

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. __-24
“PHL Open for Business” Initiative (Phase One)
Ensuring a Streamlined, Supportive Business Environment in Philadelphia

WHEREAS, making Philadelphia an attractive and equitable place to do business plays a pivotal role in unlocking economic opportunities for all residents, fostering an economy that fully leverages the city's talent and potential, propelling more individuals towards self-sufficiency, and creating thriving, healthy communities; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has significant strengths to build on, including the small, home-grown businesses that led the city's post-pandemic recovery, increasing their share of total employment to 41%; entrepreneurs whose new business registrations surged 35% from 2019 to 2022; our world-class “Ed and Meds”; and the emerging life sciences, biotech, logistics, and advanced manufacturing sectors; and

WHEREAS, even so, Philadelphia still lags many peer cities on key indicators including availability of middle-wage jobs and the number of Black- and brown-owned businesses; and

WHEREAS, local government has an important role to play in spurring economic growth and equitable access to opportunity, including by tackling the cost and complexity businesses face when navigating City government, which can disproportionately impact small businesses, sole proprietorships, and enterprises owned by minorities, women, and people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, Philadelphia City Council's Special Committee on Regulatory Review and Reform identified a range of challenges and pain points for local businesses related to regulatory process, technology, and customer service; and

WHEREAS, in the years since, the Commerce Department has been working proactively with frontline City workers and business stakeholders to improve the ease of doing business by redesigning processes and improving communications; and

WHEREAS, for example, the City recently revised the inspection process for childcare facilities' kitchens to align with the limited food-related activities performed at those sites; this reduced the regulatory burden for the facilities and streamlined the Health Department's inspection process; and

WHEREAS, even while promising approaches are underway to reduce the “time tax” and bureaucratic burden placed on businesses – including through the Office of Business Services of the Commerce Department, which offers one-on-one navigator services to help entrepreneurs plan, start, and grow their businesses – the City needs an overarching strategy to ensure a streamlined, supportive business environment; and

WHEREAS, achieving this goal is part of a new “PHL Open for Business” initiative and will require an all-of-government effort – including City Council of Philadelphia working in partnership with the Administration – that prioritizes the end-user’s experience; and

WHEREAS, efficient and effective government that fosters an environment conducive to a diverse and growing business community is essential to building a Philadelphia that is the safest, cleanest, greenest big city in America, with access to economic opportunity for all;

NOW THEREFORE, I, CHERELLE L. PARKER, Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, by the powers vested in me by the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, do hereby order as follows:

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS

The term “department” as used herein refers to all departments, offices, agencies, boards, and commissions in the Mayor’s Administration.

The term “Project Team” as used herein refers to the Mayor’s Office, Commerce Department, Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) (the Inspections, Safety and Compliance Division and the Quality of Life Division), Streets Department, Department of Public Health, Law Department, Department of Planning and Development (DPD), Office of Clean and Green Initiatives, Department of Parks and Recreation, and Office of the Director of Finance (Finance), with support from the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Office of Innovation and Technology (OIT), and Managing Director’s Office (MDO).

The term “regulatory step” as used herein refers to all business licenses, permits, certificates, fees, and tax filings administered by City departments; it does not refer to enforcement activity by the City in response to a potential violation of local law, including criminal or civil violations.

The term “regulatory sequence” as used herein refers to common situations in which a business needs to perform several regulatory steps in sequence to accomplish a specific goal related to operation of a business within Philadelphia (e.g., starting a new business, expanding or altering a business’s physical location, accessing a City-administered tax credit, bidding on a City contract).

SECTION 2. MAYOR’S BUSINESS ACTION TEAM

The Commerce Department’s Office of Business Services is hereby renamed the Mayor’s Business Action Team. It continues to be part of the Commerce Department and will continue its mission to provide one-on-one assistance to businesses in navigating City services and processes and connecting them to resources. All City departments will work cooperatively with and be responsive to the Mayor’s Business Action Team staff to resolve any obstacles faced by individual businesses.

SECTION 3. AUDITING

By April 15, 2024, the Project Team shall provide the Mayor’s Office with an initial listing of all regulatory steps and common regulatory sequences. All departments shall provide the Project Team with the information needed to develop the listings and partner with the Project Team, as requested, in analyzing the data.

The comprehensive listing shall include, for each regulatory step:

- a description of the step;
- the name of the Department and any specific Office or Division therein that administers the step;
- any associated fees, costs, or other requirements for accomplishing the step (e.g., filling out an application, submitting documents);
- the ways a business can access the step (e.g., online application, in-person assistance at Municipal Services Building, departmental telephone helpline);
- any timeframes in a service level agreement (SLA) for the Department to complete its activity on the step;
- whether the step may be unnecessary and should be evaluated for elimination.

The listing of common regulatory sequences shall include:

- a name for the sequence (e.g., starting a new business; altering a business location; seeking a City tax credit);
- the steps, and related Departments, involved in the sequence; and
- whether the sequence only applies to certain business sectors (e.g., retail storefront, restaurant, health care facility), and, if so, which ones.

SECTION 4. PRIORITIZATION

Approximately every three months, the Project Team shall lead an ongoing process to prioritize a set of regulatory steps and sequences (hereinafter, collectively, business services) for improvement. The Project Team shall identify the first improvement cohort by April 15, 2024.

In prioritizing business services for improvement, the Project Team shall engage individual businesses, business organizations, and front-line staff and consider the following factors:

- **Importance to businesses:** Whether improvement to business service would help businesses open and operate efficiently, including by reducing the “time tax” and minimizing bureaucratic burdens.
- **Implications for public health or safety:** Whether the business service has direct implications for public health or safety.

- **Equity in current service delivery:** The extent to which enterprises owned by minorities, women, and people with disabilities, small businesses, and sole proprietorships experience reduced access to or benefit from current business services.
- **Resource allocation:** The number of City staff and level of City funding directed toward the business service (i.e., an estimate of what it currently takes to deliver the service).
- **Positive spillover effects:** The potential positive impact of improving the business service on business activity and economic growth.

SECTION 5. IMPLEMENTATION

Every quarter, the Project Team shall provide a report to the Mayor’s Office on what services have most recently been improved, including any testimonials from businesses, business organizations, and front-line staff, as well as what is currently in the improvement process.

In working to improve business services, the Project Team shall emphasize:

- Opportunities for businesses and front-line staff to contribute to developing solutions;
- Interdepartmental coordination and collaboration; and
- Developing impact metrics that: (a) enable tracking of progress over time; (b) support ongoing learning; and (c) identify additional opportunities for improvement.

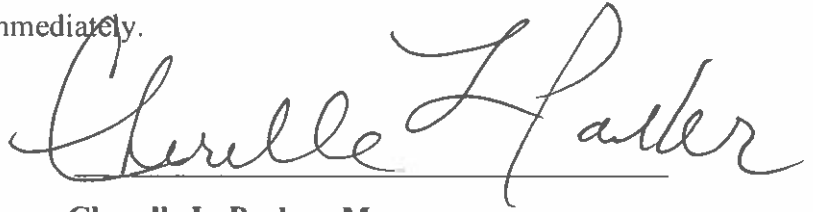
SECTION 6. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

The Business and Intergovernmental Roundtables shall assist the City in pursuing the above actions, including by identifying best practices in regulatory streamlining at other levels of government that could be implemented locally and opportunities to coordinate similar or related business services provided at the local, state, and federal level.

SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Order shall take effect immediately.

Date: April 15, 2024

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cherelle L. Parker". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Cherelle L. Parker, Mayor