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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG, COMMISSIONER OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS LINARES AND
SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES COMMISSIONER WALSH ANNOUNCE INITIATIVES
TO HELP SUPPORT HISPANIC BUSINESSES**

Giving Startups and Small Businesses Tools to Grow in New York City as Part of the Mayor's Five Borough Economic Opportunity Plan

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Guillermo Linares and Small Business Services Commissioner Robert W. Walsh today announced five initiatives to support Hispanic small businesses and help them weather increasing challenges brought on by the economic downturn. The City has worked with a coalition of Hispanic businesses, community-based organizations, and other to develop initiatives that strengthen the capacity of Hispanic businesses and provide greater access to the City's financing and business assistance services. Helping small business grow is an integral part of the Mayor's Five Borough Economic Opportunity Plan to create jobs for New Yorkers today, implement a vision for long-term economic growth, and build affordable, attractive neighborhoods. The five initiatives include the NYC Business Solutions Financing Fair, a new NYC Business Solutions satellite office in Washington Heights, greater access to pro bono legal assistance through the NYC Business Solutions Centers, the development of a seminar to train Hispanic business associations on services available to businesses, and the launch of an online directory on the National Hispanic Business Information Clearinghouse website. The Mayor made the announcement at the Audubon Partnership for Economic Development in Washington Heights. Joining Mayor Bloomberg was Deputy Mayor for Economic Development Robert C. Lieber, Deputy Mayor for Legal Affairs Carol Robles-Roman, National Hispanic Business Information Clearinghouse Chairman Salvador Gomez, Audubon Partnership for Economic Development Executive Director Carmen Diaz-Santiago, and Stephen Falla Riff from the Legal Aid Society.

"Strengthening and providing the tools businesses need in order to thrive are crucial to our Five-Borough Economic Opportunity Plan for spurring New York's recovery from the national economic recession," said Mayor Bloomberg. "New York has led the nation in the rate of growth for Hispanic-owned businesses, and it's important to our economy to help even more of these businesses succeed."

"The Bloomberg Administration is strengthening its efforts to ensure all New Yorkers have access to services," said Deputy Mayor Robles-Roman. "By providing a growing community of small business owners with tools and services to face challenging economic times, we are also strengthening many neighborhoods and communities in all five boroughs."

“New York City’s small businesses are critical drivers of our economy employing almost half of all New Yorkers,” said Deputy Mayor Lieber. “These five initiatives will make it easier for Hispanic businesses to access the tools they need to keep their doors open and continue to make investments in their operations, and help entrepreneurs launch new businesses in the five boroughs.”

“Our City’s small businesses make each neighborhood unique and diverse, and we must help them continue to thrive. Even during the best of times operating a business can be challenging,” said Commissioner Walsh. “We are expanding the services offered through NYC Business Solutions to ensure that New York businesses can access City services to help them start, operate and expand. I thank Mayor Bloomberg and Commissioner Linares for their support and applaud them for their efforts that will greatly benefit businesses in the Hispanic community.”

“In uncertain economic times it becomes critical to aid and support the livelihood of small business owners in our City,” said Commissioner Linares. “Latino and immigrant owned businesses are in the majority and are the backbone of the City’s economy. It is exciting to partner with Commissioner Walsh and the Department of Small Business Services in delivering these initiatives.”

“The National Hispanic Business Information Clearinghouse is pleased to partner with Mayor Bloomberg and the City of New York to offer this free business resource to further assist New York’s Hispanic business community in achieving the American dream of owning a successful business,” said National Hispanic BIC Chairman Gomez. “We are dedicated to assisting Hispanic entrepreneurs by providing critical business information that supports economic development in the Hispanic community, in New York City and our nation.”

“The Legal Aid Society Community Development Project is excited to partner with the Department of Small Business Services and Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs to provide free legal services and educational workshops to low-income small businesses throughout New York City,” said Stephen Falla Riff of the Legal Aid Society. “We look forward to working together to assist immigrant and other low-income communities throughout the city.”

“Audubon is very pleased to partner with NYC Business Solutions, a partnership that will enhance the services Audubon provides and will yield benefits to the small business community we serve here in Washington Heights and Inwood, said Audubon Executive Director Diaz-Santiago. “In this time of crisis, solutions are what we need.”

The five initiatives the City will launch to aid Latino Small Businesses include:

- **NYC Business Solutions Financing Fair** – On July 9th, The Department of Small Business Services will host a NYC Business Solutions Financing Fair at the Malcolm X & Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial, Educational and Cultural Center in Washington Heights designed to match Hispanic entrepreneurs and small business owners with lenders. Traditional and alternative lenders will participate in the financing fair which will provide entrepreneurs and small business owners the opportunity to pitch their financing needs.
- **NYC Business Solutions Center Satellite Office in Washington Heights** – In September 2009, the Department of Small Business Services will open an NYC Business Solutions satellite office in Washington Heights. The satellite office will be housed in the office of a

local business services organization and will complement the services of the NYC Business Solutions, Upper Manhattan Center located at 215 West 125th Street. The satellite office will be staffed with bilingual (Spanish and English) account managers to ensure that entrepreneurs and business owners can access NYC Business Solutions services in the Spanish language. Since 2004, the Department of Small Business Services has established six NYC Business Solutions Centers throughout the City to provide entrepreneurs and small business owners help with starting, operating and expanding their businesses in New York City.

- **Greater Access to Pro-Bono Legal Assistance** – The Department of Small Business Services has partnered with the Legal Aid Society to support the launch of expanded Spanish language legal workshops at NYC Business Solution Centers. In August, the partnership will launch a Spanish language workshop series designed to educate businesses on the most common issues and challenges associated with commercial leases and contracts. Currently, the Department of Small Business Services helps small businesses connect to pro bono legal services for assistance with contract review, business formation and intellectual property advice.
- **Assistance and Education from City Agencies** – Within the next ninety days the Department of Small Business Services and the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs will host a half-day seminar for Hispanic business associations. Through a series of presentations and workshops, business associations will be given comprehensive training on the range of services offered to businesses by the City. Representatives from the Department of Small Business Services will cover the full suite of NYC Business Solutions services including navigating government, minority and women-owned business enterprise certification, training employees, help accessing incentives as well as legal, financing and hiring assistance. The program will also include a session on credit repair services presented by representatives from the Department of Consumer Affairs’ Office of Financial Empowerment.
- **Bilingual Online Directory with National Hispanic Business Information Clearinghouse** – The National Hispanic Business Information Clearinghouse (NHBIC) has launched the NHBIC web portal for small businesses in New York in partnership with the Department of Small Business Services and the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs. The Western Union sponsored NHBIC web portal is a free online resource that provides critical local business assistance information to entrepreneurs and business owners in Spanish and English. NHBIC helps immigrant entrepreneurs and business owners successfully integrate and build regional economies.

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