

Nov. 21, 2011

For more information, contact:
Rob MacKay, 718.219.6243

Queens Economic Development Corporation announces training course in Mandarin Chinese for aspiring home-improvement contractors

Flushing, NY — The Queens Economic Development Corporation, Assemblymember Grace Meng, City Council Member Peter Koo and State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky on Nov. 21 announced a pilot program in Mandarin for Chinese immigrants who want to become city-licensed home improvement contractors.

Gathered in Assemblymember Meng's Flushing district office, the leaders informed that QEDC will provide a qualified instructor who will offer Mandarin-language workshops to aspiring contractors prior to taking the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs licensing exam. The lessons will be accompanied by one-on-one business advisory services, such as consultations on permits and licensing, business development, procurement and access to capital.

QEDC is able to provide this service thanks to a \$25,000 grant for being a finalist in the Competition To Help Reach Immigrant Ventures and Entrepreneurs (THRIVE), which is jointly funded by the NYC Economic Development Corporation and the Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation, and is administered by Baruch College's Lawrence N. Field Center for Entrepreneurship. Competition THRIVE is designed to generate business plans to address the challenges faced by immigrant entrepreneurs, including access to credit, financial management, language barriers and access to business networks.

After implementation, a panel of judges will review the program and decide if it should receive an additional \$100,000 for expansion.

Classes will begin in January, but participants can learn more about the training course beforehand via two-hour orientation sessions. The sessions will take place at 39-01 Main St., Ste. 509 in Flushing on Tuesday, Nov. 29, at 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday, Dec. 6, at 6:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Dec. 11 at 1 p.m. (Classes will take place at the same location.)

“Safety remains the top priority in building construction! Thank you to the QEDC for their vital efforts in helping our immigrant community become properly trained,” Assemblymember Meng said. “With this training course, workers will be able to find secure and legal jobs while helping the borough's economy continue to thrive.”

“So many immigrants arrive in Queens with valuable skills they can use to find work, particularly in construction and the building trades, but often they do not know how to navigate the application and permit process to do so legally,” Sen. Stavisky said. “Our goal is to help integrate these workers into the borough's economy so that they can find safe, legal, properly paid work in the community. This program through the QEDC can help train immigrant workers and guide them through the steps to use their skills legally.”

—Continues—

“I would like to commend QEDC for implementing this important project,” added Council Member Koo. “As we all know, there are many immigrant home improvement contractors who have the skills, but do not possess the knowledge to operate with proper licensing. This is a great opportunity for local Chinese contractors to expand their business, understand the licensing process and find new opportunities.”

“QEDC’s mission is to create and retain jobs,” said QEDC Executive Director Seth Bornstein. “The focus of this program will be to help entrepreneurs become licensed, take on bigger projects, and as a result, hire more people.”

Established in 1977, QEDC has assisted thousands of entrepreneurs in preparing business plans and filing for business registrations, permits, licenses and loan packaging. QEDC has also helped scores of neighborhoods revitalize their commercial districts by creating business organizations and establishing business improvement districts.

###