

START YOUR BUSINESS IN ALAMEDA



A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

START YOUR BUSINESS IN ALAMEDA

Starting a new business can be both exciting and challenging. This booklet is designed to guide you through the necessary steps and provide you with a helpful checklist to get started.

The City of Alameda offers a business-friendly environment and actively supports the development of a strong, diverse, and vibrant business community. City staff is available to help establish and expand your business.

Alameda’s official city website, www.cityofalamedaca.gov, offers an extensive listing of valuable information and business links.

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STEP 1

DEVELOP A BUSINESS PLAN

A business plan is the first step to starting a successful business. This plan will help you evaluate your idea, estimate costs, and determine the strengths and weaknesses of your proposal. A business plan is usually required to apply for a commercial loan and it will establish a road map for your business future.



WHO TO CONTACT

Alameda County Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

1330 Broadway, Suite 705

Oakland, CA 94612

www.acsbdc.org

www.cityofalamedaca.gov

The City of Alameda's website includes demographic information and resources to help develop your business.

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)

492 9th Street, Suite 350

Oakland, CA 94607

<http://eastbay.score.org/>



HELPFUL HINT: GET HELP

SBDC offers seminars and free one-on-one counseling on all aspects of small business management including business plans, accounting systems, and financing. Contact the Alameda County SBDC office at (510) 208-0410 or www.acsbdc.org.

At SCORE, retired business professionals volunteer to provide free counseling to individuals starting small businesses. Contact the local chapter at (510) 273-6015.

DETERMINE YOUR BUSINESS STRUCTURE

It is important to determine the structure of your business for operating and business reporting purposes. Will you operate your business as a sole proprietor, partnership (two or more owners), or corporation (one or more stockholders/officers)? Each business Structure has certain advantages and disadvantages in terms of costs, taxation, and liability.

If you are a sole proprietor, no formation documents are required to be filed with California Secretary of State's office. It is optional for partnerships to file with the State.

If you are starting a corporation or limited liability company, you must contact the California Secretary of State's Office. They can supply you with all the information and forms you need.

You may also want to consult an attorney or tax accountant for more guidance.



WHO TO CONTACT

California Secretary of State – Sacramento Office

1500 11th Street

Sacramento, CA 95814

(916) 657-5448

www.ss.ca.gov/business

STEP 3

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

If you cannot find what you are looking for, staff in the City of Alameda's Economic Development Division is eager to help. Feel free to contact them at (510) 747-6890 or via email at econdev@ci.alameda.ca.us.



WHO TO CONTACT

Economic Development Division

2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 120

Alameda, CA 94501

(510) 747-6890

econdev@ci.alameda.ca.us

www.cityofalamedaca.gov

Planning & Building Division

2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 190

Alameda, CA 94501

(510) 747-6850

www.cityofalamedaca.gov



STEP 3 continued

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION



HELPFUL HINT: CHECK AND CLEAR ZONING REGULATIONS!

Before signing a building/property lease or purchase agreement, contact the City of Alameda's Planning & Building Division to determine the zoning of the site.

Not all spaces are suitable for certain types of business uses. City zoning and building codes exist to protect you and your neighbors from incompatible uses. For example, it may not be safe for a childcare center to be located next door to a chemical manufacturing plant, and zoning and building code restrictions help avoid this potential hazard.

Planning and Building Division staff can also inform you of any reviews, permits, or fees that may be necessary for your proposed location. Certain kinds of businesses may require a use permit and a public hearing in order to comply with the City's zoning regulations. All permit fees are separate and in addition to the business license fee.

Zoned for what you want to do? New business needs to complete the zoning clearance form and get it approved by the **Permit Center**, open from 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday at City Hall, 2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 190, before filling out a business license form, purchasing property or signing lease agreements

STEP 4

REGISTER A FICTITIOUS NAME

If you create a name for your business that is different than your own legal name, you need to register the Fictitious Business Name with Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office. This step needs to be completed before obtaining a business license from the City of Alameda.

