

The background of the slide is a blue-tinted aerial view of a city. In the foreground, a large steel truss bridge spans across a river. The city skyline in the background includes several tall buildings, one of which has a distinctive dome. The overall scene is a dense urban environment.

# **From Barriers to Breakthroughs**

**LEVELING THE REGULATORY PLAYING FIELD TO EMPOWER ENTREPRENEURS.**

# Agenda Overview



## **ABOUT CITIES WORK**

Who we are and what  
we do

## **BARRIERS TO BUSINESS**

Report context and  
key findings

## **CITIES WORK CASE STUDIES**

Our work in Fort  
Worth

## **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

Ask any questions and  
offer any feedback!

# About Cities Work

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We are Institute for Justice's non-partisan regulatory consulting initiative committed to increasing economic opportunity and fostering entrepreneurship in cities across the country.

We partner with cities to make it cheaper, faster, and simpler to start a small business—all free of charge.

# Projects & Partnerships

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# Approach

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Founded on  
collaboration  
with city  
government



Guided by the  
lived  
experience of  
entrepreneurs



United with  
community  
stakeholders



Grounded in  
operational  
sustainability

# Project Pillars



**Comprehensive Research &  
Analysis on Local Business  
Regulations**



**Insights Gathering with  
Entrepreneurs and City  
Stakeholders**



**Customized Strategy  
Reform  
Implementation &  
Continual Learning**

# Why Regulatory Reform?

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41%

Of Americans would start a business in the next 6 months if they could.

<2%

Actually do.

~50%

Cite government fees and regulations as a reason.

# Reform Goals



**Champion simple, accessible, and transparent permit and licensing processes.**



**Ensure equitable access to city staff and resources for all business owners, regardless of background or socioeconomic status.**



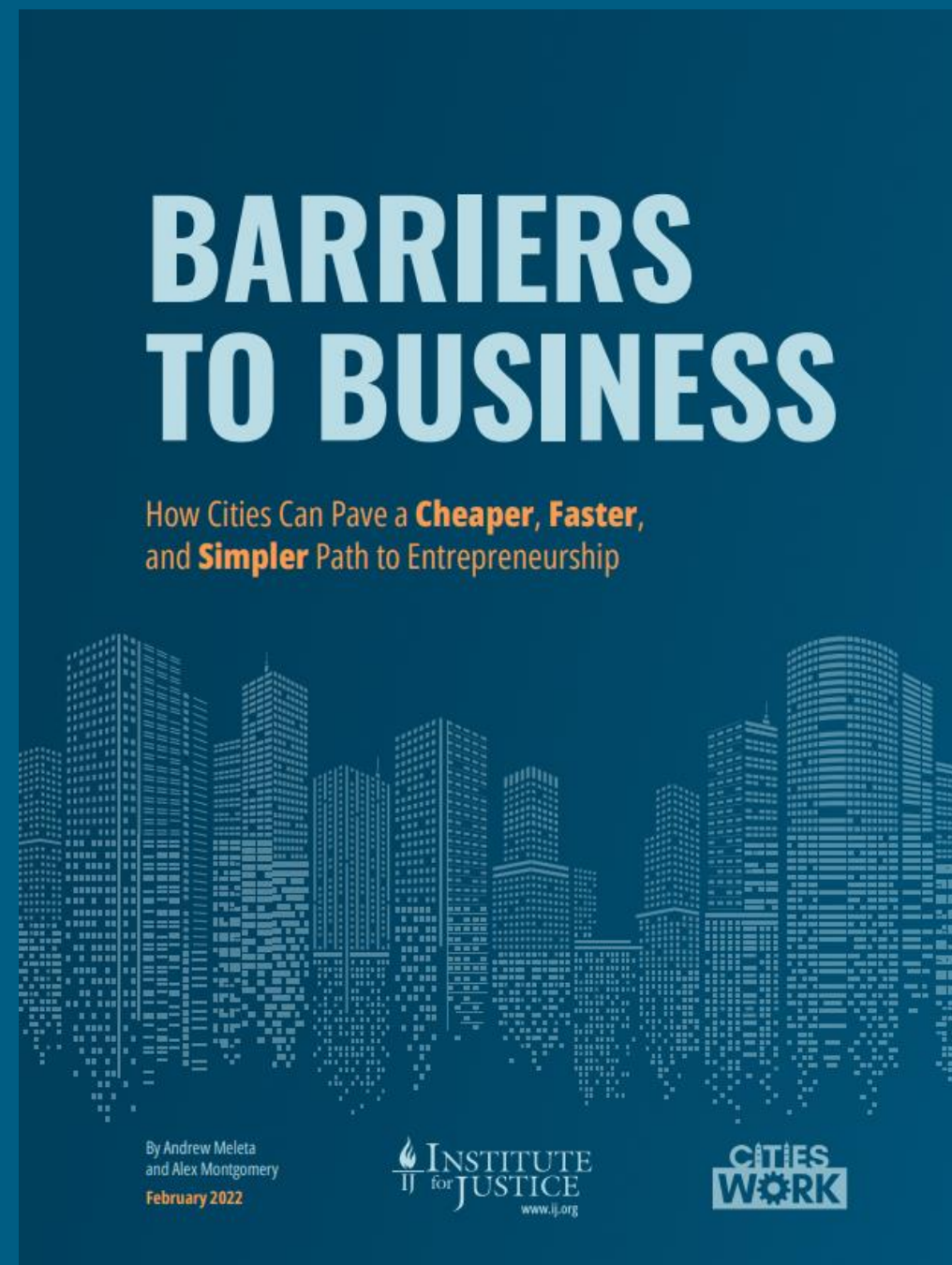
**Increase transparency and accountability at all levels of city government throughout the process of starting a small business.**



