



New York City Offers the Country's First-Ever Freelancers Hub

Insights

8.29.18

It should come as no surprise that New York City is home to a large number of freelancers—approximately 400,000 according to the [NYC Department of Consumer Affairs](#). In order to assist this growing population, the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment of recently announced that a Freelancers Hub will be opening at the Made in NY Media Center in Brooklyn during the first week of October. [Julie Menin, Commissioner of the Office of Media and Entertainment](#), said in a statement: "We're extremely proud that The Freelancers Hub at the Made in NY Media Center will make New York the first city in the country to provide direct services and support to independent workers in the creative industries, demonstrating how cities and governments can help workers flourish and grow their business while maintaining the independence and flexibility that comes with freelance work."

Free memberships to the Hub will include four free days of workspace each month. The Hub will also provide monthly meetings, free workshops on various topics like marketing, accounting, and tax assistance, and free legal advice regarding contracts and payment disputes. The Hub will be managed by the Freelancers Union and supported by the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, so, for the time being, it is focusing on gig workers in the media and entertainment sectors only.

The establishment of the Hub follows the city's passage of the Freelance Isn't Free Act on May 15, 2017, which we previously discussed on the [blog](#). The Act is the first of its kind in the country and is intended to address the problem of nonpayment or late payment for freelance work. The Act requires there be a written contract for freelance work worth \$800 or more, incentivizes timely payment for services, and allows freelancers to enforce their rights in court. Moreover, the Act protects workers from retaliation for exercising their rights under the Act. For example, the law prohibits hiring parties from refusing to work with freelancers who ask for a written contract.

According to the Department of Consumer Affairs, those in the arts and entertainment industry would particularly benefit from the assistance of the Hub, as they were overrepresented in terms of complaints received by the Department during the first year of the Freelance Isn't Free Act, accounting for 72 percent of the complaints received.

It is clear that New York City is intent on protecting and supporting its growing population of gig workers. Will other local governments follow suit? Stay tuned for more developments.

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