Also, public notices announcing your new business name must be posted for four weeks in the local newspaper to complete the registration process.



WHO TO CONTACT

Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office

1106 Madison Street
Oakland, CA 94607
(510) 272-6362
www.acgov.org/auditor/clerk/filefbn1.htm

Alameda Times Star

7677 Oakport St.
Oakland, CA 94621
(510) 208-6300
www.insidebayarea.com/timesstar

Alameda Journal

1516 Oak St.
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 748-1666
www.insidebayarea.com/alameda

Alameda Sun

3215 Eagle Ave, Ste. J
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 263-1470
www.alamedasun.com



HELPFUL HINT: DECIDING YOUR NEW BUSINESS NAME

To make sure your business name doesn't conflict with other businesses, you can see if it is already in use within Alameda County by checking the Fictitious Business Name Database at <http://rechart1.acgov.org>

All businesses are required to file both state and federal tax returns. Many small businesses need an Employer Identification Number (EIN), even if they do not have employees. Businesses may also need a Tax Identification Number (TIN) for tax, employment, and other purposes. Contact the state Franchise Tax Board and the federal Internal Revenue Service to learn more about specific requirements.

Will you sell a product? The California Board of Equalization can help you to determine whether you need a Seller's Permit. You may also be required to collect sales tax. To do so, the Board of Equalization will need to issue you a resale number in order to report that sales tax.

Whether self-employed or an employer with one or more employees, you must also pay Social Security taxes.



WHO TO CONTACT

Internal Revenue Services, Oakland Office

1301 Clay Street
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 637-2487
www.irs.gov

California Franchise Tax Board

1515 Clay Street, Suite 305
Oakland, CA 94612
(800) 852-5711
www.ftb.ca.gov

Social Security Administration

(800) 772-1213
www.ssa.gov/employer



State Board of Equalization

1515 Clay Street, Suite 303
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 622-4100
www.boe.ca.gov

STEP 6

APPLY FOR BUSINESS LICENSE

All individuals, partnerships, corporations, and sole proprietors conducting business in the City of Alameda are required to have a business license. This includes persons dealing with residential and commercial real estate rentals or who operate home-based businesses within the City. In most cases, licenses are based on the gross receipts of your business.

Licenses expire on June 30. Fees for new licenses are prorated from August to June. At the end of each year, renewal notices are sent out to all existing license holders to inform them that the annual renewal period has begun, to request updated information, and payment of fees by July 31 of the renewal year.

Zoned for what you want to do? New business needs to complete the zoning clearance form and get it approved by the **Permit Center**, open from 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday at **City Hall, 2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 190**, before filling out a business license form, purchasing property, or signing lease agreements.



APPLY FOR BUSINESS LICENSE

Closing a business? And, remember, if you are closing a business in Alameda, let the City business license staff know. Failure to notify could result in additional taxes, interest, and penalties being assessed against your account.

Working from Home? If you are working from home or in an area zoned residential, you will need a Home Occupation Permit. For additional information, please see the forms below or contact the **Permit Center** at (510) 747-6800.

Need Forms? Most of the City's forms (listed below) are downloadable from the City's Department of Finance webpage (<http://www.cityofalamedaca.gov/Business/Business-License>) or available at:

Finance Department

Room 230, City Hall

Mon – Thurs, 8 – 5 p.m. (510) 747-4881:

Finance Department Forms:

- General Business License Application
- Contractors Only Business License Application Business License Renewal
- Business License Fee Schedule
- Business License Municipal Code Section

Permit Center

Room 130, City Hall

Mon – Thurs, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (510) 747-6800:

Permit Center Forms

- Zoning Clearance Form
- Home Occupation Permit Application
- Sign Permit Application

STEP 7

ALAMEDA PERMITS & LICENSES

Your business may require site inspections by the Fire and/or Building Department as part of your application approval, depending on your business type and/or if you are making improvements to a building. Permit fees may vary depending on the size and location of the project. The permit technicians at the City's Building Division will be happy to meet with you to discuss your project and provide you with a fee estimate.

