



Empire State Development opens \$9 million biotech incubator - Harlem Biospace @ Mink

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Shown (from left) are: Blair Duncan, Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone; Cordell Cleare; Hope Knight, Empire State Development; Shaun Abreu, New York City Council; Samuel Sia, Harlem Biospace; Scott Metzner, Janus Property Company.

Manhattan, NY Empire State Development (ESD) has opened Harlem Biospace @ Mink, a new graduation incubator in Innovation Triangle West Harlem's Factory District. Located in the restored Mink Building at 1361 Amsterdam Ave., this \$9 million facility expands New York's life sciences infrastructure by bridging a critical gap in the biotech ecosystem. Designed to support 12 to 15 growing biotech firms with up to 210 researchers, the incubator provides advanced laboratory space

for early and mid-stage companies transitioning from shared facilities to private labs. The project, supported by a \$1.5 million ESD grant recommended by the New York City Regional Economic Development Council, underscores New York's strategy to catalyze biotech innovation and accelerate the growth of its life sciences industry. The opening was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by ESD commissioner Hope Knight, state senator Cordell Cleare, council member Shaun Abreu, Janus Property Company, Harlem Biospace, Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, which provided a \$1.5 million build-out loan for the project and others.

Harlem Biospace's new 10,250 s/f incubator in the Mink Building complements its first space down the street at the Sweets Building, bridging the gap between small incubators and private commercial spaces. The facility offers a suite of advanced research tools to support a wide spectrum of experiments. For cell culture, it provides biosafety cabinets, precision-controlled incubators, and high-speed centrifuges. Chemical handling is facilitated by fume hoods and Milli-Q water systems, while various temperature-controlled storage options ensure sample integrity. The lab is also equipped with analytical instruments, including high-resolution fluorescent microscopes, multi-mode microplate readers, and rapid thermocyclers for nucleic acid amplification. This array of equipment enables Harlem Biospace to support the diverse needs of its tenant companies.

The Mink Building in Harlem, originally a short-lived brewery building and then a fur storage facility from the early 20th century, has been transformed into a modern hub for laboratories and innovation tenants of all kinds, especially in biotechnology and life sciences. After falling into disrepair alongside the declining fur industry, the building has been revitalized by the Janus Property Company as part of the Factory District redevelopment. This effort has repurposed the historic industrial zone into a mixed-use area, attracting a diverse array of businesses, educational institutions, and cultural organizations, while maintaining a connection to West Harlem's industrial heritage.

Empire State Development president, CEO and commissioner Hope Knight said, "Under Governor Hochul's leadership, New York continues to make strategic investments to enhance and grow the life sciences and biotech ecosystem in New York City. The expansion of Harlem Biospace exemplifies these smart investments that support groundbreaking companies. By nurturing innovators at various stages of growth, from startups to established firms, we're bolstering the workforce of tomorrow and strengthening New York's position as a leader in scientific advancements."

Volastra Therapeutics, a New York-based firm in innovative cancer treatments, serves as the anchor tenant in this project, occupying 11,000 s/f adjacent to the Harlem Biospace incubator. This drug discovery and therapeutics company focuses on developing novel approaches to treating cancer. Volastra's presence alongside the incubator space creates a strategic mix of established and emerging biotech companies, fostering a collaborative environment that can accelerate scientific breakthroughs. Hemogenyx Pharmaceuticals, a New York-based clinical-stage biopharmaceutical group traded on the London stock exchange, was also attracted to the Mink Building because of the success of the New York State-funded life sciences commitment and the ideal location and growing ecosystem of Innovation Triangle-West Harlem. The Hemogenyx lab includes two GMP-certified

clean rooms and is in clinical trials of breakthrough therapies for treating blood diseases and viral infections. These synergies of activity, combined with Harlem Biospace's support services and proximity to academic institutions like Columbia University and CUNY's Advanced Science Research Center/City College of New York, positions the Mink Building and Factory District as a catalyst for West Harlem's life sciences ecosystem.

Janus Property Company founder and principal Scott Metzner said, "Governor Hochul's steadfast support of West Harlem made this happen. Congratulations to Dr. Samuel Sia on his visionary expansion of Harlem Biospace into the Mink Building, to the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone for its indispensable assistance and to the entire team that made this complicated project a reality. This extraordinary collaboration is just the newest success in making Innovation Triangle-West Harlem the most exciting new innovation district in the country."

Harlem Biospace co-founder Sam Sia said, "We are thrilled to support the growth of startup life-science and deep-tech companies in West Harlem. This beautiful set of private labs and offices with shared amenities will help propel the Innovation Triangle in West Harlem as one of the most vibrant innovation clusters in the United States, adjacent to ground-breaking research at Columbia and CUNY academic campuses, and to the Harlem community with whom we will develop some of the most important industries of our future."

Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone President and CEO Blair Duncan said, "We are proud to be a part of Harlem Biospace and provide build-out financing to activate this project. Funding a Harlem-based, early to mid-stage biotech and life science industry is core to our mission of sustaining the economic development of communities across Upper Manhattan. We thank the Empire State Development team, New York City Economic Development Corporation, elected officials and everyone else responsible for their efforts and vision in making Harlem Biospace a reality."

Congressman Adriano Espaillat said, "Today is a culmination of years of hard work and dedication, and I commend all who worked to bring this project to fruition. A special thank you to Governor Hochul and her team for delivering this state-of-the-art incubator for small and medium sized biotech and life sciences companies to my district. The Harlem Biospace will foster involvement and inclusion of a broad-based, diverse set of students, researchers and technicians focused on breakthroughs in the fields of broadband, transportation, health care, agriculture and finance."

Cleare said, "I applaud ESDC for this targeted investment in West Harlem and I hope that the industries supported not only provide good careers for our longtime residents but public-minded solutions in the medical, science and technology fields that improve our collective quality of life."

Council Member Shaun Abreu said, "As we cut the ribbon on the Harlem Biospace at the Mink Building, we are not just celebrating a new space for innovation; we are investing in the future of our community. This expansion, made possible by a generous \$1.5 million grant from Empire State Development, will empower local entrepreneurs, create jobs, and drive economic growth in a neighborhood with limitless potential. Together, we are building a brighter future for Harlem."

NYCREDC co-chairs Félix Matos Rodríguez, City University of New York chancellor and William Rahm said, “The establishment of Harlem Biospace’s new incubator lab is a pivotal development in our mission to transform New York City into a global hub for life sciences. This facility not only fuels innovation but also provides crucial infrastructure for emerging companies to thrive. Our strategic focus remains on enhancing the economic landscape through science and technology, ensuring that New York City continues to attract top talent and maintain its competitive edge in the global market.”

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