

Starting a Business in Franklin NH – What you Need to Know

Starting a business is an exciting and scary adventure. You have an idea that looks promising and now you need to know what it takes to pull it all together, to plan for the success of your business and to meet the city requirements that will ensure legal and safety measures are met. All new businesses are advised to register with the Franklin NH Planning and Zoning Office to understand the city requirements and ensure that all building, fire safety, signage, etc., issues are handled appropriately. This can also help expedite the “new business” process by ensuring that any startup issues and concerns are addressed early and dealt with quickly. There is no fee for business registration.

This short guide is designed to offer a few resources on how to develop your business and to provide an understanding of the city requirements that must be met to ensure a successful opening of that business. The focus of this document is primarily for small businesses.

The timeline for approval of the various documents is dependent on the complexity of the project. If building permits or approvals from the Planning Board are required, the time between the first contact with the Planning Office and the grand opening will be longer.

All small business startups will have better success if they have done research into the details of what starting a small business entail. There are several resources available locally, and state organizations can provide guidance on everything from business plans to marketing. An excellent document to review no matter where you are in your planning has been published by Business News Daily: [How to Start a Business: A Step-by-Step Guide](#) .

A good state resource is the “one stop shop” link on the State of NH website that provides contact information for those wishing to start a business in NH. That information is available here: [Start Your Business in NH](#) .

The Lakes Region SCORE Chapter 172 provides a more personal touch and its mentors will work through your business concerns with you. The chapter “is

dedicated to offering small business education and mentoring services in the central New Hampshire, Lakes Region Communities.” They can be found at [Lakes Region SCORE](#).

It has been the experience in our city that those small businesses that have developed a sound Business Plan and have the income to open and sustain their business with sufficient capital for at least 6-12 months have the best chance of being successful. Lack of such preparation has resulted in several small businesses not surviving to their first anniversary.

STARTING WITH THE BUSINESS PLAN: The first stop any new business owner in Franklin NH needs to make is with the Franklin Planning and Zoning Director. You can discuss your business plan and cover topics such as:

- Name and location of the new business
- Type of Business [for example retail sales, service-oriented food service, etc.]. Information on hours of operation and the number of employees is also helpful.

The location is important since different types of businesses are allowed in different zoning districts. You can check the information to better understand the different districts under Zoning Ordinance Sections [305-12](#) , and [305-13](#).

If you are leasing space in the main downtown area, you need to think about compliance with the historic requirements. The city Heritage Commission oversees exterior building alterations, colors and signage. The Planning Director can review all of these issues with you when you meet or talk. You can access the Commission’s regulations and related documents at [Heritage Commission](#).

If the building you intend to lease needs work to get it ready for your business, then you may need a building permit. According to Franklin City Code [305-31](#) Permits, A, (a) [1] “A building permit will be required for all work, including, but not limited to, any plumbing, HVAC, electrical, or mechanical work, roofing, new or replacement windows, adding or moving interior walls, new or replacement ceiling, any structural changes to the building, or new expanded fencing.”

Any proposed building improvements can also be discussed with the Planning Director. It is a good idea to schedule a site visit for the Planner and the Building Inspector, who works out of the Franklin Fire Department, to discuss the important fire and life-safety codes, along with the general building codes. The links below (building permit form, signage concerns, Planning and Zoning general information and FAQ's) will help you prepare for this visit.

BUILDING PERMIT:

The [Building Permit](#) form is required for work that may be needed to renovate the space to fit your business needs. Allow enough time from application to approval to fit your business timeline. You will also need an inspection from the Fire Code Marshall regarding the safety and security of your building before a **Certificate of Occupancy**, needed to open your business, will be issued.

SIGNAGE: The public face to your business can be greatly enhanced by innovative and appropriate signage. As covered above, if you are in the downtown district, the Heritage Commission will be involved. The Heritage Commission is working on a Signage Policy and Guidelines for signage in the downtown area. For signage in the other zoning districts, please consult the Signage section of the [Zoning Ordinance](#) found in Article V. [305-24](#).

PLANNING AND ZONING: This link will provide you an overview of the city Planning and Zoning departments. [Franklin NH Planning and Zoning](#).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: To further understand when a building permit is required, as well as other building and demolition concerns, please review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) list that provides more detail.

Make sure you plan ahead and leave time for the permits and inspections necessary to obtain a Certificate of Use and/or Occupancy!

The City of Franklin is a city on the move and we are excited to have new businesses consider us as a prime business location. Taking the time to develop a solid business plan, understanding the planning and code requirements, and allowing enough time for all will expedite the process and quickly get you on your way to a successful new venture in the rapidly evolving Three Rivers City.

All links used in this document are listed below:

How to Start a Business: A Step-by-Step guide

<https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/4686-how-to-start-a-business.html>

Start your business in NH

<https://quickstart.sos.nh.gov/online/Account/LandingPage>

Lakes Region Score

<https://lakesregion.score.org/>

District Descriptions

<https://www.ecode360.com/10177827>

Permitted use, special exceptions and special use permits.

<https://www.ecode360.com/10177842>

Heritage Commission

<https://www.franklinnh.org/heritage-commission>

Permits

<https://www.ecode360.com/10178377>

Building Permit

https://www.franklinnh.org/sites/franklinnh/files/uploads/fillable2018_bldgpermit_0.pdf

Signs

<https://www.ecode360.com/10178065>

Franklin Planning and Zoning

<https://www.franklinnh.org/planning-zoning-building>

Frequently Asked Questions

[https://www.franklinnh.org/sites/franklinnh/files/uploads/planning zoning building 2017 faqs.pdf](https://www.franklinnh.org/sites/franklinnh/files/uploads/planning_zoning_building_2017_faqs.pdf)