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Call for inspections and obtain a Certificate of Occupancy

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.denvergov.org/developmentservices

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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!

Denver's Office of Economic Development offers a diverse set of programs and services to help new and expanding businesses here. From small business financing to employee recruitment, Enterprise Zone tax credits and other tax credits based on your investment and growth, and a wide range of referrals to a range of community resources, we are ready to help ensure your success. Learn more at www.denvergov.org/oed, click on "Build Your Business."

Denver has a public, free, community space that is designed just to serve the unique needs of aspiring and existing entrepreneurs. It is **The Commons on Champa** at 1245 Champa St. Learn more about their events and services at www.thecommons.co.

OED professionals maintain office hours for free advisory sessions, either walk in or by appointment. 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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Celebrate success

Good luck with your new business!

BUSINESS STARTUP CHECKLIST

A roadmap to opening
a business in the
City and County of Denver



Welcome to Denver!

Thank you for bringing your business here! To help get your new business up and running and to expedite the city's approval process, the Offices of Economic Development, Excise and Licensing and Development Services have prepared this checklist to help guide you through the various city agencies.

Since it is the responsibility of each new business to complete the needed approvals before it can open, this checklist will help you avoid unnecessary delays. The requirements may vary according to the type of business you intend to start or expand, but the following steps are a good guide to what you will encounter.

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Plan your business

- Pick/develop a marketable business concept
- Identify target market, product or service customer group
- Determine business location
- Develop marketing strategy
- Identify operational needs
- Estimate project start-up expenses
- Project financial statements for three years (worst-case, realistic case, best-case scenarios)
- Research the competition
- Select advisors (consultant/lawyer/CPA)

RESOURCES:

- The Commons on Champa**
www.commonsonchampa.com
- Colorado Business Resource Guide**
www.coloradosbdc.org, click "resources"
- Denver Small Business Development Center**
www.coloradosbdc.org
- Counselor to America's Small Business (SCORE)**
www.scoredenver.org

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Select a location and determine zoning and 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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Development Services
201 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 203
www.denvergov.org/developmentservices
720-865-2790

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Register your business name and structure

Search for business name availability and register your business name and structure at:

Colorado Secretary of State
1700 Broadway, Suite 200
Denver, 80202
www.sos.state.co.us
303-894-2200

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Register with tax authorities on the city, state, and federal level

Taxes that may be levied on businesses include income tax, employment tax, sales tax and city business taxes. Register with Denver's Treasury Division, Colorado Department of Revenue and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service to obtain the necessary tax information.

City: To register for city taxes, file returns and manage tax accounts, visit Denver's eBiz Tax Center at www.denvergov.org/ebiztax.

Denver Treasury Division
201 W. Colfax Ave., Atrium 720-913-9400

State: For state taxes and a Sales Tax ID number, visit the Colorado Business Express website, www.colorado.gov/cbe.

Federal: 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 800-829-1040 www.irs.gov

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Get a zoning permit

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Development Services
01 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 203
www.denvergov.org/developmentservices
720-865-3000 (voicemail for zoning questions)

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Determine your business activity type and obtain any permits or licenses

City license permits: To determine whether your business requires special permits or licenses, contact:

Denver Excise and Licensing
201 W. Colfax, Suite 206 Dial 3-1-1
www.denvergov.org/businesslicensing

State license permits: In addition to city permits and licenses, check with the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies regarding any state requirements.

Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies
1580 Broadway, Suite 1350
303-894-7800 www.colorado.gov/dora

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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 Guide includes a helpful section on this topic (www.coloradosbdc.org, click on "Resources").

Unemployment insurance requirement: Visit the Colorado Business Express website, www.colorado.gov/cbe, to register your business with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment in order to establish an unemployment insurance account.

Once you are ready to begin hiring a staff for your business, the Denver Office of Economic Development's Workforce Development Services team can help you find and prescreen qualified applicants at no cost. To learn more about workforce services for employers, call 720-913-1999 or go to www.denvergov.org/workforce.

Report new hires: Employers are required to report newly-hired employees to the Colorado State Directory of New Hires, www.newhire.state.co.us.

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Obtain a building permit (if required)

A building permit is required if:

There is a change of occupancy as defined in the Denver Building Code.

If you elect to do interior changes. All Elective work must be done to current building code.

NOTE: If there is a change of occupancy, ADA compliance is required, which may require changes to the building.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.denvergov.org/developmentservices

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Get other approvals

Contact Development Services to find out about:

A Wastewater Management sewer use and drainage permit may be required, depending on the quantity or type of wastewater involved with your business.

Department of Environmental Health approval is required when food is involved in the business or daycare, or for swimming pools and spas.

Fire Department approval may also be required.