



**Division of Small Business
& Technology Development**

Business Mentor NY – Walkthrough for Businesses Seeking Help with COVID-19

Empire State Development

A Division of Empire State Development

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The COVID-19 Volunteer Task Force

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak and the urgent need for professional assistance and advice for NYS based Small Businesses, we are leveraging the **BUSINESS MENTOR NY** system as a **method of connecting entrepreneurs** in need of help **with the growing number of VOLUNTEER MENTORS** that are stepping up to help in this time of crisis.

From around the state businesspeople are stepping up to act as Mentors **that can guide small businesses through this crisis with financial and related advice** on acquiring capital and applying for and leveraging various disaster resources including:

**the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan program
and the SBA Paycheck Protection Program**



What is Business Mentor NY?

Business Mentor NY is the state's first large scale, **web-based**, hands-on mentoring program geared to help entrepreneurs and established small businesses overcome challenges to grow their business.

- **Skills-based volunteerism** by individuals or groups that capitalizes on personal talents or core business skills, experience or education to **support small business owners and entrepreneurs**
- Assistance that is **specific and action oriented** on the part of the small business
- Business mentor volunteers act as **pro-bono advisors** or sounding boards for the small business owners that are looking for guidance
- Small business mentoring **provides a potential solution to accessing needed information** and expertise through a streamlined process, **enabled by technology**
- **Designed to augment and support, not replace, conventional face to face contact**

Where to Begin?

1. Visit Website



2. Choose Join Now



3. Choose "Find a Mentor"



Three Steps to Finding Help

How It Works

1

Create your profile

Sign up and complete your profile. Describe yourself, what you do, and what you hope to accomplish here.

2

Reach Out

Send messages to others in the community to express your interest in starting a new mentoring conversation.

3

Start Mentoring

Talk on the phone to get to know one another. Move forward by setting goals and solving problems together!



STEP ONE – Creating a Profile:

Creating a New Profile takes
about 10 minutes.

First create an account:

Enter your Name

Enter your E-mail address
(be sure to check you entered correctly!)

Create a Password
(to log back in when contacted)

Select “Find a Mentor”

Click Submit when Done

The screenshot shows the Business Mentor NY registration page. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Entrepreneurs', 'Mentors', and 'Q&A', along with 'Join' and 'Log In' buttons. The main heading is 'Join the Business Mentor NY Community'. Below this, there are two main sections: 'Sign up using your social account' with buttons for Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google, and 'Or create an account below'. The 'Or create an account below' section contains several input fields: 'First Name' (with 'Joanna' entered), 'Last Name' (with 'Sample' entered), 'Email Address*' (with 'Mymail@myemail.com' entered), 'Password*' (with masked characters), and 'Confirm Password*' (with masked characters). Below the password fields is a note: 'Passwords must have a minimum of 8 characters and contain at least one capital letter, one lower case letter, and one number'. There are two radio button options: 'Find a mentor' (selected) and 'Be a mentor'. The 'Find a mentor' option has the text 'I am looking for a mentor to help my business.' and the 'Be a mentor' option has 'I'd like to volunteer my time to help business owners succeed.'. At the bottom of the form is an orange 'Submit' button. Below the button is a small disclaimer: 'By clicking the button above, you are indicating that you have read, understood and agree to Business Mentor NY's Terms of Use, Privacy Policy, and Code of Conduct.'

STEP ONE – Creating a Profile: Screen 2

NEXT Agree to Community Expectations:

Click checkbox

Click to continue

Entrepreneurs Mentors Q&A Joanna

Community Expectations

Mentors are volunteering their time to help you. In return, we ask that you follow our community expectations.

Invest time in creating a clear and thoughtful profile
Please write a good description of your business and problems you seek to solve. Vague or short profiles may be removed from the site..

Follow through
Business Mentor NY is a time commitment, both in terms of actively working with a mentor and preparing for meetings. Please follow through. You should be currently dedicating time and effort to your business, and able to follow through with commitments made in mentoring conversations.

