

This is the fourth part to the series guiding you through the general process of starting your own business. In the first part we discussed the idea formation process, how to determine your strengths and analyze the holes within your plan. In the second article we discussed the process of determining the feasibility of starting the business by analyzing the market and costs associated with the venture. In the third article we covered the site selection process and the pros and cons of each. This article will cover the agencies to contact to obtain your permits and licenses.

One of the most asked questions at the Small Business Development Center is, “Where do I go to get a license or a permit?” The answer to this question is, “It depends on what you are doing.” One of the most common permits needed is the sales tax permit, and this permit can be obtained at the Comptroller of Public Accounts office. The permit will allow you to collect sales taxes on behalf of the State of Texas, which you then have to send in on a periodic basis. The process is relatively quick and inexpensive.

Another important agency to visit is the County Clerk’s Office. In order to open a commercial checking or savings account, the bank may require a “Doing Business As” form (DBA) or Assumed Name form. This form can be filled out at the County Clerk’s Office and basically lets the county know that you will be operating under a different name.

If you are trying to start a restaurant, a very important agency to contact is the Department of Health. This department oversees all the health code requirements that a building should have prior to handling food service. Meanwhile, a day care provider will need to visit with the Texas Department of Human Services, and a person engaging in alcohol or firearms sales will have to visit the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission.

Besides the above listed agencies, you may have a question regarding whether a particular building is zoned for commercial use. The agency to contact in this instance is the City’s Planning and Development Department in City Hall. Human resource questions on the other hand can be direct either to the Texas Workforce or the Internal Revenue Service, dependant on the nature of the inquiry. The IRS can also help with the acquisition of an Employer Identification Number needed in the hiring process of employees.

As you can see there are many agencies that hold jurisdiction over individual portions of a business. In addition, there are different agencies that govern different industries. People interested in starting their own business require guidance with this process and thus should visit the Small Business Development Center for direction.

Up to this point we have covered the process of generating your idea, analyzing your strengths and the holes in your business venture, covered how to view the market and the costs associated with your business venture, reviewed the differences between the three types of business location categories, and discussed the agencies to contact to find out about the appropriate permits or licenses that may affect your business. In the next business tips article we will discuss the process of planning the layout of your facility to maximize its efficiency.

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