

City of Independence Guide to Starting a Business



Version: 7/09/2018

For more information about starting a business in Independence go on line to <http://www.independencemo.org> or call the Community Development at 816-325-7415

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Letter from the Mayor



Dear Future Business Owner:

Thank you for selecting the City of Independence as the home for your future business. The City is ready to help you make it happen. The process of starting or expanding a business can be both exciting and challenging. We know you have lots of questions about the types of permits and licenses you will need and the process that goes along with obtaining them. You may also have questions about general business planning and the preparation needed before you open for business. The City of Independence is committed to making this process as straightforward as possible.



City staff has created this guide as a tool to help point you in the right direction of resources available to you and to help you navigate the licensing and permitting process at the City. It is designed to be used as a complete guide or in sections depending on your needs. Hopefully, you will find that it provides valuable information no matter what stage you are in, from the entrepreneur exploring a new idea to the seasoned business owner looking to expand.

The City of Independence is committed to your success. Use this guide as a resource, but do not feel like you have to manage the process alone. As a service to potential businesses in our community, staff is happy to meet with you and provide information and contacts for other available resources in the community. Additionally, when you are ready to open a physical storefront or location in the City we offer no-cost predevelopment meetings between you and various City departments involved in the development and permitting process. This no-cost predevelopment meeting will help ensure a more seamless development process when starting your business.

Contact the City of Independence for general questions about the process and/or to setup a no-cost predevelopment meeting. We look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eileen Weir". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eileen Weir, Mayor

Economic Development Organizations in Independence

City of Independence

The City of Independence works to promote a healthy Independence economy by assisting entrepreneurs, developers and businesses large and small to navigate the City's development and permitting process. They also help new and existing businesses meet their needs for labor, real-estate, financing and technical assistance. The City also manages various incentive programs including: the Enhanced Enterprise Zone, Tax Abatement, Tax Increment Financing, Community Improvements Districts and Transportation Development Districts. They can also assist in obtaining various State incentives.

City of Independence
111 E. Maple Avenue
Independence, MO 64050
www.independencemo.org/econdev/

Independence Economic Development Council

&

Independence Regional Ennovation Center

The Independence Economic Development Council and the Independence Regional Ennovation Center are a one stop shop for information necessary to operate a successful business in Independence. The Independence EDC provides a wide range of reports and information that are important to help you make smart decisions. This information includes customized demographic and market reports, information on state incentive negotiations, procurement and site selection. The Ennovation Center Business Incubator focuses on growing business and helping people with big ideas turn those goals to reality. The Ennovation Center features two incubators: a commercial kitchen with multiple workstations for food production and catering businesses and a business technology incubator featuring offices, office suites with multiple workspaces, and techlabs for biotech and small scale component manufacturing. The Center was created with a partnership between the City of Independence, Independence School District and the Independence Economic Development Council.

Independence EDC
210 W. Truman Road
Independence, MO 64050
816-252-5777
info@inedc.biz
www.inedc.biz/

Independence Regional Ennovation Center
201 N. Forest Avenue, Suite 120
Independence, MO 64050
816-463-3515
info@ennovationcenter.com
www.ennovationcenter.com/

Independence Chamber of Commerce

The mission of the Independence Chamber of Commerce is to provide leadership and service to promote the economic growth of Independence. The Chamber offers programs and services for members including business networking, small business education classes, Young Entrepreneurs Academy, Chamber Spotlight, various committee and marketing opportunities for your business.

210 West Truman Road
Independence, MO 64050
816-252-4745
www.ichamber.biz

City Departments

Throughout the development process with the City of Independence, you will come in contact with many different departments depending on your particular project. Below you will find brief descriptions of the departments you may encounter, to help you navigate the City.