Be Respectful
Mentors volunteer their time to provide support and guidance. be respectful of their commitment. We encourage you to craft tailored messages to each mentor in which you articulate how the mentor's expertise can help you. We discouraging sending messages like "please help me." Messages such as these are not effective.

Our team and mentors are monitoring community activity, and reserve the right to moderate access to the Business Mentor NY community.

I agree to meet these expectations

Save and Continue

STEP ONE – Creating a Profile: Screen 3 Part One:

Answer these questions about your business:
(You need to complete a profile to communicate on site)

Type of Business

Business Name

Stage that best describes your business

Select formation Month/Year
(from Dropdown)

Select Industry
(from Dropdown)

Use scroll on screen for next questions

About Your Venture

Here is where you tell us about your business, social enterprise, or nonprofit. We use the term "venture" to refer to all types of businesses and organizations.

Remember, the more details you include about your venture, the more likely you are to connect with the mentors on MicroMentor!

What type of venture or idea for a venture do you have?*

- For-profit venture
- Nonprofit organization
- Social enterprise, (a venture that uses profits to fulfill a social or environmental mission)
- Unsure
- Other

What is the name of your venture?

Leave blank if your venture does not currently have a name

What stage best describes your venture?*

- My venture is at the idea stage – it does not yet have a working prototype or customers and is not operational.
- My venture is operational, but does not yet have any earned revenue. (Earned revenue results from selling a product or service).
- My venture has customers and is earning revenue, but is not yet profitable. (A venture is not profitable when its earned revenue is less than its expenses).
- My venture is operating at scale and is profitable. (Scale occurs when a venture is able to operate in volume discounts to clients or from suppliers. A venture is profitable when its earned revenue is greater than its expenses).
- Other

When did you start your venture?*

What is the industry that best describes your venture?*

STEP ONE – Creating a Profile: Screen 3 Part Two: Answer these questions

Enter a description of your business (at least 150 characters):

Be as descriptive as you wish or use a sample like this:

"I am the owner of a New York State small business that has been impacted by the coronavirus. I am seeking assistance with navigating the federal SBA loan applications for financial assistance."

Select three areas you need the most help

Enter a description of the help you hope to find (at least 150 characters):

Be as descriptive as you wish or use a sample like this:

"I am looking for assistance to help answer questions about the applications in connections with the SBA loan programs EIDL (economic injury disaster loans) and PPP (paycheck protection program)."

Enter your City County and ZIP code

Add your website if you wish

Click **SAVE** and Continue when done

Please provide a description of your venture for potential mentors to see.*
Include your motivations, what actions you've taken up until now, and your future goals in 150 or more words.

Good responses tend to range between 300 and 1,000 characters

Please select the 3 areas of expertise that would be most helpful to your venture right now.*

- Select up to 3 -

Please provide a description of how a mentor could help you develop your venture.*

Include the current challenges you are facing and specific areas of your venture that you need help with in 150 or more words.

City

County*

Select

Postal Code*

Please provide all the website addresses where you promote your business.

www.yoursite.com

Select a website type

+ Add website

Save and Continue

STEP ONE – Creating a Profile: Screen 4

NEXT

Upload a photo or logo if you choose:
(can be added later if you wish)

Pick a file here
(NOT REQUIRED)

Click to continue

Entrepreneurs Mentors Q&A Joanna ▾

Profile Photo

160 x 160

Please upload a professional photo of yourself
Profiles with photos are much more likely to receive messages from other users. For best results, find a photo that shows your face, and is square in shape.

Browse...

