



Office of Information Technology Services

Innovation That Matters... For All New Yorkers



New York Business Express

Project Initiated: January 2015

Project Completed: January 2017

Category: Business Government to Business

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Representing Chief Information
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Executive Summary

New York Business Express (<https://www.businessexpress.ny.gov/>) is a single portal that is revolutionizing the way that new businesses interact with State government. Designed to aid businesses in navigating required licenses, permits, and forms in the State of New York, **New York Business Express** streamlines all State information needed to open and grow a business, helps users navigate regulations and opportunities, and provides personalized up-to-date information.

The idea of **New York Business Express** first began in 2015 as part of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's "New York State of Opportunity" agenda, which laid out a vision to help small businesses start up and grow. Governor Cuomo envisioned a program that would offer a game-changing approach to small business growth and an innovative way of cutting red tape, further demonstrating that New York State is open for business.

Prior to the launch of **New York Business Express**, business owners in New York were required to navigate a complicated maze of the information and requirements of multiple agencies, often duplicating efforts entering business information across separate agency forms. Citizens were also required to contact different agencies for updates on the statuses of their separate submissions, provide information on forms and seek guidance on regulations, and more. In sum, the old process was not straightforward or easy to navigate and often resulted in citizens hiring outside assistance to complete business applications.

New York Business Express is a central and easy to navigate space containing a vast array of information for more than thirty-three executive NYS agencies. In addition to containing general information, businesses can create a specific business profile and use that information to populate forms and applications for transmission through the portal to multiple agencies. In addition, users can now create custom business checklists containing regulations for their specific business type by entering information about their business using an easy-to-follow, intuitive question-based system like "Turbo Tax" software.

New York Business Express places businesses at the center of State operations and makes it faster to open and easier to grow a business in the State of New York. Streamlining government services around business needs spurs economic growth and inspires citizens to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams.

Concept

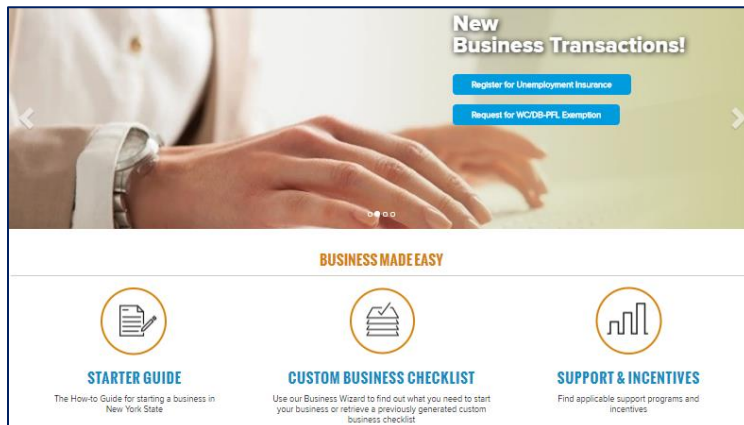
New York Business Express began with Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's "New York State of Opportunity" agenda in 2015 to help small businesses get started and grow. The Governor called for a program that would offer a game-changing approach to small business growth and an innovative way of cutting red tape, further demonstrating that New York is open for business.

One New York State

The most important concept behind **New York Business Express** is the presentation of "One New York State" to business owners. In the past, business owners needed to courier their own information among and between various agencies. Those agencies did not interact with one another and had no way to advise business owners of all the potential regulations across the state. **New York Business Express** addresses the need for business interactions with New York State in a central location where all business-related questions, concerns, statuses, and transactions can reside.

In addition to the online portal, the creation of **New York Business Express** was accompanied by the establishment of a complementary New York Business Information Center. The Center provides a single phone number to connect users with answers to their business-related questions and offer updates on the current application status of their transactions completed within the **New York Business Express** portal. Call center staff are trained to answer questions regarding portal information across all agencies. In addition to providing information, call center staff also utilize online *co-browse* functionality to further assist users who may experience any difficulties using **New York Business Express**.

Essential Information & Personalized Journey



New York Business Express

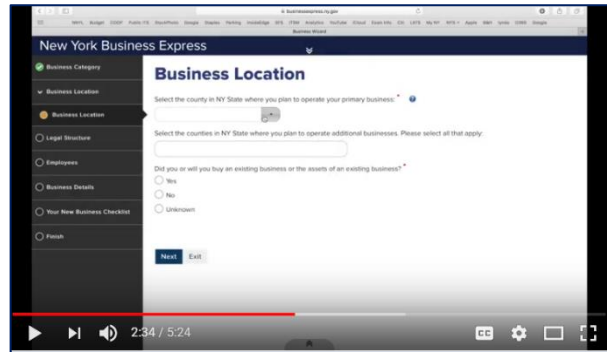
contains a wealth of information that used to only appear on various state agency websites. The new portal consolidates all relevant information in a single location.