Building Permits

Building Permits are how the City of Alameda ensures construction is safe for occupancy and use. A Building Permit is needed for all new construction in Alameda.

Certificate of Occupancy

A certificate of occupancy is required for all new businesses in Alameda. This is required even if no construction is taking place. Your business must be located in a building constructed appropriately for your use. A permit is also required for most modifications, replacement construction, additions, or remodeling. Any changes to a building must comply with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



ALAMEDA PERMITS & LICENSES

Sign Permits

If your business would like to display a sign that is visible from outside a building, a sign permit is required. The Planning Division will perform “Design Review” assuring your sign is code compliant. The Building Division will issue a permit for its installation to assure it is safely attached to your building.

Fire Code Permits

A Fire Code Permit from the Fire Preventive Services Division is required if you want to conduct specific activities and practices. Use of hazardous substances or materials may require additional review and/or permits.

Encroachment Permits

An encroachment permit is required for any use of the public sidewalk or right of way, for such uses like sidewalk seating or merchandise displays. Proof of insurance will be required



WHO TO CONTACT

For Building and Sign Permits:

Planning & Building Division

2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 190

510-747-6850

<http://www.cityofalamedaca.gov/City-Hall/Community-Development>

For Fire Code Permits:

Fire Prevention Services Division

2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 120

Alameda, CA 94501

510-337-2120

<http://www.cityofalamedaca.gov/City-Hall/Fire-Prevention>

STEP 8

OTHER AGENCY PERMITS

Depending on the type of business, you may be required to obtain permits or licenses from the following County, State, or Federal agencies. Please contact these individual agencies directly, if applicable.

Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) License

No person may directly or indirectly, on any pretense, sell, barter, charge for possession or otherwise dispose of alcoholic beverages as part of a commercial transaction without having obtained the proper license or permit.

California Department of Consumer Affairs License

Many professional businesses such as accountants, engineers, doctors, and dentists require a State License from the California Department of Consumer Affairs. Businesses such as barters, cosmetologist, security services, and auto repairs are also required to obtain a State license. Please call to find out if you must register your business.

Import/Export Permit

If your business will involve the import or export of products with other countries, you may need to obtain an Import/Export Permit from the United States Customs Service.

Restaurants and Food Vendors and Salons and Tattoo Parlors

A health inspection is required for restaurants and food vendors, as well as salons and tattoo parlors. Contact the Alameda County Environmental Health Department to arrange for an inspection, or to request information advice regarding health and environmental safety issues.

Retail and Wholesale Business Permits

If your business will involve sales, you will need to obtain a Seller's Permit from the State Board of Equalization.

Other Permits & Licenses

To determine what other regional, state, and federal permits and licenses your business may need, call the State's "CalGOLD Business Permits Made Simple" office.

OTHER AGENCY PERMITS

Child Care Center or Family Care Home License

Licensing of all child care centers and family child care homes in California is required and can be obtained through the California Department of Social Services. In addition, large family day care homes with 9 to 14 children must also obtain from the City of Alameda a business license from the Finance Department and a Zoning Administrator Permit from the Planning Division that allows this special use in a residence.

Contractor's License

Construction is one of the largest industries in California's diverse economy. The Contractors State License Board (CSLB) receive and processes applications for new licenses, additional classifications, changes of license records, and license renewals. An Application for Original Contractor's License can be obtained from any CSLB office, by telephone, or online.



