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****PRESS RELEASE****

**OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVATES
SMALL BUSINESS DISASTER RELIEF FUND IN RESPONSE TO THE MISSION-
BERNAL FIRE**

Fund to Provide Emergency Capital for Businesses & Merchants to Resume Operations

San Francisco, CA—In response to a five-alarm fire on June 18 near 29th and Mission, San Francisco Mayor Edwin M. Lee has directed the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) to activate the Small Business Disaster Relief Fund, providing emergency capital to small business impacted by the fire. The Small Business Disaster Recovery Fund is part of a comprehensive assistance package which includes resources and services aimed at helping small businesses and their employees recover as quickly as possible. Services include: job search assistance, access to unemployment information, help obtaining small business loans, guidance concerning licenses and permits, and other small business and employee services.

“Small businesses are part of the heart of our communities. When they are struggling, it impacts our neighborhoods on so many levels,” said Mayor Lee. “The aftermath of a fire can be devastating for merchants and their workforce, the Small Business Disaster Relief Fund will provide much needed support to get businesses back on track when they need it the most.”

The immediate weeks after a disaster is critical for a business to determine whether it can resume operations in San Francisco. While many businesses may receive insurance proceeds or have the ability to access a traditional or disaster loan, the delay in receiving these funds can take weeks or months. The Small Business Disaster Relief Fund will allow a business, after a disaster, to immediately access up to 10K in funds for inventory replacement, equipment purchases, security deposits for a new lease, employee salaries, or other expenses to stabilize cash flow. The fund is designed to provide businesses with capital as they assess damages and compile resources to safely and effectively reopen. The fund was created following another fire at 22nd and Mission in January last year and is part of Mayor Lee’s 2015-2016 budget.



“We will do whatever we can to help get these small businesses get back up and running as soon as possible,” said Todd Rufo, Director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. “Based on our experience responding to past fires, we developed the Small Business Disaster Fund as a way to provide immediate assistance to small businesses impacted by these terrible events.”

OEWD staff was on site the day of the fire in Mission-Bernal and was able to conduct an assessment of the businesses and provide direct assistance to affected small businesses. Approximately nine businesses suffered fire and/or water damage, staff with OEWD’s Small Business Development Center continues to assist these businesses and coordinate response efforts with partners and city agencies.

The Small Business Disaster Relief Fund is led by the Office of Economic and Workforce Development in partnership the Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA). Businesses that are impacted can contact MEDA for more information on the relief fund: **Nathanial Owen**, [415.282.3334 ext 153](tel:415.282.3334), nowen@medasf.org. For more information on the fund, please visit: oewd.org/disaster-relief.

“The Small Business Disaster Relief Fund program will build upon MEDA's recent efforts to provide grants and support to small businesses affected by the Mission and 22nd Street fire that displaced 36 small businesses, many of which lacked the resources to survive a disaster event. MEDA's team is committed to administering the program so businesses impacted by disasters have access to capital and technical assistance to stay in business and reopen as quickly and seamlessly as possible. We are looking forward to working with the Office of Economic and Workforce Development on activating this vital resource,” said Luis Granados, Executive Director of the Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA).

About the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD)

The Office of Economic and Workforce Development's (OEWD) mission is simple – we support the ongoing economic vitality of San Francisco. Under the direction of Mayor Edwin M. Lee, OEWD provides city-wide leadership for workforce development, business attraction and retention, neighborhood commercial revitalization, international business and development planning. For more information, go to: www.oewd.org

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