



Opening a Business in Lakewood

Food Service (Restaurants and Coffee Shops) Checklist

Thank you for considering Lakewood for your business! This checklist guides you to which forms you need to complete, offices you need to visit and reviews that need to be conducted to open your food service business in Lakewood.

Step 1: Getting Started

- Apply for an [Employer Identification Number \(EIN\)](#), also known as a Federal Tax ID Number from the IRS. This is used to identify your business and allows you to hire employees. If you are a sole proprietor without employees, you may choose to use your Social Security Number instead.
- Apply for a [Seller's Permit](#) from the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration. Every location must have this permit to sell taxable goods.
- Choose and file a business name. File a [Fictitious Business Name \(FBN\) Statement](#) at the Office of the County Clerk if you will be using a name other than your given name, the names of your partners, or the officially registered name of your LLC or corporation.
- Check out the local [Small Business Development Center](#) for advice and guidance at no cost to you.

Step 2: Finding a Location

- From a regional mall to dozens of neighborhood shopping centers to industrial areas, Lakewood is a city of 21st-century possibilities for your business. The city's economic development gateway offers profiles of selected commercial centers and links to business data sources. Click [here](#) for a map of selected shopping centers.
- The Gateway Cities Council of Governments has an [online real estate tool](#) to ensure that you select the right building, lot or retail space for your business.
- If you have found a prospective location for your business, you would need to get a Zoning Clearance from the city to make sure it has the right zoning for a retail business.
- If the business you are opening is the same as the type of business that was there before, it will be much faster to get up and running. Otherwise, permits may be required from the Community Development Department.

- Identify the parking requirements for your retail business and check to see if the lease includes parking spaces to meet those requirements.
- Check to see whether the location meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements so you are aware of and can budget for any needed renovations.
- If you plan to serve alcohol, a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required from the City's Community Development Department. If the property has an existing alcohol license, you could research whether it could be transferred to you. Otherwise, you can obtain an alcohol license from the [State of California Department of Alcohol and Beverage Control](#).

Step 3: Preparing to Open

- Approval of a site plan review by City staff and usually the Development Review Board (DRB) is needed before you open your business. This review ensures the business has adequate parking, lighting, landscaping, signage, utilities, solid waste storage in an approved trash enclosure and adequate conformance with ADA. The DRB review of your site plan includes the installation or modification of exterior permanent signs.
- A CUP may also be needed for your business. A CUP requires the approval of the Planning and Environment Commission. A City Planner can help you determine if a CUP is required for your business.
- Contact the Los Angeles County Department of Health to obtain a [Public Health Permit](#).
- If your food service business will generate fats, oils and grease during food preparation, you will need a [Los Angeles County Industrial Waste Permit](#).
- If you plan to have live entertainment, music or karaoke...
- Every business require a [business license](#) prior to the operation and opening of any business or a change in ownership of an existing business. A City planner reviews the proposed business site plan and floor plan for compliance with the Lakewood Municipal Code before issuance.

Step 4: Open Your Business

- Connecting with people will be the key to your success. Join the [Greater Lakewood Chamber of Commerce](#), check out [SELACO Workforce Development Board](#) for hiring and training advice and engage with various non-profit groups in the city to spread the word about your business.

Resources:

City of Lakewood Community Development Department: (562) 866-9771, extension 2343

Greater Lakewood Chamber of Commerce: (562) 531-9733

Long Beach City College Small Business Development Center: (562) 938-5100

Southeast Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board: (562) 402-9336