HOW TO START A BUSINESS IN BLUE SPRINGS





WELCOME TO BLUE SPRINGS

Blue Springs is a progressive, business-friendly community and a great place to grow your ideas and your business. We are well-known for our favorable housing market, award-winning schools, and our designation as a preferred place to live for working commuters. With a population of over 59,430 and averaging an increase of 1.5% per year, more people than ever are making Blue Springs their community of choice.

The geographic location of Blue Springs makes it an attractive residential area and a hub for commerce. Blue Springs is located only 20 miles from major metropolitan business and commercial centers such as Downtown Kansas City and the Country Club Plaza.

We are proud to be home to the Blue Springs School District, one of the Top 5 School Districts in Missouri. Blue Springs was named one of "America's Best Places to Raise Your Kids" according to *BusinessWeek magazine* and has earned a place on *MONEY magazine's* 'Best Places to Live' list.

Thank you for locating your business in Blue Springs or for considering Blue Springs as a place to open your business.

In Blue Springs, we believe in partnerships and we consider every person and entity an important part of our vibrant community. To help you reach your business goals, we have assembled this booklet for your convenience to help you find contact information and to quickly access additional information you may need for doing business in Blue Springs.

This booklet is intended to serve as a guide to assist you in opening your business in Blue Springs, Missouri.

This booklet contains a step-by-step method that includes contact information for quick access to additional help you may need for doing business in Blue Springs.

We worked closely with our local and regional partners to make this guide, however; Please consider consulting an attorney and/or accountant to advise you with your business decisions.

How to Start a Business in Blue Springs QR Code



STEPS TO HELP YOU START YOUR BUSINESS IN BLUE SPRINGS

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GETTING STARTED

We encourage you to take advantage of free/reduced priced training and counseling services available here in Blue Springs. These resources can help you prepare a business plan, secure financing, pair you with a business coach and connect you to fellow entrepreneurs in our community. Please contact these agencies to learn about specific resources.

Blue Springs Chamber of Commerce
(816) 229-8558 | www.bluespringschamber.com

The Chamber of Commerce offers Business Mentoring and a variety of educational programming. The Chamber has several committees and events focusing on business development and connections.

Blue Springs Department of Economic Development
(816) 622-4006 | www.bluespringsgov.com/business

Offers a centralized resource to connect you with business information and will help guide you through the City's development process.

Mid-Continent Public Library/Square One Small Business Services | www.mymcpl.org/squareone

Square One Small Business Services at Mid-Continent Public Library offers classes, programs, resources and research guidance both online and in person. Small business specialists can meet with you by appointment.



BUILDING A BUSINESS PLAN

Build Your Business Plan

The Small Business Administration (SBA) is a robust source of information that can help you start, manage and grow your business.

SBA's Business Plan Tool provides you with a step-by-step guide to help you get started. All of your information entered into this tool is 100% secure and can only be viewed by accessing your account using the password you have specified. Not only can you save your plan as a PDF file, you can also update it at any time, making this a living plan for your reference.

During the step-by-step process, this tool will let you update the status of your business plan. Once you save your information and move to a new section in the business plan, a check mark will appear in the numbered section menu at the top of the screen denoting when each section is complete. Visit www.sba.gov for more details.

Every great business begins with a plan. That plan will evolve over time but this initial document will serve as your guide over the next 3-5 years.

Below are several key points that your business plan should include based on the stage of your business.

If You Are an Established Business

If you are an established business, be sure to include the following information:





- Mission Statement – This explains what your business is all about.
- Company Information – Include a statement that covers when your business was formed, the names of the founders and their roles, your number of employees, and your business location(s).
- Market Analysis – Include examples of company growth, such as financial or market highlights.
- Products, Services or both – Describe the products or services you provide.
- Marketing Strategy – A walk-through of your overall strategy, timelines and budget
- Management Plan – Detailed information about your key personnel, company employees and roles, facility details and capital improvement schedules
- Financial Information – If you are seeking financing, include any information about your current bank and investors.
- Future plans – Explain where you would like to take your business.

PRO TIP

Marketing, advertising and promotion are an important part of getting your business off the ground.

The Chamber Business Directory features a complete list of local media agencies, advertising specialty companies and printers that serve our community.