STEP 8 continued

OTHER AGENCY PERMITS



WHO TO CONTACT

ABC Alameda County

District Office
(510) 622-4970
www.abc.ca.gov

California Dept.of Consumer Affairs

(800) 344-9940
www.dca.ca.gov

United States Customs Service

(415) 782-9210
www.cbp.gov/trade

Alameda County Environmental Health Department

1131 Harbor Bay Pkwy
Alameda, CA 94502
(510) 567-6700
www.acgov.org/aceh

State Board of Equalization

(510) 622-4100
www.boe.ca.gov

California Department of Social Services

1515 Clay Street, Ste.1102
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 622-2602
www.dss.cahwnet.gov

Contractors State License Board (CSLB)

(800) 321-2752
www.cslb.ca.gov

CalGOLD Business Permits

Made Simple
(916) 322-7394
www.calgold.ca.gov



HELPFUL HINT: BECOMING A CONTRACTOR

When testing for your Contractor's License, be sure to study beyond what you need to pass the test. Continue upgrading your skills in your craft and in business matters. Read the educational articles in each issue of the California Licensed Contractor, a free newsletter you will receive when licensed.

Take advantage of other educational opportunities as they arise because by mastering both your craft and your business, you can work towards success!

STEP 9

IF YOU HAVE EMPLOYEES

If you hire employees, be sure to register with the California Employment Development Department. They will provide you with the necessary forms and answer any questions you may have regarding your responsibilities. As an employer, the State requires you to do the following:

- Withhold State income tax;
- Withhold State disability insurance;
- Pay unemployment tax; and
- Pay for any unemployment training costs.

You must also register with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in order to receive an Employer Identification Number. The IRS offers many services to new business owners and will provide a package of helpful information explaining the type of forms used and due dates for these forms.

As an employer, you are required to carry worker's compensation insurance. You may obtain this insurance through your own insurance agent or the State Compensation Insurance Fund of California (SCIF). The SCIF is a non-profit, public enterprise fund that operates like a mutual insurance carrier. Please contact their Bay Area – Pleasanton office for more details.



Useful Information

The City's New Smoking Ordinance prohibits smoking in public places including dining area. Smoking is also prohibited in all indoor and outdoor areas of employment including owner-operated businesses open to the public and all vehicles used as a worksite (taxis, tractors, trucks, etc.).

STEP 9 *continued*

IF YOU HAVE EMPLOYEES



WHO TO CONTACT

Employment Development Dept. (EDD)

Oakland Employment Tax Office
7700 Edgewater Drive, Suite 100
Oakland, CA 94621
(888) 745-3886
www.edd.ca.gov

Internal Revenue Service

Oakland Office
1301 Clay Street
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 637-2487
www.irs.gov

State Compensation Insurance Fund (SCIF)

5880 Owens Drive
Pleasanton, CA 94588
(925) 523-5000
www.scif.com

Alameda One-Stop Career Center

College of Alameda
555 Ralph Appezato Memorial Parkway
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 522-7221
www.alameda.peralta.edu



HELPFUL HINT: EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT

The Alameda One-Stop Career Center, located at the College of Alameda, can help local businesses with training, prescreening and interviewing of applicants, and with referrals of only pre-qualified candidates. Businesses are able to access a variety of services at no charge, specifically designed to increase their competitiveness and to grow their bottom line.

Local Green Initiatives

In February 2008, City Council adopted a Resolution setting a greenhouse gas reduction goal of 25% below the 2005 baseline level. Council also adopted the Local Action Plan for Climate Protection. In 2009, Alameda joined the East Bay Green Corridor, a partnership of cities, universities, community college districts, and Lawrence Berkeley National Lab to develop and expand the regional green economy. In recent years, the City has worked to promote and implement a number of strategies to reduce both the City's and the community's carbon footprint. See www.cityofalamedaca.gov/Go-Green



Free Energy Audits and Rebates

Known as the “Greenest Little Utility in America,” Alameda Municipal Power (AMP) has been in service to Alameda residents and businesses for well over 120 years. AMP provides a number of energy-efficiency programs, with free energy audits and a number of rebates available for Alameda businesses use.

Business Waste Reduction

Alameda has a robust recycling and composting program where most materials normally thrown out can easily avoid the landfill by taking advantage of a spectrum of offerings. Through ground-breaking climate change policy and enthusiastic community effort, Alameda is actively working toward zero waste ideals in a multi-layered waste reduction program with Alameda County Industries (ACI), Alameda's exclusive waste hauler. Please call ACI today to find out how your business can contribute to the greening of our city.

