

For Immediate Release: September, 1, 2017

Press Contact: Gloria Chan, OEWD, 415-554-6926, Gloria.chan@sfgov.org

Rachel Starr, Inner Circle Labs, 415-684-9560, rachel@innercirclelabs.com

****PRESS RELEASE****

SAN FRANCISCO ANNOUNCES NEW STRATEGY TO EMPOWER & SUPPORT FREELANCERS WHO ARE UTILIZING ONLINE PLATFORMS FOR WORK

New resources for self-employed as gig economy grows

San Francisco, CA— Today, the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), the Department of Technology, and Supervisor Mark Farrell in partnership with Samaschool, a local non-profit specializing in digital literacy and online work competency, launched a strategy to support freelancers/self-employed individuals in response to the growing gig economy. As part of Mayor Lee's effort to ensure residents have access to work and economic sustainability, the strategy was created to support these individuals by laying out the requirements to operate in San Francisco, providing workforce resources and by helping freelancers build financial security through education and empowerment.

"As the use of online platforms for employment grows, San Francisco is leading the way nationally in helping individuals navigate the gig economy; while also connecting freelancers to educational and employment services," said Todd Rufo, Director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD). "This strategy pairs gig work opportunities with OEWD's proven career training to help freelancers reach their career goals and achieve economic self-sufficiency."

The Gig Economy Strategy provides a set of tools to guide and support freelancers. Its focus is providing a clearinghouse of resources that may be used to grow gig work into a robust small business, to supplement existing income, or to use as a stepping stone to connect to more traditional full-time employment.

The strategy includes the [Gig Economy Starter Kit for Freelancers published on San Francisco's online Business Portal](https://businessportal.sfgov.org/start/starter-kits/freelancer) (<https://businessportal.sfgov.org/start/starter-kits/freelancer>) and provides a roadmap on how to become a successful freelancer [with free interactive training modules/videos](http://gigtraining.sfgov.org/) (<http://gigtraining.sfgov.org/>), developed by Samaschool, that cover a range of topics such as:

- Permits needed to become a freelancer
- Professional communications including contracts and bidding for work
- Customer service and client management
- Platform specific matching and navigation
- Career planning and goal setting
- Finances and taxes

- Trust, safety, and protections as a freelancer
- Business planning/time management

“Samaschool is focused on supporting the evolving U.S. labor market as gig work becomes an increasingly viable career option. We’re honored to join OEWD in their proactive efforts to support the San Francisco workforce, especially as it relates to gig entrepreneurs,” said Lindsey Crumbaugh, managing director at Samaschool. “This program will allow job seekers the ability to acquire gig work as a source of supplemental income to help offset some of the deeper economic issues associated with unemployment and income volatility. It will also serve as a bridge to full-time employment for many, and the potential to become a primary source of income for existing entrepreneurs, contract workers and people who are self-employed.”

Most freelancers/self-employed individuals that frequently use online technology platforms do so to supplement, rather than replace, existing sources of income according to a [study called the ‘Gig Economy in San Francisco’](#) conducted by the Controller’s Office in 2016. Additionally, the study revealed the use of technology platforms to engage in gig work has grown rapidly with approximately 5 percent of San Francisco residents generating some sort of income from gig work. San Francisco Supervisor Mark Farrell commissioned the Controller’s Office to create this study to better understand this space as a city.

“With the growing gig economy and workforce, it is crucial to give these workers all the resources and tools they need to be successful,” said Supervisor Mark Farrell. “As ground-zero for the gig economy, the City must plan for the future by putting programs and resources in place that support the future of jobs and work in San Francisco and beyond.”

The study also found that while self-employment is growing in the City, full time employment still comprises 70 percent of the city’s workforce, representing no significant change since 2000. This data suggests that gig opportunities are likely being leveraged by people who were already self-employed as opposed to shifting workers from full and part-time employment to self-employment. These self-employed workers, also called ‘Gig Entrepreneurs’, may also be referred to as an independent contractor, a freelancer, or someone who otherwise alternates work arrangements without a traditional full-time job status.

In-person assistance on using the Gig Economy Starter Kit for Freelancers and related online training is currently available at the San Francisco Main Public Library (100 Larkin St.), the Western Addition (1449 Webster St.), and the Visitacion Valley (1099 Sunnysdale Ave.) neighborhood workforce centers, known as Access Points. In addition to the Gig Economy Starter Kit for Freelancers, OEWD is continuing to build more resources with Samaschool to support these individuals and the nonprofits that serve them. In the coming months, OEWD and Samaschool will also launch:

- More online courses available through <http://gigtraining.sfgov.org> and an expansion of the network of SF neighborhood workforce centers offering the trainings
- Additional resources for self-sufficiency, tax preparation and other financial counseling integrated into gig training programs

- Online gig training embedded into in-person sector training courses, like healthcare or hospitality, in order to support individuals who are exploring different occupational paths to gain experience and acquire new skills as part of their long-term career goals

About the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD)

The Office of Economic and Workforce Development's (OEWD) mission is simple – to create shared prosperity in San Francisco. OEWD provides city-wide leadership for workforce development, business attraction and retention, neighborhood commercial revitalization, international business and development planning. www.oewd.org

About Samaschool

Samaschool, a program of the global social enterprise Samasource, equips people to earn a living wage through independent work. Samaschool's program empowers people with the digital literacy, professional skills, and online work competency needed to thrive in this economy. www.samaschool.org

###