



## **\$1.8 Million in Cash Infusion Grants & Services for Bronx Small Businesses** *The Bronx Community Foundation in Partnership with Bronx Business Improvement Districts Continues Comprehensive Small Business Recovery Strategy*

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2/22/2021, *The Bronx, NY* – The Bronx Community Foundation in partnership with Bronx Business Improvement Districts (BID's) and The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce provided \$1.4 million in cash grants to borough small businesses amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to cash infusion grants this innovative partnership among The Bronx Community Foundation and the Bronx's leading equitable economic development organizations has developed a borough-wide strategy which supports small business capacity building, connectivity and technology, in-business COVID-19 testing, and targeted restaurant support programs.

To date, partnership activities include:

- Deployment of \$1.4 million in cash infusion grants to Bronx small businesses with an emphasis on businesses owned by women and people of color
- Invested \$250,000 in building outdoor dining structures and providing heaters to support Bronx restaurants in conjunction with the NYC Open Street Dining Program
- Invested \$20,000 in outdoor dining winterization programs
- In partnership with the Bronx Business Organization Coalition, provided technical assistance to Bronx businesses applying to the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- Funding for the Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership to provide strategic and customized business services through a 12-month Success Circle Program.
- Robust advocacy with City, State, and Federal partners to create a borough-based economic recovery strategy inclusive of workforce development, technology and connectivity, direct business assistance, and targeted advocacy efforts.

The Foundation works closely with Bronx equitable economic development organizations including: Third Avenue Business Improvement District, The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce, Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District, Westchester Square Business Improvement District, Throggs Neck Business Improvement District, Southern Boulevard Business Improvement District, Fordham Road Business Improvement District, BOC-Network, BOEDC, SoBRO, and the Business Initiative Corporation of NY.

"As COVID created a health pandemic, the underlying economic pandemic became even greater for Small, Minority and Women owned Businesses in The Bronx." noted **Michael Blake, former NYS Assemblymember and Vice Chair for the Democratic National Committee.** "The collaboration between The Bronx Community Foundation, the Third Avenue Business Improvement District and business allies throughout The Bronx truly helped save and sustain many Bronx Businesses so that their dreams were not lost due to circumstances out of their control. From grants to pay rent and utilities to financial capability training to Access to Capital, we came

together led by Derrick Lewis, Desmon Lewis, Michael Brady and their respective teams to restore hope and economic possibilities to our Bronx Businesses.”

“Over the last decade, prior to the pandemic, Bronx based businesses were on a trajectory of growth. These businesses are the lifeblood of our local economy”, said **Desmon Lewis, Co-Founder of The Bronx Community Foundation**. “When the pandemic hit, we quickly needed to work with and mobilize alongside our partners to support immediate relief to stabilize Bronx commercial districts and keep as many of our small businesses open. We thank all of our partners who are standing shoulder to shoulder with us to help with emergency relief, but who are also working with the Foundation on building and instituting a framework for economic recovery post the pandemic in The Bronx.”

“Small businesses have been deeply affected by the COVID-19 crisis and failure of government to coordinate actions to protect our most vulnerable stakeholders.” stated **Michael Brady, CEO of the Third Avenue Business Improvement District**. “Our city wide and local economies rely on small businesses to employ over 50% of New York City’s workforce. Small businesses add over \$950 billion in revenue for New York State. Yet, during a time of mandated closures received little support. Third Avenue BID is grateful to have partnered with The Bronx Community Foundation to support our Bronx businesses when others turned their backs and we are proud to continue our work and partnership into the future.”

“The Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District is grateful to our Bronx business organization partners, the Bronx Community Foundation for their work to support Bronx small businesses.” said **Jennifer Tausig, Executive Director of the Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District**. “When less than 1% of the grants from the City went to the Bronx, the Foundation and our partners stepped up and provided our businesses with a lifeline they so desperately needed, when no one else did. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Foundation to support the people, families, non-profits and small businesses in the Bronx.”

“The Bronx Foundation Small Business Grants and the collaborative grassroots work of Bronx business service organizations has been a lifeline for so many of our borough’s small businesses as they face unprecedented challenges.” said **Lisa Sorin, President of The Bronx Chamber of Commerce**. “We are proud to continue our partnership, as we help to equitably rebuild our borough one business at a time.”

“We were crying with tears of joy due to the generosity of The Bronx Community Foundation and Third Avenue BID.” stated **Claudia and Richard Berroa, owners of Claudy’s Kitchen** located in Kingsbridge “We are beyond words grateful for this support during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“The pandemic has challenged so many small businesses in our area forcing many to close.” noted **Rajab Elsayed, owner of Raj’s Menswear** in the South Bronx. “We are grateful for the funding support and also the continued services of the Bronx Community Foundation and Third Avenue BID. We know that we have someone in our corner to help us - this is important for all small businesses.”

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*The Bronx Community Foundation (Bx.C.F.) is the first and only community foundation in The Bronx, solely dedicated to delivering resources to the diverse, vibrant, and hard-working people of the borough. The foundation's focus is on meeting the shared outcomes of increasing economic security, advancing inclusivity and sustainability, advocating for social, economic, environmental, and racial justice, increasing access to quality education, healthcare, strengthening community resiliency and vitality, accelerating innovation, and supporting generational change throughout The Bronx. Bx.C.F. takes a place-based strategic approach toward philanthropy. To make significant progress, the foundation works collaboratively with the community to help develop and*

*advance a community-wide common agenda toward solving challenges. The Bronx Community Relief Effort, the foundation COVID-19 program, supports effective, on-the-ground operations that are focused on meeting the most essential needs of The Bronx community. This includes filling gaps in public financing and broader grant programs.*

**To learn more about The Bronx Community Foundation or to contribute visit: [www.thebronx.org](http://www.thebronx.org)**