

## **GOVERNOR CUOMO LAUNCHES BUSINESS MENTOR NY ONLINE PLATFORM TO SUPPORT AND GROW SMALL BUSINESSES**

***Innovative and Free Resource Builds on the Success of Business Mentor NY Program; Allows Business Owners to Register Online and Connect with Other Business Professionals Directly***

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the launch of a new online platform for Business Mentor NY, the State's first, large-scale, hands-on mentoring program designed to help entrepreneurs and small businesses across New York State grow their businesses. The platform – [www.businessmentor.ny.gov](http://www.businessmentor.ny.gov) – is designed to streamline the free mentoring process so that business owners throughout New York State may receive assistance from a variety of experienced professionals who represent a vast range of disciplines and are volunteering their time and expertise. Through the website, participants may register online, review the profiles of potential mentors and communicate directly with them on an as-needed basis and at no charge. The kickoff event occurred at the Manhattan headquarters of Quirky, a successful invention company, whose senior executives will serve as mentors in the program.

“This free, new program will help small businesses looking to grow,” Governor Cuomo said. “Helping small business owners overcome obstacles and achieve greater success will in turn strengthen local economies and spur job creation. I commend the Quirky team and other volunteer mentors who will donate their time and expertise in order to help their fellow New Yorkers with reaching their full economic potential.”

In his State of the State address in January, Governor Cuomo first announced the creation of Business Mentor NY, which builds upon the volunteer mentoring efforts that provided assistance to businesses affected by Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Lee and Tropical Storm Lee.

“Great companies start with great ideas, and Business Mentor NY was created to help entrepreneurs build a successful business model around their great ideas,” said Kenneth Adams, President, CEO & Commissioner of Empire State Development (ESD). “Whether it's overcoming hardships caused by a severe storm, reviewing insurance policies or managing finances, this innovative network was designed to help small businesses grow by learning from the experiences of their peers throughout the State.”

Starting today, ESD, which administers the Business Mentor NY program, will conduct a series of events across the State to increase awareness about the program's benefits. The program partners with the NY Rising Small Business Recovery Program to assist businesses in communities affected by the aforementioned storms and is funded in part through the federal Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program enacted in the wake of Superstorm Sandy. Business Mentor NY connects volunteers working in the private sector to small businesses and minority and women owned businesses (MWBs) to help them both recover from the storm and become more resilient. The one-on-one guidance and counsel will complement the State's current network of financial and technical assistance providers that help owners and communities realize their full economic potential.

More than 200 business professionals have volunteered to participate as mentors in Business Mentor NY to date, including lawyers, accountants, consultants and other entrepreneurs and experts in the fields of finance, retail, communications and information technology, human resources and staffing, public relations, sales and marketing. Through the website, small business owners may research online profiles of potential experts in order to find a suitable mentor and reach out to him or her directly.

The program is being conducted in partnership with MicroMentor, a proprietary online mentoring platform that connects volunteer mentors with entrepreneurs so they may solve problems and build businesses together. An initiative of the nonprofit Mercy Corps, MicroMentor has a track record of success nationwide. MicroMentor has found that formal mentoring programs, such as Business Mentor NY, help businesses increase their annual revenue, create jobs and launch successful businesses compared to businesses that do not participate in mentoring programs.

“MicroMentor is proud to partner with the Empire State Development and help entrepreneurs experience how the power of mentoring can help their businesses thrive,” said Samantha Albery, director of MicroMentor. “As New York State entrepreneurs use Business Mentor NY to connect with business professionals, they will turn their business dreams into realities and spur economic growth across the State.”

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