



Good afternoon Assembly Members,

My name is Mohamed Attia, I'm the Executive Director of the Street Vendor Project at the Urban Justice Center.

The Street Vendor Project is a member-led organization that advocates for street vendors' rights and fights to improve their working conditions.

While street vendors have been dealing with an outdated, unjust system that was created four decades ago that has impacted their livelihoods dramatically and made it quite impossible for them to be financially secure, we've recently seen that the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has made it even more dire for them than it has been to sustain their livelihoods.

Street vendors are the smallest businesses in our City, they're mostly hard-working immigrants and military veterans, single mothers and low-income New Yorkers who live day by day to survive and thrive in our City.

They serve all New Yorkers across the City, contribute to the local economy, create jobs and pay taxes just like any small businesses, but yet, they're still excluded from all government relief programs.

Although small business loans and grants exist, in practice we have found that many immigrant small business owners and sole proprietors are ultimately ineligible due to monolingual English application documents, extensive documentation required, and extensive eligibility criteria. Many fear they will be unable to reopen after the crisis.

Immigrant-owned small businesses comprise 48% of New York City's roughly 220,000 small businesses. Immigrants employ nearly half a million New Yorkers and contribute \$195 billion to the city's gross domestic product (GDP) annually. In order to ensure that they can continue these contributions, we are asking for bold action from our city council to ensure our immigrant run small businesses can emerge from this crisis and continue to serve New York City. Along with United for small Business NYC, we are asking for the creation of grants specifically for Microbusinesses and Immigrant Small Businesses, with the following parameters of eligibility:

- Ensure that eligibility is not dependent on commercial rent payments, utility bills or payroll;
- Confirm that no immigration status reporting is required, either for employer or employee;
- Allow for adequate documentation to include that which is suitable for cash transaction reporting, such as reporting daily sales on written ledgers, or end of day counts;
- Ensure all promotional and application materials are in multiple languages; and
- Allow for a mobile food vending license or permit, general

merchandise license, tickets received for vending, or proof of quarterly sales tax filings to be sufficient proof of sole proprietorship.

Not to mention that thousands of street vendors who are undocumented and in mixed immigration status families haven't received a dime from the government during this crisis, although they've been paying their fair share of taxes and fees just like any other businesses and workers in NYC.

It's unfair and unacceptable to see how NYS government is excluding a population of nearly 20,000 people who are the most vulnerable communities at the moment.

Street vendors are essential workers who have been feeding our City since its establishment, and it's so disappointing to see the government ignoring them in such a crisis.

We urge the State Government to introduce and pass legislations that support small businesses, such as, but not limited to, bodegas, small mom-and-pops and street vendors who are mostly owned and operated by immigrants that use traditional methods in running their businesses.

Also, to create and streamline a relief program that will provide recovery for all New Yorkers, specially folks who have been excluded from the deferral stimulus package, regardless their

immigration status, with cash assistance for family who are in dire need now.

Finally, to decriminalize street vending across the state by passing legislation S6817/ A9782 and create a fair vending system where vendors are running their business legally not under the shade.

Thank you,
Mohamed Attia.