JPEG and PNG files only -- 5MB limit

Save and Continue

STEP ONE – Creating a Profile: Screen 5:

**Answer these questions about you:
(these are for demographic purposes and are not visible to
the public)**

Choose the languages you want to communicate in here

Enter your phone numbers(to receive texts)
Field is required but can be any 10-digit number (1234567890)

Contact preference (E-mail)

Age/Gender/Ethnicity/Disability
information all optional

Education dropdown

Select any answer here

Click **SAVE** and Continue when done

The screenshot shows the 'About You' section of a profile creation form. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Entrepreneurs', 'Mentors', and 'Q&A', and a user profile icon for 'Joanna'. The main heading is 'About You', followed by a note: 'Answers from this section are kept confidential and will not be shared on your public profile. Why do we need to know this?'. The form contains several fields: 'What country were you born in?' (dropdown menu with 'United States' selected), 'Which of the following languages do you speak fluently?' (text input with 'English x' entered), two phone number fields (each with '+1 -' as a placeholder), 'For important notifications only, would you prefer to be contacted by?' (checkboxes for 'Email' (checked), 'SMS or Text Message', and 'Voice Call'), 'What year were you born in?' (dropdown menu with 'I prefer not to share' selected), 'Please select your gender*' (radio buttons for 'Male', 'Female', 'Other', and 'I prefer not to share'), 'Please select your ethnicity*' (dropdown menu with 'Decline to state' selected), two checkboxes for 'Check here if you are a veteran' and 'Check here if you live with a disability', 'Please select the highest level of education you have completed' (dropdown menu with 'Undergraduate - Bachelor's Degree' selected), and 'Do you intend to connect with a mentor on MicroMentor?' (radio buttons for 'Yes', 'No', and 'Not sure yet'). At the bottom right is an orange 'Save and Continue' button. Blue arrows from the text on the left point to the language field, the phone number fields, the contact preference section, the gender field, the ethnicity field, the education dropdown, and the 'Save and Continue' button.



**Business
Mentor NY**

STEP ONE – Creating a Profile: Screen 6: REVIEW YOUR NEW PROFILE:

Click here to make edits

Click “Looks Good!” to SAVE and Continue

Entrepreneurs Mentors Q&A Joanna

Review your public profile

An attractive and detailed profile is critical to finding a valuable connection on Business Mentor NY. This is what other users will see when considering sending you a message - are you satisfied with how it looks?

I'd like to make some edits Looks good!

Joanna Sample
New York, NY, United States
Restaurant/Cafe/Bar/Catering
Recent Activity

WHAT I NEED HELP WITH

We are in need of expert guidance collecting up information and documenting our application for a disaster loan. We prefer someone familiar with the Restaurant industry but will be happy to get any help we can!

Expertise

- Accounting and Finance » Cash Flow
- Accounting and Finance » Financial Planning
- Accounting and Finance » Loans and Financing

Experience
Business Started: January 2005
Languages Spoken:

ABOUT MY BUSINESS

In Business Since 2005

I need Your Help LLC

We run a restaurant in midtown, that has been forced to shut down during the COVID outbreak. While we have a limited ability to do takeout, our restaurant featured dishes prepared in front of the guests and relied heavily on tourism and has seen a severe downturn in sales without that feature. We need guidance in applying for an SBA Payroll Protection or Disaster loan to help get us through.

STEP ONE – Creating a Profile: SURVEY?:

You may be asked to complete a survey but it is not required.



Entrepreneurs Mentors Q&A Joanna

Business Mentor NY Survey

You're so close to finding a mentor!

Before you enter the MicroMentor community, we want you to know that learning more about your venture is REALLY IMPORTANT for us to help mentors and mentees connect.

MicroMentor is a nonprofit organization that provides free mentoring services to entrepreneurs who need help the most. To support us in our mission and other entrepreneurs in need, please fill out the following survey that should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Do this later [Continue to Survey](#)

Choose to do now, or SKIP by clicking “Do this later”

STEP TWO – FINDING SOMEONE TO HELP YOU!

