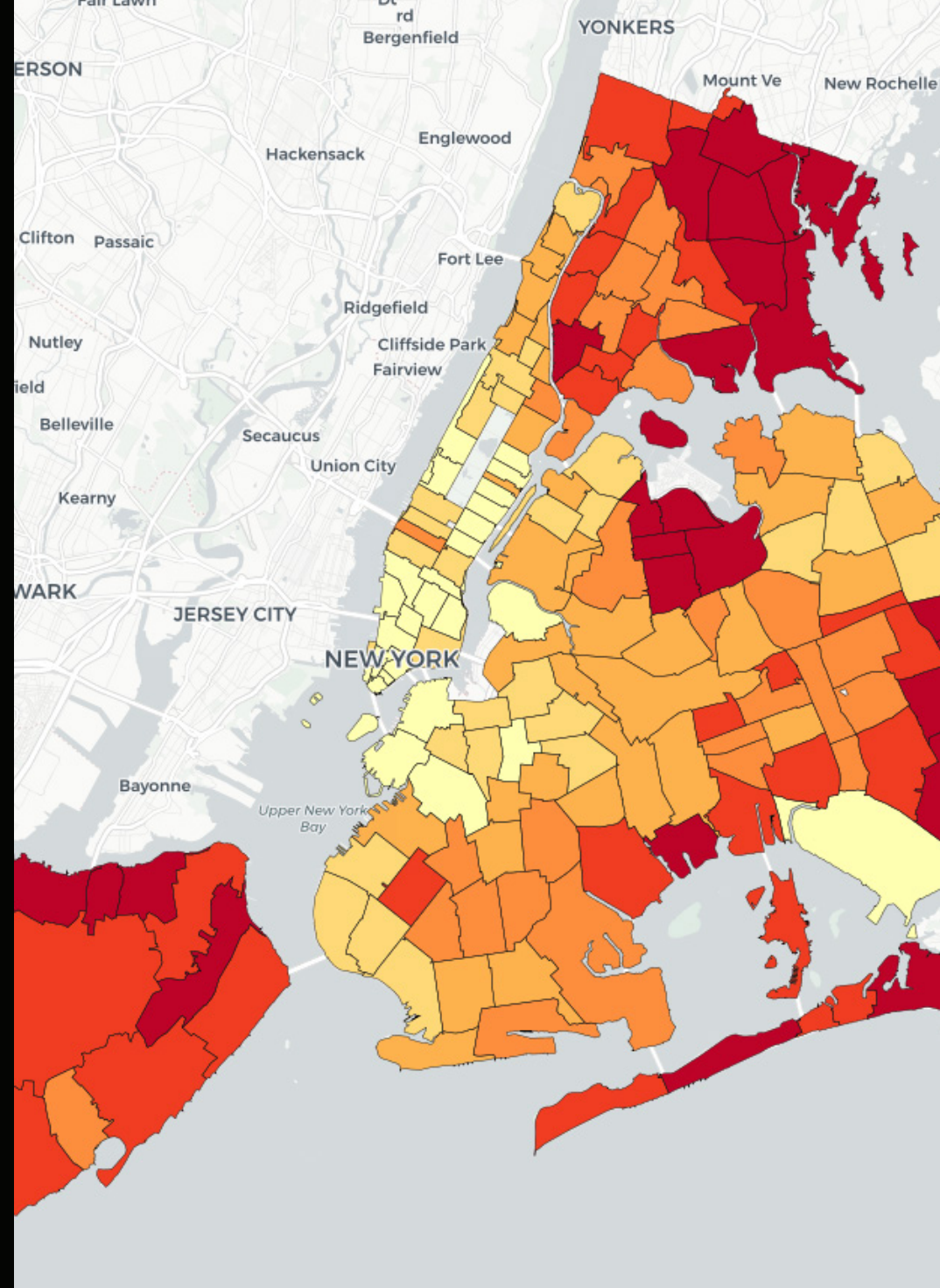


Recovery For All

A Vision for New York City's
Equitable Economic Recovery

NY Workforce Recovery Strategy Group
July 2020





New York City must turn its focus to a local economic recovery centered on equity

In response to the growing crisis of unemployment and small business collapse in New York City as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, over 80 leaders from the private and human services sectors have partnered to form the **NY Workforce Recovery Strategy Group** and create space for a solutions-oriented discussion to the current economic challenges.

Together, this group of leaders and experts have developed strategies for NYC's recovery in the following areas:

- » Education & Training Ecosystem for the Displaced Workforce & Marginalized Communities
- » Relief Programs for Individuals & Hard-Hit Communities
- » Rebuilding through Public Works & Direct Public Employment
- » Recovery for Local Small Businesses & Nonprofits and Support for New Business Development

An economic and workforce development strategy focused on opportunity, equity, education and training will reshape New York City's economy to create healthier communities, more skilled workers, deeper talent pools, and a more resilient business climate.