Two key features of the system include the ability to create *custom business checklists* and find personalized *support and incentives*. Both features use an intuitive question-based program that guides

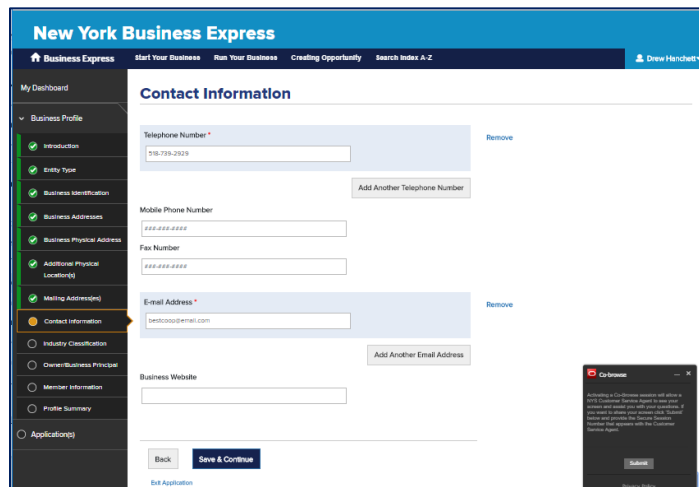
the users through simple questions and answers to establish their business intention (what their business will do) and to deliver a custom list of requirements and incentives with the associated forms that need to be submitted to help a business get started or grow in New York. The ability to create a custom business checklist or find support and incentives is available to any visitor to the portal.

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Users find the information relevant to their business, and navigate to the correct forms and information using the *comprehensive index* of business forms and information within **New York Business Express**.

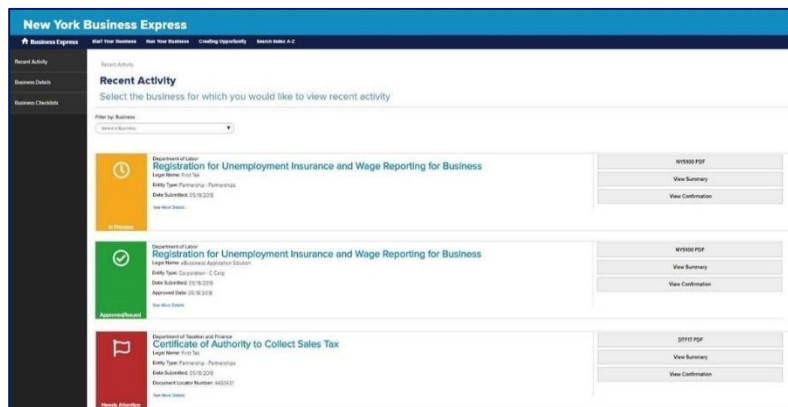


Business Profile



New York Business Express includes the ability to create a custom business profile. Using this feature, users can establish a username and password which allows them to keep their business information on file and use it for future portal transactions.

Up-to-Date Status Information



Users who maintain a custom business profile are also able to log in at any time to view the status of pending applications submitted through the **New York Business Express** portal via their own personal *dashboard*.

Previously, users would have been required to contact each individual agency via phone to obtain status information.

Significance

By improving the way businesses gather information from, and interact with State government, New York State is paving the way to business growth and development across the State. By placing key information and tools into one central location, New York State is further proving the state is, indeed, “Open for Business.”

Agency Collaboration

The success of **New York Business Express** would not have been possible without the dedication and support of multiple State agencies. Following the call of the Governor, the NYS Executive Chamber, the New York State Office of Information Technology Services (ITS), the Department of State (DOS), Department of Taxation and Finance (DTF), Department of Labor (DOL), and the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) began working closely together to establish clear project governance and scope with the focus of improving the process of forming a business in NYS. By having the commitment and contributions from multiple agencies who are central to business development, project sponsors ensured that the program would have the necessary buy in to guarantee initial project completion and overall program longevity.

