



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Brian P. Murphy, Assistant City Manager for Community Development *BM*

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Subject: Council Order #4 dated 5/23/11 and Council Order #20 dated 5/16/11 regarding support for Global Entrepreneurship Week, Cambridge Local Economy Week, and programs for residents interested in starting a new business in Cambridge

Both of these orders focus on support for the city's business community, particularly locally-owned independent businesses, and efforts to nurture an entrepreneurial climate in Cambridge. The Economic Development Division (EDD) of the Community Development Department (CDD) offers, on an ongoing basis, a variety of programs and activities designed to encourage entrepreneurship and to assist business owners and residents who are interested in starting or growing a business.

In fiscal year 2011, 170 individuals attended approximately 30 workshops that were offered on a range of business topics, including how to start a business, budgeting and money management, restaurant management practices, accounting, business demographics, e-commerce, loan preparation and how to do business with the City and the State. EDD contracts with Center for Women & Enterprise (CWE) to conduct workshops and to provide individualized small business consulting to those interested in starting a new business or improving an existing business. The Façade Improvement and Retail Best Practices programs further support the success of new and existing businesses by providing matching grants and design consultation for implementing exterior, interior, and operational improvements.

To encourage a supportive business climate, Economic Development staff provides technical assistance to the city's various business associations, working with business and community leaders on special events, member recruitment, community outreach and other matters that affect commercial district vitality. Staff members regularly visit local businesses to encourage owners to take advantage of the services and programs offered by the City. To emphasize the importance of supporting the local economy, EDD promotes the efforts of Cambridge Local First (CLF), which works with independent businesses citywide.

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In the last several years, EDD has expanded networking programs and events in an effort to facilitate business relationships and help small businesses to learn how to contract with larger companies. Several Commonwealth Supplier

Diversity Office (SDO) sponsored classes are held each year in Cambridge to enable small businesses to connect their products and services with potential buyers statewide. Cambridge businesses are also encouraged to use the Women and Minority Owned Business Directory (http://www2.cambridgema.gov/cdd/ed/smbus/ed_mwbd.html) as a networking resource.

In anticipation of both Cambridge Local Economy Week and Global Entrepreneurship Week, EDD will coordinate with the various business associations and local businesses to plan and promote broad participation in activities and events associated with these initiatives. Utilizing existing resources, City staff will widely publicize the events in the community, on the Community Development and City websites, and at EDD's business development workshops in the fall.