



# Doing Business

Step-by-Step Guide

[bloomingtonil.gov](http://bloomingtonil.gov) (309) 434-2226

WELCOME

*We're glad you are here!*

We are glad to hear you are opening or expanding your business in the City of Bloomington! Our staff is eager to assist and guide you through the process.

Within this step-by-step guide to doing business, you will be provided an overview of items that you'll need to check off your list prior to opening your business in Bloomington, Illinois!



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# Starting your business!

The resources below will help with starting your business and getting it off the ground! This may include picking a business name, finding your client base, finding the best employee, marketing for your business, and so much more!

## **Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO)**

The Illinois DCEO has a wealth of resources to help you start or grow your business. This includes Startup Resources, Small Business Resources, Licenses & Registrations, Taxes, Census and Market Data, Community Profiles, Sources for Financing, Workforce Development, Incentive Programs, and more.

Find this information at [illinois.gov](http://illinois.gov)

Contact Lauren Gibson, North Central Regional Economic Development Manager via email [lauren.gibson@illinois.gov](mailto:lauren.gibson@illinois.gov)

## **Small Business Administration (SBA)**

The United States Small Business Administration offers outstanding online education through its SBA Learning Center. This portal features an entire library of free online courses to assist businesses of all sizes. [sba.gov](http://sba.gov)

## **Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council (BN EDC)**

The BN EDC grows the local economy by assisting with local business expansion, recruiting new businesses and companies to the area, and encouraging the next wave of entrepreneurs to establish their business here. Contact the BN EDC before you start or expand your business to find out more on how they can assist you.

[www.bnbiz.org](http://www.bnbiz.org) (309) 452-8437

## **Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) of McLean County at IWU**

The SBDC of McLean County provides no-cost business counseling, educational events, and business research and planning and more!

Contact the SBDC today by calling (309) 556-3784 or via email at [sbdc@iwu.edu](mailto:sbdc@iwu.edu)

## **McLean County Chamber of Commerce**

This membership based organization serves over 900 businesses and organizations within the surrounding communities. Membership benefits include educational opportunities for marketing, professional development, advocacy, healthcare solutions, and much more. Small group 'solo'preneur sessions are also available.

Contact the Chamber today by calling (309) 829-3940 or via email at [chamber@mcleancochamber.org](mailto:chamber@mcleancochamber.org)

## Site Selection & Zoning

# *Location is everything!*

Whether you have already found a space or need site selection assistance, the Economic & Community Development Department at the City of Bloomington is here to help! The Economic Development Division works with local partner organizations and utilizes economic development tools to assist you with site selection. With access to property and parcel listings, as well as city infrastructure insight, we can help you navigate the process of selecting a property best suited for your needs. This assistance does not negate the need for a licensed realtor, broker, or legal council when purchasing or leasing a property/parcel.

Knowing how a property is zoned prior to purchase or lease can streamline your planning moving forward. Zoning classifications are local regulations that define how a property or parcel of land can be used. The Planning Division provides technical and professional assistance regarding city planning, zoning, annexation, historic preservation & rehabilitation, sign regulation, and more.

Click the convenient links below to view the City of Bloomington Zoning Maps & Municipal Code.

[Zoning Map](#)   [Zoning Code](#)   [City Code](#)



Contacts:  
Site Selection - Economic Development  
(309) 434-2295  
[econdev@cityblm.org](mailto:econdev@cityblm.org)

Planning & Zoning  
(309) 434-2448  
[planning@cityblm.org](mailto:planning@cityblm.org)

# Project Review Group

## *Let's get together*

Project Review Group (PRG) is your one-stop-shop from concept through construction, we are here to help. Representatives from Economic & Community Development, Public Works Engineering Division, Fire Department, and Parks & Recreation departments will review your project with you and work towards creating a realistic timeline for moving through the process. Use this meeting to ask any questions you may have about your property, structures, and the process of working with the city.

PRG is happy to meet with you at any stage of the process! Before you choose a location, when designing your building, etc. PRG meets each Wednesday at 1 P.M. at the Government Center in Downtown Bloomington. Appointments are required and can be facilitated in person or virtually. To request an appointment please submit a meeting request form linked here.

