

City of Berkeley

BUSINESS RESOURCE GUIDE



INTRODUCTION

The City of Berkeley recognizes the central role businesses play in the local economy and the quality of life for residence. To assist entrepreneurs in starting businesses, the City offers a range of business assistance programs and services through the Office of Economic Development (OED) and community partners such as the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA). Through a collaborative effort, the City has provided a resource guide for how to start and sustain a successful business in Berkeley. This includes information on the programs and services available to businesses such as the Berkeley Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) and a guide to obtain the permit(s) and license(s) necessary to start a business.



The Office of Economic Development (OED)

The Office of Economic Development offers assistance to new and growing businesses in Berkeley. With expertise in commercial real estate, financing, economic data, green business, and marketing, our office provides Berkeley ventures the resources they need to thrive. We work with local, regional and state partners to create a vibrant economy. Home to UC Berkeley and the Berkeley Lab, our city is a center for technological innovation. Trendsetting companies in fields ranging from alternative energy and zero waste production to nanotechnology and bioengineering choose to do business here because of our highly educated workforce and culture of creativity.

Office of Economic Development
2180 Milvia Street, 5th Floor
Berkeley, California 94704
Tel: (510) 981-7530
TDD: (510) 981-6903
Fax: (510) 981-7099
www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/oed

Starting a Business

Explore your idea

Thinking about starting a business? You've come to the right place. But before you make a grand investment of time, resource and money, consider whether you have the following characteristics and skills associated with successful entrepreneurs, put together by Small Business Administration (SBA):

- Comfortable taking risks
- Independent
- Persuasive
- Able to negotiate
- Creative
- Supported by others/community
- Experience

Still think you have what it takes?



Check out SBA's "20 Questions before Starting" to get thinking about key business decisions:

<https://www.sba.gov/starting-business/how-start-business/20-questions-starting>

More Resources for small, starting businesses

The California Business Portal was created to provide information on how to start and grow a business. The Portal offers information on incentives and financial assistance to operate a business. For more information visit: <http://businessportal.ca.gov>

SCORE East Bay provides resources, expertise, FREE Confidential Business, conseling, workshops, entrepreneur business services, social media, funding alternatives, and advice. For more information visit: <http://www.eastbayscore.org>

Centro Community Partners: Centro Community Partners train underserved, low-income and minority entrepreneurs to help them start, develop and grow their businesses. For more information visit: <http://www.centrocommunity.org>

AnewAmerica: AnewAmerica provides training and technical assistance to targeted communities for economic and social empowerment through a focus on green entrepreneurship, asset building, social responsibility and civic engagement. For more information visit: <http://www.anewamerica.org>

Tech Futures Group is a FREE and complete advisory wing for select technology companies and startups. For more information visit <http://www.techfuturesgroup.org>

Starting a Business

Create a Business Plan

A business plan is a document for business success. The following sections are suggested by the Small Business Administration (SBA):



- Executive Summary
- Company Description
- Market Analysis
- Organization & Management
- Service or Product Line
- Marketing & Sales
- Funding Request
- Financial Projections

For more information visit:

<https://www.sba.gov/starting-business/write-your-business-plan>

More Resources:

SCORE East Bay provides seminars on How to Get Started Writing a Business Plan.
For more information visit: <http://www.eastbayscore.org/workshops>

Centro Community Partners created The Business Planning App, the first and only FREE mobile app, that helps you plan for a new or growing small business without having any entrepreneurship training. For more information visit: <http://www.centro-mobile.org>

Bplans offers business plan templates and information on how to develop a business plan.
For more information visit: <http://www.bplans.com>

Small Business Development Center Network (SBDCNet) provides and alphabetized list of business plan templates.
For more information visit: <http://www.sbdcn.net/small-business-information-center/business-plans>

Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center offers small business training, consulting, incubation, access to capital and networks, and emotional support to transform your dreams into 'Open for Business' signs.
For more information visit: <http://www.rencenter.org>

Starting a Business

Explore Available Sources of Financing

One of the most important aspects of starting a business is deciding how to finance it. You have a variety of options ranging from family and friends, venture capital financing and traditional loans. The major differences between these programs include the total dollar amount that can be borrowed, the type of lenders who can provide these loans, the uses for the loan proceeds and the terms placed on the borrower. (SBA, 2016).

