



Alliance for Downtown New York, Inc.
120 Broadway, Suite 3340
New York, NY 10271
212 566-6700 Fax 212 566-6707
www.DowntownNY.com

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Contact: Andrew Breslau 212-835-2759, abreslau@downtownny.com

Downtown Alliance Announces Two Initiatives To Help Small Businesses And Restaurants

One To Make Delivery And Takeout More Profitable, One To Help Storefronts Be COVID-Ready

NEW YORK (August 4, 2020) – The Alliance for Downtown New York, the nonprofit business improvement district for Lower Manhattan, is launching two initiatives focused on assisting the neighborhood’s small businesses.

The Alliance has partnered with **BentoBox** to assist eligible restaurants with setting up their own easy online ordering platforms. The plug-and-play e-commerce experience can be customized for each business and allows them to take orders without the use of other third party apps. The program will cover one year of services.

The Alliance is also working with **Streetsense**, a retail and urban-design consultancy, to provide up to 25 small businesses with one-on-one technical assistance to transform their spaces to be COVID-compliant.

Additionally, Streetsense will be producing two **Readiness Guides**, one specific to restaurants and bars and the other for retailers. The guides will be accompanied by two, 60-minute webinars. The guides and webinars will be made available to all Lower Manhattan businesses for free.

"Our program with BentoBox will eliminate the need for third-party services that eat into restaurant profits. Our local eateries, which already operate on razor-thin margins, are facing a once-in-a-generation crisis. This will empower New Yorkers to better support the local favorites that need our help," said Jessica Lappin, president of the Alliance for Downtown New York.

"COVID has foisted a whole new set of demands on all storefront businesses," Lappin continued. "Through consultations with Streetsense we hope to provide timely guidance for stressed entrepreneurs on everything from smart changes to their physical spaces to proper communication with customers."

Brian Taff, CEO of Streetsense: "We are honored to help the Downtown Alliance build a tool kit with a combination of practical guidance and ready-to-use tools that will help local businesses navigate a rapidly changing retail landscape. This important project will directly benefit retailers and restaurateurs in one of the most important global financial districts in the world, and we are excited for the opportunity to be a part of it."

“BentoBox is proud to partner with the Downtown Alliance and support Lower Manhattan restaurants with our direct online ordering solution,” said Krystle Mobayeni, co-founder and CEO of BentoBox. “We are thrilled to align with a like-minded, mission-driven organization that helps restaurants drive revenue and connect with diners during COVID and beyond.”

Both of these programs are part of a continuing effort by the Alliance to support businesses that have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. The Alliance is actively working to help Lower Manhattan's business community recover from the crisis: awarding rental assistance grants, educating local-business owners about available funding opportunities, convening industry-specific working groups, communicating which businesses are open to residents and spotlighting essential workers who are making a difference. Efforts will continue throughout the year with dedicated marketing initiatives to help safely open doors and turn the lights back on across the neighborhood.

EACH PROGRAM HAS DIFFERENT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND APPLICATION PROCESSES

To apply to the **Restaurant Online Ordering Program with BentoBox**, eligible restaurants are those with gross annual revenues of less than \$3 million and fewer than 30 full-time-equivalent employees as of October 1, 2020. Eligible restaurants must be [located south of Chambers Street and the Brooklyn Bridge in Manhattan](#). Acceptance into the program will be made on a first-come, first-served basis. The program excludes national chains, franchises and businesses that have more than five locations in New York City.

This application page will go live Wednesday, August 5, at 9a. Applications are due Friday, August 14, at 5p. All applicants will be notified of their status no later than Friday, August 21.

[Restaurant Online Ordering Program with BentoBox](#)

To apply for the **Streetsense technical assistance program**, small businesses must be operating and located within the boundaries of the Lower Manhattan Business Improvement District in New York City, roughly from Murray Street to the Battery and South Street to West Street (more specifically [delineated here](#)). A small business is defined as one that has fewer than 30 full-time-equivalent employees as of March 1, 2020, and gross annual revenues of less than \$3 million. The program excludes national chains, franchises and businesses that have more than five locations in New York City. An eligible essential small business is required to have a current lease, or an option to renew, for a ground-floor storefront business within the Lower Manhattan Business Improvement District through December 31, 2020.

This application page will go live Monday, August 10, at 9a. Applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis until 25 eligible businesses have been accepted. Consultations with Streetsense will take place between August and October 2020.

The Downtown Alliance will publish Streetsense's Pandemic Survival Toolkits online on August 14. A webinar to discuss the restaurant and bar tool kit will be live Thursday, August 20, followed by the retail webinar on Friday August 21.

[Streetsense Technical Assistance Program](#)

About the Alliance for Downtown New York

The mission of the Alliance for Downtown New York is to provide service, advocacy, research and information to advance Lower Manhattan as a global model of a 21st century Central Business District for businesses, residents and visitors. The Downtown Alliance manages the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Business Improvement District (BID), serving an area roughly from City Hall to the Battery, from the East River to West Street. For more information visit downtownny.com

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