

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, December 1, 2015

DEPARTMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES, NYCHA, CENTER FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, AND CITI COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCE OPENING OF THE ROCKAWAY WORKFORCE1 CAREER CENTER

New center connects Rockaway residents to high-quality employment by providing comprehensive career services, including financial counseling and on-site occupational trainings

New York – The Department of Small Business Services (SBS), the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), and Citi Community Development announced today the opening of the Rockaway Workforce1 Career Center to provide a continuum of services for jobseekers through the Rockaway Economic Advancement Initiative.

The initiative is part of Doorways to Opportunity, a \$1.4 million multi-partner initiative funded by Citi that provides public housing residents across New York with access to employment opportunities, free financial counseling and entrepreneurship training in partnership with community organizations.

It builds on an announcement made by Mayor de Blasio in October 2014 to expand place-based economic empowerment and mobility in the Rockaways and connect residents with high-quality, full-time employment through a partnership between the Mayor, SBS, NYCHA, CEO, and Citi with an over \$1.1 million investment. The Rockaway Economic Advancement Initiative also reflects the Mayor's *Career Pathways* workforce development framework, which was introduced in 2014 to drive investments in middle-skill job training, prioritize good-payment full-time job placements for workforce agencies, and require companies doing business with the City to move New Yorkers to the front of the hiring line.

The Rockaway Workforce1 Career Center will offer wrap-around career readiness and recruitment services responsive to the needs of local residents, including:

- Tailored intensive career planning and job search preparatory services – including pre-employment assessments, individual employment plans, and career counseling
- High quality recruitment and job matching for jobseekers
- Candidate services like resume development and interview support, as well as connections to supportive services, including High School Equivalency Diploma programs
- Group and one-on-one financial counseling to support smart earning and saving practices
- On-site, industry approved occupational training for in-demand jobs
- Assistance for businesses in Rockaway to find, hire, and train a qualified workforce
- Referrals to coordinated network of Rockaway community-based organizations, workforce development providers, training providers, faith-based organizations, and social service agencies

“By better training and preparing Rockaway residents for high-quality jobs, we’re investing in the economic success of the peninsula’s hard-working families and our economy as a whole,” said **Alicia Glen, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development**. “The opening of the Rockaways Workforce1 Career Center is part of the City’s commitment to building a more prosperous and inclusive economic future for Sandy-impacted neighborhoods, like the vibrant Rockaway community.”

“The Rockaway Workforce1 Center empowers Rockaway residents with the support, training, and connections necessary to access good-paying jobs and quality career opportunities,” said **Gregg Bishop, Commissioner of the Department of Small Business Services**. “I want to thank our partners at Citi, CEO, NYCHA, and HRO for joining forces to develop a dynamic new resource for the Rockaway community, bringing together a comprehensive and unique set of career services that responds directly to the needs of Rockaway jobseekers.”

“By coordinating with SBS, NYCHA, and NYC Center for Economic Opportunity to provide a continuum of workforce development services in one location, connecting Rockaway residents with high-quality employment, we hope to strengthen this community and expand economic opportunities, making progress toward a more inclusive New York City,” said **Eileen Auld, Director, New York Tri-State Market, Citi Community Development**.

“This project builds on evidence from effective workforce programs and can further the economic well-being and recovery of the Rockaway community as part of the fight against inequality,” said **CEO Executive Director Matthew Klein**. “CEO is proud to work with NYCHA, SBS, and Citi to provide New Yorkers of the Far Rockaways with assistance and skills training that will help them move up their career pathways into jobs with family sustaining wages. We hope to learn lessons from this project that can help inform improvements to the City’s workforce system.”

“Connecting NYCHA residents to quality employment is an important part of our long-term strategic plan NextGeneration NYCHA,” said **NYCHA General Manager Michael Kelly**. “By working with partners like the Department of Small Business Services, the Center for Economic Opportunity and Citi Community Development, we can ensure our residents have increased access to job training and employment opportunities, and the support they need to achieve economic empowerment.”

SBS’ current Workforce1 system successfully connects New York job seekers to quality training and good jobs through 16 Workforce1 Centers across the five boroughs. The Workforce1 system operates at a citywide scale, and the Rockaway Economic Advancement Initiative – with support from NYCHA, CEO, and Citi Community Development – represents the first time Workforce1 will operate within a neighborhood-level economic mobility effort.

The Rockaways location will be the first Workforce1 Career Center to include a dedicated training lab space, equipping Rockaway residents with the skills necessary to secure in-demand jobs by providing industry-approved occupational trainings in an easily accessible location on the peninsula. The center and training lab were developed with support from L+M Development Partners, the developer behind the affordable housing complex where the center is located. The flexible training lab space will open with a complete offering of trainings in 2016 focusing on a range of occupations in healthcare, transportation, construction and other sectors.

“L+M is proud to have rehabilitated the Arverne View affordable housing complex in the Rockaways and taken our community development beyond the bricks and mortar,” said **Ron Moelis, CEO and founding partner of L+M Development Partners**. “The Rockaway Workforce1 Career Center will empower local residents to transform their skills and increase their opportunities to secure higher-paying jobs. We thank the de Blasio administration and all our partners for helping to make this effort a real success for the neighborhood.”

