and capital resources, particularly in the wake of a pandemic that exacerbated the worst inequities in our society. While Director Sofis was unable to participate in that first hearing, it was important to hear from leadership last month on the Department's continuing work to support our immigrant, low-income, BIPOC and women workers, social enterprises, and small businesses.

Out of respect for the Budget & Appropriations Committee's time, we were not able to cover everything in one hearing. I offered to follow up with a letter of inquiry outlining additional questions for discussion at our next budget briefing. Please respond in writing to the following requests for information:

- 1) Please report on the current model of OEWD support for monolingual and ESL small businesses, both in helping merchants (including those who do not regularly access resources online) to apply for local, state and federal relief programs and in marketing the availability of those resources in ethnic media.

- 2) For each OEWD program that provides direct relief to small businesses, how many grant recipients are there total and how much funding have they received?
- 3) While neighborhood data is helpful, there are many small business owners citywide who should be able to access small business relief. Please provide a breakdown of the ethnic/gender demographics of who is receiving grants and loans from the City, and how much of that is general fund/Department funding and how much is federal and state funding specifically for COVID relief?
- 4) The Commercial District Interventions make up the second biggest investment category (at \$16.6M) next to Technical Assistance (\$16.8M). Highlights pulled in the OEWD presentation list Supervisor addbacks as key elements of the program. Please provide a full breakdown of the programs and events funded through this Commercial District Interventions, and which are funded through the Department's general budget and which are funded through Board of Supervisors addbacks.
- 5) What metrics does OEWD use to track the utility and priority of programs like "Shop and Dine in the 49", versus using those funds for direct relief, tenant improvement or start-up funds for merchants?
- 6) The OEWD 5/11/22 presentation lists Safety Ambassadors as a key element of the Commercial District Interventions. Please provide a breakdown of every Ambassador program funded through OEWD, for how much, to which grantee, and for what geographic area of coverage. Please also delineate any overlap from pre-existing Ambassador programs funded through Community Benefit District/Business Improvement District assessment fees or other Ambassador programs funded through other agencies like the Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA).
- 7) What is the typical wait time from public noticing of an open application process to deployment of funds to recipients and has there been an improvement on this wait time since last year?
- 8) Please outline the equity criteria for your grants programs. For example, I note that the food commissary grant is only applicable within the geographic boundaries of Community Benefit Districts or Cultural Districts, and while I understand the goals there, it really leaves out a lot of neighborhoods with deep inequities, including immigrant and low-income neighborhoods at risk of gentrification and displacement, including Chinatown and large swaths of the Mission and Excelsior.
- 9) How is OEWD/OSB working with the State and other city Departments who may have access to tailored funding that OEWD can leverage for grants, small business incentives, and workforce development? For example, are there environmentally sustainable tax credits or incentives for small businesses to access specific infrastructure at a discount, like commercial refrigeration or water-conserving laundromat equipment?

Thank you for your continued openness to improving the City's services and equitable programming for small businesses. I look forward to your responses and discussing more.



Aaron Peskin