Community Development

Community Development is involved in land use planning for the City and administers the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), which includes all of the City's zoning and subdivision regulations. Community Development also includes building permitting and inspections. **Your business will have to meet zoning and code requirements. If any construction is necessary including a new building, addition or renovation building permits and inspections will be required. The City adheres to the following codes:**

- ☐ International Building Code, 2012 Edition
- ☐ International Existing Building Code, 2012 Edition
- ☐ International Fuel Gas Code, 2012 Edition
- ☐ International Mechanical Code, 2012 Edition
- ☐ International Plumbing Code, 2012 Edition
- ☐ National Electrical Code, 2011 Edition

City Hall
111 E. Maple Avenue, 2nd Floor
Independence, MO 64050
816-325-7109
www.independencemo.org/comdev/

Regulated Industries Division

The Regulated Industries Division Is involved in managing and tracking the business license and operating permit process for the City. In addition, the Regulated Industries Division issues and monitors liquor licenses. **All businesses in Independence are required to have a business license from the City to operate. All businesses selling alcohol in the City are required to apply for and obtain a liquor license. Additionally, if your business includes sales, you will need a [Missouri Sales Tax Number](#) (acquired from the State).**

City Hall
111 E. Maple Avenue, 2nd Floor
Independence, MO 64050
816-325-7079
www.independencemo.org/BusLicense/Licenses.aspx

Fire Department

The Fire Department is responsible for many aspects of fire prevention and fire safety including the inspection of new and existing businesses, code compliance and building plan review. **All businesses must be in compliance with the International Fire Code, 2012 Edition before a Certificate of Occupancy can be issued.**

Independence Fire Department
816-325-7121
www.independencemo.org/Fire/PlanReview.aspx

Regulated Industries Division - Food & Institution Division

The Regulated Industries Division regulates, educates and licenses restaurants and food service establishments through routine inspections, complaint investigations and continuous training in all food/drink establishments, retail grocery, child day care facilities, lodging, massage therapy, tattoo parlors and commercial swimming pools/spas. **If your business falls into one of these categories, especially a food/drink establishment or a Mobile Food Unit (MFU) you will need to contact the Regulated Industries Division.**

111 East Maple Street
Independence, MO 64050
816-325-7803

<http://www.ci.independence.mo.us/ComDev/PermittedEstablishments>

Public Works Department - Engineering Division

Public Works, Engineering Division manages engineering services for street, parking lot, storm and sanitary sewer projects; performs construction inspections, contract administration and permitting for Public Works projects. **New construction will need to be inspected and any sidewalk or roadwork will need to be reviewed and permitted by the Public Works Department.**

City Hall
111 E. Maple, 3rd Floor
Independence, MO 64050
Telephone: (816) 325-7600

www.independencemo.org/PublicWorks/Engineering.aspx

City Owned Utilities

The City operates three public utilities: Independence Power & Light, the Water Department and the Water Pollution Control Department. These Departments are responsible for providing the service, inspecting plans, utility permitting and easements. **All businesses will need utilities connected to them including: power, water, sewer and gas. Contact Information for each utility can be found in the Contact Information section of this guide.**

| |
|--|
| <p>Independence Power & Light www.independencemo.org/pl/ 816-325-7930</p> |
| <p>Water Department www.independencemo.org/water/ 816-325-7700</p> |
| <p>Water Pollution Control Department www.independencemo.org/WPC/ 816-325-7930</p> |

Non-City Utilities

There are several utilities that are not owned by the City but you may need to contact in order to open your business. Below are phone numbers and websites for natural gas, telephone and Digital cable/high-speed internet providers.

Digital Cable/High-Speed Internet

Comcast

www.comcast.com/locations/missouri/independence.html

800-391-3000

AT&T

www.attsavings.com/att-uverse-independence-mo.html

800-975-0683

Natural Gas

Missouri Gas Energy

www.missourigasenergy.com/MGE/

816-756-5252

Telephone

Sprint

www.sprint.com/business/

816-927-2199

AT&T

www.attsavings.com/missouri-att-independence-phone-deal.html

888-9475-0683

Licenses & Permitting Checklist

The checklist below will provide you with a list of necessary licenses and certificates to apply for and obtain prior to starting your business in Independence.