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COVID-19 Has Exposed Deep Inequities in NYC

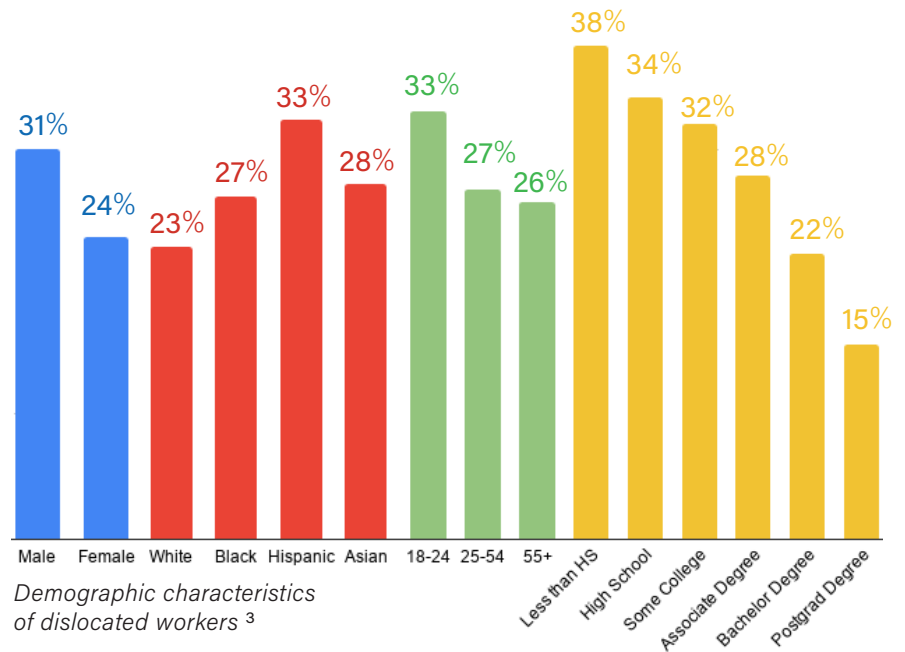
New York City was the national epicenter for COVID-19 crisis. The health and economic impacts have caused sudden and deep damage to the city's economy and claimed the lives of over 20,000 New Yorkers - 88% of whom were persons of color.¹ Through May, over 1.25 million New Yorkers faced unemployment and steep economic insecurity - 892,000 private sector and government jobs were lost, and 330,000 independent contractors filed for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. The city's unemployment rate stood at 18.3% - with marginalized communities facing the highest rates of displacement.²

The pandemic has shown us who keeps our city running - food delivery workers, home health aides and nurses, cab drivers, custodial workers among many. Despite their essential status to our economy, inequity here expresses itself as low wages, few safety supports, and long and unstable schedules.

The recent weeks of peaceful protests over the current and historically unequal treatment of Black and Brown people by institutions and systems of power have made it abundantly clear that New Yorkers want a stronger safety net and economy that proactively benefits the many, not the few.

An equitable recovery requires bold and decisive action and must center on:

- » Hardest hit and marginalized communities
- » Small businesses and community-based organizations
- » Racial and economic justice
- » Voices of a diverse community of leaders



¹ Age-adjusted rates of lab confirmed COVID-19 cases. NYC Health Department (April 16, 2020). See: <https://on.nyc.gov/3i4Pyo>

^{2, 3} The Covid-19 New York City Economy Three Months In: Reopening, and a Continuing Low-Wage Worker Recession. Center for New York City Affairs (June 2020). See: bit.ly/2O36q0W

Guiding Principles for Policy Development & Investment

City and State leaders should focus on building the foundation of a **21st century local, interconnected and participatory economy that provides resiliency and well-being for all**. This requires prioritizing the needs of communities, job seekers and businesses that have been hardest hit by this pandemic and the systemic marginalization and disinvestment that existed prior to the COVID-19 crisis and subsequent recession.

We urge the Mayor's administration and City Council to take a leadership role in the implementation of these recommendations for an equitable local recovery, and to appropriately advocate to their State and Federal colleagues for the changes necessary to be innovative and adequately resourced. Without new sources of revenue coming from the NYS Governor and Legislature, as well as significant investments from the Federal government, the equitable recovery that New Yorkers need at this historic moment will not succeed.

