



USBnyc Policy Demands for COVID-19

Our members and clients (small businesses, sole proprietorships, cooperatives, street vendors, and non-profits who provide goods and services to the public) are seeing a catastrophic drop in income, ranging from 50 to 80 percent. Because of this, we need swift action to protect small businesses and non-residential tenants from displacement and closure.

OUR PRINCIPLES

Relief measures should take into account the already precarious position of small businesses, even before the COVID-19 crisis.

Commercial tenants struggle with high rent and property taxes. Street vendors are often unable to obtain permits and are heavily targeted by City agencies.

All relief measures should be universal. No one should be left out.

We are only as resilient as the most vulnerable members of our community. Relief must include street vendors, delivery workers, freelancers, cultural workers, gig workers, sole-proprietors, unbanked people, and undocumented immigrants.

Congress must pass a bold and swift stimulus package.

City and state government have important roles to play, but the federal government must act to address the enormity of this public health and economic crisis, including free testing and treatment for all, direct emergency assistance and paid sick leave for all workers, and emergency small business aid.

No one should be profiteering from the crisis.

Banks, landlords, suppliers, and other creditors should not use this moment to price-gouge or penalize people.

Large corporations that are benefiting from this crisis, including retail giants like Amazon and Walmart, should be redistributing their profits to struggling workers.

OUR POLICY DEMANDS

What the City Should Do:

- New York City should expand on its existing grants and loans to create an emergency relief fund for small business owners, employees, street vendors, and independent contractors to cover lost revenue and wages.

- The NYC Department of Small Business Services should waive “loss of income” eligibility requirements for existing grants and loans for businesses that have been mandated to close or reduce service.
- All New York City agencies and departments should suspend enforcement of fines, tickets, and violations that do not seriously impact public health and safety, including those for unlicensed street vendors.
- The NYC Department of Education should ensure that street vendors, delivery workers, pharmacy and grocery store workers, and restaurant cooks are included in the childcare plan for frontline workers.
- The Department of Consumer and Worker Protection should ban price gouging for essential items on the part of suppliers and wholesalers in addition to retailers.
- The NYC Department of Finance should suspend the tax lien sale for 2020.

What the State Should Do:

- New York State and New York City should delay the collection of business sales taxes due March 20, corporate taxes due April 15, and payroll taxes due April 30.
- New York State and New York City should issue a rent and mortgage freeze for the duration of the crisis, and suspend rent and mortgage obligations for 60 days, with the possibility to extend should the public health crisis continue.
- New York State should provide an emergency relief fund for small business owners, employees, street vendors, and independent contractors to cover lost revenue and wages.
- New York State should provide hazard pay for all frontline workers, including street vendors, delivery workers, pharmacy and grocery store workers, childcare providers, and restaurant cooks.

What the Federal Government Should Do:

- Congress should pass a strong stimulus package that includes free testing and treatment for all, direct assistance to low-income workers and small business owners, and suspension of commercial rent and non-payroll expenses.
- Congress should expand the small-business loan program typically offered for natural disasters and create an emergency aid fund for impacted businesses.
- Congress should establish a federal fund to reimburse workers for lost wages, including those who are furloughed or working reduced hours.
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) should cease operations to ensure all immigrant workers, street vendors and small business owners can access vital resources being offered in hospitals, schools and places of worship.
- USCIS should suspend enforcement of the public charge rule to ensure that non-citizens can access benefits during the crisis.