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****PRESS RELEASE****

**MAYOR LEE & SUPERVISOR KATY TANG LAUNCH A PROGRAM THAT
STREAMLINES SERVICES FOR SMALL FOOD BASED BUSINESSES**

**Pilot Program provides service to small food-based businesses to facilitate permitting
process**

San Francisco, CA – Mayor Lee announced with Supervisor Katy Tang, The Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) and the Office of Small Business the launch of *The Small Business Acceleration Program*, the first of its kind pilot program that provides direct services to individuals seeking to open small brick and mortar food-based businesses in San Francisco and guides them through the current complex permitting process.

“Small food and restaurant businesses are at the core of our City’s vibrancy. They generate important employment opportunities and local character for San Francisco neighborhoods,” said Mayor Lee. “The program is key in coordinating with other City services from various departments, helping our small food businesses open their doors more easily and timely.”

The launch of the *Small Business Acceleration Program* follows a 2015 report prepared by the Office of the Controller, which considered the complexities of the restaurant permitting process and identified the need for a single point of contact to work with small businesses on permitting and licensing across City departments. The program is funded through the Mayor’s budget with support from Supervisor Katy Tang.

“Small food businesses working to open a brick and mortar location need resources to help them understand how to do it right: how to comply with applicable regulations, and how to work with various departments to achieve the permits necessary to open their doors,” said Supervisor Tang. “I am very excited that our small food and restaurant businesses will have a guide to help them understand and work through what can sometimes be a very complicated process.”

The Small Business Acceleration Program is in a pilot phase focusing on food and beverage businesses, and is an interagency initiative led by OEWD, in partnership with the Office of Small Business, the Planning Department, the Department of Building Inspection, the Department of Public Health, the Fire Department, the Police Department, Public Works, the Public Utilities Commission, the Department of Environment, the Treasurer and Tax Collector’s Office, the Entertainment Commission, and the Office of the Assessor- Recorder.



“The Mayor has made supporting small businesses a priority. OEWD worked with other city departments to develop this program to not only help small business owners get through the process faster, but also feel better about how the process went. By having a dedicated client manager who is focused on small businesses, we’re getting the right information in the hands of business owners from the start and staying with them all the way through process,” said Todd Rufo, Director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development.

“The small business community plays a vital role in our local economy and in making San Francisco the unique place it is today,” said Director of San Francisco Planning John Rahaim. “The Small Business Acceleration Program is an innovative approach and important step in working toward a simplified and time efficient permitting process.”

“The complexity of opening our bakery made the thought of expanding in San Francisco a daunting and overwhelming prospect,” said Mary Gassen of Noe Valley Bakery. “Since working with the Small Business Acceleration Program, we have been making swift and steady progress towards opening our bakery in the West Portal neighborhood. I was able to gain a holistic understanding up-front of what would be required, and have gotten assistance coordinating resources and information from different departments. Most importantly, I know I can call someone who will help answer my questions regarding any of the necessary permits and licenses!”

This program provides direct services to assist individuals opening small brick and mortar food-based businesses in San Francisco who are ready to engage in the permitting process. A dedicated case manager is available to:

- Provide information and resources about the process and requirements
- Evaluate individual needs
- Engage and instruct throughout the process
- Coordinate a suite of City services

“San Francisco is a world-class dining community, with more restaurants per capita than any other US city. Restaurants are a high-risk, tight-margined endeavor, and the longer it takes to open, the greater the chance it will fail. The Golden Gate Restaurant Association is thrilled the city recognized this challenge and launched the *Small Business Acceleration Program*. Mapping and streamlining the opening process will help our city maintain the award-winning hospitality industry we are all so proud to have,” said Gwyneth J. Borden, Executive Director of the Golden Gate Restaurant Association.

This highly anticipated strategic initiative is part of a larger effort to improve business permitting processes for current and potential businesses owners. The award-winning [San Francisco](#)



[Business Portal](#) was the first major step toward consolidating and streamlining over 300 business permitting processes, across more than 60 City, State, and Federal permitting departments. This launch comes just two months after the SF Business Portal released a new and significantly improved version of the online tool, with new features that allows users to create secure online profiles, submit permit applications via the web, customize checklists to monitor progress, and save important documents for future use. The *Small Business Acceleration Program* launch and continued improvement of the SF Business Portal demonstrate Mayor Lee's dedication and comprehensive approach to making it easier for entrepreneurs to start, stay, and grow a business in the City.

For more information on the Small Business Acceleration Program, go to: [OpenInSF.com](https://www.openinsf.com)

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. For more information, go to: www.oewd.org

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