



One Year Progress Report

Since 2001, the Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia (SBN) has provided a platform for thousands of thriving, independent, locally-owned businesses committed to improving their environmental and social impacts as well as their profitability in the Greater Philadelphia region. SBN business members represent almost 7,000 jobs in the Philadelphia region. In November 2011, SBN released an award-winning report, "Taking Care of Business: Improving Philadelphia's Small Business Climate," which analyzed Philadelphia's small business climate, showing that Philadelphia's 93,000 small businesses provide over half of the jobs in the city.

The chart below shows progress on report recommendations over the past year.

1 APPROVALS

Reduce the time, cost and confusion of obtaining City approvals.

- » City's online Business Services Center, released November 2011, improved to allow business to identify approvals needed
- » New L&I website launched in August 2012 that features searchable and mappable data
- » Health and L&I now jointly review food related business plans
- » L&I currently moving from Hansen to Eclipse, an online licensing and permitting system that enables simultaneous multi-user commenting across departments and the ability for applicants to track the progress of their applications through an online system
- » Sign permitting process under review
- » City remapping food truck permissible areas

2 TAXES

Simplify the tax compliance burden for small businesses.

- » Jump Start Philly, recent Philadelphia business tax legislation, will implement a phased-in exemption of the first \$100,000 in gross receipts starting in 2014
- » Jump Start Philly will also eliminate business taxes for the first 2 years of operation for new businesses that create at least three full-time jobs in their first six months and at least six full-time jobs by 24 months. 600 applicants to date.

3 LAWS

Ensure laws do not unnecessarily harm small businesses.

- » Discussions to improve understanding of impact of laws on business

4 INSPECTIONS

Reform the inspection system to ensure it is fair, objective and offers the right to a timely appeal.

- » Inspectors dress in professional attire
- » Improved focus on vacant and tax delinquent properties and closed businesses
- » L&I posts violations online in list and map format

5 FINANCING

Partner with Community Development Financial Institutions and nonprofit support organizations to increase financing to small businesses.

- » ROSCA peer lending model implemented by FINANTA and EntrepreneurWORKS, two Business Technical Assistance Program (BTAP) providers for the Commerce Department
- » Commerce Department looking into a possible partnership with local CDFIs in order to provide additional capital and operating support to organizations making microloans
- » Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation subsidiary (PIDC Regional Development Corporation) granted status as a Community Development Financial Institution in April 2012

6 SUPPORT

Encourage collaboration and increased accountability among small business support organizations.

- » Commerce Department lists small business technical assistance providers on Business Services Center
- » Increased multi-lingual staff, including Commerce's first full-time Mandarin speaking staff, and Khmer and Korean now represented as well
- » SBN and Commerce bringing SourceLink in to identify and understand current areas of focus and gaps in service
- » City requires performance data from non-profit TA providers
- » Philadelphia Works in strategic planning process to engage small business employers in a more focused way; now targeting small businesses and trying to align them with the services needed to screen applicants and fill positions; PW business engagement

7 LAND

Transfer vacant land and enforce tax foreclosure laws to provide land for new and expanding businesses.

- » Philly Landworks allows business to identify and potentially obtain publicly owned property
- » PA General Assembly passed a bill authorizing Philadelphia and other local governments to create a Land Bank to put blighted properties back into productive reuse
- » City Council and Administration exploring land bank creation

8 PROCUREMENT

Consolidate and modernize the City's procurement process to increase small business participation.

- » Buy American Executive Order 4-12 signed by Mayor Nutter to put in place a process whereby locally-made goods will be prioritized when the City is procuring items, ensuring that locally-made goods and the use of local labor are an essential component of City procurement

9 COMMUNICATION

Improve communication between government and small businesses.

- » Positive meetings and discussions held between City and SBN
- » As the City's workforce arm, Philadelphia Works working to improve communications between government, businesses and nonprofits: now live person on the employer hotline to respond to people immediately when calls come in, streamlining contracting process to reduce the time it takes to create a contract with an employer for customized job training and on the job training