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Small Business Commissioner Torres-Springer visits Coney Island storefronts to help Sandy-impacted businesses



Department of Small Business Services Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer speaks about the city services available for impacted small businesses with Councilmember Mark Treyger, Executive Director of Alliance for Coney Island Johanna Zaki and the owner of JR Island Meat Market.

New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer on Monday visited new storefronts along Mermaid Avenue that are being renovated as part of the city's Hurricane Sandy Storefront Improvement Program.

Funded by the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, the program has provided more than \$1 million in grants to help 72 small businesses across the city renovate storefronts damaged by Superstorm Sandy and to restore the vitality of local commercial corridors impacted by the storm.

Supported by the Alliance for Coney Island, Astella Development Corporation and the Business Outreach Center Network, more than a dozen storefronts are being rebuilt along Mermaid Avenue, as part of the program.

"In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, our city's businesses overcame tremendous challenges to help their customers — and their community — get back on their feet," said First Lady Chirlane McCray, who chairs the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City. "The Mayor's Fund is proud to have provided funding to enable 72 small businesses with the help they needed to renovate their storefronts. We want them able to signal to the world that they are open for business and stronger than ever."

"The Hurricane Sandy Storefront Improvement Program is bringing new vibrancy and energy to small businesses and commercial corridors impacted by Hurricane Sandy," said Torres-Springer. "I encourage all New Yorkers to shop local and support these neighborhoods."

"Small businesses are the lifeblood of our city's economy and an integral part of every thriving community. Unfortunately, many of Coney Island's stores were severely damaged or destroyed by Sandy, causing millions of dollars in damage and leaving local residents without many vital services," said Councilmember Mark Treyger.

“This recovery won't be complete until our neighborhood's small businesses reopen and our commercial areas are revitalized, and this program is essential to reaching that goal. My thanks to Mayor de Blasio and SBS Commissioner Torres-Springer for ensuring that the recovery reaches businesses in every impacted neighborhood,” Treyger said.

Launched in August, 2013, the SBS Improvement Program provides grants of up to \$20,000 to cover the construction costs of storefront improvements for businesses located along commercial corridors that were impacted by Superstorm Sandy.

In addition to the SBS Improvement Program, the city also provided more than \$28 million in grants and loans immediately after the storm to small businesses impacted by Sandy. Through the federally funded Hurricane Sandy Business Loan and Grant Program, more than 100 businesses have been approved for nearly \$15 million in grants and loans under the de Blasio administration — compared to seven approvals in January.