

# ***Starting a New Business:***

*A Step by Step Guide to Starting or Expanding your  
Business in Oshkosh*

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**OSHKOSH**

**ON THE WATER**

City of Oshkosh  
Department of Community Development  
215 Church Avenue  
Oshkosh, WI 54901  
PH: 920-236-5000  
FAX: 920-236-5053

<http://www.ci.oshkosh.wi.us>

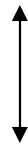
**START**



**Contact the City of Oshkosh Planning Services Division at (920) 236-5059 or visit City Hall at 215 Church Avenue to confirm the project conforms with city zoning codes and discuss next steps.**



**Contact the City of Oshkosh Inspection Services Division at (920) 236-5050 or visit City Hall at 215 Church Avenue after discussing the project with Planning Services to ensure project conforms with state building codes and discuss next steps.**



**Staff will advise on next steps that may be necessary if the project is feasible.**

# *Starting a Business in an Existing Building?*

## *Begin Here:*

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### Step 1:

**Call Planning Services to confirm the proposed use of your building is compliant with the zoning code.**

#### **Planning and Zoning Services:**

Phone: (920) 236-5059

Fax: (920) 236-5053

City Hall 215 Church Avenue (Second Floor)

Oshkosh WI, 54901

[http://www2.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Community\\_Development/Planning\\_Services/](http://www2.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Community_Development/Planning_Services/)

#### *Other Planning Services responsibilities:*

- Any new signage or additions to existing signage will require a review/permit. The Planning and Zoning Office can review the sign's copy, placement, and size. Once zoning is approved a sign permit will be issued by Inspection Services, which will verify that the structure is being built to code, and if necessary, installed by a licensed contractor.
- The Planning and Zoning Office can also assist in questions pertaining to garbage collection. Commercial property owners are responsible for arranging their own garbage collection with a private service provider. If you have questions regarding where your refuse containers can be placed call the Planning and Zoning Office located on the second floor of City Hall.

Planning and Zoning Services provides planning services to the community, dealing with activities such as zoning and subdivision regulations, land use planning, economic development, historic preservation and housing programming.

Zoning is the division of land into districts. These districts have uniform zoning regulations including those on land use, height, setbacks, lot size, density, coverage, and floor area ratio. Zoning and its regulations help ensure a city will grow and change in a managed, predictable way, to help safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of a city. You must have the appropriate zoning before you may build on your land.

## Step 2:

**Please call Inspection Services Division to see if a building plan is code compliant and if a building plan is required prior to obtaining permits.**

### Inspection Services:

Phone: (920) 236-5050

Fax: (920) 236-5128

City Hall 215 Church Avenue (Second Floor)

Oshkosh WI, 54901

Mail: Inspection Services Division, PO Box 1130, Oshkosh WI 54903-1130.

[http://www2.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Community\\_Development/Inspection\\_Services/](http://www2.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Community_Development/Inspection_Services/)

### *Permit Inspections:*

- Building, Electrical, Plumbing, and HVAC permits are required when making alterations to your building.
- These permits can be obtained, reviewed, and issued by the Inspection Services Division.
- If you are renting a space you will need the property owner's signature in order to obtain any permits. The property owner must physically come into City Hall and sign the permit.
- Permit applications can be found here and sent in by mail or fax:  
[http://www2.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Community\\_Development/Inspection\\_Services/applications\\_and\\_forms.asp](http://www2.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Community_Development/Inspection_Services/applications_and_forms.asp) (City Website → Departments → Inspection Services Division → Permits/Forms → Applications and Forms)
- Please note the permit fees which can be reviewed here:  
[http://www2.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Community\\_Development/Inspection\\_Services/assets/pdf/PERMIT\\_FEES.pdf](http://www2.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Community_Development/Inspection_Services/assets/pdf/PERMIT_FEES.pdf) (City Website → Departments → Inspection Services Division → Permits/Forms → Permit Fees). Please call to confirm permit fee amount.
- Scheduled inspections are required during various phases of your construction project. Required inspections can be found here:  
[http://www2.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Community\\_Development/Inspection\\_Services/assets/pdf/Required\\_Inspections-Commercial.pdf](http://www2.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Community_Development/Inspection_Services/assets/pdf/Required_Inspections-Commercial.pdf) (City Website → Inspection Services Division → Permits/Forms → Applications and Forms → Required Inspections for Commercial Project)
- Inspections can be scheduled by calling the inspection request line (920) 236-5128 or online.

## Step 3:

- Please refer to pages 9 and 10 for other required steps for other City of Oshkosh department requirements.

# ***Starting a Business in an Existing Building that Requires a Conditional Use Permit or Planned Development Approval***

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***Start with steps 1 through 3 that are found on page 3 and 4 before obtaining your Conditional Use Permit.***

## **What is a Conditional Use Permit (CUP)?**

- Each of the City's zoning districts includes a specific list of conditional uses that are permitted only through the issuance of a conditional use permit granted by the Common Council. Conditional uses are those uses that are unique or may have an unusual impact in their location or operation that requires in depth review of their location, design, configuration, and operation.

