

So You Want To Start A Business ...



1. **The first step is to find help so CONGRATULATIONS!** We are here to help.
2. **Register your business with the City of Boston.**
 - a. www.boston.gov/starting-business
 - b. It's \$65 for Boston residents. You must renew every 4 years.
3. **Find a location!**
 - a. Contact the local Main Streets in your preferred neighborhood (they usually have a list) OR a commercial real estate broker.
 - b. When you find it, check the ZONING! Is it zoned for your business type?
 - i. <http://maps.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/zoningviewer/>
 - c. If it's not zoned for your business type, you'll need to get a record of Legal Occupancy (Certificate of Occupancy).
 - i. <https://www.boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/how-get-record-legal-occupancy>

Once you have the Certificate of Occupancy, you will be able to:

- Change the zoning;
- Apply for a permit to do construction, including painting;
- Or get any other permits.



BEFORE YOU SIGN A LEASE, you should review this document.

Remember commercial leases DO NOT HAVE THE SAME PROTECTIONS AS RESIDENTIAL LEASES!

<http://clinics.law.harvard.edu/tlc/files/2015/05/Commercial-Leases-101-Legal-Toolkit.pdf>

4. What kind of business is it?

- Retail
- Professional
- Other services
- Food Service
- Salon/Barber Shop
- Industrial

This determines what your next steps are. Different businesses have different requirements. The Office of Small Business Development or your local Main Streets can help you with the next step.

FAQs:

Do I need a business plan?

Yes ... and no.

A business plan is a good idea to help you plan for what you'll need. It will help you decide the number of employees, how much inventory that you can carry, and how much you should charge customers. It will also help you when you need to find financing, and for any other technical assistance that you utilize – this is a good thing to present to others about your business idea.

But you shouldn't feel like you must follow your business plan to the letter. In fact, you might find that your business plan doesn't really match what's happening in real time. And that's ok! It happens.

Do I need money?

Yes. There are a lot of places to find help with financing! Ask at Boston's Small Business Development or your local Main Streets organization.

How much money will I need?

That's what the business plan is for.

Should I become an LLC or an S corporation?

You might be wondering what does this even mean? These are ways of protecting yourself in your business. The biggest difference will be how you file taxes, so the best person to ask about this is an accountant.

You should know that if you do incorporate that you will need to file articles of incorporation with the state of Massachusetts.

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/cor/corpweb/corllc/llcinf.htm>

If you have any questions about any part of this process, or even after you open your business, feel free to reach out to Ginger Brown, Executive Director of JP Centre/South Main Streets at (617) 942-2439 or at director@jpcentresouth.com.