_____ **File State of Missouri & Federal required documents**

- 1) Register business name and file for incorporated status with the Missouri Secretary of State
- 2) Obtain Federal Employer Identification Number
- 3) Obtain Sales Tax ID (if necessary)
- 4) Obtain State Permits and Professional Licenses, if applicable

_____ **Identify a building in which to locate your business**

If location is already determined:

- Check zoning to ensure your business is able to operate within designated zone by contacting Planning and Zoning at 816-325-7421
- Schedule a pre-development meeting with City Departments by calling 816-325-7415

If you do not have a location:

- Contact the City of Independence or the Independence EDC at 816-252-5777 for a list of available properties

_____ **Apply for and obtain City of Independence Business License**

- Apply online at www.indepmo.org/businesslicense
- Apply in person at Independence City Hall, 111 E Maple, Independence, MO 64050

_____ **Apply for and obtain an Independence Health Permit (if required)**

- Independence Health Permits must be applied for in person at Independence City Hall, 111 E Maple, Independence, MO 64050. You may contact the Regulated Industries Division at 816-325-7079.
- Complete food handlers or food mangers training (if required). Schedule for classes can be found at <http://www.ci.independence.mo.us/ComDev/PermittedEstablishments>

_____ **Apply for and obtain City Liquor License through the Independence Regulated Industries Division (if required)**

Determine type of license must have City license (packaged, by 'the drink', wholesale distributor)

- Apply in person at Independence City Hall
- Apply for license from the State of Missouri

_____ **Schedule final inspections**

- Fire Department
- Regulated Industries Division
- Building Inspection

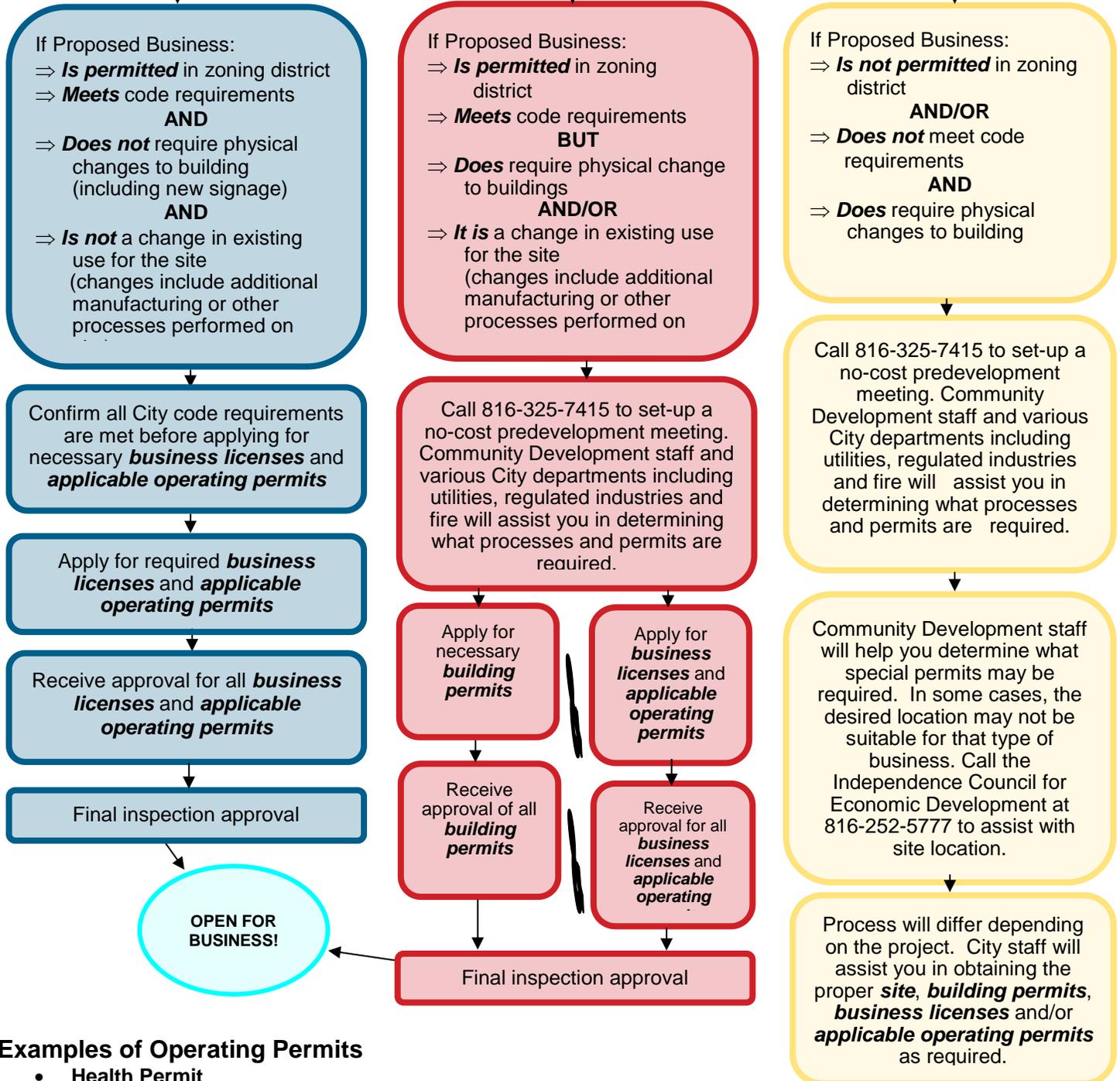
_____ **Obtain Certificate of Occupancy (if required)**