## **What is a Planned Development approval (PD)?**

- A Planned Development (PD) is an overlay district that is placed over a residential, commercial, or industrial zoning district. The purpose of the Planned Development is to achieve higher quality projects with additional amenities and greater development standards. The PD allows added flexibility from the underlying or base standards of the Zoning Ordinance in return for the higher quality development project. Once a PD Overlay (approved by the Common Council) has been applied to a property or area, all development on the property or within the area must either comply with the approved PD, amend the PD, or a new PD be established.

## **What next?**

- Contact Planning Services to discuss interest in a CUP or PD (920) 236-5059. Staff will then schedule an appointment with you to discuss ordinance requirements, the request's consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, and potential concerns regarding the proposed use.

***DISCLAIMER:*** After you receive your CUP or PD you may also need a Site Plan Review if necessary (See below).

# ***Starting a Business in an Existing Building, a Vacant Lot, or Expanding a Building that Requires a Conditional Use Permit or Planned Development Approval***

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## **What next?**

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***DISCLAIMER:*** After you receive your CUP or PD you may also need a Site Plan Review if necessary (See below).

## ***Starting a Business on a Vacant Lot OR Expanding an Existing Business***

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***Start with steps 1 through 3 that are found on page 3 and 4 before proceeding  
with the Site Plan Review process.***

### **What is Site Plan Review?**

- The site plan review process is required for every commercial, industrial, institutional, and multi-family (three or more units) projects in the City prior to issuance of a building permit or developmental activity. The Site plan review requirement applies to first-time development of property as well as for additions and expansions to existing developments.

### **What next?**

- Contact the Site Plan Review Coordinator (920) 236-5059. Staff will then schedule a pre-submittal meeting with you.

## *Additional Required Steps*

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*Please review the required steps below to ensure all necessary city and state permits, licenses, and inspections are applied for.*

**Weights and Measures License:**

Inspection Services Division  
Second Floor, City Hall, 215 Church Ave.  
Phone: (920) 236-5050

Any devices that are used to weigh/measure merchandise will need to be registered and inspected annually as well. Please note that it is the business owner's responsibility to register any new equipment, and if they are found to be operating unregistered equipment they will be cited for noncompliance.

**Assessor's Office:**

Second Floor, City Hall, 215 Church Ave.  
Phone: (920) 236-5070

- The Assessor's Office requires all businesses to register their personal property annually.
- New Business Personal Property Forms can be found online here: [http://www.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/oshkosh\\_ias/Main/Home.aspx](http://www.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/oshkosh_ias/Main/Home.aspx) (City Website → Departments → Community Development → Assessor → Forms). Please print, complete, and return the form to the Assessor's Office located on the second floor of city hall.
- Purpose of this form: Allows city assessors to enter your business information correctly onto the personal property roll and ensures any information mailed from the assessor's office will go to the correct person at the correct office.
- If you are mailing your correspondence please use the address below:

C/O PERSONAL PROPERTY  
ASSESSORS OFFICE  
CITY OF OSHKOSH  
PO BOX 1130  
OSHKOSH WI 54903-1130

**City Clerk's Office:**

First Floor, City Hall, 215 Church Ave.  
Phone: (920) 236-5011

- Establishments intending to serve alcohol will need to apply with the City Clerk's Office to apply for a liquor/fermented malt license.



- Due to the varying needs of business owners you will need to contact the Clerk's office directly to discuss your intended use and they can walk you through the application process.
- The City Clerk's Office is located on the first floor of City Hall at 215 Church Avenue in Oshkosh.

**Oshkosh Fire Department:**

Phone: (920) 236-5241

Email: fireprevention@ci.oshkosh.wi.us

- The fire department must be contacted for an inspection before opening for business to ensure adequate protection in the event of an emergency.
- Visit the fire department website <http://www.oshkoshfd.com/> for more information by clicking on the "Prevention" tab on the left hand side of the page.

**Water Utility:**

Third Floor, City Hall, 215 Church Ave.

Phone: (920) 232-5325

- Water Utility can assist you with billing questions as well as turn your water service on or off.
- If you need to schedule an appointment to replace your water meter please call (920) 232-5330.
- Water Utility is a part of the Public Works Department located in City Hall. For more information regarding water as well as other utilities visit their website here: [http://www2.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Public\\_Works/index.asp](http://www2.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Public_Works/index.asp) (City Website → Departments → Public Works).

