

## The agenda for New York's entrepreneurs: 2025 legislative session

Small Business Majority has created a comprehensive state policy agenda to ensure entrepreneurship is at the center of a thriving and inclusive economy in New York. It's critical that state lawmakers enact short- and long-term policies to support and empower entrepreneurs by guaranteeing their access to capital, an infrastructure that can support their ability to offer quality jobs, and their ability to compete on a level-playing field. To achieve these goals, policymakers should consider the following policy proposals.

### Increase access to capital and opportunity for entrepreneurs

- **Continue to support New York's implementation of the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) programs.** State administrators of the federal SSBCI funds must ensure these programs are reaching under-resourced small businesses. Programs should equitably target micro, rural and BIPOC-owned businesses through impactful lending and investments, with a particular focus on small-dollar loans that traditional lenders are less likely to make.
- **Pass the Consumer and Small Business Protections Act:** New York is one of only seven states in the nation to not provide protections against unfair or abusive lending practices. The Consumer and Small Business Protections Act would strengthen protections for small business owners and consumers alike. This would expand protections that already exist under the New York Truth in Lending Act, which, as written, has limits on necessary protections for small business owners.
- **Enact the New York Public Banking Act:** The New York Public Banking Act creates a needed regulatory framework for local public banks in New York. Through public banking, cities and counties across the state can divest public money from Wall Street banks that have long stopped lending dollars to small business and invest in financial institutions who will intentionally support small business and other community economic development initiatives.

### Bolster a Main Street-friendly workforce and the creation of quality jobs

- **Support the Fair Pricing Act:** Healthcare affordability continues to be a top issue for small business owners. New York must tackle absurdly high prices by capping how much a healthcare provider can charge for outpatient services, regardless of the setting in which it is provided. With so many hospitals consolidating and integrating with other providers, the costs of medical services are skyrocketing with no accompanying increase in value. Policymakers should cap how much a provider can charge for a limited number of services, putting an end to providers charging different prices for the same procedure based on who owns the building.
- **Modernize Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI):** When New York passed paid family leave in 2016, which allows small business owners and workers to take paid time off to care for a family member, lawmakers did not update the state's Temporary Disability Insurance policy, which enables owners and employees to take time off when they themselves are unable to work due to a medical issue. Now small business owners and their workers are left to navigate two very different systems with inconsistent benefits. For example, a worker who takes time off to care for someone else's medical needs may receive pay that is up to six times larger than if that same worker took time off to care for their own medical needs. The TDI program should be updated to allow business owners and their employees to take paid leave when medically necessary. This will help retain top talent at small businesses who otherwise may seek employment from a large business who can offer more robust medical leave benefits. According to our [polling](#), only about

half of small businesses offer some kind of paid medical leave for serious health needs. The vast majority of small business owners (86%) support access to paid leave as an employer—but many cannot afford to pay an employee who is on extended leave out of pocket.

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- **Simplify paid family leave:** New York's current Paid Family Leave law requires employers to purchase their own private paid leave insurance plan. This can be expensive, confusing and time-consuming. New York instead should create a state-run paid leave insurance program, as other states have done, to auto-enroll employees and to take contributions through payroll deductions. This would decrease overhead costs and the burden for small business owners who struggle to research, purchase and administer the own private plan.
- **Address childcare access and affordability:** A lack of access to affordable childcare for small business owners and employees has become a significant barrier to entrepreneurship. According to [our polling](#), 59% of small business owners say a lack of childcare for their own children creates an impediment to grow their business. Furthermore, more than 6 in 10 (61%) agree that their employees' childcare issues have negatively affected their ability to do their job as efficiently as both the employer and employee would like. Not only that, but small childcare providers are struggling to keep their heads above water due to the high costs of running their businesses and complicated regulations and licensing requirements. To support entrepreneurs, New York lawmakers should invest \$1.2 billion to create a permanent fund to provide sustained and reliable compensation and benefits to all childcare businesses in the state to ensure that these entrepreneurs are being paid a fair and living wage. Additionally, lawmakers must increase access to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) for families across the state, while ensuring providers receive the maximum allowable rate to serve families.
- **Implement the New York Secure Choice Savings Program:** In 2018, New York passed the New York State Secure Choice Program (SCSP) but the program has yet to be implemented. The state should move swiftly to launch a program that will allow small businesses of all sizes to auto-enroll their employees in a retirement savings program. This necessary program has had wide success in many other states, including Colorado, Oregon and New York.
- **Create the Worker Ownership Center:** Establishing a Worker Ownership Center would support the development of worker-owned businesses across New York. This Center would assist small businesses in the state that are at risk of either closing or being sold to private equity and big out-of-state corporations, helping to preserve the small business community, creating more opportunities for entrepreneurship and giving small business owners an additional option for succession planning.
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## Promote a level playing field for New York small businesses

- **Pass the Antitrust Act 21<sup>st</sup> Century:** Across America, 75% of industries have experienced increases in consolidation, leading to more powerful corporate entities threatening the vitality of local and small businesses. These largely unchecked consolidated powers often lead to higher prices, lack of entrepreneurship opportunities and local businesses being driven out of their communities. New York lawmakers must ensure that dominant corporations can't use their power to fix prices, exploit local businesses and more. New York can be an innovator in modernizing how we approach consolidation and modern corporations to protect our small business community.
- **Ban non-compete contracts:** Our [polling](#) shows nearly half of small businesses (46%) say a non-compete agreement prevented them from starting or expanding their business, and a third (35%) were prevented from hiring an employee. While the Federal Trade Commission moved to ban non-compete agreements, this ban has been held up in the [courts](#) and is in jeopardy. While the Federal Trade Commission moved to ban non-compete agreements, this ban has been held up in the [courts](#) and is in jeopardy under the new administration. The legislature must act on the state-level to ensure New York small businesses are protected from harmful non-compete agreements.

## New York City specific policies

- **The Fine Transparency for Small Businesses Bill** will bring much-needed transparency to how fines are imposed on small businesses citywide. **Support the Fine Transparency for Small Businesses bill:** Small businesses are struggling with rising costs, so we urge the city to do its part to keep small business costs down. The Fine Transparency for Small Business bill will bring much-needed transparency to how fines are imposed on small businesses citywide. This will help ensure fairness, inform policy decisions and support compliance with workshops and outreach efforts so that businesses can avoid fines in the first place and stay in good standing.
- **The Small Business Bill of Rights** empowers small businesses by increasing transparency and codifying explicit requirements from landlords. **Pass the Small Business Bill of Rights bill:** Too many large landlords are using their market power to engage in dishonest, unfair business practices, taking advantage of small business owners. We urge policymakers to support the Small Business Bill of Rights which would increase transparency and codify explicit requirements from landlords, ensuring equal footing during commercial lease negotiations, guarantee accountability between landlords and tenants and support fair lease agreements across New York City.
- **Extend the Relocation and Employment Assistance Program (REAP):** REAP is a critical incentive that drives economic growth, supports small businesses and fosters equitable development across New York City's five boroughs. We must extend and expand this program to encourage more businesses to grow beyond Manhattan's central core. REAP has been an important resource for small businesses struggling with the current workforce and creates opportunities for all New Yorkers.