_____ **Open for business!**

Business Development Overview

Before You Sign a Lease or Buy a Property...

Call the Independence Council for Economic Development at 816-252-5777 for real-estate searches, local demographics and information regarding local and regional small business assistance requirements.



Examples of Operating Permits

- Health Permit
- Food Handler Permit
- Business Liquor License
- Employee Liquor License

Licenses & Permitting

Federal, State & County Requirements

*In addition to City requirements related to zoning, permitting and licensing there are also Federal, State and County requirements when opening a business. Below is a list of these requirements and contact information for the appropriate office. **Disclaimer: in order to ensure your business is fully compliant with all requirements it is best to contact an accountant and attorney to help in this process.***

STEP 1)

STATE - Create a Business Entity

You'll need to choose a business entity type. The Secretary of State's office offers useful information in this area and the ability to perform many required filings online at <http://www.sos.mo.gov/business/corporations/startBusiness.asp>. However, it is best to consult an attorney or tax advisor before filing. Downloadable forms are also available at the same site, if desired.

STATE - Fictitious Name Recognition

If your business operates under a different name than it is legally registered as you must file a fictitious name registration. Registration of a fictitious name must be made with the Missouri Secretary of State, State Office Building, 615 East 13th Street, Kansas City, Missouri, by calling 816-889-2925 or online at http://www.sos.mo.gov/business/corporations/fictitious_faq.asp

STEP 2)

FEDERAL - Federal Employer ID Number

Each business employing people is required to apply for a Federal employer identification number (FEIN). An FEIN number may be obtained by calling 1-800-829-1040 or online at www.irs.gov

STEP 3)

STATE - Register as an Employer & Apply for Missouri Sales Tax Number

Every business employing people is subject to State withholding taxes for those individuals. Additionally, if your business will be involved in sales, you are required by both State and City laws to have a Missouri Sales Tax Number. You can apply for both on the same form. To obtain information regarding withholding and sales taxes, you can call the Missouri Revenue Department at 573-751-2836 or go online at <https://dors.mo.gov/tax/coreq/index.jsp>

STEP 4)

CITY – Apply for and Obtain City Licenses & Permits

This includes City Business Licenses, Health Permits (if applicable) & Liquor Licenses (if applicable). This is discussed in-depth on page 10 of this guide. You will need to obtain a Certificate of No Tax Due from the MO Department of Revenue, Taxation Division. Contact them at 573-751-9268 or apply online at <https://dors.mo.gov/tax/notaxdue/taxpayer.jsp>

STEP 5)

COUNTY - Property Assessment Requirements

After you have obtained all licenses and certifications you will need to register with the Jackson County Assessment Department for a Business/Personal Property Assessment. Registration must be made at the Jackson County Assessment Division, 321 West Lexington, Independence, Missouri, or you can call 816-881-4672.

