



Officials Give Peek at Planned Small Business Regulation Reforms

By: Courtney Gross

It was one of Mayor Bill de Blasio's campaign promises: streamlining regulations for small businesses. NY1 got a sneak peek at the administration's plans, which hope to eliminate some of the bureaucratic hoops some small businesses must go through.

NY1's Courtney Gross filed this exclusive report. "Right now we are where all the magic happens, in the kitchen of the Bogota Latin Bistro," says George Constantinou. It's a restaurant that opened a decade ago.

Gross: "How many agencies do you have to deal with here?"

Constantinou: "I would say the fire department, Health Department, Department of Buildings, Department of Consumer Affairs, Sanitation."

Restaurants deal with layers upon layers of so-called bureaucracy. Now, though, the de Blasio administration is trying to wipe the slate, or should we say plate, clean.

"It's focused on compliance. It's focused on support. It's focused on education and less on punitive enforcement," says Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer of the Department of Small Business Services.

After a six month review, NY1 got an exclusive first look at what the de Blasio administration plans to do to streamline regulations for small businesses.

For one the city will open a small business hub where owners can go to meet with multiple city agencies in one location. They will do the same thing online. They will also hire 10 small business coordinators to help owners navigate rules and regulations.

"We are looking not just at permits and licenses and fines, but really a set of proactive support services we need to provide small businesses so that they can spend less of their time navigating government and more of their time running their business," Torres-Springer says.

This shake up may not happen immediately.

That one stop hub won't be open until the end of the year. The online portal will be rolled out over two years.

The city wants to eliminate or consolidate redundant permits or licenses, but officials could only name four they have picked out so far. While there may not be a rush, this owner is still satisfied.

"I am seeing more changes, more reform happening under de Blasio's administration," Constantinou says.

City officials say all of this education and outreach will end up meaning fewer fines for small businesses like Bogota. Perhaps that's less revenue for the city, but it will mean more money back in owners' pockets.