



Opening a Business in Lakewood

Office/Professional Business

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 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. If you are selling taxable goods, you would need this permit.
- 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 will 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. Plans and permits will be required for any proposed signage. Also, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is

required from Building and Safety. This includes an ADA point of sale and paths-of-travel from both the nearest public sidewalk and an ADA parking space.

- Identify the parking requirements for your retail business and check to see if the lease includes parking spaces to meet those requirements.

Step 3: Preparing to Open

- Approval of a site plan review by City staff 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.
- Approval of the Development Review Board (DRB) will be required for any installation or modification of exterior permanent signs and any modification to the exterior of the structure.
- A Conditional Use Permit (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.
- You will also be working with various County of Los Angeles departments as you prepare your business for opening. City staff will help direct you to the appropriate agencies, such as Building and Safety, County Fire, Public Health and Industrial Waste.
- Every business is required to obtain 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. Business licenses are also required for all contractors, subcontractors and installers.

Tip: Business owners are required to register with the corresponding state agency that oversees the type of office or professional business.

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