City Zoning, Permits & Licensing

Location and Zoning

Prior to signing a lease or buying a property, check with the **Community Development Department** to assure the property is appropriately zoned for your intended business use. Zoning laws restrict the use of property and may limit the use of the location you have selected. To contact the Community Development Department regarding zoning laws, call **816-325-7421**. You may also check the zoning of the building you are interested in at www.independencemo.org/comdev/zoningmap.aspx

If you need assistance finding a location in Independence, contact the **Independence EDC** at 816-252-5777 to request a list of available property or you may search our database of available property at www.independencemo.org/EconDev/SitesAndBuildings.aspx

City Business License

Prior to obtaining a City business license you must first obtain a Federal Employer ID Number and a Tax ID from the Secretary of State. Once you have obtained these certificates you may proceed to applying for a City Business License.

Any individual or company operating a business or providing a service in the City of Independence is required to have a Business License. To avoid delays in the opening of your business apply for your license as soon as you decide on a location, **since it may require two to six weeks to obtain your license**. The initial license fee is based on the estimated annual gross revenue to be generated by the business for the first 12 months.

The fee for a business license is as follows:

- Gross annual receipts of \$25,000 or less, the fee is \$75.00;
- Gross receipts over \$25,000, the fees are \$75.00 plus \$0.29 for each \$1,000 or part thereof over \$25,000.

For your convenience you may apply online at www.indepmo.org/businesslicense or submit your completed application for a business license to the **Regulated Industries Division**, on the second floor of City Hall using the forms provided by the City. You must also provide a current "No Tax Due" letter from the State of Missouri at that time (if applicable).

Inspections and Review of Business Location (if applicable)

Upon receipt of your building or remodeling plans, the City will begin a review process of all proposed construction for compliance with City code. Once your plans have been approved, licensed contractors must pull the required building permits from City Hall at 111 E. Maple Avenue, 2nd Floor.