In many ways, **New York Business Express** represents a paradigm shift. New York State is moving away from multiple agency specific processes to a single process that focuses on customer experience. To accomplish this task, agencies embraced a new way of interacting with businesses. The multi-agency Processing Team for the project worked to develop common acceptable standards with the ITS Application Development Team working to architect and design a flexible framework to communicate with each individual legacy agency system. This important foundational work was essential to improve the experience of interaction between businesses and the State, the original charge for the project.

Improving Business Interactions with Government

Prior to **New York Business Express**, businesses requiring multiple licenses and permits to operate in New York were required to navigate a labyrinth of policies, regulations, and forms belonging to numerous State agencies. A large percent of the information requested was duplicative between agencies and businesses had to interact with each agency independent of one another, creating a confusing and uncoordinated process. This process also impacted State agencies who were required to perform duplicative work and maintain duplicate record.

During the development process of **New York Business Express**, the ITS business team visited with business groups across New York to gain insight and feedback. After meeting with twelve small business development and support groups, local chambers of commerce, entrepreneurial assistance programs, small business development centers, and business owners the team brought back the clear feedback that there was a need for a central location where businesses could interact with State government to obtain clear and easy to understand information. Synergy among and between agencies was determined to be beneficial in the support of businesses opening in New York.

The final product available to the public is driven by a simple user interface, easy custom business checklists, incentive finders, and online applications. The current version of **New York Business Express** contains the ability to establish a business profile, which businesses can

use to enter their basic business information one time and can use that information across transactions completed within the portal.

In addition, the single phone number to call for help connects users to the New York State Business Information Center, which provides users the ability to ask all their business-related questions to knowledgeable staff. The call center staff also can assist callers using co-browse features further allowing businesses to access the help and information they need without confusion or delay.

Impact

The greatest impact of **New York Business Express** is the presentation of “One New York State” to the business community, instead of thirty-three disparate executive State agencies. By giving businesses one place to locate and store information, and receive technical and tactical support, New York makes it faster and easier to open a business.

Currently, **New York Business Express** provides a variety of tools and resources for businesses in New York, including:

- A *comprehensive index* of business searchable information and forms;
- Quick and easy to use *custom business checklists*, as well as an *incentive and resource finder*, which are driven by an intuitive question-based program, like Turbo Tax;
- The ability to create an account with a *New York State Business Profile* that contains business information to be reused across multiple applications for various agencies;
- 24/7 access to a user *dashboard* with up-to-date application statuses and documents; and
- And the ability to contact the New York Business Information Center with agents who can utilize *chat* and *co-browse* features to assist callers.

Analysis of the performance of the current system is ongoing and continues to reveal positive trends. During the initial phase of **New York Business Express**, weekly volume was consistent with an average of 10,000 users. Since the introduction of online transactional capabilities, that volume has grown to approximately 14,000 users per week. Other indicators of a positive online experience are the percent of returning users increasing to around 37 percent, the bounce rate dropping into the low 30 percent range from around 40 percent early on, and average session times have increased to 7.5 minutes.

On average, the system sees 300+ transactions per day with New York businesses registering for exemptions from Workers Compensation/Disability Benefits and Paid Family Leave and Unemployment Insurance. The popularity and use of **New York Business Express** is expected to increase as additional agencies and transactions are added to the portal.

ITS worked primarily with the NYS Executive Chamber, DOS, DTF, DOL, and WCB, in addition to a few others, to lay the groundwork for **New York Business Express**. Through the commitment and cooperation of all agencies involved, the portal currently contains information

for all business formation and houses the actual business formation transactions for two agencies with a third and fourth planned to go live in 2018. At that time, users will be able to use **New York Business Express** to execute all basic necessary business formation transactions.

At the end of 2018, six transactions that are core to business formation will reside in **New York Business Express**. Future transactions will continually be added to the system to eventually eliminate the need for businesses to use any other method of filing paperwork or individual agency interactions. The overall potential scope of the system includes all thirty-three executive agencies and over 1,500 transactions, including both business and occupational license transactions. The eventual goal is to allow businesses to obtain all necessary information and file all necessary transactions in a single place and eliminate the need for businesses to need to interact separately with different New York agencies.

In addition to tracking portal metrics and planning for additional transactions, the ITS business team has continued to meet with small business and entrepreneur contacts. Through these interactions, teams continue to learn what business owners need and want as the system continues to evolve and improve. **New York Business Express** is feeding the entrepreneurial spirit in New York as business owners indicate that they often visit the site to create a new custom business checklist to see what would be involved in growing or starting their newest business idea. The future of business in New York is bright with **New York Business Express!**