Once you complete your profile (or log back in), you are taken to the main screen

Search Tool is found here
(before you search be sure
Search Mentors selected)

Mentor listings
Note that COVID-19 Volunteers
have Green checks and badges

The screenshot shows the Business Mentor NY website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Entrepreneurs', 'Mentors', and 'Q&A' tabs. The 'Mentors' tab is highlighted with a red circle. Below the navigation bar is a search bar with the text 'Search Mentors' and a subtext 'Here are the mentors that are most closely related to your entrepreneur profile.' There are three dropdown menus for 'Any Expertise', 'Any Industry', and 'Has owned business?'. Below the search bar, there is a grid of mentor listings. Each listing includes a profile picture, name, location, and a 'Learn More' button. Some listings have a green checkmark and 'Member: COVID-19 Volunteer Mentor Task Force' badge. The grid contains 12 listings in a 4x3 layout.

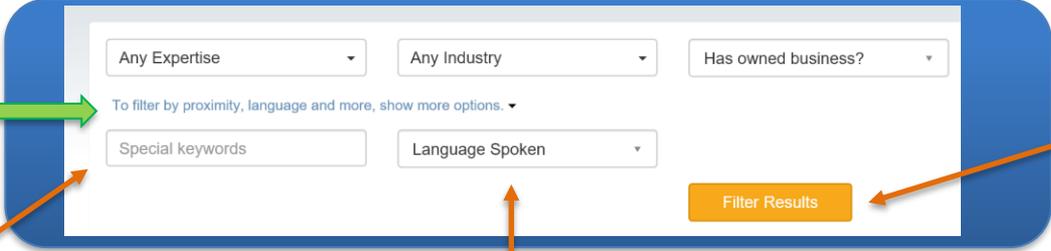
The Navigation bar lets you select **Mentor**, Entrepreneur or Q&A section listings, edit your account settings or view your messages.

Click Learn More to View Profiles
(communicate via button on profile page)

STEP TWO – REACH OUT – Search tool

The Search Tool

Use the “special keywords” function to find Mentors with specific skills and expertise.



The screenshot shows a search interface with several input fields and a button. A green arrow points to the 'Special keywords' field with the text 'Click here first!'. An orange arrow points to the 'Filter Results' button with the text 'Click Here to Apply the Filter to results'. Another orange arrow points to the 'Language Spoken' dropdown menu with the text 'Use this to select a specific language if you wish'. Below the screenshot, there is a text box: 'Enter your search phrase here (“COVID”, “SBA”, “Disaster”, etc.)’.

Click here first!

Click Here to Apply the Filter to results

Use this to select a specific language if you wish

Enter your search phrase here (“COVID”, “SBA”, “Disaster”, etc.)

The Special Keywords tool can be used to:

- Find someone in a particular city, remember to search other names of places close by too (Example: Albany, Schenectady, Troy for Capital District of NYS).
- Look for a specific industry (example: Plumbing, Restaurant, etc.).

The Expertise and Industry drop-down menus can also be used to narrow the search:

- Many skills (accounting, staffing, purchasing, marketing, etc.) are highly adaptable to a variety of businesses.

STEP THREE – Making Contact

Start a Conversation 

Crafting a message

- Once you've found several Mentors who seem like they may be good fit, send each of them a brief, personalized message.
- When writing potential connections, be clear in the help you need and why you chose them. Like a good cover letter, this is your opportunity to describe your relevancy and significance.

Example First Message for Making Contact:

*Hello Mr./Mrs. _____,
My name is _____ and I am the owner and operator of First Impression Messaging Service, a company that aims to help businesspeople put their best foot forward in all direct messaging correspondence. After reviewing your profile, I hope that you can assist me with completing my SBA Payroll Protection Program Application. Kindly review my profile and reach out should you be able to help. Thank you in advance for your time, it is appreciated!
All the best, Your Name*

For Business Mentor NY Help and Resources

Visit: <https://businessmentor.ny.gov/learn-more/about>



Together we will all move forward!

BusinessMentor.NY.gov



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