Through the Mayor's Housing Recovery Office (HRO), the Rockaway Workforce1 Center will also provide opportunities to Sandy-impacted New Yorkers through the HRO-SBS Workforce1 Partnership and Build It Back HireNYC Initiative. Announced by Mayor de Blasio in October 2014 as a pillar of the City's investment in the Rockaways, the partnership requires all contractors, consultants, and vendors receiving Sandy recovery funds from the City for Build It Back projects to post job opportunities and work with Workforce1 on employment requirements. The Rockaway Workforce1 Career Center will connect Sandy-impacted residents with opportunities through the rebuilding effort.

"Through Sandy Recovery Workforce1, Rockaway residents can play an immediate role in the recovery of their neighborhood. We offer workforce training opportunities, including fully-paid pre-apprenticeship training in the construction trades, and job opportunities, including positions with the contractors doing the Build it Back construction work," said **Amy Peterson, Director of the Mayor's Housing Recovery Office**. "With the opening of the new Workforce1 Center, we are excited to expand further in the Rockaways, so that even more residents can be connected with high-quality and meaningful employment."

To inform training offerings and supportive services at the center, the Rockaway Workforce1 Community Experts Committee, comprised of key local stakeholders and community leaders, will continue to convene with support from Council Member Donovan Richards to ensure center offerings are responsive to the needs of local residents.

"One of the greatest needs in the Rockaways is workforce development, so the opening of the Workforce1 Career Center is the most important addition to the Far Rockaway community, especially with the strong revitalization push coming to Downtown Far Rockaway," said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. "From the career planning services to the assistance for Rockaway businesses to find, hire and train a qualified workforce, Rockaway job seekers and business owners will now have the opportunity to gain the tools needed for success. I'd like to thank the Department of Small Business Services for supporting Rockaway communities with essential services and initiatives."

"Unemployment is one of the toughest problems facing our community. We have educated, skilled people, who just need to make the connection to the right employer," said **State Senator James Sanders Jr.** "This new Workforce 1 Center will be a one-stop shop for job seekers, bringing the resources they need to find

work directly to them, right in their own community. I am sure that many people will benefit from its services.”

To learn more about offerings at the Rockaway Workforce1 Career Center, jobseekers can visit nyc.gov/workforce1. New Yorkers can also find valuable resources online through the [Workforce1 Career Blog](#) and [Career Bulletin](#), and by following Workforce1 on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#). Sandy-impacted residents are also encouraged to learn more about Sandy Recovery Workforce1 and register for communication about Build it Back job opportunities by visiting nyc.gov/sandyrecoverywf1.

About the Department of Small Business Services (SBS)

The Department of Small Business Services helps unlock economic potential and create economic security for all New Yorkers by connecting New Yorkers to good jobs, creating stronger businesses, and building a fairer economy in neighborhoods across the five boroughs. For more information on all of SBS’ services, go to nyc.gov/sbs, call 311, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#), or visit our [blog](#).

About Citi

Citi, the leading global bank, has approximately 200 million customer accounts and does business in more than 160 countries and jurisdictions. Citi provides consumers, corporations, governments and institutions with a broad range of financial products and services, including consumer banking and credit, corporate and investment banking, securities brokerage, transaction services, and wealth management. Additional information may be found at www.citigroup.com | Twitter: @Citi | YouTube: www.youtube.com/citi | Blog: <http://blog.citigroup.com> | Facebook: www.facebook.com/citi | LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/citi.

About the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO)

The Center for Economic Opportunity works to reduce poverty and advance evidence-based policy in New York City through research, program design, monitoring and evaluation. Part of the Mayor’s Office of Operations, CEO manages a dedicated annual Innovation Fund and works collaboratively with City agencies and other partners to create, implement, and oversee a range of anti-poverty programs, policies, and research projects. CEO’s in-house evaluation team works with nationally recognized, independent evaluation firms and City agencies to rigorously measure program impacts and provide objective evidence to inform decisions of whether to replicate, eliminate, or scale up programs.

About the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)

NYCHA's mission is to increase opportunities for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers by providing safe, affordable housing and facilitating access to social and community services. More than 400,000 New Yorkers reside in NYCHA's 328 public housing developments around the five boroughs, and another 235,000 receive subsidized rental assistance in private homes through the NYCHA-administered Section 8 Leased Housing Program. For more information, visit our website at www.nyc.gov/nycha.

About the Mayor's Housing Recovery Office (HRO)

The City of New York created the Housing Recovery Office (HRO) within a week of Hurricane Sandy's landfall to coordinate efforts to quickly return residents to their homes. The New York City Build it Back program, administered by HRO, was designed to assist homeowners, landlords, renters, and tenants affected by Hurricane Sandy within the five boroughs. The program offers multiple pathways to assistance, including: property rehabilitation or reconstruction, reimbursement for repair work already carried out, and acquisition of homes.

###

Contact: Lulu Mickelson (SBS), lmickelson@sbs.nyc.gov, 212-513-6318