- » **“Back to normal” is not good enough:** “Normal” for millions of New Yorkers meant multiple low-wage jobs with little mobility, no access to healthcare or other benefits, little economic security and unsafe working conditions, and unpredictable schedules. A stronger and inclusive economy that ensures job quality, career mobility, living wage pay and benefits, stable schedules, and safe working conditions is the new starting line.
- » **Prioritize & collaborate with impacted communities:** Ensure that programs and investments prioritize the communities, individuals and small businesses that have been hardest hit by this pandemic, and particularly those facing historic marginalization and disinvestment. Work in collaboration with community based organizations and local stakeholders to build policy, programs and investments, enabling innovation not regulation.
- » **No austerity budgeting - Invest in a sustainable economy built from the bottom-up:** Rebuilding NYC's economy with a focus on its workforce and local small businesses is an investment in our future economy and tax base, not an act of charity. An equitable recovery plan must reprioritize and redirect resources toward community investments through a combination of new revenue streams and increased cuts in other portions of the City budget.



Education & Training Ecosystem for the Displaced Workforce & Marginalized Communities

New York City and State have consistently underinvested in adult education and job training over the course of decades. These failed policies and inadequate systems have sustained racial and economic inequity, and a continued impoverishment of our communities. New Yorkers who were failed by the public school system have been abandoned as adults without access to education and training that would empower them with real economic opportunity with living wages, career mobility and job quality.

The pandemic has had tragic consequences for unemployed, underemployed and low-wage workers. If the City does not take action to support New Yorkers in short-term hiring and relief efforts as well as long-term training and career development, the racial and economic inequity across the city will be worse in 2025 than it was in 2015. Now is the time to deeply invest in strengthening our communities and economic future by building a system that is data informed, ensures that services are easy to access, and is responsive to labor market needs and the needs of New Yorkers.

Our recommendations for education and training programs are structured to reflect short- and long-term timelines and specific communities. They include a short-term focus on job placement strategies, while investing in in-depth career and skills development in the long-term to help businesses and New Yorkers build a more resilient, nimble and modern economy.



Recommendations



Develop, expand and fund employment programs that meet immediate relief efforts to jumpstart businesses and (re)hiring including transitional employment, wage subsidy, work based learning programs and apprenticeships

These types of programs support and incentivize re-hiring, diverse new hiring, and retention of existing employees.

- » Strong program models to include and expand upon are 9/11 Emergency Employment Program, programs funded by the the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act after the 2008 recession, and Apprenticeships with Intent to Hire
- » Ensure that flexibility and decreased administrative burden is built into these programs to maximize employer, particularly small business, input and participation
- » Wages earned should not count toward public benefits thresholds in order to enable New Yorkers to maintain public housing, SNAP and other critical supports

Enable contract flexibility for workforce development contracts reflective of COVID&post-COVID requirements

City agencies need to preserve and expand contract and program flexibility that has been developed in response to COVID to support all workforce programs in the post-COVID reality, through a collaborative process with service providers.

- » Provide quick agency approval and build in flexible performance outcomes that are reflective of COVID and post-COVID requirements such as virtual/remote training, case management, testing and credentialing. Basic parameters for flexibility include: how contract funding is used for OTPS vs. staff wages; partnership flexibility enabling multiple types of organizations to complete job placements and support services based on client needs and interests; shifting program delivery and design in real time (ex. program's target population, outreach methods); shifting expected outcomes such as job placement and wage levels
- » Advocate toward relevant State and Federal agencies to enable licensing and credentialing changes that need to take place (ex. TABE requirement for proctors)
- » Ensure that contracts cover the direct per-participant costs of providing quality services
- » Fund professional development of trainers and workforce staff to ensure quality virtual training and supports
- » Ensure that contracts cover the full direct per-participant costs of providing quality services



Provide guidance and fund supplies and infrastructure to ensure COVID-safe in-person training

- » Includes but is not limited to personal protective equipment (PPE) for clients and trainers, protective and cleaning equipment within facilities, screening capacity, transportation supports, and infrastructure investments such as building virtual training capacity
- » Provide access to PPE manufacturers for social service providers

Use a local outreach and referral networks to support targeted local hiring in hardest hit communities

- » Networks should center on community-based organizations and chambers of commerce, and businesses in industries that will quickly re-open such as construction, tech, healthcare, and education
- » This approach should be integrated into all government driven jobs, especially those created in response to COVID-19 such as contract tracers, resource navigators, and senior feeding programs

Create resources, opportunities and incentives for employers to work with service providers and colleges to quickly infuse labor market needs into curriculum design & hiring

Leverage and empower existing collaboratives as clearinghouses to scale curriculum design, job openings, hiring efforts, employer engagement, outreach and retention with priority for marginalized communities through partnerships with community-based organizations.