Resources:

Berkeley Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program can provide access to capital for businesses and entrepreneurs who seek to grow and create jobs, but do not qualify for a traditional bank loan. For more information visit: <http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/loanfund>

Breakaway Funding offers a securities-based crowdfunding portal designed to make it easy and convenient for business owners to consider crowdfunding in their funding mix. For more information visit: <http://www.breakawayfunding.com>

Bay Area Development Company assists with real estate (land/building acquisition, construction), transaction costs (appraisal) and fixed asset (long term capital equipment) financing for small businesses (504 loans). For more information visit: <http://www.baydevco.com>

Main Street Launch (formally OBDC) is a non-profit community development financial institution that provides business owners with capital, education, and relationships that allow them to flourish. For more information visit: <http://www.mainstreetlaunch.org>

Nor-Cal FDC provides guidance and tools to help locate appropriate capital for business development and growth. Nor-Cal FDC's MicroLoan bizLAUNCHER Tool can also help you determine capital start-up costs. For more information visit: <http://nor-calfdc.org>

Small Business Administration (SBA) provides a number of financial assistance programs for small businesses that have been specifically designed to meet key financing needs, including debt financing, surety bonds, and equity financing. For more information visit: <https://www.sba.gov/loans-grants>

Opportunity Fund, approved by SBA, lends to small businesses at affordable prices. For more information visit: <http://www.opportunityfund.org>

VEDC California is a non-profit lender (microloans, small business loans, SBA 7(a) loans and SBA 504 loans). For more information visit: <http://vedc.org/california>

Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) provide assistance to small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs throughout the United States and its territories. For more information visit: <https://www.sba.gov/tools/local-assistance/sbdc>

Starting a Business

Establish Your Business as a Legal Entity

Every new business must take key initial steps to establish itself.

Register Your Business

You must register your business with the California Secretary State Office, the City of Berkeley, and any other city in which you plan to conduct business, including home businesses.

California Secretary of State:
<http://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/>

Register a Fictitious Business Name

Registering your business name is a key step to legally operating your business.

Fictitious Business Name Research:
<https://www.acgov.org/auditor/clerk/fbn.htm>

Filing a Fictitious Business Name: <https://www.acgov.org/auditor/clerk/filefbn2.htm>

Open a Business Checking Account

A separate business checking account allows you to separate your business finances from your personal finances. Consult with your current financial institution or other financial institutions to find the type of account that will meet your unique business needs.

Choose a Business Structure

New businesses must choose a business structure which will have legal and tax implications. Learn about the different types of business structures, put together by the

California Business Portal:
<http://businessportal.ca.gov/Business-Assistance/Start-a-Business/Choosing-a-Business-Structure>

Obtain Your Federal Business Tax ID

Generally businesses need an Employer Identification Number (EIN). An EIN is also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number, and is used to identify a business entity. An EIN is established by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

Internal Revenue Service (IRS):
<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>

Starting a Business Obtain Your Business License and Permits

Apply for a Business License

All businesses operating in the City of Berkeley are required to have a current business license for each location. If you are opening a new business, buying an existing business, or transferring a business to your ownership, you must apply for a new business license under your name.

The first step is to download and complete a Business License Application: <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/businesslicense/>

Or visit the Customer Service Center to file it in person:

City of Berkeley Customer Service Center
1947 Center Street, First Floor
Phone: (510) 981-7200
Email: BusLic@ci.berkeley.ca.us
Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 8:30am - 4pm



Business License Review

After you file for your business license at the Customer Service Center, the customer service agent will direct you to visit the Zoning Counter of the Permit Service Center, located at 1947 Center Street on the 3rd Floor. There, a staff planner will review your application(s) to ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and other applicable regulations. This review process typically takes one to three days.

Annual Renewal & More Info

A fee is required to file your business license, and you must renew it annually. The City of Berkeley mails renewal notices to all business owners of record annually in December.

