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City launches ad campaign on free services for immigrants

By: Bill Parry

The city is preparing to launch an advertising campaign to help raise awareness of free business services for immigrant entrepreneurs. The city Department of Small Business Services is behind the Immigrant Business Initiative, a public/private partnership that works with community-based organizations to provide tailored business services in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Russian and Haiti-Creole, to meet specific needs of diverse communities of immigrant entrepreneurs.

“Immigrant entrepreneurs create local jobs and help form the vibrant fabric of our neighborhoods across the city, which is why SBS is committed to reaching all entrepreneurs - no matter where they are from, what language they speak, or what they look like - and providing them with the tools they need to thrive,” SBS Commissioner

Maria Torres-Springer said. “Through the Immigrant Business Initiative’s advertising campaign, we are ensuring that diverse immigrant communities know about free business services available to help their businesses start, operate, and grow, and that these services exist directly in their neighborhoods and preferred language.”

Advertisements have been translated into five languages, and will appear in targeted community media outlets, as well as on bus shelters and phone kiosks. The ads feature a business owner or community service provider with information on how the city can help.

“Nearly half of all small businesses in the five boroughs are owned by immigrant families, and they are an increasingly growing part of the economic fabric of New York City,” Citi’s Director of Community Development Bob Annibale said. Citi supported the Immigrant Business Initiative with a \$250,000 contribution.

Meanwhile, Borough President Melinda Katz announced the release of the Queens’ “Immigration Task Force Directory of Services” last Friday. The directory contains listings for 65 non-profit organizations and agencies that provide assistance to immigrants living in Queens.

“The character of the great Borough of Queens has always been shaped by the tremendous economic, social, cultural and civic contributions from immigrants hailing from all over the world,” Katz said. “The members of my Immigration Task Force advocate on behalf of tens of thousands of immigrants each year. Queens is committed to enhancing access to services that are available to all New Yorkers and their families, and I encourage everyone to utilize these resources.”

Each immigrant services organization entry in the directory provides contact information for the organization along with types of programs and services offered by the organization and a list of the languages spoken by its staff.