

Offered by City Councilor Julia Mejia



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING DISCUSSING PERMITS FOR AT-HOME ENTREPRENEURS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

- WHEREAS,** Business-owners across the city are closing up shop due to the economic hardship associated with maintaining a physical storefront during a global pandemic, and entrepreneurs with the dream of one day opening up a storefront are putting that dream on hold; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Lack of access to physical commercial spaces has historically impacted entrepreneurs of color at a disproportionate rate, with neighborhoods that have the highest opportunity often being too expensive for start-up business owners of color; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Entrepreneurs across the city without access to the capital needed to start a brick-and-mortar business often get started in their home, relying either on the online marketplace for sales and consulting, or in-person services such as hair care and beauty supplies; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Cities across Massachusetts, including Arlington, Concord, and Newton, and most recently Cambridge, are set to begin to allow for cottage food operations, or “residential kitchens,” a type of business that allows entrepreneurs to prepare certain types of food in their home to be sold for profit ; *and*
- WHEREAS,** There are several different kinds of residential kitchen permits, including retail residential kitchens---wherein the at-home entrepreneurs prepare foods to be sold at farmers markets, craft fairs, online, or through the mail---as well as wholesale residential kitchens, which can sell to supermarkets or restaurants; *and*
- WHEREAS,** According to state guidelines, the foods produced in these residential kitchens must be safely held at room temperature, including baked goods, jams, jellies, and more; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Residential kitchens not only help food entrepreneurs get a leg up in an increasingly volatile market, but it also helps supply local, culturally competent

food to neighborhoods that too often exist in areas without reliable nutritious food access; *and*

WHEREAS, Other at-home businesses, such as barber shops, nail salons, tailors, cafes etc., provide easy access to goods and services in communities where capital is harder to come by; *and*

WHEREAS, Small businesses come in all shapes and sizes and it is the responsibility and the obligation of the Boston City Council to encourage entrepreneurship and small business growth within the city; ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to examine the possibility of expanding the rights and abilities of at-home entrepreneurs to conduct business/provide services in their homes. Representatives from the administration, including the Mayor's Office of Economic Development, particularly the Department of Small Business Development and newly appointed Chief of Equity, are encouraged to attend. Small business advocates, including the Small Business Administration, BECMA, the LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce, and members of the public are also encouraged to testify virtually.

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