

HOW TO OPEN A NEW BUSINESS



Welcome to (City Name)!

Starting a business can be both exciting and challenging. The (City Name) is here to help and created this flowchart to assist you throughout the process. Have questions? Flip the page over for our contact information.

STEP 1.

SITE EVALUATION

Verify if site is located within an area that allows your business.



STEP 2.

PLANNING & ZONING APPROVALS

Obtain approval from the Planning Department.



STEP 3.

BUSINESS LICENSE APPLICATION

Apply for a Business License from the City Clerk.



STEP 4.

BUILDING PERMITS & APPROVALS

Obtain a Certificate of Compliance from the Building Department. This includes applying for construction work permits and scheduling building, mechanical, plumbing, electrical and fire inspections.



STEP 5.

BUSINESS LICENSE

Obtain a Business License from the City Clerk. Make sure to renew the license by (insert date) and schedule the bi-annual Business License inspection.



OPEN YOUR BUSINESS



ANNUAL BUSINESS LICENSE RENEWAL

City Name

Address · City, State, Zip

(XXX) XXX-XXXX

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GLOSSARY

- **Business License:** License required by the local, state and/or federal government to conduct business.
- **Certificate of Compliance:** A document issued by the local building department stating that the property is safe and suitable for occupancy.
- **Permitted Uses:** An authorized use within a zoning district.
- **Special Land Uses:** Uses that may be permitted within a zoning district subject to special conditions and standards.
- **Site Plan:** A plan, to scale, showing uses and structures proposed for a parcel of land. It includes lot lines, streets, building sites, public open space, buildings, major landscape features – both natural and man-made – and, depending on requirements, the locations of proposed utility lines.
- **Zoning:** A tool that most cities use to govern “uses” (e.g. residential, commercial, or industrial), the size of buildings, and how buildings relate to their surroundings—including neighboring buildings, open spaces and the street.

CONTACT INFORMATION & RESOURCES

| STEP | CONTACT INFO | RESOURCES |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| 1. Site Evaluation | Department Name Contact Name, Title (XXX) XXX-XXXX Email Address Website (if applicable) | |
| 2. Planning & Zoning Approvals | Department Name Contact Name, Title (XXX) XXX-XXXX Email Address Website (if applicable) | |
| 3. Business License Application | Department Name Contact Name, Title (XXX) XXX-XXXX Email Address Website (if applicable) | |
| 4. Building Permits & Approvals | Department Name Contact Name, Title (XXX) XXX-XXXX Email Address Website (if applicable) | |
| 5. Business License Approval | See Step 3 | |
| 6. Open Your Business | See Step 1 | |
| 7. Annual Business License Renewal | See Steps 3 and 4 | |

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NEW BUSINESS CHECKLIST



| | | |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| STEP 1. SITE EVALUATION <i>Verify if site is located within an area that allows your business.</i> | Assess surrounding businesses and customers to see if the location meets your target market. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Consider traffic patterns and parking supply. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Understand local ordinances. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Choose several locations and confirm with the Planning Department on site zoning (see Step 2). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| STEP 2. PLANNING & ZONING APPROVALS <i>Obtain approval from the Planning Department.</i> | Contact the Planning Department to verify if the property you selected is in the correct zone that allows for your business use. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | When you select a property, fill out and submit the Zoning Verification Application. Pay required fees. Receive zoning approval before continuing to any other step. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Determine if additional planning or zoning approval is required, such as a Special Land Use permit or Site Plan (see Glossary). The Planning Department will inform you of all required processes. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | If required, apply for Site Plan approval and/or Special Land Use permit, pay associated fees, or skip to Step 3. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | If Site Plan review is required: | |
| | Prepare preliminary sketch of the site plan and schedule a Pre-Development meeting with the Planning Department. Bring your architect or engineer who is creating the site plan. If the project involves new construction, the City Engineer and Fire Marshal will be included. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Prepare site plans based on Planning Department (and City Administration) feedback. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Submit site plans to Planning Department. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Make any required revisions to site plans. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Attend scheduled Planning Commission Meeting. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | If a Special Land Use permit is required: | |
| | Attend City Council Meeting. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Make updates based on Planning Commission and City Council feedback. Receive final approval from Planning Department. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| STEP 3. BUSINESS LICENSE APPLICATION <i>Apply for a Business License from the City Clerk.</i> | Apply for a Business License with the City Clerk and pay fee. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Register your business name with the County Clerk or establish an LLC with the State of Michigan. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Register your Tax ID with the State of Michigan. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Register other licensing as needed (e.g. child care license, liquor license, food service license). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| STEP 4. BUILDING PERMITS & APPROVALS <i>Obtain a Certificate of Compliance from the Building Department. This includes applying for construction work permits and scheduling building, mechanical, plumbing, electrical and fire inspections.</i> | Submit Business License application to Building Department and pay required fee. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Prepare and submit construction plans (if applicable). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Send licensed contractor to apply for work permits and pay fees (if applicable). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Schedule work permit inspections (building, mechanical, plumbing, electrical and fire). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Perform revisions after inspections. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Schedule final work permit inspections. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Pass final work permit inspection. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Pass Fire Marshal inspection. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Pass Certificate of Compliance Inspection. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Receive Certificate of Compliance. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| STEP 5. BUSINESS LICENSE APPROVAL <i>Obtain a Business License from the City Clerk. Make sure to renew the license by (insert date) and schedule the biannual Business License inspection.</i> | After all other department and agency approvals are received, receive Business License. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Submit a Sign Application and pay required fee (if applicable). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Open your business! | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Submit your annual Business License renewal application and fee by (insert date). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Schedule and receive a biannual Business License inspection within 24 months, conducted by the Building Department. This inspection may also include the Planning Department, City Engineer and Fire Marshal. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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