# BARRIERS TO BUSINESS

AN OVERVIEW

# Barriers to Business Report

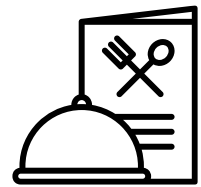


20 Cities Across the US

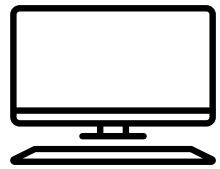


Local Business Regulations Analysis

# Overall Report Results



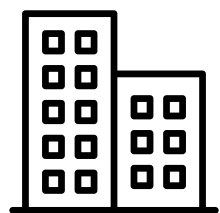
Average cost to start a restaurant was more than \$5,300 across 13 fees



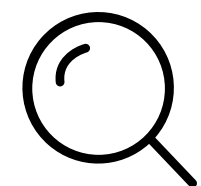
Opaque regulations; cities rarely create reliable one-stop-shops



Average of 55 steps to start a barbershop, with 8 agencies involved



Burdensome zoning and building permit requirements

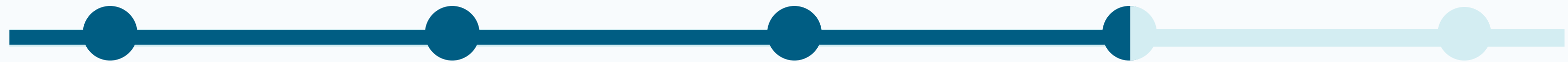


Specific business types face unique barriers



# CASE STUDY: FORT WORTH, TX

# Project Timeline



RECRUITED BY AN  
ESO TO CONDUCT  
RESEARCH ON  
FORT WORTH

FORMALIZED  
PARTNERSHIP  
WITH TEAM FORT  
WORTH

IN-DEPTH  
REGULATORY  
RESEARCH &  
LOCAL INSIGHTS

REFORM  
IMPLEMENTATION

CONTINUAL  
LEARNING AND  
ADJUSTMENTS

# Fort Worth Restaurant

## FINDINGS



Total Cost:  
\$4,250



Number of  
Fees: 21



Minimum in-  
person  
activities: 8



Number of  
Agencies  
Involved: 9



Number of  
Forms: 18



Number of  
Steps: 63

# One-Stop Shop Score

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1/5

- ✗ Connecting city requirements with processes from other levels of government
- ✗ Completing forms and registrations through the portal, not through each agency's own website
- ✗ Covering all city requirements, not just requirements for getting a business license
- ✗ Providing a single log-in opportunity so entrepreneurs can organize information and track progress in one location
- ✓ Guiding entrepreneurs effectively through the process

# Fort Worth Reform Report



Regulatory Research



Local Insights Synthesis



Main Goals &  
Recommendations



# New One-Stop Shop Score

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4/5

- ✓ Connecting city requirements with processes from other levels of government
- ✗ Completing forms and registrations through the portal, not through each agency's own website
- ✓ Covering all city requirements, not just requirements for getting a business license
- ✓ Providing a single log-in opportunity so entrepreneurs can organize information and track progress in one location
- ✓ Guiding entrepreneurs effectively through the process

# Main Insights Categories

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## NAVIGATING PERMITTING AND LICENSING PROCESSES

- General confusion
- Poor website user experience
- Subjective inspections
- Harmful grease trap requirements
- Application issues due to siloed city departments

## ACCESSING CITY RESOURCES

- Finding and obtaining resources
- A lack of adequate resources for entrepreneurs facing the highest barriers to entry and current small entrepreneurs
- Obtaining affordable commercial spaces

## INTERACTING WITH THE CITY

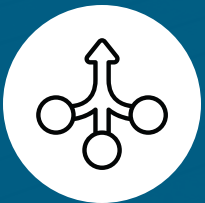
- A feeling of subjective policies
- An exclusionary reputation in unofficial practices
- Communication challenges for non-native English speakers

# Strategies & Recommendations

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Reduce compliance costs to entrepreneurs.



Eliminate and/or consolidate duplicative or unnecessary permits and documentation.



Increase access to city resources and staff.



Increase and improve cross-training for city employees and communication between departments.

# Team Fort Worth

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- **Small Business Task Force**
- **Fort Worth City Council**
- **Sparkyard**
- **Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**
- **Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce**
- **Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce**

# Key Takeaways from Fort Worth

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- ➔ Value of working with trusted community organizations to ensure cultural competency.
- ➔ Identify champions within the city government and the entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- ➔ Maintain a realistic understanding of reform timelines.



# ANY QUESTIONS?



Scan here for the  
Cities Work Playbook!

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