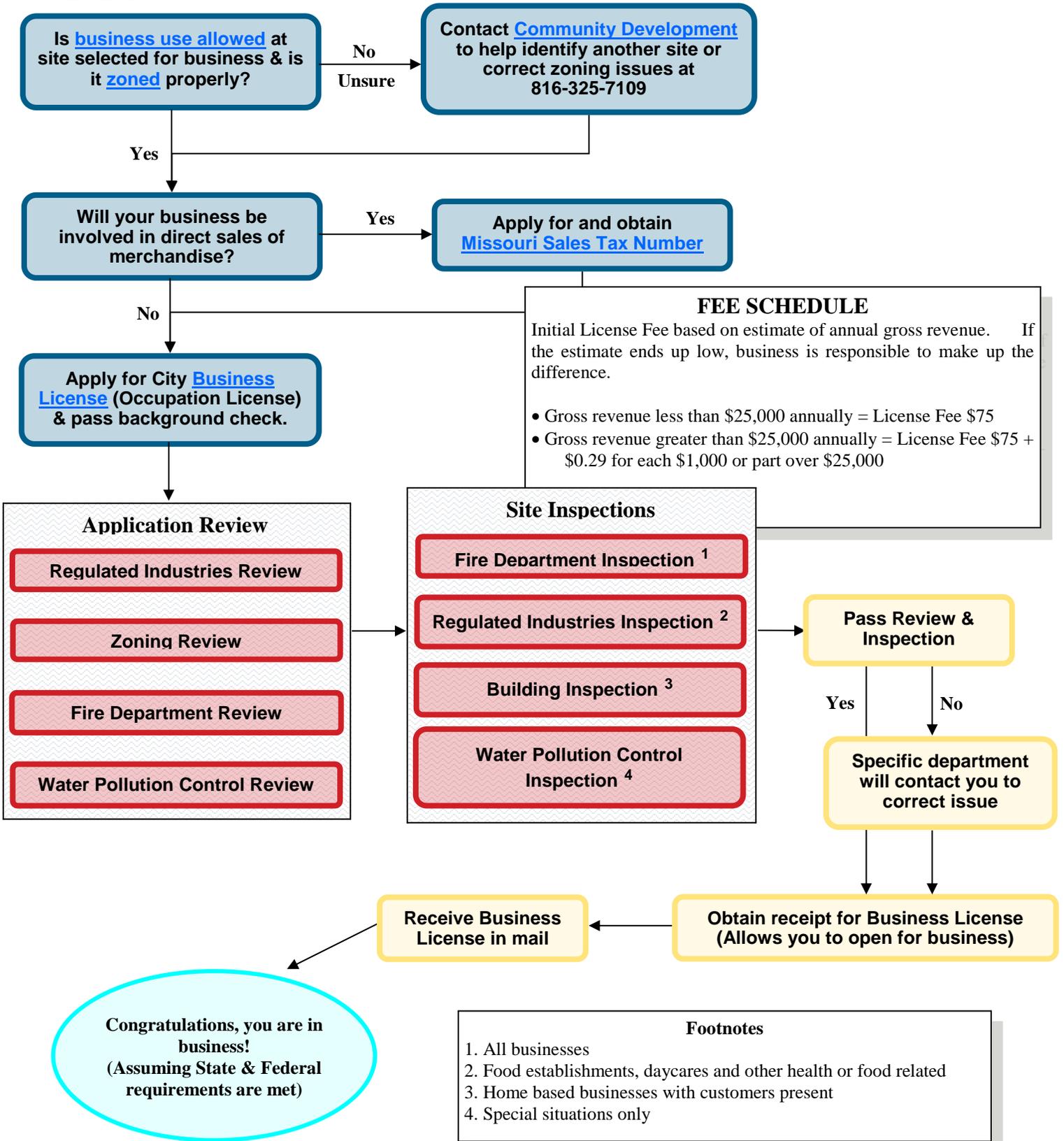
As construction gets underway, a request for inspection will be sent to each City department that is required. Your business will be inspected by the Fire Department for compliance with the City Fire Code. If the business involves the sale or preparation of food, the Regulated Industries Division will also make an inspection of the premises. When your location passes final inspections the City will issue a Certificate of Occupancy signaling the site meets all building, fire and health codes and is suitable for business.

Open for Business

Once your business license is approved by the Regulated Industries Division and a Certificate of Occupancy has been issued you are now ready to open for business. **Good Luck!**

Business License (Occupational License) Flowchart

Start here



Small Business Development

Checklist

This checklist identifies many of the key aspects that are helpful to be evaluated prior to starting a new business. As you apply for a license through the City of Independence, use this checklist as a guideline to be sure you are ready to become a successful business owner. Please take time to consider each item thoughtfully.

Business Operations

- Are you sure your business fills a specific market need?
- Do you know and understand the components of a business plan?
- Have you assembled a team of professionals to assist with the complexities of opening a business?
- Do you feel comfortable using a computer or other technology to improve business operations?
- Do you know who your target market/customer is?
- Do you have current demographic information describing your market or customer? If not do you know how to access this information?
- Do you know how to learn about your business competitors?
- Do you understand marketing trends in your business?

Legal

- Do you know what form of legal ownership (sole proprietor, partnership, or corporation) is best for your business?
- Do you know if your business will require a special license or permit and how to obtain applicable licenses and permits and what the associated fees are?
- Do you know how to obtain an Employer Identification Number for your business?
- Do you know if your business should have some form of intellectual property protection?
- Are there any federal or state regulations or compliance requirements for your business?

