



# City of Seattle

**Office of the Mayor**

**City of Seattle**

Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor

## **Executive Order 2018-06: Support for Seattle's Small Businesses**

*An Executive Order recognizing the Small Business Advisory Council's (SBAC) inaugural year and the work plan developed, acknowledging the mission of giving small businesses a voice at City Hall, seeking their counsel on policies and programs, and providing them access to tools and resources to promote their success.*

WHEREAS, small businesses play a critical role in the vibrancy, health, and diversity of our neighborhoods and economy; and

WHEREAS, 95% of Seattle establishments are small businesses employing fewer than 50 people; and establishments with fewer than 50 employees provide nearly 200,000 jobs, or 31% of our employment; and

WHEREAS, women, immigrants, refugees, persons of color and minorities are more likely to own smaller businesses than larger ones, and face institutional barriers to entry; and

WHEREAS, in line with national trends, business ownership rates in Seattle are declining; and

WHEREAS, small businesses struggle to find affordable, appropriately-sized commercial spaces, and retail rents have increased more than 25% since 2012; and

WHEREAS, small businesses, especially those in labor-intensive and low-wage industries, are the most vulnerable to local and national economic turmoil; and

WHEREAS, City policies and programs may have unintended impacts on small businesses and their workforce; and

WHEREAS, small businesses value their employees who are instrumental to the success of the business; and

WHEREAS, resource-constrained entrepreneurs have historically lacked direct channels to City Hall; and

WHEREAS, on November 30, 2017, I issued Executive Order 2017-15, establishing the City of Seattle's Small Business Advisory Council (SBAC); and

WHEREAS, the goal of SBAC is to provide feedback to the City on the cumulative impacts to small business of City actions, including major construction projects, permitting processes, parking practices and fees, regulatory requirements, signage and licensing fees and requirements and changes in zoning; and,

WHEREAS, SBAC's role is also to provide a better understanding of the obstacles small businesses face and identify the resources, tools, and programs they need to be successful; and

WHEREAS, SBAC provided policy recommendations and identified policy options that they would like the City to pursue to improve the environment for small businesses in the City of Seattle.

Now, THEREFORE, I, Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor of Seattle, hereby order:

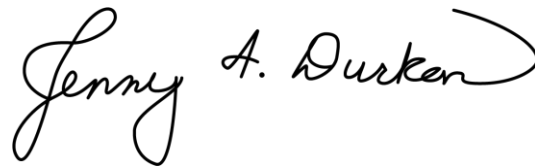
- 1) The City Budget Office, with support from the Department of Finance and Administrative Services and the Office of Economic Development, shall lead a study of taxes and fees that apply to small businesses in Seattle with the goal of 1) looking for ways to reduce the cumulative impact of fees; 2) examining the feasibility of providing small businesses with some financial relief from the City's business and occupation (B&O) tax; and 3) identifying issues and recommending steps the city can take to support the employees that are vital to the success of every business. Qualifying businesses must demonstrate a commitment to hiring local diverse talent and adhere to labor standards.
- 2) The Office of Economic Development (OED) will conduct a feasibility study on establishing a program to connect small businesses to trained Seattle youth seeking employment and adults seeking career development and retraining programs. The study will focus on, but not be limited to, small businesses in the hospitality, manufacturing, maritime, health care and technology sectors. The study will address eligibility requirements, training resources, and participation incentives for businesses.
- 3) The City will immediately re-establish the Citywide Business Advocacy Team (CBAT) to reduce "red tape," increase support for workers, and help Seattle small businesses navigate government. Led by OED, membership will consist of:
  - a. Deputy director-level participants from the following offices and departments: Office of Economic Development, Office of Labor Standards, the Office for Civil Rights, Office of Planning and Community Development, Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections, Seattle Department of Transportation, Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle City Light, Department of Finance and Administrative Services, Department of Neighborhoods, and Innovation and Performance. The Seattle Police Department and Seattle Fire Department will participate on a per issue basis.

The mission of CBAT will be to: 1) solve problems for small businesses; 2) advise small businesses on how to support their workforce and comply with labor standards; 3) track consistent trends in small business challenges; and 4) design and implement innovations to City processes, practices, and policies to address these persistent challenges. A CBAT representative will attend Small Business Advisory Council meetings and CBAT will provide an annual report to the Mayor, City Council, and Small Business Advisory Council regarding small business issues addressed and recommendations for regulatory and policy changes, and the impacts of these changes.

- 4) The Citywide Business Advocacy Team (through its respective Departments) will be responsible for the creation of and regular updates to a Seattle Small Business Welcome packet. This packet will provide a one-stop shop of information on permits, labor standards, taxes, licenses, fees, and support resources needed to successfully establish a small business. A first draft of the Welcome Packet will be submitted to the Mayor and the Small Business Advisory Council by April 30, 2019.

Inquiries regarding this Executive Order should be directed to Kyla Blair, Office of the Mayor.

Dated this 30th day of November, 2018

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny A. Durkan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

Jenny A. Durkan  
Mayor of Seattle