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

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

San Francisco, CA—In response to a two-alarm fire today in Chinatown on the 1100 block of Stockton Street, San Francisco Mayor Edwin M. Lee has directed the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) to activate the Small Business Disaster Relief Fund. The Fund will allow the seven businesses with six storefronts that are impacted businesses, to immediately access up to 10K in funds for inventory replacement, equipment purchases, security deposits for new leases, employee salaries, or other expenses and to stabilize cash flow. It is designed to provide businesses with capital as they assess damages and compile resources to safely and effectively reopen.

“It’s important that San Francisco small businesses know that the City is here to help when they face unforeseen events,” said Mayor Lee. “Through the Small Business Disaster Fund, the small businesses impacted by the fire in Chinatown will get the resources and assistance they need to recover quickly and resume operations.”

The immediate weeks after a disaster is critical for small business. 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 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.

“The Office of Economic and Workforce Development team has been on site all day, providing in-language technical support for these small, family owned, businesses that are impacted by the fire,” said Todd Rufo, Director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. “Mayor Lee created the Small Business Disaster Relief Fund to provide immediate capital to these businesses when they need it the most.”

OEWD staff remains on site and has conducted an assessment of the businesses, providing direct assistance to the affected small businesses. Approximately six storefronts with seven businesses suffered fire and/or water damage, staff with OEWD’s Small Business Development Center will also assist these businesses and coordinate response efforts with partners and other 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: **Nathaniel Owen, 415.282.3334 ext 153, nowen@medasf.org**. For more information on the fund, please visit: owd.org/disaster-relief.

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/disaster-relief

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