Regional Initiatives

The Bay Area Green Business Program is a successful partnership of environmental agencies and utilities. It assists, recognizes, and certifies businesses and government

STEP 10 *continued*

GREEN RESOURCES

agencies that voluntarily operate in a more environmentally responsible way, such as conserving resources, preventing pollution, and minimizing waste. Contact the Bay Area Green Business Program at (510) 567-6770

FREE “RECYCLE FOR BUSINESS” PROGRAM

The StopWaste Business Partnership

The StopWaste Business Partnership, a program of StopWaste.Org, offers companies and institutions in Alameda County free help to lower operating costs, increase efficiency and protect the environment through recycling and waste prevention improvements. No matter if you are looking to set up a paper recycling program at your business, or bring sustainability to the entire supply chain, the StopWaste team has the expertise and tools you need. Services offered include: free publications and tools; funding assistance; expert advice; and recognition.

Alameda County Household Hazardous Waste Small Business Disposal Services

If your business has leftover hazardous materials, you may be eligible for a service to safely dispose of these items at reasonable, affordable rates. Businesses that qualify as “small quantity generators” can dispose of hazardous materials safely, conveniently, and in way that protect our environment. Visit the Alameda County Household Hazardous Waste Program at www.stopwaste.org/home/index.asp?page=583

MATERIALS EXCHANGE

The California Materials Exchange (CalMAX) is a free service provided by the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB). The program’s goal is to help businesses, industry residents, and others locate markets for usable nonhazardous materials that would otherwise be discarded. According to CIWMB, “the concept behind CALMAX is simple: One business’s trash is another business’s treasure.”

To post reusable materials you currently have or locate wanted items, please visit www.calrecycle.ca.gov/CalMax



WHO TO CONTACT

Bay Area Green

Business Program,
Regional Contact
(510) 567-6770
www.greenbiz.abag.gov

Alameda Municipal Power

2000 Grand Street
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 748-3900
Office Hours:
Monday-Friday
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
www.alamedaamp.com

Alameda County Industries, Inc. (ACI)

2307 Blanding Avenue, Ste. B
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 483-1400
www.alamedacountyindustries.com
Office Hours:
Monday-Friday
7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

StopWaste Business Partnership

Phone: 1-877-STOPWASTE (786-7927)
Email: Partnership@StopWaste.Org
www.stopwaste.org/home/index.asp?page=9

Environmental Services Division, Department of Public Works, City of Alameda West

950 West Mall Square
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 747-7930
[http://www.cityofalamedaca.gov/CityHall/
Environmental-Programs](http://www.cityofalamedaca.gov/CityHall/Environmental-Programs)

Alameda County Industries, Inc. (ACI)

2307 Blanding Avenue, Ste. B
Alameda, CA 94501
Phone: (510) 483-1400
Fax: (510) 814-7314
Office Hours:
Monday-Friday
7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
www.alamedacountyindustries.com

CalRecycle

(877) 520-9703
Email: CalMAX@calrecycle.ca.gov
www.calrecycle.ca.gov/CalMax

STEP 10 continued

GREEN RESOURCES



HELPFUL HINT: SPARING THE AIR

The Bay Area Quality Management District's Compliance Assistance Program provides assistance to Bay Area business owners to aid their efforts to reduce emissions and comply with District regulations. For more information, contact the Compliance Assistance Hotline at (415) 749-4999 or visit www.baaqmd.gov.