**Winnebago County Health Department:**

112 Otter Ave, Oshkosh

Phone: (920) 232-3000

- The Winnebago County Health Department can assist by issuing the required permits for your establishment's intended use.
- A health department license must be issued for the following: campgrounds (campgrounds and recreational camps), Food (restraints, retail food stores, and vending machines), lodging (hotels, motels, tourist rooming houses, and bed and breakfast), Manufactured Home Communities, Swimming Facilities, Tattoo and Body Piercing, and Temporary and Special Events (Food and Camping).
- For questions regarding health department related licenses please call (920) 232-3000 or visit their website: <http://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/health/units/environmental-health/food-safety-recreational-licensing>

## Local Resources

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*Starting your own business can be confusing and at times you may not know where to go to receive the resources you need. Below you will find local agencies that can assist you with any business questions and needs.*

### **City of Oshkosh- Community Development Department**

City Hall

215 Church Avenue, Second Floor

(920) 235-5055 or (920) 236-5059

[http://www.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Community\\_Development/](http://www.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Community_Development/)

### **Greater Oshkosh Economic Development Corporation (GO-EDC)**

2380 Hwy 44, Suite B, Oshkosh, WI 54904

(920) 230-3323

<http://www.go-edc.com/>

Financial Assistance Programs:

- *Revolving Loan Fund Program*

The GO-EDC Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program is a partnership between the City of Oshkosh and GO-EDC. The RLF is administered by GO-EDC and includes flexibility designed to encourage business growth and job creation, while providing for recapitalization and growth of the RLF. It is a flexible gap financing tool for businesses engaged in high-income and job growth through projects involving expansion and/or relocation in the City of Oshkosh.

Website: <http://www.go-edc.com/about-us/rlf/>

### **Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce**

120 Jackson Street, Oshkosh WI, 54901

(920) 303-2266 or (920) 303-2263

<http://www.oshkoshchamber.com/>

Financial Assistance Programs:

- *Revolving Loan Fund Program*

The purpose of the Revolving Loan Fund is to promote local economic development through the expansion and retention of employment and business opportunities in the Oshkosh area, with an emphasis on the Central Business District. The fund is also designed to promote and foster entrepreneurial expansion in the Oshkosh area.

Website: <http://www.oshkoshchamber.com/business-resources/grow-a-business/revolving-loan-fund-program/>

**Oshkosh Business Improvement District (BID)**

120 Jackson Street, Oshkosh WI, 54901

(920) 303-2266 or (920) 303-2263

<http://www.oshkoshchamber.com/business-resources/economic-development/business-improvement-district/>

Financial Assistance Programs:

- *Downtown Oshkosh Business Grant*

These funds offer financial assistance to new business ventures or relocating establishments. The downtown environment has grown over time, and we are happy to support our progress in any way possible. The Recruitment Fund Grant Program awards up to \$5,000 to individual businesses in order to assist with relocation to the BID, or fund an expansion project for a business currently located within the BID district.

Website: <http://www.downtownoshkosh.com/recruitment-fund-grants.html>

**Free Counseling Services:****Small Business Development Center**

835 High Street (Sage Hall, Room 1614)

Oshkosh, WI 54901

(920) 424-1453

<http://www.uwosh.edu/cob/sbdc>

**Oshkosh SCORE Chapter**

120 Jackson Street

Oshkosh, WI 54901

(920) 303-2266 or [info@oshkoshchamber.com](mailto:info@oshkoshchamber.com)

<http://www.oshkoshchamber.com/business-resources/grow-a-business/score-small-business-counseling/>

## *Federal and State Resources*

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### **Internal Revenue Service**

Corporations Bureau, Suite 300  
PO Box 7846  
Madison, WI 53707-7846  
Ph: (608) 261-7577  
Website: <http://www.irs.gov/Businesses>

An Employer Identification Number (EIN) is also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number, and is used to identify business entity. Generally, businesses need an EIN:

[http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/Employer-ID-Numbers-\(EINS\)](http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/Employer-ID-Numbers-(EINS))

Links to basic federal tax information for people who are starting a business, as well as information to assist in making basic business decisions: <http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/Starting-a-Business>

### **Wisconsin Department of Revenue**

265 W. Northland Ave.  
Appleton, WI 54911-2016  
Ph: (920) 832-2727  
Website: <http://www.revenue.wi.gov/businesses/index.html>

A seller's permit is required for every individual, partnership, corporation, or other organization making retail sales, leases, or rentals of tangible personal property or taxable services in Wisconsin, unless all sales are exempt from sales or use tax. For more information visit:

<http://www.revenue.wi.gov/faqs/pcs/seller.mhtml#s1>

### **Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions**

201 W. Washington Avenue, Suite 500  
Madison, WI 53703  
Ph: (608) 261-9555  
Fax: (608) 261-7200  
Website: <http://www.wdfi.org/>

Creates a legal business entity.

### **The U.S. Small Business Administration**

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was created in 1953 as an independent agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. They recognize that small business is critical to our economic recovery and strength, to building America's future, and to helping the United States compete in today's global marketplace.

Website: <http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business>

### **Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)**

WEDC uses a range of state and federal investment programs to help businesses start, grow and relocate in Wisconsin. To help drive economic growth in our state, WEDC has provided more than \$500 million in financial assistance since its foundation in 2011. Their regional account managers work with local economic development partners to structure customized solutions to address the specific needs of businesses. Examples of financial investment options are: business retention and expansion grants, loans and tax credits, and workforce training grants. WEDC also help attract new companies to the state.

Website: <http://inwisconsin.com/>