

## Building Collective Power for Bushwick's Small Business Community

Through a Neighborhood 360 Grant funded by New York City's Small Business Services, RiseBoro community organizers are helping small businesses in Bushwick unlock economic potential, access city resources, and achieve their business goals. "If there's anything you want to see implemented in the neighborhood, now is your chance to get that dialogue going and make it happen," said Nalisha Samlall, RiseBoro's Neighborhood 360 Manager.

Thanks to a Neighborhood 360 Grant sponsored by New York City's Small Business Services (SBS), RiseBoro Community Partnership is now offering one-on-one support to members of Bushwick's small business community, helping local businesses owners unlock economic potential, maintain good operating standing, and achieve their personal business goals.

Since joining the team in January 2023, RiseBoro's Neighborhood 360 Manager Nalisha Samlall has spent countless hours meeting with business owners on Bushwick's commercial avenues to offer individualized support and build and maintain merchant associations that can advocate on the business community's behalf, like the Wyckoff Avenue Merchants Association and the Knickerbocker Avenue Merchant Partnership Kamp.

"The one-on-one business support has gone a long way," Samlall said. "We were able to help a business get a \$10,000 microgrant by helping them fill out the application, and the next week two other businesses who had heard about this reached out to us for support."

We also use our connections and resources to connect owners with additional city resources and are taking on tangible projects that help entire commercial areas thrive.

"We know that small businesses rely on foot traffic, so we've been promoting events and hosting events that get people walking down the avenues and seeing these businesses," Samlall said. "We also do beautification and cleanliness because that's another thing that will get people walking down these avenues, and it's something business owners have cited issues with. We recently installed some fences along tree beds to prevent pet waste from getting into it, and we also did some landscaping."

Graffiti is another major issue reported by local businesses, and Samlall tackled that too, partnering with a local cleanup group to do some graffiti removal on storefront gates.

"A lot of businesses in Bushwick have been here for generations now, and they've dealt with displacement and now gentrification forces, so understandably when we walk in and tell them 'We're here to help you unlock economic potential', they're like... 'no,'" said Samlall of her early efforts to build relationships with the business community.

Through these tangible improvement projects, she has built trust among local business owners that the Neighborhood 360 team is not only effective, but is here to stay.

"Sometimes small business owners can be skeptical because they've been overlooked for so long," Samlall said. "But if there's anything you want to see implemented in the neighborhood, now is your chance to get that dialogue going and make it happen."

The Neighborhood 360 Grant extends through 2025 and supports Wyckoff, Irving, Knickerbocker, and Wilson Avenues and Bushwick's Broadway, from Myrtle Avenue to Flushing Avenue. If you are interested in learning more about how Neighborhood 360 can support your small business, contact Nalisha Samlall at [nsamlall@riseboro.org](mailto:nsamlall@riseboro.org) or 646-794-0078.