- » Program models include: SBS Industry Partnerships, DOE Career and Technical Education (CTE) Industry Commissions, DOE CTE Industry Scholars Program, and CUNY Sector Innovation Specialists

Strengthen connections between union and non-union training programs and strengthen pre-apprenticeship programs

- » Expand existing pre-apprenticeship programs and develop new programs in growing sectors such as tech and healthcare that prepare potential trainees on relevant foundational skills to ensure successful entry and completion
- » Include unions in workforce development conversations to understand skill gaps and build a more integrated and accessible workforce system



Develop, expand and fund a city-wide 21st century career development system focused on training, upskilling, employment & education supports for a post-COVID economy

Major economic forces are shaping our city today - automation and emerging technologies that shift expectations and skill needs of workers and employers, and a historically tight labor market suddenly hit by drastic unemployment and decimation of service industries. In order to prepare New Yorkers to meet these pressures, New York City requires a city-wide 21st century career development system that weaves high school and postsecondary education with the workforce and economic development systems.

- » Align programs to labor market demand in high growth sectors, incl. tech and healthcare, both of which have proven to be more resilient and vital during the pandemic
 - » Bridge the digital divide by ensuring that workers and program participants have access to technology and the internet through increases in broadband availability, technical assistance, and devices (ex. laptops, tablets)
 - » Expand digital skills training for workers who have been displaced or are adversely affected by automation
 - » Build 21st century skills into all workforce programs, incl. critical digital and cognitive skills, social and emotional skills, adaptability and resilience, and communication
 - » Design and deliver all economic development programs with workforce development and adult literacy strategies
- » Expand paid work based learning programs - including internships, apprenticeships, and applied learning opportunities and degree programs - within high school and postsecondary education through collaboration with workforce development providers and employers
 - » Build a standardized set of metrics and outcomes that are developed in partnership with public and private funders and service providers
 - Incentivize effective outcomes that support career advancement and skill and credential attainment, not just job placement
 - Leverage and build up on the City's common metrics which include shared definitions of success and measured outcomes; collect, share, monitor and assess uniform data across public and private workforce programming (designed with privacy issues in mind); and engage the philanthropic community around adoption of and alignment with common metrics
 - » Expand adult literacy and bridge programs to ensure all workers can access training opportunities
 - » Provide support and wrap around services to participants (ex. childcare, transportation, and health care)
 - » Support worker ownership programs and skills training for cooperative business management
 - » Expand the practice adopted by agencies like DYCD of designing public and private programming with direct input from practitioners



Integrate workforce development into all economic development efforts that arise to jumpstart the economy & build in sustainable funding sources

All major economic development projects and initiatives must include substantial workforce training investments that create equitable career pathways for all New Yorkers in the new post-COVID economy. Public works projects will necessarily require resources to fill, modify or build talent pipelines. Where possible, those investments in human capital should prioritize skills that lead to recognized credentials and/or are valued in the labor market beyond the scope of a given public works project to ensure local talent is prepared to access new hiring opportunities.

- » For economic development initiatives sponsored by City entities like the Economic Development Corporation (including specific development partnerships with corporations, and sector-wide initiatives such as New York Works) all RFPs and contracts should include language requiring the private sector partners to detail how they will implement and invest in a pipeline connecting local workers to trainings and to jobs.
- » Establish hiring goals for disadvantaged and local workers on projects involving City resources such as land, tax credits, or direct funding. Designate a monitoring agency (such as WKDEV) and/or an accountability process between partnering community-based organizations and business entities carrying out the project to ensure development projects achieve and maintain

their workforce goals, evaluating the success of development projects on the basis of how well they create jobs for New Yorkers in need of employment.

- » Develop a flexible workforce training fund that can provide sustainable, long-term funding for training programs across all agencies and initiatives. This fund should be made up of the two major stakeholders driving economic development in NYC:
 - Economic development initiatives sponsored by City & State entities such as NYCEDC and ESD — All future economic development proposals by public entities should include a portion of a project's subsidies into this city-wide workforce fund. This funding should be a meaningful portion of the project's total public cost - approx. 10% of the full public subsidy/investment should be directed at workforce training initiatives.
 - The city's employer community — Private sector companies doing business or looking to grow in the city should contribute to the development of the skilled labor pool they will be hiring and that will be fueling their growth. The City should develop a mechanism for all businesses to pay into the system-wide fund, for example through an annual payroll tax contribution (ex. Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund is supported by a 0.056% contribution rate from all employers, administered as a payroll tax similar to unemployment insurance contributions).



Rebuilding Through Public Works & Direct Public Employment

New York City can leverage this moment of crisis through robust public works programs. This includes investing in rebuilding and repairing existing infrastructure — including transportation, education, recreation, housing and community facilities — and making targeted new investments that promote equity, access to opportunity, and long term careers. Priority should be given to investments in communities most heavily affected by the public health and economic crisis.

