

# STREET VENDING: MYTHS vs. FACTS

*MYTH #1: “Vendors compete with brick-and-mortar businesses”*

**FACT: Vendors actually *help* brick-and-mortar businesses!**

Studies all over the US have found that sidewalk vending benefits local businesses. It increases foot traffic and stimulates economic activity in commercial areas. Vendors also purchase supplies from businesses in the area and help local businesses grow. Businesses located near street vendors tend to have higher rates of employment retention.<sup>1</sup>

*MYTH #2: “Being a vendor is an easy way to make money”*

**FACT: Vendors work long hours for low wages!**

In 2012, fulltime vendors in large cities worked an average of 11 or 12 hours/day for 5 or 6 days/week, while earning an average income of less than \$18,000 per year<sup>2</sup>. With food vending permits unavailable from the city and costing an average of \$25,000 on the black market, NYC vendors face huge startup costs. Additionally, without a permit, they can be slammed with \$1000 fines that quickly eat up their small income.

*MYTH #3: “Food Vendors serve unsafe or low-quality products”*

**FACT: Food carts have been found to outperform restaurants in food safety inspections!<sup>3</sup>**

Vendors are required to take a food safety course from the city in order to get a food license. Even unpermitted vendors often have completed the safety course and obtained a license. Vendors undergo frequent health inspections from the city. Additionally, Green Cart vendors improve access to affordable fruits/vegetables in low-income neighborhoods.

*MYTH #4: “Vendors don’t pay taxes”*

**FACT: In addition to paying taxes, vendors contribute substantially to the local economy!**

In 2012, New York City vendors contributed an estimated \$71.2 million in local, state and federal taxes. That same year, vendors’ contributions to the New York City economy totaled an estimated 17,960 jobs, \$192.3 million in wages and \$292.7 million in value added.<sup>4</sup> At SVP, we have many members come to our office to pay their taxes every 3 months, *including undocumented immigrants* who often cannot access the services that their tax dollars support.

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<sup>1</sup> Street Vendor Project, “Studies: Street vendors do not compete with brick-and-mortar merchants,” June, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Dick M. Carpenter II, P.H.D, Institute for Justice, “Upwardly Mobile: Street Vending and the American Dream,” September, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Andrea C. Erikson, Institute for Justice, “Street Eats, Safe Eats,” 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Dick M. Carpenter II, P.H.D, Institute for Justice, “Upwardly Mobile: Street Vending and the American Dream,” September, 2015.