



United for Small Business NYC (USBnyc) is a coalition of community organizations across New York City fighting to protect New York's small businesses and non-residential tenants from the threat of displacement, with particular focus on owner-operated, low-income, minority-run businesses that serve low-income and minority communities. Small businesses provide jobs, culturally relevant goods and services, and community, keeping our neighborhoods thriving and vibrant places to live. The rising cost of rent leads to displacement that impacts both long-time small businesses and burgeoning entrepreneurs across New York. The communities that tend to be hardest hit are communities of color and immigrant communities facing rapid gentrification.

Under the threat of landlord harassment, impending displacement, and a lack of city resources, USBnyc aims to create strong, lasting protections for commercial tenants. **We believe that small business displacement is cultural displacement. In order to protect New York's vibrant culture, the City must take the following steps to protect New York's small businesses:**

Give the City's most vulnerable small businesses the tools to fight back against unscrupulous landlords.

The constant threat of gentrification makes commercial tenants vulnerable to the same harassment that residential tenants face. However, there are even fewer resources dedicated to fighting commercial displacement and commercial tenant harassment. **The City should designate city funding to legal services, including litigation, for small businesses** to ensure that the commercial tenant anti-harassment law that allows commercial tenants to litigate against landlords is fully leveraged as a tool to protect business owners and workers from harassment.

Immigrants run **48%** of all of New York City's small businesses and an average of **26%** of New Yorkers work at a **small business** (a business that employs 20 or fewer people).

The USB NYC logo is located in the bottom right corner of the text box.

Additionally, the city should demonstrate its commitment to immigrants since immigrants run 48% of all of New York City's small businesses. They are subjected to market forces and the compounded threat of harassment due to immigration status or perceived immigration status. **The city should protect immigrants as both workers and business owners, and clearly state that harassing business owners, workers, or customers based on immigration status is a form of harassment subject to penalty.**



Ensure that Local Businesses Have Access to Local Space.



A major challenge to small businesses struggling to hold on is the out of control real estate market. On the residential side, one solution has been to work with non-profits to develop affordable units. This has been facilitated through different financial incentives and tools available to said non-profits. This model is only beginning to be applied outside residential on a citywide level: the City's non-profit industrial development fund is attempting to leverage public and private resources to build more affordable industrial space. **The City should create a similar non-profit commercial development fund.** In this case, a non-profit

commercial development fund would similarly provide public funding to subsidize the new development or renovation of commercial space, resulting in more affordable rents for commercial tenants.

Warehoused storefronts are unsightly and reduce foot traffic for existing small businesses, reduce available rental space for new small businesses, and act as a mechanism for gentrification, especially in communities of color. Landlords hold onto vacant spaces and wait for real estate prices to rise, so they can rent the property to a newer and wealthier clientele. **Currently, no penalty exists for property owners who neglect vacant properties or intentionally leave space vacant.** This ultimately stacks the deck against the remaining businesses in neglected corridors. **Landlords should be penalized and fined for warehousing commercial properties for more than 6 months.**

Call to Action: Protect New York's Small Businesses

New York's small businesses are an integral part to this city's vibrancy, culture, and economic vitality. They are community hubs, provide vital resources, and contribute to the fabric of our neighborhoods. And they are under threat. As displacement runs rampant in New York City, it is more important than ever to commit to protecting our small businesses. We call on fellow New Yorkers to support USBnyc and small businesses across the City.