Blue Springs Chamber of Commerce Business Directory QR Code

NAMING, REGISTERING AND ORGANIZING YOUR BUSINESS

Choosing a business name is an important step in the business planning process. Not only should you pick a name that reflects your brand identity, but you also need to ensure it is properly registered and protected for the long term.

Check for Trademarks

Trademark infringement can carry a high cost for your business. Before you pick a name, use the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's trademark search tool to see if a similar name, or variations of it, is trademarked. Visit www.uspto.gov for more information.

If You Intend to Incorporate

If you intend to incorporate your business, you'll need to contact your state filing office to check whether your intended business name has already been claimed and is in use. If you find a business operating under your proposed name, you may still be able to use it, provided your business and the existing business offer different goods/services or are located in different regions.

Pick a Name That is Web-Ready

In order to claim a website address or URL, your business name needs to be unique and available. It should also be rich in key words that reflect what your business does. To find out if your business name has been claimed online, do a simple web search to see if anyone is already using that name.

Next, check whether a domain name (or web address) is available. You can do this using the WHOis database of domain names at www.whois.com If it is available, be sure to claim it right away. This guide explains how to register a domain name.

Claim Your Social Media Identity

It's a good idea to claim your social media name early in the naming process – even if you are not sure which sites you intend to use.



Apply for Trademark Protection

A trademark protects words, names, symbols, and logos that distinguish goods and services. Your name is one of your most valuable business assets, so it's worth protecting. Visit www.sba.gov to learn how to trademark your business name.

Register Your New Business Name

Naming your business is an important branding exercise, but if you choose to name your business as anything other than your own personal name then you'll need to register it with the appropriate authorities. This process is known as registering your "Doing Business As" (DBA) name.

What is a "Doing Business As" Name?

A fictitious name (or assumed name, trade name or DBA name) is a business name that is different from your personal name, the names of your partners or the officially registered name of your LLC or corporation.

It's important to note that when you form a business, the legal name of the business defaults to the name of the person or entity that owns the business, unless you choose to rename it and register it as a DBA name.

For example, consider this scenario: John Smith sets up a painting business. Rather than operate under his own name, John instead chooses to name his business: "John Smith Painting". This name is considered an assumed name and John will need to register it with the appropriate government agencies.

The legal name of your business is required on all government forms and applications, including your application for employer tax IDs, licenses and permits.

Do I Need a "Doing Business As" Name?
A DBA is needed in the following scenarios:

- Sole Proprietors or Partnerships – If you wish to start a business under anything other than your real name, you'll need to register a DBA so that you can do business as another name.
- Existing Corporations or LLCs – If your business is already set up and you want to do business under a name other than your existing corporation or LLC name, you will need to register a DBA.

How to Register your "Doing Business As" Name
If you choose to use a "Doing Business As" (DBA) name, you must register it with the Missouri Secretary of State. Visit www.sos.mo.gov or call 866-223-6535 for more information.

You will also need to register your DBA name when you apply for a Blue Springs Business License.

Organizing Your Business

Small business owners have the same organizational options as large companies: Sole Proprietorship, Partnership, Limited Liability Company and Corporation. Each of these types of legal organizations have advantages and disadvantages. Some of the considerations to explore are:

- Capital and debt of the business
- Taxation of the business
- Managerial needs of the business
- Need for continued growth or expansion
- The product or the service sold
- Liability characteristics of the planned business

Please consult with your attorney before entering into any form of legal organization and have your attorney review all legal documents.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT LOCATION FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Choosing a business location is one of the most important decisions a small business owner or startup will make. It requires planning and research, looking at demographics, assessing your supply chain, scoping the competition, staying on budget, understanding local zoning, ordinances, taxes, and much more.

When choosing a location for your business, you need to consider the zoning and building occupancy requirements in the city. Blue Springs has zoning ordinances and regulations



that define how you can use your property. Cities, counties and other local governments commonly adopt zoning plans and set development standards to ensure that land is used for the common good of the community.

Zoning laws come into play on all properties, regardless of size. If you are thinking about leasing, buying or making improvements to property you already own, make sure you understand the zoning restrictions before you commit to anything. Some considerations:

• Home-based businesses are generally allowed in Blue Springs, with some limitations to preserve the quality and character of residential neighborhoods.