Public investment in a large-scale set of infrastructure projects (both physical and social infrastructure) could achieve two key goals at once: employing tens of thousands of New Yorkers whose private sector jobs have been lost in the crisis, and helping New York address a looming crisis of even greater magnitude — the climate crisis.

- » Invest in accelerated public projects to repair and rebuild public infrastructure
- » Invest in longer-term infrastructure projects that create equitable opportunity
- » Potential projects include Broadband Installation and Digital Infrastructure; Repairs, Enhancements, and Greening of NYCHA Facilities; Public Transportation; the “Cleaner and Greener New York” plan; Public Health Infrastructure; Childcare Infrastructure; Social & Opportunity Infrastructure



Recommendations



Invest in accelerated public projects to repair and rebuild public infrastructure & longer-term infrastructure projects that create equitable opportunity

New York City's aging infrastructure posed a threat to the city's long-term economic health even before the current crisis. To help get thousands of New Yorkers back to work while strengthening the city's economy for the long term, the City, State, and Federal government should harness the availability of labor and relative underuse of public infrastructure to invest in a major program of repair and rebuilding both the civic and the civil infrastructure of New York City.

New York faces over \$200 Billion in planned work and unmet needs just to return the city's infrastructure to a state of good repair with the potential to put about half the people who have lost jobs back to work and rebuild the social and physical infrastructure needed to ensure an equitable recovery and an economy and society that can flourish for decades to come.

As policymakers consider a slate of public works projects, and individual projects, we suggest they consider:

- » **Focus Public Employment on Equity:** Public works projects should be direct and intentional about the groups of people who are expected to benefit from the jobs and training they provide. Specifically, the black, brown, low-income, and public housing communities that have been hardest hit by COVID-19 and the job losses as a result of the virus should be directly targeted to take part in public works projects. Additionally, students and recent college graduates should be prioritized, particularly the 500,000+ CUNY community, who without intervention are at risk of experiencing career-long wage and promotion stagnation.
- » **Definition of Civic & Physical Infrastructure:** Infrastructure includes the assets that allow our economy and society to function, including both physical and social infrastructure. A public works program should invest in jobs that fix our crumbling physical infrastructure, such as engineers, construction, transit and technology workers, and jobs that build community and society such as teachers, child-care workers, librarians, and public artists.



- » **Timeline:** Investments in public works projects should start with those that are “shovel ready” but additionally focus on some requiring longer lead times to assemble the necessary capital, physical, human, and legal resources. Projects ready to launch immediately are most likely to focus upon existing infrastructure, and have readily available talent pipelines. Medium and long-term projects are most likely to require up front investment in talent pipelines and necessary legal or other preparation.
- » **Transferable Skills/Career Pathways:** Public works investments will necessarily require resources to fill, modify or build talent pipelines. Where possible, those investments in human capital should prioritize skills and/or credentials that are valued in the labor market beyond the scope of the public project.
- » **Funding and Need for Federal Support:** The pandemic represents a national emergency that has hit New York City the hardest. We are the epicenter of the crisis, representing approximately one third of deaths in the United States to date. Just as cities and states cannot respond to hurricanes or other natural disasters without Federal support, the same is true of a pandemic. While City and State resources can and will contribute substantially to these programs, the sheer need is so vast that it cannot be accommodated without Federal support. The Federal government has played a substantive role in history in emergency aid, and in building infrastructure in times of need, such as the 1930s Works Progress Administration, which helped build parks, bridges, pools, parks, schools, and public art in New York.

- » **Local and State Revenue:**

The City and State should look to leverage the substantial wealth accumulated within the City and State by unlocking new revenue streams to get our economy back on its feet. The pandemic has deepened and accelerated existing inequalities, highlighted by the fact that job losses are concentrated in low-income occupations, with higher-income earners less affected. The stock market and investor returns remained strong for months despite the extreme economic hardship experienced by small businesses, low-income communities, and communities of color. City and State revenue generating mechanisms previously discussed such as a pied-a-terre tax, enhanced millionaire’s tax, stock transfer tax, and/or bonding for capital projects based on these revenue streams, are all recommended by a recent Fiscal Policy Institute study, and have received varying levels of support from City and State electeds in the past. These mechanisms should be revisited in order to draw on our collective resources to both revive the economy and combat unsustainable levels of inequality.



