

STARTING A BUSINESS IN DENVER

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



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A multi-lingual road map to opening a business in the City and County of Denver



DENVER

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
& OPPORTUNITY

denvergov.org/economicdevelopment

STARTING A BUSINESS IN DENVER

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

WELCOME TO DENVER!

Thank you for choosing Denver as a home for your business! This checklist is intended to get you up and running as soon as possible. It includes navigation through the various city agencies and external organizations you will work with throughout this process.

There are many approvals needed before a business can open in Denver, and the information below will help you avoid unnecessary delays.

01

PLAN YOUR BUSINESS

- Develop a marketable business concept
- Identify target market; who is your ideal customer?
- Develop a marketing strategy
- Identify operational needs, such as staffing, production, and equipment needed
- Estimate start-up expenses
- Create financial projections for three years (worst-case, realistic case, best-case scenarios)
- Research the competition
- Select advisors (consultant/lawyer/CPA)

Who to Contact

- The Commons on Champa: <https://thecommons.co/>
- Colorado Business Resource Book: <https://bit.ly/2S1cF6z>
- Denver Small Business Development Center: <https://bit.ly/3mYwOFS>
- Counselor to America's Small Business: <https://bit.ly/3QqC47o>

02

REGISTER YOUR BUSINESS NAME & STRUCTURE

Search for business name availability and register your business name and structure.

Who to Contact

Colorado Secretary of State
<https://www.coloradosos.gov/>
303.894.2200



03

DETERMINE YOUR BUSINESS ACTIVITY TYPE & OBTAIN APPROPRIATE PERMITS OR LICENSES

Who to Contact

City and County of Denver

- Denver Excise and License: <https://bit.ly/3IEsIr6> to determine whether your business requires special permits or licenses.

State of Colorado

- Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies: <https://dora.colorado.gov/> for any state requirements.

04

SELECT A LOCATION & DETERMINE ZONING & SITE PERMITTING

When selecting a site, it is important to make sure the location is appropriate for your business. Among the factors to consider are the type of building, location, zoning, and available parking. Consider working with a licensed contractor with expertise in these areas.

Who to Contact

- Denver Community Planning & Development: <https://bit.ly/39wjU3F>
- Denver Development Services – Small Business Services: <https://bit.ly/3MVnr9e>

05

OBTAIN A ZONING PERMIT

A zoning permit is required prior to receiving a building permit for a renovation. This is applicable if the use in a building or other commercial space is different from the previous use or if zoning approval is required for any other permit or license (see below). A pre-application meeting is recommended.

Who to Contact

Denver Development Services:
<https://bit.ly/3xzze7l> 720.865.3000

06

GET OTHER APPROVALS

Who to Contact

- A Wastewater Management sewer use and drainage permit may be required, depending on the quantity or type of wastewater involved with your business <https://bit.ly/3Qn9ofs>
- Denver Department of Public Health & Environment approval is required when food is involved in the business, if this business is a daycare, or for swimming pools and spas <https://bit.ly/3QrKZp7>
- Fire Department approval may also be required <https://bit.ly/3xYOXye>

07

OBTAIN A BUILDING PERMIT (IF REQUIRED)

- There is a change of occupancy as defined in the Denver Building Code
- If you elect to do interior changes. All work must be done to current building code. *If there is a change of occupancy, ADA compliance is required, which may require additional changes to the building code.*

Who to Contact

Denver Development Services:
<https://bit.ly/3xzze7l> 720.865.3000

08

CALL FOR INSPECTIONS AND OBTAIN A CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

A building or zoning inspection may be required prior to opening your business.

Who to Contact

Denver Development Services:
<https://bit.ly/3xzze7l> 720.865.3000

SCAN ME



Learn more about all things DEDO by scanning this code



09

REGISTER WITH TAX AUTHORITIES

Taxes that businesses may pay include income tax, employment tax, sales tax, and city business taxes. Register with the Denver's Treasury Division, Colorado Department of Revenue, and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service to ensure you have the necessary tax requirements for your business.



Who to Contact

City and County of Denver

- Denver Treasury Division: <https://bit.ly/3HCjy7Z>
- Denver eBiz Tax Center: <https://www.coloradosos.gov/> to register for city taxes, file returns and manage tax accounts.

State of Colorado

- For state taxes and a Sales Tax ID number, visit the Colorado Business Navigator: <https://mybiz.colorado.gov/intro>.

Federal Government

- All forms of structure, except sole proprietors with no employees, must obtain a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN), which is also your federal tax ID number. For more federal tax information: Internal Revenue Service, <http://www.irs.gov/> 800.829.1040

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EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

A business with employees must register as an employer; pay additional taxes; withhold, match, and submit employee withholdings; obtain workers' compensation insurance; and follow other employee eligibility regulations. The Colorado Business Resource Book listed above includes a helpful section on this topic.

Unemployment insurance requirement:

Visit the Colorado Business Navigator website to register your business with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment in order to establish an unemployment insurance account.

Who to Contact

Denver Workforce Services

- Once you are ready to begin hiring staff for your business, the Denver Workforce Services team can help you find and prescreen qualified applicants at no cost.
workforce.development@denvergov.org
720.913.1999

Colorado State Directory of New Hires

- Employers are required to report newly hired employees to the Colorado State Directory of New Hires: <http://www.newhire.state.co.us/>

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OPEN YOUR BUSINESS!

By completing these steps, you have built a strong foundation that, along with hard work and a little luck, will enable your business to thrive in the Mile High City.

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CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Good luck with your new business. Please let us know when you're open so we can help you celebrate!



MORE!

The Denver Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program is a State of Colorado tax credit program that allows businesses located within a specific geographic area to receive tax credits against their state income tax liability for qualifying activities, such as job creation, employee training and investment in business personal property. Denver's designate EZ includes over 30 square miles of commercially zoned real estate. Learn more at <https://oodit.colorado.gov/enterprise-zone-program>

Denver Economic Development & Opportunity offers a diverse set of programs and services to help new and expanding businesses. From small business financing to employee recruitment, tax credits based on your investment and growth, and a wide range of referrals to a menu of community resources, we are ready to help ensure your success. Learn more: <https://qrco.de/bd610H>

Denver has a public, free, community space that is serving the unique needs of aspiring and existing entrepreneurs. **The Commons on Champa:** <https://thecommons.co/> at 1245 Champa St.

City professionals maintain office hours for free advisory sessions, by appointment: <https://bit.ly/3xCrvFz>. A wealth of other partners, including state and federal government offices as well as nonprofit organizations, offer free counseling and training as well.



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& International Trade

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