### Project Review Group Meeting Request Form

Contact:  
Planning Division  
(309) 434-2341  
[planning@cityblm.org](mailto:planning@cityblm.org)



## What to know

# Before you build

Did you know that you need to submit your property and building plan to the City of Bloomington for review and approval prior to starting work?

Your design professional will need to submit two (2) sets of sealed and signed drawings detailing the planned improvements to the site. Plans should detail all existing proposed buildings, plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and all other requirements based on size and construction type.

You will need to request the appropriate permits, schedule inspections, and receive a Certificate of Occupancy before you can open/operate your business.

### View our Guide to Building in Bloomington

Examples of the items you will need to check off your list can be seen below.

- Commercial & Residential Building Permits
- Commercial & Residential Plumbing Permits
- Change of Use/New Tenant Permit
- Fire Sprinkler Permit
- Sign Permit
- Health Department Approvals

#### Create Utility Accounts to Manage and Pay your Bills

- Energy provided by - Ameren, Corn Belt Energy, and Nicor Gas
- Water and wastewater provided by The City of Bloomington
- Contact the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District for information on fees and plan review.

*This list is not all encompassing. Permits required will be project dependent.*

## Helpful Tip!

Don't forget to budget for permitting fees. More information regarding permits, fees, and inspections can be found on [bloomingtonil.gov](http://bloomingtonil.gov)

Contact:  
Building Safety  
(309) 434-2226  
[comdev@cityblm.org](mailto:comdev@cityblm.org)

# Register

# *Business taxes & licensing*

Knowing where to register your business for all of the taxing bodies can be a daunting task. Let us help! Below you will find a list of State and Local tax obligations as well as local licensing considerations.

## **City of Bloomington Taxes**

[bloomingtonil.gov](http://bloomingtonil.gov)

- Food & Beverage
- Short Term Rentals
- Hotel/Motel
- Packaged Liquor
- Amusement
- Local Motor Fuel
- Sales



## **City of Bloomington Licensing**

Contact the City Clerk's office to determine if you need additional permits or licenses such as liquor or gaming licenses.

City Clerk Department: (309) 434 - 2509 ext. 6 or via email [cityclerk@cityblm.org](mailto:cityclerk@cityblm.org)

## **State of Illinois & Internal Revenue Service (IRS)**

Taxes paid to the State of Illinois and the IRS vary based on business type. For a complete list of taxes owed to the State of Illinois and the IRS visit the links below.

[illinois.gov](http://illinois.gov)

[IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov)

# Programs & Incentives

The Economic Development Department has produced this incentive guide for current and prospective businesses and developers interested in doing business within the City of Bloomington. From the BN EDC, to the State of Illinois and beyond, numerous programs are available!

**Programs managed by the City of Bloomington Economic & Community Development Department:**

Tax Increment Financing, Property Tax Abatement, Sales Tax Rebate, and Harriet Fuller Rust Facade Grant Program.

*Program details can be found at [bloomingtonil.gov/ed](http://bloomingtonil.gov/ed)*

**Program managed by the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council:**

Enterprise Zone - Properties / projects located in the local Enterprise Zone can enjoy three key benefits: Building materials sales tax exemption, Enterprise Zone investment tax credit, and exemption on the Illinois Natural Gas Tax.

*Program details can be found at [bnbiz.org](http://bnbiz.org)*

**Programs managed by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity:**

Advantage Illinois, Economic Development for a Growing Economy Tax Credit Program (EDGE), Illinois Small Business Jobs Creation Tax Credit, and more

*Program details can be found at [illinois.gov/DCEO](http://illinois.gov/DCEO)*



Congrats

*It's time to celebrate!*

Before you turn on your open sign for the very first time there are a few more steps you may want to consider.

- Obtain the necessary insurance
- Register as an employer with the Illinois Department of Employment Security
- Register your business with the State of Illinois Department of Revenue
- Attract and train the right employees

Hooray! Now it's time to celebrate the start of your new business! You are now a part of a community that supports small and large businesses alike. Thank you for choosing Bloomington as your new business hometown.

Keep in touch with the City of Bloomington's Economic Development team and take part in our Business Retention and Expansion Program. This program offers business assistance and resources to help businesses thrive.



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(309) 434-2295  
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