The process of starting or expanding your business is both exciting and challenging. We know you have lots of questions and concerns about the types of permits and licenses you will need and the process that goes along with obtaining them. The City of Annapolis is committed to making this process as straightforward as possible.

The Office of Economic Development office is located on the second floor of 145 Gorman Street across from the street from the Noah Hillman Parking Garage. Our team of is here to meet with you, answer questions, and facilitate introductions with other departments from which you may require input to assist you in finding the best location for your new or expanding operation.

Before signing a lease, it is best to begin the Use and Occupancy application process, which is required prior to opening your business. The Department of Environmental and Neighborhood Programs 410-263-7946 is your first point of contact for this information. For detailed information about our services and the types of assistance available, please browse our website at www.annapolis.gov.

Department of Planning and Zoning

The Department of Planning and Zoning is responsible for a wide range of activities and responsibilities, including economic development, land use planning, affordable housing, transportation projects, historic preservation, open space conservation, and neighborhood improvement projects. P&Z coordinates the City's efforts with state agencies and the planning commission and it oversees the operation of the Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Consult the City of Annapolis Zoning Ordinance to make sure that your business/property meets the zoning requirements for the site. You may need a permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals. If you need assistance, the Department of Planning and Zoning is available to answer any questions.

Department of Neighborhood and Environmental Programs

If your project involves the construction, alteration, repair, or demolition a structure you should determine whether your project will require a Building Permit from the City's Department of Neighborhood and Environmental Programs. The Department of Neighborhood and Environmental Programs is responsible for building construction, code enforcement issues, and conducting inspections. These regulations and inspections insure that building construction and improvements are done in accordance with the building code and protect public safety. Code Enforcement also handles Use and Occupancy permit, which is secured during the opening process. Permit fees are paid at Permit Counter, located on the second floor of 145 Gorman Street.

Do not use your own judgment in determining whether you will need a building permit. The staff in the Department of Neighborhood and Environmental Programs can easily determine whether you need a building permit.

The Department of Neighborhood and Environmental Programs is available to provide you with a consultation or pre-application meeting regarding opening your business.

City Clerk

The City Clerk:

- is the custodian of the City Seal and the legal records of the City;
- keeps a record of all proceedings of the Annapolis City Council;
- prepares, maintains and records all laws, ordinances, and resolutions adopted and enacted by the Annapolis City Council;
- prepares and grants certificates for licenses;
- directly issues over twenty-five different types of permits and licenses.

The City Clerk is responsible for the licensing and regulation of many different types of businesses and events. The Deputy Clerk can best answer questions about licenses offered by the City Clerk.

Fire Marshal's Office /Fire Prevention

The Annapolis Fire Department Fire Marshal's Office is dedicated to preserve life and property from fire, explosion and other related hazards through fire prevention, public education and fire investigation. The Fire Marshal's Office is also responsible for issuing several permits, inspections, and signature authority for Use and Occupancy Certificates. Business owners are encouraged to consult with the Fire Marshal early and often during the process of opening or expanding your business.

Health Department

The Health Department is responsible for the protection of the general health of Annapolis residents and visitors. As part of their role, the Health Department is responsible for enforcing the state rules and regulations regarding various business establishments in the city to protect public health. The Health Department will help you determine what permits are required for your type of business.

Department of Public Works (DPW)

The Department of Public Works Recycling Division is the municipal contact for questions regarding trash collection throughout the City. Most commercial establishment must utilize private waste haulers for collection of solid waste. The City does offer commercial recycling. A list of City of Annapolis Licensed Refuse Collectors is on the website. The Department of Finance will activate a water account and the Department of Public Works will connect water or sewer to your business for a fee.

Tax Information

You must establish your necessary tax accounts with the Comptroller of Maryland. This should be done after you have applied for your federal tax or EIN. For more information, see page 40. Get easy access to obtain and/or enter a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) from the IRS. Most business owners need to register with the State of Maryland. Register your business or Doing Business As (d/b/a), and form the legal business entity with the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation. This helps prevent others from using your business name.

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