More information is available at the City of Berkeley Finance Department's Website:

- Essential Business License Requirements
- Business License Tax Classifications
- Other Business-Related Taxes

Three main steps in Business License Review



Additional Contact Information & Resources

Use Permit

Businesses that require a Use Permit may require a public hearing before the Zoning Adjustments Board, which has the power to approve, condition, or deny an application. New business applicants should be aware that new buildings and additions creating substantial new floor area, or alcohol service, will typically require Use Permits or Administrative Use Permits.

For more information contact:

Planning & Development: (510) 981-7500, permits@cityofberkeley.info

Inspections

When a business starts up in an older existing building, a building inspection will probably be required to ensure life safety and compliance with the building codes. This inspection may be required whether or not the proposed business differs substantially from the previous use.

Businesses going into new or very recently completed buildings are normally exempted from an inspection. For more information contact:

Building & Safety: (510) 981-7440, Planning@ci.berkeley.ca.us

Public Safety

Exterior or interior construction to the building may require a fire inspection. For more information contact:

Fire Marshall: (510) 981-5585, Fire@ci.berkeley.ca.us

Exterior Signage

The installation of new signs (or the transfer of existing signs to a new building) is subject to review under the City's Design Review Ordinance. Signs must also conform to the Berkeley Sign Ordinance. Sign applicants should first contact the planner assigned to Design Review at the Zoning Counter, then go to Building Permits at the Permit Service Center. For more information contact:

Planning & Development: (510) 981-7500, permits@cityofberkeley.info

Sidewalk Seating

Business owners interested in obtaining a permit to provide sidewalk cafe seating should contact the Engineering Inspector at the Permit Service Center: (510) 981-7505.

Environmental Health

Approval and inspection may be required for some business licenses. This includes inspections & permits for all food service/food handling. For more information:

Environmental Health: (510) 981-5310, EnvHealth@ci.berkeley.ca.us

Zero Waste Services

Commercial refuse, recycling & composting service. For more information or to establish service, contact Zero Waste Services:

(510) 981-7270, CustomerService@CityofBerkeley.info

Hazardous Material Permit

The Toxics Management Division (TMD) is responsible for enforcing regulations related to the use of hazardous materials. For information, please contact:

Toxics Management: (510) 981-7460, Toxics@ci.berkeley.ca.us

Utilities

When a new business is established, a security deposit may be required. Please contact the offices listed for further information.

East Bay Municipal Utility District: 1 (866) 403-2683

Pacific Gas & Electric Co.: (800) 468-4743

Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) License Approval

Business owners interested in obtaining a memorandum letter giving approval to provide alcoholic beverage service should contact the Area Coordinator at the Berkeley Police Department (BPD). For more information contact:

Police Department: (510) 981-5900, police@cityofberkeley.info

Starting a Business

Find a Location for Your Business

Choosing a business location is perhaps the most important decision a small business owner or startup will make, so it requires precise planning and research. It involves looking at demographics, assessing your supply chain, scoping the competition, staying on budget, understanding state laws and taxes, and much more.

For tips on choosing a location visit:
<https://www.sba.gov/starting-business>

Locate in Berkeley

Want to locate in Berkeley? Use our on-line tool to find vacancies throughout Berkeley for your business. Search on Use (retail, office, industrial), Neighborhood, Square Footage or other key criteria. See property photos, descriptions and connect to brokers or owners.

<http://www.locateinberkeley.com>



Zoning Compliance

A review for zoning compliance is required if you are starting a new business, changing the nature of your business, or applying for a building permit (e.g., for an interior remodel). Before deciding on a location for your business, be sure to check what your desired location is zoned for in order to determine whether or not your business type is a permitted use.

Zoning by Address:
https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Planning_and_Development/Home/Zoning_by_Address.aspx

Some businesses may require a Zoning Certificate (ZC) or Administrative Use Permit (AUP), while others may require a Use Permit (UP) with a public hearing; it depends on the location and business type. Zoning Certificates can be obtained 'over the counter' in one day, whereas obtaining an AUP or UP is a months-long process.

