



## Information Sheet and Check List for Opening a Business

Please review this form prior to opening your business to get a broad overview and better understanding of all the steps and details that are involve in opening a business. We suggest that you check off the various tasks as you complete them.

**Zoning**  
I have met all zoning requirements. A Conditional Use Permit is not necessary or I have obtained one.  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Business License**  
I have submitted a completed business license application with all necessary documentation and paid the appropriate business license fee.  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Occupation**  
I understand and meet all of the conditions that apply to the operation of a home-based business.  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Occupancy Inspection**  
My building owner has scheduled an occupancy inspection.  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Building Improvements/Construction Permits**  
I have obtained all permits for building renovations including building, plumbing, electrical, etc.  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signage**  
I have obtained an approved sign permit before ordering my sign.  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Food-Related Business**  
I am in a food-related business and have contacted the St. Louis County Health Department to receive their approval.  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Alcoholic Beverages**  
I am serving alcoholic beverages and have obtained a liquor license.  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Requirements**  
I have obtained a sales tax number and am registered with the State of Missouri.  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

## **1. Zoning Requirements**

For Questions, call 314-963-5314

The City's Zoning Code regulates where specific business activities may be located within the city. Some business activities are allowed by right in certain Commercial and Industrial areas, while others may not be allowed or require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to operate. Unique parking, building setbacks, and landscaping requirements may also apply. Before signing a lease to move into a commercial or industrial space, contact the Planner to describe your intended business activities and verify if your business use is allowed in that location or if additional zoning regulations apply.

Generally, businesses cannot operate in Residential zoning districts except for licensed Home Occupations (see below), short term rentals, and limited day cares. Contact the Planner for more information.

## **2. Home Occupation**

For Questions, call 314-963-5314

Limited small businesses may be operated out of a home with a Home Occupation License, provided the business is clearly incidental and subordinate to the use of the property as the applicant's residence. Commercial signage is not allowed and commercial vehicles must be parked within an enclosed garage or screened rear yard. Regulations upon the number of employees and customers, minimum parking availability, hours of operation, and other code requirements also apply. Certain business types are not allowed to operate as Home Occupations. A City-issued business license is required. Contact the Planner for more information.

## **3. Business License**

For Questions, call 314-963-5300

A City-issued business license is required before a business can open. Application packets for business licenses are available online or at the Customer Service Desk in City Hall. Before the license is issued, the City must first review and approve the zoning, occupancy inspection, fire code compliance, state sales tax ID (where applicable) and registration with the Missouri Secretary of State office.

The license fee is based upon the statement of gross receipts (money and other compensation received from business activity) from the previous year. Proof of income is not required, but can be requested any year the business is in operation for a random audit of license fees. Licenses expire December 31<sup>st</sup> and must be renewed annually.

## **4. Occupancy Inspection**

For Questions, call 314-963-5332

An approved Occupancy Inspection is necessary before the City will issue a business license. The City does not recommend signing a lease to move into a commercial space until after the completion of an initial city Occupancy Inspection. After receiving a business license application, the City will contact the building owner/property manager to schedule an Occupancy Inspection to verify that the tenant space, building exterior and common areas meet all basic property maintenance requirements. Additional site-specific or use-specific occupancy requirements may apply.

The city Occupancy Inspection will identify existing conditions which must be addressed to obtain occupancy approval. Please inform the inspector of planned renovations. The building owner may then

need to apply for Building Permits to address items identified during the inspection. After all necessary building permits have been obtained and the work has been completed, the building owner must schedule a final Occupancy Inspection. The business may not open until after a final Occupancy Inspection has been approved. The cost of the Occupancy Inspection is \$70, which includes one re-inspection.

## **5. Building Improvements/Construction Permits**

For Questions, call 314-963-5325

Moving into an existing commercial space may involve some interior renovations and other improvements which will require city permits. The City of Webster Groves issues building, plumbing, electrical, and HVAC permits for interior renovations and new construction. Alterations to the exterior of an existing buildings must also be reviewed by the City's Architectural Review Board (ARB) as part of the permit review process. The ARB meets twice monthly to review construction projects. Building permit applications are due two weeks in advance of each ARB meeting date.

The City does not recommend signing a lease to move into a commercial space until after an initial city Occupancy Inspection has occurred to ensure all parties are aware of the building improvements and permits necessary for Occupancy.

## **6. Signage**

For Questions, call 314-963-5314

The City's Sign Code regulates the size, type, and placement of all business signage. Before you order any signage, be sure that your designer or installer have obtained a city Sign Permit. Contact the Planner for more information.

## **7. Food and Drink-Related Businesses**

For Questions, call 314-963-5318

All eating and/or drinking establishments are required to have a St. Louis County Health permit. For instructions and forms, visit the website at [www.stlouisco.com/doh/foodcenter/restmt\\_open.html](http://www.stlouisco.com/doh/foodcenter/restmt_open.html). Any business selling alcoholic beverages by the package or glass must have a City Liquor License approved by the City Council. Contact the City Clerk or visit [www.webstergroves.org/liquorlicense](http://www.webstergroves.org/liquorlicense).

## **8. Sales Tax Number and State Registration**

If engaging in sales, an applicant must provide the City with the business' state sales tax number. A state sales tax number can be obtained from the Missouri Department of Revenue at 573-751-2836 or online at <http://dor.mo.gov/business/sales>. Most companies operating in Missouri must register with the State. Unincorporated businesses must also file if they do business under any title other than the actual name of the owner. Visit [www.sos.mo.gov](http://www.sos.mo.gov) for information, or contact the Office of the Secretary of State in Jefferson City at 866-223-6535.

## **9. Special Business Taxing Districts**

For Questions, call 314-963-5333

The Crossroads, Old Orchard, and Old Webster special business taxing districts promote their local districts through marketing, special events, public parking, and other public improvements. Boundaries of the 3 districts may be viewed at [www.webstergroves.org/index.aspx?nid=138](http://www.webstergroves.org/index.aspx?nid=138). Businesses located in these districts pay a business license surcharge to support the activities of these districts.