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Your Guide to Opening a Busi...

YOUR GUIDE TO OPENING A BUSINESS IN WASHTENAW COUNTY

 January 6, 2025

 Startup Ecosystem, (<https://annarborusa.org/news/category/startup-ecosystem/>)
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7 STEPS TO OPENING A BUSINESS

STEP 1

SITE EVALUATION

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

STEP 2

PAUSE BEFORE PURCHASING

Take the time to gather necessary history and expertise before entering a Purchase Agreement.

STEP 3

PLANNING & ZONING APPROVALS

Obtain approval from the Planning Department.

STEP 4

BUSINESS LICENSE APPLICATION

Apply for a Business License from the City Clerk.

STEP 5

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 6

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.

STEP 7

OPEN YOUR BUSINESS

ANNUAL BUSINESS LICENSE RENEWAL

<https://annarborusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Ann-Arbor-SPARK-7-steps-High-Res-scaled.jpg>

Welcome to Washtenaw County! We're thrilled that you are interested in setting up a new brick-and-mortar business in our community, and we're here to help you navigate the process. Ann Arbor SPARK supports small businesses in any industry and at any stage, and can provide resources and referrals throughout this complex journey.

To help you get started, we've simplified Washtenaw County communities' small business development process into a series of 7 steps and a full technical glossary to move your brick-and-mortar business moving from 'great idea' to grand opening. Be sure to contact the SPARK Business Development Team at BusinessDevelopment@annarborusa.org

(<mailto:businessdevelopment@annarborusa.org>) for support during each step of the way.

Important Note: Before exploring potential sites, we highly recommend reviewing the [Michigan Small Business Development Center's \(SBDC\) Guide to Starting and Operating a Small Business](https://michigansbdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/MI-SBDC-Guide-to-Starting-2024-Web2.pdf) (<https://michigansbdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/MI-SBDC-Guide-to-Starting-2024-Web2.pdf>). This resource outlines essential milestones in developing your business idea—including planning for operations, finances, legal matters, and strategic communications—and identifies crucial steps to consider before purchasing property.

Are you ready to find the perfect place for your brick-and-mortar business in Washtenaw County? Let's go!

► Step 1: Site Evaluation

STEP 1

SITE EVALUATION

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

► Step 2: Pause Before Purchasing

STEP 2

PAUSE BEFORE PURCHASING

Take the time to gather necessary history and expertise before entering a Purchase Agreement.

► **Step 3: Planning & Zoning Approvals**

STEP 3

PLANNING & ZONING APPROVALS

Obtain approval from the Planning Department.

► *** Step 4: Business License Application**

STEP 4

BUSINESS LICENSE APPLICATION

Apply for a Business License from the City Clerk.

► **Step 5: Building Permits & Approvals**

STEP 5

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 6: Final Approvals, Business License and Renewal**

STEP 6

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.

► Step 7: Open Up Shop!

STEP 7

OPEN YOUR BUSINESS

WASHTENAW COUNTY COMMUNITY INFORMATION

**Please note that each community in Washtenaw County will have a slightly different permitting and permit application process. Please refer to these websites for more information about these community-specific processes and contacts below:*

- **Ann Arbor Township** (<https://aatwp.org/township-government/departments/building-inspector-and-zoning-official/>)
- **City of Chelsea** (<https://cacagency.org/>)
- **City of Manchester** (<https://city-manchester.org/building/>)
- **City of Saline**
(https://www.cityofsaline.org/departments/building_engineering/building_and_permits.php)
- **City of Ypsilanti** (<https://cityofypsilanti.com/258/Permit-Center>)
- **Washtenaw County** (<https://www.washtenaw.org/167/Permit-Information>)

- **City of Ann Arbor** (https://stream.a2gov.org/energov_prod/selfservice/#/home)
- **City of Dexter**
(https://www.dextermi.gov/government/departments_and_services/zoning_compliance_and_permits_guide.php)
- **Pittsfield Township** (<https://www.pittsfield-mi.gov/2206/Forms-Applications-and-Flowcharts>)
- **Scio Township** (<https://www.sciotownship.org/community/planning-and-zoning>)
- **Ypsilanti Township** (<https://ypsitownship.org/departments/building/index.php>)

GLOSSARY

- **Certificate of Occupancy:** A document issued by a local government agency or building department certifying a building's compliance with applicable building codes and other laws, and therefore indicating that it is in a condition suitable for occupancy.
- **Due Diligence Period:** A set number of days that you have to get the necessary confirmations and approvals from the community before you are bound to purchasing the property.
- **Purchase Agreement:** A documented agreement between a buyer and seller that outlines the legal terms of a real estate transaction.
- **Site Plan:** A document that details your site's current conditions and your proposed changes. It is a technical document that should always be prepared by an architect or engineer. A Site Plan is a detailed map of the property that typically includes:
 - A scaled drawing of the property
 - Property lines
 - Location of existing trees and vegetation
 - Existing and proposed buildings
 - Driveway entry and exit locations, roadways, and sidewalks
 - Utility poles and power lines

- Fencing
- Other on-site structures, such as sheds, generators, etc.
- **Site Plan Review:** A systematic assessment of land development proposals, established by a local ordinance, by which a local planner or official ensures that a proposal is consistent with land development policies, regulations, and accepted land design best practices prior to issuing a building permit.
- **Special Land Use Permit:** A legal document that allows a piece of property or land to be used in a manner that deviates from the zoning regulations in the area. These permits create “exceptions” to the Zoning Ordinance, and typically require that this exception will not cause any adverse impacts to the neighboring area.
- **Zoning Compliance:** The desired use of this property adheres to local zoning regulations.
- **Zoning Regulations:** Established in the local Zoning Ordinance, regulations that dictate how property in specific areas within a locality can be used and designed.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!