Accounting

- Do you know how to prepare and/or interpret a balance sheet, income statement and cash flow statement?
- Do you know how to compute the start-up costs and financial “breakeven point” for your business?
- Do you have a payroll process planned for your business?
- Do you understand the tax requirements associated with your business?

Real Estate

- Are you interested in buying or leasing property?
- Do you know if the property you are interested in is zoned correctly?

Financing

- Do you have financing in place? Do you have at least 6 months of cash reserves available?
- Do you know about various incentive and loan programs for small businesses?
- Do you know how a business loan can impact your credit?

The Business Plan

Developing a sound business plan is an extremely important component of the business start-up process. A good business plan will articulate what your business does, what success looks like and how you will get there. A typical business plan includes a summary, market analysis, company description, organization and management structure, marketing and sales structure, descriptions of your service or product, research on the competition, budgets for initial and ongoing capital and operations costs, and financial information. A business plan is typically part of the documentation submitted for a business loan.

Locally the Independence EDC/Ennovation Center can assist you with such a business plan to get you started or connect you with regional resources through the Small Business Technology & Development Center, KC SourceLink and various other resources available through UMKC or MEC. See the Technical and Other Resources section of this guide for contact information.

Developing a Business Plan



Branding Your Business

Branding isn't just for big companies. Every huge brand had to start somewhere. It is vital to your business that you put some time and effort into developing the brand. Your brand is how your business connects with its current and future customers. Here are some key branding steps you should consider:

- 1) Develop a recognizable logo that embodies the brand message you want to convey. It may be helpful to hire a graphic designer to help you create a professional logo.
- 2) Develop a web presence of some kind. Today, many consumers expect to be able to find information about your business online. There are many options available to allow you to develop a website. Additionally, social media is a great way for you to create buzz and get the word out about your business at little to no cost.
- 3) If your business includes products that need packaging, spend some time developing packaging that incorporates the branding you have created.



The Professionals

Successful business owners not only have a plan for their business and how it will be successful, but also surround themselves with a team of experts. These experts help them make the right decisions when first starting out but also help tackle challenges and hopefully success in the future. The City recommends that you find reputable professionals who will give you the best advice possible especially in areas where you might need some coaching. Whether you work with paid professionals or free consultants, do not overlook this step. Consider these professionals for your business:

Accountants can help you...

- Interpret financial statements
- Compute start-up costs & breakeven point
- Prepare and understand taxes

Attorneys can help you...

- Determine the best organization for you business (Corporation, LLC or Sole Proprietorship)
- Determine if you need intellectual property protection like a patent.
- Make sure you are compliant with all federal, state and local laws.

Bankers can help you...

- Make sure you have enough cash reserves to open for business
- Secure financing like loans or lines of credit

Marketing Firms or Consultants can help you...

- Develop a marketing plan that will propel your business to success.

Real Estate Agent or Broker can help you...

- Help determine your business' property needs for retail, warehouse and/or kitchen space.
- Find a location appropriate for your business

Small Business Development Resources & Contact Information

City of Independence

The City of Independence works to promote a healthy Independence economy by assisting entrepreneurs, developers and businesses large and small to navigate the City's development and permitting process.

111 E. Maple Avenue
Independence, MO 64050
816-325-7415
www.independencemo.org/econdev/

Independence Economic Development Council

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Independence Regional Ennovation Center

The Independence Economic Development Council provides a wide range of reports and information that are important to help you make smart decisions. This information includes customized demographic and market reports, information on state incentive negotiations, procurement and site selection.



Independence EDC
201 N. Forest Avenue, Suite 120
Independence, MO 64050
816-252-5777
info@inedc.biz
www.inedc.biz/

Independence Chamber of Commerce

The mission of the Independence Chamber of Commerce is to provide leadership and service to promote the economic growth of Independence. The Chamber offers programs and services for members including: business networking, small business education classes, Youth Entrepreneur Academies, Chamber Spotlight, various planning committees to serve on and marketing opportunities for your business.



