For Immediate Release
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 **The NYC Small Business Resource Network Receives $500K Grant from Wells Fargo to Develop Websites and Online Tools for NYC Small Businesses**

 ***The funding helps expand the Open + Online Initiative which has helped over 700 small businesses throughout New York City improve their digital presence and better compete in an increasingly digital marketplace***

***Grant will target minority and women-owned enterprises across the five boroughs***

**NEW YORK, NY** (February 9, 2024) – Today, the NYC Small Business Resource Network (SBRN) announced that Wells Fargo has provided funding that will help 500 small businesses across New York City get online and grow their business. The $500,000 grant will support the SBRN’s *Open + Online* initiative, a free resource to help business owners establish or improve their digital presence, with a focus on minority and women-owned enterprises (MWBE). Interested businesses can apply to participate at [openandonline.smallbiz.nyc](http://openandonline.smallbiz.nyc/)**.**

“Wells Fargo is a proud supporter of this important initiative because we understand how crucial it is for local small businesses to have a digital presence in order to build their brands and connect with a wider customer base,” said **Krissy Moore, Senior Vice President – Community Relations Northeast Region at Wells Fargo**. “While economic challenges continue for small businesses in New York City and across the country, we are focused on opening up more avenues to economic advancement and strengthening the small business community for the long-term. Our goal is to help as many small businesses as we can with a strong emphasis on supporting the needs faced by diverse small business owners and providing them with the digital tools and services they need to compete in the 21st century economy.”

The SBRN is a comprehensive approach to small business resiliency that offers free, personalized guidance and support to help businesses grow and thrive. The SBRN is driven by a team of dedicated Business Support Specialists who work one-on-one with small business owners, helping them gain access to a range of programs and services including grants and loans, connections to legal counsel, business coaching, marketing guidance, and technology support.

Originally launched as a pandemic recovery effort, the SBRN continues to support small businesses via a collaborative partnership between the five boroughwide chambers of commerce. The SBRN has reached close to 50,000 businesses, providing direct support to over 13,000, with 76 percent of businesses served being MWBEs.

“It is crucial that we help minority and women-owned small businesses improve their digital presence, so they can continue to drive New York City’s economic recovery. We are so thankful that Wells Fargo has stepped up to support the important work the Small Business Resource Network is doing through the Open + Online program. This funding will have a tremendous impact on hundreds of small businesses, helping them grow and better serve their customers and communities,” said **Lisa Sorin**, President of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce; **Randy Peers**, President and CEO of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce; **Jessica Walker**, President and CEO of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce; **Tom Grech**, President and CEO of the Queens Chamber of Commerce; and **Linda Baran**, President and CEO of the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce on behalf of the **Five Chamber Alliance**.

In 2021, the SBRN launched ***Open + Online*** - a free resource to help small businesses establish or improve their digital presence. This program, supported by funding raised by the Partnership for New York City, was conceived to address the digital divide, and targeted MWBE entrepreneurs with little to no online presence. To date, *Open + Online* has completed almost 1000 digital projects, including basic websites, e-commerce websites, SEO consultations and logo/branding design.

“*Open + Online* is a valuable resource to help entrepreneurs to compete in an increasingly digital marketplace. Wells Fargo’s support will greatly expand access to technology tools for minority- and women-owned businesses across the five boroughs,” said **Kathryn Wylde, President and CEO of the Partnership for New York City.**

“We live in a digital world and through Wells Fargo’s generous grant, small businesses throughout New York City will have the tools and resources needed to thrive in today’s online marketplace,” said **New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) President & CEO Andrew Kimball.** “The expansion of NYC’s Small Business Resource Network’s *Open + Online* initiative will also translate to more resources for MWBEs, whose success is critical to building an inclusive economy that works for all New Yorkers.”

“Every entrepreneur knows that building a strong digital footprint is vital to success,” said **New York City Department of Small Business Services Commissioner Kevin D. Kim**. “The partnership between Wells Fargo and the NYC SBRN will help minority- and- women entrepreneurs to do just that. Their success online is key to their success in business, and to the success of the City of Yes.”

“I’m very thankful for the Small Business Resource Network’s *Open + Online* initiative. As a minority and LGBTQ+ business owner, this has helped my home based small business be more accessible to potential customers,” said **Arnaldo Felix Silva, owner of Sweet Isla Bakery.** “My digital program manager helped give my business a beautiful online presence that aligns with my vision and helps me to honor my Puerto Rican culture. Programs like this are a blessing for small business owners since most of the time we struggle with the starting costs of having a website or getting much needed professional help. I will be forever thankful for this program.”

“MoJazz Dance is so deeply grateful and fortunate for the support and services we received through the *Open + Online* Program. From our initial point of contact, the digital program manager understood and accommodated our challenging schedule and paired us with an outstanding website designer who was an absolute delight to collaborate with,” said **Audrey Madison, Founder and Artistic Director of MoJazz Dance.** “In one month, our designer patiently guided us with discussions and written to-do lists, and executed desired revisions based on our feedback notes. She truly captured the essence and spirit of MoJazz Dance. Our program manager supported our knowledge and abilities to maneuver the technical functions of the site and developed our confidence to do so. Our final product is absolutely amazing and we are elated to extend our digital presence with a website that truly reflects who we are.”

**About the NYC Small Business Resource Network:**

The NYC Small Business Resource Network (SBRN) is a comprehensive approach to small business resiliency that offers free, personalized guidance and support to help businesses grow and thrive. Originally launched as a pandemic recovery effort, the SBRN continues to support small businesses today via a collaborative partnership between the five borough chambers of commerce, with generous support from the City of New York. Our unique service-delivery model places Business Support Specialists on the ground in neighborhoods across the city, helping businesses get connected to free resources offered by both the public and private sectors. [https://www.nycsmallbusinessresourcenetwork.org](https://www.nycsmallbusinessresourcenetwork.org/)

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