Key examples of potential public works projects illustrative of the framework detailed above include:

- » **Repairs, Enhancements & Greening of NYCHA Facilities:** Reversing decades of underinvestment can benefit residents by improving living conditions while investing in job-ready skills and career pathways, promoting local hiring, and developing a model for long-term sustainable public housing.
- » **Social & Opportunity Infrastructure:** Institutions that play a vital role in expanding access to economic opportunity and supporting the most vulnerable New Yorkers — including public libraries, CUNY community colleges, human services organizations, workforce development providers, and cultural institutions — all face mounting infrastructure needs. Investments in these areas can reap multiple benefits by creating jobs while strengthening the city’s social safety net.
- » **A Cleaner & Greener New York:** Fully funding the Department of Parks and Recreation’s capital budget as well as projects such as Renewable Rikers, solar and wind power generation, energy grid infrastructure, energy storage systems, conversion to permeable surfaces, coastal resiliency, water infrastructure, composting, and urban agriculture systems, which help New York prepare for and navigate the challenges of climate change.
- » **Public Transportation:** Expediting needed investments in public transit can put thousands of New Yorkers to work while improving the city’s long-term ability to grow jobs, support low-wage workers, attract visitors, and improve accessibility. Major priorities include the MTA and Port Authority capital programs, Gateway Tunnel, and investments in bus and bike lanes.
- » **Broadband Installation & Digital Infrastructure:** Closing New York’s pervasive digital divide will require substantial investment in broadband installation — including in schools, colleges, public housing, and low-income communities — as well as the skill sets to build and deploy networks and ensure uptake.
- » **Childcare Infrastructure / Early Childhood Education Provision:** Build upon existing early childhood education infrastructure to bolster the supply of quality childcare, support infrastructure upgrades to increase safety and flexibility, and facilitate a return to work for more New Yorkers.
- » **Public Health Infrastructure:** To help mitigate the impact of future public health crises, investments should be made in public health infrastructure, including the city’s aging public hospitals, community-based health centers, testing and tracing capabilities, and air quality improvements.



Relief Programs for Individuals & Hard-Hit Communities

Relief programs and services need to be expanded to support New Yorkers continuing to struggle from the health and economic fallout caused by the pandemic. Direct individual relief programs should be focused on community-scale monetary support for the areas most under-resourced now. This means expanding the narrow means-testing cash assistance programs that existed before and a true universal basic income for all New Yorkers.

- » Provide direct cash assistance to individuals and families in neighborhoods most affected by COVID-19
- » Provide expanded tax credit options to all low-income New Yorkers such expanded NYS Earned-Income Tax Credit and Child & Dependent Care Tax Credit



Recommendations



Provide direct cash assistance to individuals and families in neighborhoods most affected by COVID-19

The City should recognize that for the remainder of 2020 and into 2021, business recovery will not be fast enough or broad enough to help those communities most severely harmed by the crisis. This reality means that direct cash transfers (like the \$1200 stimulus checks from the Federal government) are a necessary part of the recovery for some neighborhoods.

- » Existing programs such as TANF are hindered by application and means-testing eligibility requirements. In the longterm, federal policymakers should expand eligibility requirements, increase income thresholds to TANF, and eliminate the current \$2,000 asset limit.
- » The City should establish a Universal Basic Income (UBI) pilot program for individuals and families in neighborhoods that have been hit hardest by COVID-19 and that were economically disadvantaged prior to COVID-19
- » The objectives of these cash transfers should be both economic survival for the recipients, and hyper-local economic stimulus in the neighborhoods targeted
- » A UBI level of \$1000/month for adults and \$500/month for children would be appropriate

- » This cash transfer program should last for a fixed period of time; we propose 12-24 months would be appropriate
- » A study should be conducted on the effects of this UBI on households and neighborhood businesses

Provide expanded tax credit options to all low-income New Yorkers such expanded NYS Earned-Income Tax Credit and Child & Dependent Care Tax Credit

The City and State should play a role in supporting the financial well-being of New Yorkers as well through expansions on a number of tax credit programs.

- » **Expand eligibility for and payments under the NYS and NYC Earned-Income Tax Credits (EITC):**
 - EITC acts as a wage subsidy that goes directly to workers regardless of their employer
 - The already-established system of EITC means that it could be expanded quickly and for the duration of the economic downturn caused by COVID-19
- » Make the NYS Child & Dependent Care Tax Credit fully refundable
- » To fund cash assistance and universal basic income, NYS policy makers could consider the proposed revenue raiser in the “Mark to Market Worker Bailout Fund” state bill (S.8277)



Recovery for Local Small Businesses & Nonprofits, and Support for New Business Development

The health crisis has caused most small businesses to cease over the past three months. Our recommendations for supporting this small business rebound with the most flexibility possible, and entail incentives to help businesses re-hire from communities affected by COVID-19, as well as regulatory streamlining, and public incubator support for new small businesses.

It is imperative that we recognize that small businesses make up the majority of NYC's workforce, and that the city employment base urgently needs successful re-openings of as many businesses as possible.

