STARTING A SMALL BUSINESS IN ELGIN
QUICK TIPS

Opening a business can be a quick or long process depending on the location, zoning and type of business. City of Elgin staff is here to help you from start to finish. Before you begin the process, review these helpful quick tips assembled from commonly asked questions:

- Applications are completed in order to obtain permits.
- Video gaming requires a liquor license.
- Any food preparation requires health department permits and inspections.
- A mixed-used business is one that has multiple components such as a retail store that also offers classes.
- All plumbing work requires the applicant to contact our local water treatment partner, FRWRD, prior to getting a permit from the City of Elgin.
- Permits expire after 180 days of no activity.
- All permits issued require an inspection; some require multiple inspections.
- Additional permits may be required based on your Business Application responses.
- All contractors have specific requirements including notarized letters of intent, licenses and more.
- Liquor license applications must go through a separate process that involves the City Clerk and the Liquor Commission.
OPENING YOUR BUSINESS

1 IDENTIFY
What do you want to do?
Whether it’s just an idea or a complete business plan, the first step is to identify your project. The more specific and detailed you can describe your project, the better we can assist you.

2 LOCATE
Where do you want your business?
Locate a property or two that you are interested in. Not sure where to begin? Contact one of the City’s trusted partner organizations:
- Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce
- Elgin Development Group
- Downtown Neighborhood Association

3 SUBMIT
What’s next?
Once you know where you want to locate your business, submit a Zoning Inquiry to determine if what you want to do can be done in the location you have selected.

4 ZONING REVIEW
Several things can happen here.
Staff will review your Zoning Inquiry to determine if what you want to do can be done in the location you have selected.

4A ZONING ALLOWED
Congratulations, your business is either fully or conditionally allowed at your desired location.
1) If fully allowed, you can move to the next step.
2) If your business is conditionally allowed, it means that your proposed business will have to go through the Conditional Use Zoning Approval process. This entails additional fees and applications as well as a public hearing. Contact Community Development for more information on this process. Completing this process does not guarantee your zoning will be approved.

4B ZONING NOT ALLOWED
Your business is not allowed at your desired location, but that doesn’t mean you are stuck.
You have two paths forward available to you:
1) Find an alternate location where your business could be allowed—Go back to Step 2.
2) Proceed with a Conditional Use Zoning Approval process. This entails additional fees and applications as well as a public hearing, but if you are set on your location, this option is available to you. Contact Community Development for more information on this process. Completing this process does not guarantee your zoning will be approved.

5 BUSINESS APPLICATION
Timing varies.
The more detail, the better.
Submit your Business Application, floor plan and fees, along with any other necessary information. City staff will respond within 7-10 business days, providing details on requirements, estimated costs, additional applications and next steps. Depending on your type of business or its buildout, you may need to obtain additional permits or licenses. Possible requests:
- Quick Permit Application
- Remodeling Permit Application
- New Commercial/Industrial Sign Permit Application
- Liquor License

6 INSPECTIONS
You’re almost there.
The number and type of inspections that are required for your business will be provided to you based on your various applications. Some permits require multiple inspections at different points during the project.

7 CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY / BUSINESS LICENSE
Open for business!
All applications and inspections are approved, the certificate of occupancy is your golden ticket, and you are ready to open.

FIND DETAILED INFORMATION: CITYOFELGIN.ORG/BUSINESS
UTILITIES AND CITY SERVICES

POLICE SERVICES
CITYOFELGIN.ORG/POLICE | 847-289-2700
151 DOUGLAS AVENUE, ELGIN, IL 60120

FIRE + EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
CITYOFELGIN.ORG/FIRE | 847-931-6175
550 SUMMIT STREET, ELGIN, IL 60120

INFORMATION + CITY SERVICES - 311
CITYOFELGIN.ORG/311 | 311 (OR 847-931-6001)
150 DEXTER COURT, ELGIN, IL 60120

ELECTRICITY - COMED
COMED.COM | 877-426-6331

GAS - NICOR
NICORGAS.COM | 888-642-6748

WATER - CITY OF ELGIN
CITYOFELGIN.ORG/WATER | 847-931-6001 (OR 311)

UTILITY LOCATES - J.U.L.I.E.
CALL BEFORE YOU DIG: 800-892-0123

WASTEWATER TREATMENT - FRWRD
FRWRD.COM | 847-742-2068

SOLID WASTE + RECYCLING
EACH BUSINESS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS OWN WASTE AND RECYCLE COLLECTION. CONSIDER YOUR BUDGET, FREQUENCY OF PICKUP, SIZE OF CONTAINERS AND ASK 311 ABOUT CODE CONSIDERATIONS FOR LOCATION OF CONTAINERS.
RESOURCES

DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION OF ELGIN
DOWNTOWNELGIN.COM | 847-488-1456
31 S. GROVE AVENUE, SUITE 100, ELGIN, IL 60120

ELGIN AREA CHAMBER
ELGINCHAMBER.COM | 847-741-5660
31 S. GROVE AVENUE, ELGIN, IL 60120

ELGIN DEVELOPMENT GROUP
ELGINDEVELOPMENT.COM | 847-741-5663
31 S. GROVE AVENUE, ELGIN, IL 60120

ELGIN AREA TOURISM BUREAU
EXPLOREELGINAREA.COM | 847-695-7540
60 S. GROVE AVENUE, ELGIN, IL 60120

COOK COUNTY
COOKCOUNTYIL.GOV | 312-443-5500
118 N. CLARK STREET, CHICAGO, IL 60602

KANE COUNTY
COUNTYOFKANE.ORG | 630-232-3400
719 BATAVIA AVENUE, GENEVA, IL 60134

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
ILLINOIS.GOV | 217-782-7500
500 E. MONROE STREET, SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701

FIND A COMPLETE LIST OF RESOURCES AT CITYOFELGIN.ORG/BUSINESS.