



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO TO STATE: EMPOWER SMALL BUSINESSES TO SAFELY REOPEN

SUSAN SERINO June 16, 2020

| ISSUE: **CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC; COVID-19; SMALL BUSINESSES**



HYDE PARK, NY – While the state begins to slowly reopen, Senator Sue Serino is calling attention to a little discussed side-effect of the pandemic—the rising costs imposed on businesses and organizations forced to comply with state-mandated reopening guidelines. Serino today announced plans to introduce legislation that would direct unused federal CARES Act funding to create grants for businesses and non-profits who have been forced to purchase everything from PPE, to industrial cleaning services, to new marketing materials,

testing and more in order to fully comply with reopening guidelines provided by the state.

“New Yorkers stepped up in a big way when they were asked to stay home and do their part to promote public health and safety. Now, it’s time for the state to step up and support them as they safely reopen,” said Senator Serino. “That means removing any potential obstacles to reopening, including the significant costs that are associated with adhering to the new stringent state mandates.”

Serino’s bill would establish the ‘New York Business COVID-19 Modification Grant Program,’ and would provide grants to help New York State businesses and not-for-profits cover the costs of complying with state mandates for reopening. The proposed grants could be used to cover any expenses related to reopening including, but not limited to:

- modifying the physical layout of a work space;
- purchasing personal protective equipment or cleaning supplies;
- upgrading technology to better accommodate remote work to limit on-premise interaction;
- purchasing additional furniture, tools, or vehicles to minimize employee interaction;
- training employees on new business practices; and
- marketing materials used to raise awareness for new practices.

Serino’s bill specifically requires the grants to be equitably distributed among all regions of the state and requires the state to give priority to small businesses who have been the hardest hit by the pandemic. The bill would also allow the grants to be used retroactively so businesses and non-profits who have already made these purchases would also receive relief. The bill aims to relieve the burden not only for these business owners, but for their customers who are trying to make ends meet as well, who may otherwise see increased costs passed directly on to them.

Serino continued saying, “Whether you were a hairdresser who drastically modified your salon and spent days tracking down expensive face shields, a restaurant owner who needs to purchase new outdoor furniture to safely expand, a small office manager who purchased decals and marketing materials to explain to customers how to adhere to new guidelines, or a not-for-profit on a shoestring budget, I know every penny counts right now as we look to safely restart. Far too many New Yorkers have yet to receive their full unemployment benefits, too many were shut out of federal assistance programs, and now they’re being asked to foot the bill to make significant changes to their business models. The state has to do more to ensure that they have the tools they need to succeed, and passing this bill is just one way we can do that.”