210 West Truman Road
Independence, MO 64050
816-252-4745
www.ichamber.biz

Independence Ennovation Center

The Ennovation Center Business Incubator was created with a partnership between the City of Independence, the Independence School District and the Independence Economic Development Council to promote economic development and to help people achieve their dreams of owning their own business. The Ennovation Center is a community of enterprising, forward-thinking entrepreneurs working together to help each other achieve success and to help Independence become a city of business owners.



201 N. Forest Avenue, Suite 130
Independence, MO 64050
info@ennovationcenter.com
www.ennovationcenter.com

KC SourceLink

KC SourceLink helps aspiring startups and established small businesses find the right business resource to start, scale or accelerate their business.



4747 Troost Avenue
Kansas City, Mo 64110
816-235-6500 or 866-870-6500
info@kcsourcelink.com
www.kcsourcelink.com/

Kansas City Manufacturing Network

Kansas City Manufacturing Network is the central resource for manufacturing company managers and owners who are working to grow and improve their businesses. The Kansas City Manufacturing Network was established in 1993 and is sponsored by the [Mid-America Manufacturing Technology Center \(MAMTC\)](#) and [Missouri Enterprise](#). Programming and direction of KCMN is guided by an advisory board of manufacturing company members in collaboration with our sponsors.

Donna Gordon
10561 Barkley, Suite 600
Overland Park, KS 66212
816-304-7958
donna@kcmn.org
<http://kcmn.org/>

Metropolitan Community Colleges

Serving thousands of credit and non-credit students, Metropolitan Community Colleges' Business & Technology campus is Kansas City's headquarters for solid technical education. In addition, the campus provides vital business services and has forged strong partnerships with employers. The campus houses state-of-the art labs for providing hands-on training for its many technical programs.

1775 Universal Avenue
Kansas City, MO 64120
816-604-1000
<http://mcckc.edu/explore/campuses/businesstechnology/welcome.asp>

Small Business & Technology Development Center (SBTDC)

The SBDC offers classes, consulting services and business planning resources for entrepreneurs and small business owners.



UMKC Small Business & Technology Development Center

4747 Troost Avenue, Suite 104A
Kansas City, MO 64110
816-235-6063
info.umkc.edu/sbt/dc

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)

Retired business professionals volunteer to provide free counseling to individuals starting small businesses. Counseling and workshops are available at a cost.



4747 Troost Avenue, Suite 128
Kansas City, MO 64110
816-235-6675
www.kansascity.score.org

Small Business Administration (SBA)

The SBA offers general and technical assistance to new and established businesses. Services include loan programs, business counseling, management training, conferences, referrals and reference libraries.



1000 Walnut
Suite 500
Kansas City, MO 64106
816-426-4900
www.sba.gov/about-offices-content/2/3123

Mid-Continent Public Library

The Mid-Continent Public Library (MCPL) consists of [35 locations](#) serving Clay, Jackson, and Platte Counties in Western Missouri. MCPL provides business reference materials and many MCPL branches have [free library programs and events](#) that for people who own small businesses or those contemplating starting a small business.

MCPL provides resource materials and [online databases](#) that can be used by business owners to access information related to starting or growing a business including:

- Sample business plans and templates
- Marketing
- Market research
- Locate local businesses
- Demographic data
- Industry research
- Company research
- Grant databases
- Online business guides and books
- Financial literacy



Business Specialist
816-520-9053
www.mymcpl.org

Missouri Department of Economic Development - Division of Workforce Development

The Division provides services for businesses and job seekers through the Missouri Career Centers and jobs.mo.gov. The Division works with a number of strategic partners to "skill-up" Missouri's workforce for today's business and industry needs. A wealth of information and resources about workforce services can be found on WorkSmartMissouri.



Independence Career Center
15301 East 23rd Street South
Independence, MO 64055
816-521-5700
<http://jobs.mo.gov/>