- » Help small businesses and new businesses start back up with less red tape
- » Provide free and/or low-cost technology and technical expertise to local businesses
- » Use wage subsidies to promote small business inclusive hiring
- » Restructure the workforce system to better serve small businesses & incentivize training and employment partnerships
- » Provide "incubator" assistance to new businesses and worker co-ops starting up in NYC



Recommendations



Help small businesses and new businesses start back up with less red tape

The City should not stand in the way of small businesses re-launching in the coming months. Instead, the sorts of permitting and other regulatory requirements usually imposed on businesses to start up or expand should be either waived, postponed or where appropriate, eliminated.

Unless a new approach is taken, and taken immediately, too many small businesses will not make it through this crisis, the effects of which are likely to last for several years. These challenges affect not only established businesses, but also and especially the minority, women and immigrant entrepreneurs who will need to find new ways to survive as traditional jobs are in short supply.

Specific policy changes should include:

- » Suspending regulations and permitting processes that do not affect immediate public safety so that businesses can open rapidly
- » Adopting an approach of creating rules — for example for how much of the sidewalk can be used by an adjacent business and how — and then letting businesses follow them without having to apply to do so. If inspections find violations, give the business the chance to adjust in order to comply.
- » Making sure all agencies are working together with the highest level of coordination
- » Developing a unified business opening application (with the requirements of all agencies centralized)
- » Making sidewalks, adjacent plazas and pocket parts temporarily available to restaurants and retail to line up customers, do limited, socially distant dining and drinking, and sale of merchandise
- » Remember to help all small businesses, including but not limited to those in the hospitality sector



Provide free and/or low-cost technology and technical expertise to local businesses

The inhibited economy of the last several months has demonstrated the degree of dependency that many small businesses have on third-party technology to survive, especially with limited in-person business allowed. Recognizing that it may be years, if ever, before the level of in-person economic activity reaches its pre-COVID levels, the City should act to level the playing field of technology and technical expertise for small businesses.

Possible areas of assistance could include:

- » Basic technology startup assistance (setting up website, contactless payment, supply chain management, global distribution)
- » Digital marketing & social media assistance
- » Simplified resource guide and information hub, offered through tech (like a 311 - small business portal)

Ideas adopted from the existing “Neighborhood Challenge” program include:

- » Platform for businesses to flag small business needs, allowing tech to access and offer solutions
- » Launch with Business Improvement Districts & local Chambers of Commerce, in coordination with tech partners
- » Connect small business concerns with technology that’s available and to challenge the tech sector to create affordable and innovative solutions to challenges currently being faced by small businesses



Restructure the workforce system to better serve small businesses & incentivize training partnerships

The City should restructure the workforce development system to better meet the needs of small businesses, and incentivize businesses to work with workforce practitioners to develop long term training partnerships to provide employment for marginalized job seekers.

- » Invest in wage supports and paid internships, including the wage subsidy programs outlined below
 - » Set a goal of increasing small business participation in the city's public workforce system by 20 percent
 - » Increase the capacity of small business intermediaries to provide workforce training services
 - » Expand small business representation on the city's Workforce Development Board and advisory boards for industry partnerships
- » Invest in place-based solutions approaches (ex. Brooklyn Chamber's Good Help program and the Lower East Side Employment Network model) that align local economic and workforce development initiatives and connect local stakeholders including businesses, education and skills training providers, community-based organizations and communities within the full scope and process, including development and design
 - » Seek opportunities to pair Workforce1 Centers and Business Solutions Centers with local business intermediaries such as chambers of commerce or business improvement districts
 - » Shift the City's Business Solutions Training grant program to be structured like the State's On the Job Training (OJT) program
 - » Develop training programs for supervisors at small businesses to help them learn how to manage nontraditional workers
 - » Include training and technical assistance services for worker-ownership and the conversions of small companies



Use wage subsidies to promote small business inclusive hiring & re-hiring

The City should use smart, targeted wage subsidies to support small business inclusive hiring and re-hiring practices. These efforts should focus on the most impacted workers and small businesses.

Wage subsidies – unlike tax credits – provide immediate economic benefit to employers and can be delivered with minimal administrative burden for the employer. By linking immediate payroll support to equitable practices (including not only hiring of employees, but also equitable management and opportunities for advancement), the City could help businesses recover while helping the low-wage workforce advance.

The City should aim to use these wage subsidies to also directly benefit smaller businesses and workers from communities in highest need. The strategies for targeting the wage subsidies to achieve these ends would be:

- » A public wage subsidy would cover up to 75% of the wages during the training period and the employer would receive a bonus of 25% of the worker's wages for the period if they hire and retain them full time for at least six months after the training period. Wage subsidies should cover TANF eligible individuals and other marginalized job seekers (persons with criminal convictions, individuals with little recent work experience, the disabled, young adults/teens, etc.).