• Before leasing or purchasing an existing building for your business, check the current property zoning to ensure your business use is allowed.

• If you need to modify the building, check with the City's Community Development Department before beginning construction. They will assist you in obtaining the needed permits and licenses.

• If you plan on contstructing a new building for your business, contact the Community Development Department at (816) 220-4565 for a free pre-application meeting, where city staff will help identify the necessary processes and approvals for your planned construction.

• The City of Blue Springs has regulations on the size and location of business signage. Work with your sign professional and city staff to determine the right signs for your business.

Community Development QR Code



Before you sign a rental/lease agreement, you should carefully investigate its terms to make sure the lease meets your business' needs and contact the City's Community Development Department to check that the area is zoned for the business you plan to conduct.

If you need help identifying available commercial property that fits your business needs, we suggest you contact the Blue Springs Economic Growth & Development Division at (816) 622-4004 . When looking for potential business locations, it's helpful to determine your priorities, keep an open mind about your options and do your research.

Take a close look at the physical space, available parking and traffic flow. If your business requires modifications to the existing space – for example, adding cubicles, raising a loading dock, or rewiring for better communications – make sure that you (or the landlord) will be able to make the necessary changes.

If you need help finding professional services we suggest you contact the Blue Springs Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber can help you locate local, trusted companies such as real estate agents/brokers, construction contractors and finance and insurance providers.

Things to Consider

If you plan on making any modifications to your building, contact the City's Community Development Department BEFORE beginning construction.

The City's permitting process is designed to save you from costly design errors or Code Violations.



PRO TIP

Unsure about the specific zoning ordinances that may apply to your business? We encourage you to set up a Pre-Application meeting with the City's Community Development Department BEFORE entering into any legally-binding contract.

This meeting will ensure that the location and zoning is a good fit for your business needs. To contact the City's Community Development Department, call (816) 228-0207 or visit www.bluespringsgov.com.

CITY, COUNTY, STATE AND FEDERAL LICENSING

Virtually every business needs some form of license or permit to operate at the local, state and federal level. Depending on your business, you may need to work with several different agencies to obtain the needed permits to operate your business. Some of the more common permits are below.

City of Blue Springs

The City of Blue Springs regulates specific types of businesses to maintain the health, safety and general welfare of the community.

• **Business Licenses** – Most businesses, regardless of size, are required to have a business license to do business in Blue Springs. Business licenses are renewed annually.

• **Solicitors, Peddlers, and Event Merchants** – Businesses that sell door-to-door, provide information door-to-door, do not have a fixed location, or sell items at events may be required to obtain a Solicitors/Peddlers License.

• **Liquor License** - Businesses wishing to sell liquor in Blue Springs will need a liquor license from the City of Blue Springs, Jackson County and the State of Missouri along with a valid City of Blue Springs Business License. Due to state regulations, City liquor licenses must be approved by the City Council. The liquor license process can take 6-8 weeks to complete, so please allow for this in your business planning schedule. Call (816) 228-0131.

Jackson County, Missouri

• **Business Personal Property Tax** – Businesses are required to register with the Jackson County Assessment Department. (816) 881-4672 or www.jacksongov.org/assessment

• **Restaurant and Food Handling** – If your business will handle food, contact the Jackson County Environmental Health Division at (816) 847-7073 or www.jacksongov.org/eh



State of Missouri

• **Sales Taxes** – Any person or company that has a business location in Missouri from which they sell or lease goods or provide a taxable service is required to collect and remit Missouri sales tax. https://dor.mo.gov/taxation/business/registration/requirements.html

• **Withholding**- Unemployment Insurance tax and other taxes – the Missouri Department of Revenue and Department of Labor and Industrial Relations offer a unified online registration to ensure your business is collecting and remitting the proper taxes. www.dor.mo.gov/register-business

Federal Government

• **Federal Employee Number (EIN)** - Typically required if your business has one or more employees, or if the business will have a bank account in the business' name. www.irs.gov/businesses



How to Start a Business in Blue Springs QR Code

The City of Blue Springs Missouri

BLUE SPRINGS Chamber of Commerce
Building Business. Growing Community.

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SQUARE ONE

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