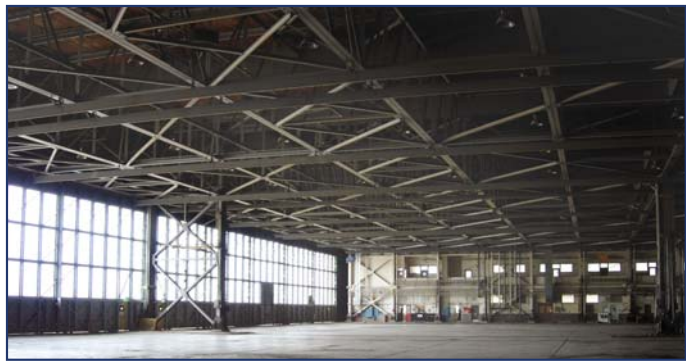
LOCAL BUSINESS INCENTIVES

The City of Alameda strives to provide outstanding customer service. Economic Development staff will act as your advocate and point of contact for all City processing and permits. On your behalf, we will coordinate with other departments and guide you through the process.

In addition, the following incentives are currently offered through the City of Alameda and other government agencies. Please contact our Economic Development Team at (510) 747-6890 for assistance.

Site Selection and Permitting Assistance

Our staff can help you find the right site in Alameda to start your business or expand. Once you've selected the site, we'll guide you through the permitting process.



Employment Training Panel Funds

This State program provides funds to help offset the costs of job skills training necessary to maintain high-performance workplaces.

Foreign Trade Zone

The City of Alameda is included in the Oakland Foreign Trade Zone. Businesses may reap substantial benefits.

Impact Fee Deferral & State Community Infrastructure Program (SCIP)

This program can help businesses conserve capital during the construction process; it assists with financing development impact fees and public infrastructure costs associated with private development.

LOCAL BUSINESS INCENTIVES

Industrial Development Bonds

Manufacturing firms may qualify for tax-exempt and other long-term, low interest rate financing through various state agencies and agencies affiliated with the City of Alameda. We can assist with the application process.

LAMBRA Tax Incentives

Similar to the State's Enterprise Zone program, the Local Agency Military Base Recovery Area (LAMBRA) provides numerous tax incentives for companies that locate at Alameda Point, the former Naval Air Base.



OTHER RESOURCES

Here are additional things to keep in mind when doing business in Alameda and as your business grows:

Garbage & Recycling Services:

Alameda County Industries, Inc. (ACI)

Contact ACI to arrange for garbage collection services.

2307 Blanding Avenue, Suite B

Alameda, CA 94501

Phone: 510-483-1400

Fax: 510-814-7314

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday

7am-6pm

Check out ACI's website www.alamedacountyindustries.com for helpful information to get started and understand Alameda's mandatory recycling practices for Alameda business.

Utilities:

Alameda Municipal Power (AMP) Known as the "Greenest Little Utility in America,"

AMP has been serving Alameda residents and businesses for over 120 years.

2000 Grand Street

Alameda, CA 94501

Phone: 510-748-5000

Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) Gas service in Alameda is provided by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E). For more information contact PG&E at (800) 468-4743 or visit www.pge.com.

OTHER RESOURCES

Commuter Resources:

511 Rideshare is a free service to help commuters find other drivers to carpool or vanpool to work. Qualifying carpools can cross Bay Area toll bridges for free during commute hours and may qualify for additional financial incentives or subsidies. For more information, visit www.511.org.



WHO TO CONTACT

Get Involved With The Business Community!

Alameda Chamber of Commerce

2210-D South Shore Center
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 522-0414
Email: connect@alamedachamber.com
www.alamedachamber.com

Park Street Business Association

2447 Santa Clara Avenue, Ste. 302
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 523-1392
Email: parkstreet1@comcast.net
www.shopparkstreet.com

Greater Alameda Business Association

(Historic Stations Shopping Districts)
P.O. Box 2892
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 869-5848
Email: gabaemail.com@alamedanet.net
www.gabaonline.com

West Alameda Business Association

1509 ½ Webster St.
P.O. Box 215
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 523-5955
Email: west_alameda@yahoo.com
www.westalamedabusiness.com



Economic Development

2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 120
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 747-6890

Office Hours: M-Th 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

econdev@ci.alameda.ca.us

www.cityofalamedaca.gov/City-Hall/Econ-Development