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## New York City Small-Business Agency Will Get Budget Boost

By: Michael Howard Saul



Mayor Bill de Blasio on Thursday plans to propose increasing city funding to programs run by the Department of Small Business Services by 73.5%, a boost that officials said marked his administration's commitment to bolstering the local economy.

Mr. de Blasio, who on Thursday is expected to release an updated budget proposal for the fiscal year that begins July 1, is recommending spending \$43.9 million of city-taxpayer money for the small-business agency next year.

The city has allocated \$25.3 million for the agency in the current fiscal year.

The mayor is proposing that the agency's overall budget, including funding from other sources, such as the federal government, total \$167 million. This year, the agency's budget is \$314 million, but aides said the current year's budget includes \$111 million in federal funding for superstorm Sandy recovery as well as other one-time federal grants. The agency's adopted budget last year was \$147 million.

The release of Mr. de Blasio's executive budget sets in motion a series of oversight hearings at the City Council. The mayor and the council are expected to complete a deal on the city budget in June.

Maria Torres-Springer, commissioner of the city's Department of Small Business Services, said the increased investment reflected the administration's "commitment to an equitable growth agenda."

"We're targeting resources where the need is greatest," she said.

Ms. Torres-Springer said the additional funding would be invested in programs, including one designed to help women who are thinking of starting a business and women who need help expanding their businesses.

The agency hopes to expand efforts to train workers in a number of industries, including technology, health care and construction, she said. Some of the money will help advance efforts to reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses.

Carlo Scissura, president of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, said an increase in the agency's budget would go a long way toward improving the business climate in the city for both employees and employers.

"Small businesses are the engine of our city," he said, "and this will help them keep running for a long time."