- » Limit the number of employees that can be subsidized at each place of business, to make the subsidy more valuable to smaller businesses
- » The City should provide free training and technical assistance to support small businesses in adopting inclusive hiring practices (training system recommendation below). This can be done directly by the City or through third party experts.
- » Wage subsidies must be tied to job quality, so that the workforce who will fill these roles can also benefit
 - A particular focus should be put on those sectors (food service, retail, healthcare) that have not typically offered high quality employment
 - Provisions for job quality should include, at a minimum, stable and predictable schedules, safe working conditions and a path to living wages
- » The City should promote job quality frameworks and strategies, such as that of the Good Jobs Institute, and demonstrate the return on investment for employers offering a better job.
- » Provide a subsidy for certain businesses to cover the indirect cost of hiring, such as extending the federal tax credit on paid sick leave and family leave during COVID-19



Provide “incubator” assistance to new small businesses starting up in NYC

Supporting the launch of start ups citywide will have multiple benefits – 1. create jobs, particularly as they grow into small businesses; 2. foster innovation; 3. continue to diversify the population of entrepreneurs and the small business landscape; 4. bring entrepreneurship to all five boroughs of NYC; 5. support COVID-19 recovery as businesses focus on NYC post-COVID-19 needs (ie., businesses addressing public health, education access and digital divide, etc.)

To ensure equity is integrated into all aspects of these programs, selected operators should have a clear history of supporting entrepreneurs of color, low income entrepreneurs and immigrant entrepreneurs.

These incubators could be a mix of both physical spaces and virtual incubator services.

Physical spaces:

- » 1-2 per borough with a focus on serving neighborhoods and/or communities that are often bypassed by traditional incubator models
- » Leverage existing real estate and expertise such as Brooklyn Navy Yard, WeWork, Silicon Harlem, LAGCC’s NYDesigns, MetaBronx, Civic Hall, etc.
- » Support the creation of several community owned and controlled cooperative hubs that could anchor the existing local worker cooperatives while serving the community at large as centers of information and cooperative development for new entrepreneurs.

Virtual programs:

- » Content delivery online including entrepreneurship portal, entrepreneurs in cohorts ('classes'), expert advice, virtual coaching, etc.
- » Program will last 12 months; 4 cohorts of 15

Levels of support:

- » Support for operators – both start up funds and ongoing operating funds
- » Support for entrepreneurs – access to funding, mentors, clients, etc.

New York Workforce Recovery Strategy Group

Kenneth Adams, Bronx Community College
Plinio Ayala and Abe Mendez,* Per Scholas
Paula Bailey, Grant Associates
Clayton Banks, Silicon Harlem
Linda Baran and Brian Licata, Staten Island Chamber of Commerce
Christopher Bloodworth, The Actors Fund
Jonathan Bowles and Eli Dvorkin, Center for an Urban Future
Phoebe Boyer, Children's Aid
Diana Caba, Hispanic Federation
Tracey Capers, Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation
Bertina Ceccarelli, NPower
Steve Choi, New York Immigration Coalition
Laura Colacurcio, Association for a Better New York
Chris Collins and Max Levitzke, SolarOne
Kathleen Culhane, Nontraditional Employment for Women
Laurie Dien, Pinkerton Foundation
Michael Dunne, ResCare
David Ehrenberg and Katie Beck Sutler,* Brooklyn Navy Yard Corporation
Lakythia Ferby, STRIVE NY
David Garza, Henry Street Settlement
Katy Gaul-Stigge, Goodwill Industries of Greater NY/NJ
Thomas Grech, Queens Chamber of Commerce
Matthew Harrigan and Lindsay Siegel, Company
Wayne Ho and Simon Chiew, Chinese-American Planning Council
Sarah Holloway, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University*
Michelle Jackson, Human Services Council
Chai Jindasurat, Nonprofit NY
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Gregory Morris, Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center*
Regina Myer, Downtown Brooklyn Partnership*
Tom Ogletree, General Assembly
Jose Ortiz, Jr., Annie Garneva & Jesse Laymon, NYC Employment & Training Coalition
JoAnne Page, The Fortune Society
Marjorie Parker and Kevin Stump, JobsFirstNYC
Valerie Payne, Rebuilding Together NYC
Randy Peers, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce
Angela Pinsky, Google
Liliana Polo-McKenna, Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow
Andrew Rasiej, Civic Hall
Eileen Reilly, CAMBA
Andrew Rigie, NYC Hospitality Alliance
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Abby Jo Sigal, HERE to HERE
Kate Slevin, Regional Plan Association*
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Lisa Sorin, Bronx Chamber of Commerce
Jodi M. Sturgeon and Allison Cook, PHI
Edward Summers, The Bronx Private Industry Council
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Jessica Walker, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce
Christopher Watler, Center for Employment Opportunities*
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**Subcommittee Co-Chair*

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