Zoning Applications

Applications may be filed online:
<https://aca.cityofberkeley.info/Community/>

or in person at the City of Berkeley:
Permit Service Center
1947 Center St, 3rd Floor
Phone: (510) 981-7500

City of Berkeley Business Assistance

Green Building

Green building and remodeling makes your business healthier and more comfortable, saves utilities bills, and improves resale values. Learn more about resource-conserving design strategies, technologies, and materials at:



cityofberkeley.info/greenbuilding
sustainability@cityofberkeley.info
(510) 981-7465

Green Business Certification Program

The City of Berkeley participates in the Bay Area Green Business Certification Program for Berkeley. Learn more information about the Program at:

www.greenbiz.ca.gov
Pamela Evans
pamela.evans@acgov.org



Economic Analysis

The Office of Economic Development compiles, maintains and analyzes data on Berkeley's economy. Staff view and reports on key indicators, such as retail vacancy rates or sales per square foot. Obtain these reports at:

ci.berkeley.ca.us/oed/reports
ecodev@cityofberkeley.info
(510) 981-7530

Visit Berkeley

Designated the official destination marketing organization for the City of Berkeley, Visit Berkeley offers a variety of brochures and literature about what to see and do in Berkeley. They also assist meeting and event planners with facility referrals and local services. Learn more information at:

visitberkeley.com
visitor@visitberkeley.com
(510) 549-7040



Film & Photography

Filming and Photography permit applications will be arranged through the Berkeley Film Office.

Film Berkeley
2030 Addison Street
Website: www.filmberkeley.com
Email: film@visitberkeley.com
Phone: (510) 549-7040

Support

The Berkeley Chamber of Commerce is a private, not-for-profit organization established in 1900 to support businesses in Berkeley.

1834 University Ave.
berkeleychamber.com
(510) 549-7000
info@berkeleychamber.com

Get Connected!

Berkeley Commerical Business District Associations

Adeline/Ashby Merchants Association
c/o Shirley Mitts, Jack's Antiques
3021 Adeline Street Berkeley, CA 94703
Tel: (510) 845-6221

Downtown Berkeley Association
c/o John Caner
2230 Shattuck Ave. Ste.C Berkeley, CA 94704
Tel: (510) 549-2230
info@downtownberkeley.org
www.downtownberkeley.org

Elmwood Merchants Association
c/o Melissa Hatheway, President
2966 College Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94705
info@elmwoodberkeley.com

Fourth Street Businesses
www.fourthstreet.com
1834 Fourth Street Berkeley, CA 94710
Tel: (510) 644-3002

Lorin Business Association
www.lorinberkeley.org
c/o Heather Haxo Phillips
heather@adelineyogastudio.com

Berkeley has many District Business Associations that serve particular geographic areas. They help solve public safety and planning issues related to individual business districts, organize public events or joint advertising for their districts.

North Shattuck Association
c/o Heather Hensley
1700 Shattuck Ave. Box 318
Berkeley, CA 94709
Tel: (510) 540-6444
info@northshattuck.org
www.northshattuck.org

Northside Merchants Association
c/o Sam Nassar, Brewed Awakenings
1807 Euclid Berkeley, CA 94708
Tel: (510) 540-8865

Sacramento Street Merchants
c/o Philip Anderson, HDR Remodeling
2952 Sacramento St. Berkeley, CA 94704
Tel: (510) 845-6100

Shattuck/Blake Merchants Association c/o
Suzanne Steinberg
Stone Mountain & Daughter
2518 Shattuck Avenue Berkeley, CA 94704
Tel: (510) 845-6106

Solano Avenue Association
c/o Allen Cain
Tel: (510) 527-5358
1563 Solano Avenue #101
Berkeley, California 94707-2116
info@solanoavenue.org

Telegraph Business Improvement District
2532 Durant Ave, Suite 100
Berkeley, CA 94704
mail@telegraphberkeley.org
Tel: (510) 486-2366
www.telegraphberkeley.org

University Avenue Association
c/o Maulin Chokshi, President
1042 University Ave. Berkeley, CA 94710
Tel: (510) 486-0317
uaaberkeley@yahoo.com
www.uaaberkeley.com