



Bethlehem Business Start-Up Guide

This step-by-step guide is intended to help business owners through the steps need to establish or expand a business location in the City of Bethlehem.

1. Department of Community & Economic Development (610) 865-7056

Your first stop when starting or expanding a business in the City of Bethlehem is the Department of Community and Economic Development. Our staff can help you with site selection, provide you with technical assistance, and connect you to various financial resources that can help make your dream a reality. We often serve as a liaison to Federal, State, and City officials and private institutions during the development process, in order to make the process as easy as possible for local businesses.

2. Bureau of Planning (610) 865-7088

When considering potential sites for your business, you should contact the Bureau of Planning and speak with the City's Zoning Officer, who can determine if your proposed use is permitted in the spaces that you have in mind. For any projects involving new construction or building additions, plans must be reviewed by the Bureau of Planning, and may need to be reviewed by the Planning Commission. Often times, these approvals are secured by the architects, engineers, or general contractors hired by the business owner. If you are looking to change the use of a building, it is important to ask about any Tapping Fees that may be associated with this change in use.

3. Bureau of Code Enforcement (610) 865-7091/TTD or (610) 865-7086

Prior to building alterations, construction, or occupancy of any commercial space, you are required to obtain various permits from the Bureau of Code Enforcement. This bureau handles the permitting process for building construction, additions, demolition, and alterations (electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and heating). Code Enforcement also handles the Certificate of Occupancy, which should be secured during the permitting process. Permit fees are paid at Financial Services, located on the first floor of City Hall.

4. Tax Bureau (610) 865-7022/TTD or (610) 865-7015

As a business owner, you are responsible for filing tax forms with the City of Bethlehem's Tax Bureau. Initially, you will need to apply for a Business License, and then each year you operate your business in Bethlehem, you will need to obtain a business privilege license and pay the annual mercantile tax. The annual license fee is \$25.00 and the license period runs from May 1st through April 30th of the following year.

5. Fire Department (610) 865-7140/TTD or (610) 865-7143

The Fire Department conducts acceptance testing and inspects after permits are issued by the Bureau of Code Enforcement for fire alarms and fire detection systems, sprinklers

and standpipe systems, tent and air supported structures, and kitchen hood suppression systems. Inspections for new business locations are typically \$75.00. Permits are required for underground tanks, installation/removal/alteration of tanks, product and vent lines, flammable/combustible use storage, bonfires, and open burning, fireworks displays, and construction of helicopter landings. For vendors at Bethlehem events, you are required to obtain approval from the Fire Department for any cooking or heating devices that you will utilize.

6. Health Bureau (610) 865-7083/TTD or (610) 865-7084

Any businesses that will involve the preparation, service, or sales of food will need to contact the Environmental Health Officer. Such businesses include restaurants, supermarkets, mobile vending, bars, delicatessens, convenience stores, temporary food stands and event vendors. An application for Food Service Facility Plan Review must be submitted along with a floor plan, intended menu, a list of proposed equipment, and the \$100.00 plan review fee. Additionally, businesses will need to secure a trash hauler to handle their business needs. The Health Bureau can provide a list of trash haulers that service our community.

7. Water & Sewer Department (610) 865-7070

Water and sewer service is administered by this department, and business owners will need to contact the department directly to coordinate the hook-up and turn-on of water and sewer services. For after-hours emergencies, (4:30pm-8:00am) please call (610)865-7077 or (610)865-7074.

8. Recycling Bureau (610) 865-7082

Businesses in the City of Bethlehem are required by law to recycle materials such as corrugated cardboard, mixed office paper, magazines and newspapers, aluminum, glass, plastics 1-7, steel cans, and leaves. In fact, many businesses have found that they can save money by recycling the bulk of their waste products. Therefore, it is important to consider the space requirements for recycling bins during the creation of floor plans for your new business. Curbside pick-up by the City of Bethlehem is a residential, not commercial program. Businesses may contract with a hauler for pick-up or they may drop their recycling at the Theis/Cornfeld Recycling Center.

9. Bethlehem Parking Authority (610) 865-7123

The BPA manages and maintains all public parking facilities in the City of Bethlehem. It also manages all parking meters (both street and lot meters), handicapped parking programs, and on-street loading zones. If you have any questions about the parking surrounding your business or the availability of parking at your business, please contact the BPA directly.

10. Department of Community & Economic Development (610) 865-7056

Once your business is up and running, CED can hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony at your new business, upon your request. Please contact us for more details.