

SMALL BUSINESS CENTER

SERVING CHICAGO'S BUSINESS OWNERS AND ENTREPRENEURS

The Small Business Center is the business licensing division of BACP and the City's "one-stop-shop" for business licensing, public way use permitting, and connecting entrepreneurs to business resources. Depending on your business activity, you may need a City of Chicago business license to legally operate in the City of Chicago. The Small Business Center was designed to assist entrepreneurs and foster business growth. The center's Business Consultants help business owners navigate through government processes, troubleshoot City agency issues, facilitate City services, and connect to neighborhood resources.

SERVICES OFFERED THROUGH THE SMALL BUSINESS CENTER

- Apply for New Business Licenses In-Person or Online at chicagobusinessdirect.org
- Renew Business Licenses online at chicagobusinessdirect.org
- Apply for Public Way Use Permits (signs, canopies, etc.) and Sidewalk Café Permits online at ipi.cityofchicago.org
- Zoning Information
- City Inspection Information (Buildings, Health, etc.)
- Business Start-Up or Expansion Guidance
- Financial Resources/Incentive Programs
- Microlending Information

MEET WITH A BUSINESS CONSULTANT

- Business Consultants are here to assist with your business license application or other business needs.
- The Chicago Small Business Center is located at City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle Street, Room 800, Chicago, IL, 60602.
- In-person application and assistance intake hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.
- Walk-in at City Hall or request an appointment by calling 312-74-GOBIZ (744-6249).
- Additionally, most business licenses may be applied for, renewed, paid, and completed online at chicagobusinessdirect.org. Public Way Use Permit Application can be processed online at ipi.cityofchicago.org.





CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AFFAIRS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

The Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) ensures a fair and vibrant marketplace for businesses, employees & consumers. BACP licenses businesses and public vehicles, regulates business activity, protects consumers from fraud, enforces Chicago's labor laws, and provides education and access to resources for businesses.

BUSINESSES

A business license issued by BACP is required to conduct most business activity in Chicago. Through the Small Business Center, BACP issues business licenses and regulates industries such as retail, liquor, theaters, event venues, restaurants, food trucks, daycare centers, motor vehicle repair shops, and many more. The Small Business Center also issues common grants of privileges such as signs, canopies, awnings and sidewalk cafe permits.

CONSUMERS

BACP protects consumers from deception, fraud, and illegal business activity. BACP investigators, part of the Business Compliance Enforcement division, investigate consumer complaints, inspect businesses, and issue citations, where necessary, to ensure compliance with City laws. BACP promotes consumer awareness through education and information to help consumers protect themselves.

WORKERS

BACP's Office of Labor Standards is dedicated to promoting and enforcing Chicago's labor laws. The laws that the Office promotes and enforces include: Minimum Wage, Paid Sick Leave, Wage Theft, Fair Workweek and more. The office processes complaints, conducts investigations, mediates disputes, directs settlement proceedings, issues violations, and, if necessary, seeks licensure discipline against employers.

Chicago.gov/LaboorStandards.

PUBLIC VEHICLES

BACP oversees the licensing of Chicago's public chauffeurs and public vehicles, including taxicabs, liveries, charter sight-seeing buses, horse drawn carriages, ambulances, water taxis and tour boats. For more details, please visit Chicago.gov/PublicVehicles

SMALL BUSINESS ADVOCACY

The Small Business Advocacy division serves as a liaison to the small business community. It handles public engagement with the small business community, develops programs and policies, and streamlines business interactions with the City. The division also oversees the Neighborhood Business Development Centers grant program, which provides grants to chambers of commerce and business support organizations to assist in the development of small businesses in Chicago. Find the nearest or most appropriate Neighborhood Business Development Center: Chicago.gov/NBDC.

LOCAL LIQUOR CONTROL

Obtaining a liquor license is a comprehensive process that involves both community input and facilities inspections. Establishments must also undergo and pass inspections from several city departments, including the Departments of Health, Fire and Buildings. To learn more about the application process, please visit: Chicago.gov/BACP.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The Outreach & Education division supports the growth of Chicago's small businesses by hosting events and providing resources to help entrepreneurs. Programs include free business education webinars and annual Small Business Expos. The division also conducts outreach campaigns to share regulatory information for businesses and protect consumers from fraud. The division provides video production and marketing support to Chicago's business community and City departments, and oversees the Cable 25 television station, which nurtures Chicago's local independent producers and fosters film and television production. Visit: Chicago.gov/BusinessEducation.



City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle, Room 805, Chicago, IL 60602
Chicago.gov/BACP

