

# BUSINESS ASSISTANCE GUIDE



## GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES IN OAK PARK



All existing and proposed businesses in the City of Oak Park are required to have an annual Business License. Applicants interested in starting a business in the City must first complete a Business License application and submit it to the Department of Technical and Planning Services. A number of factors will be considered before the application is approved:

### PROCESS FOR OBTAINING A BUSINESS LICENSE

*Each applicant must file a business license application with the Department of Technical and Planning Services. The following factors are considered before the application is approved:*

- ▶ ***Is the use presently permitted?***  
IF YES, the application moves on to the next phase of review.  
IF NO, a special land use permit or rezoning may be necessary.  
These processes are reviewed by the Planning Commission.
- ▶ ***Does the proposal constitute a substantial change in use, new construction, or structural alteration?***  
IF YES, the applicant must file site plans for review.
- ▶ ***Does the proposal meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance?***  
IF NO, the applicant must request and obtain a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- ▶ ***Does the proposal involve interior or exterior construction?***  
IF YES, the applicant must obtain a building permit from the Building Division.

### Permitted Use

The Zoning District will be checked to determine if the proposed business is a *Permitted Use*. Some uses are *Special Land Uses* and require additional review and approval by the Planning Commission and City Council. In the case that the proposed business is not a *Permitted Use*, the department will contact the applicant.

## Variances

The Zoning Ordinance contains many regulations that businesses must meet before they can develop or operate. These regulations include minimum parking requirements, building setbacks, sign standards, etc. Some proposed businesses, due to unique circumstances, do not meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance provisions. In these cases a *variance* must be obtained by the Zoning Board of Appeals before consideration of a proposed business can proceed. A *variance* is an authorization granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals to utilize a parcel or structure in a way that would otherwise be in violation of the ordinance requirements. These are strict legal tests that the applicant must meet before the Zoning Board of Appeals can grant a variance. Applications for a variance are available at the Department of Technical & Planning Services.



## Interior or Exterior Construction

A building permit must be obtained for all new construction or interior and exterior construction, renovation or alteration to existing buildings. Prior to the issuance of a permit proposed work must first undergo a Building Plan Review. Applications for Building Permits are available at the Department of Technical & Planning Services.

## Site Plan Review

Site Plan Review is the process of reviewing documents and drawings for proposed developments. A Site Plan must illustrate the layout of land and structures and demonstrate conformance with Zoning Ordinance requirements. The Site Plan allows for examination of both the on-site and off-site impacts from the proposed development. These impacts include ingress/egress, interior/exterior traffic flow, storm drainage, grading of land, landscaping, lighting and parking.

**Proposed businesses are required to submit a Site Plan and undergo a review process under the following circumstances:**

- If the proposed business is a **substantial change in use** from the previous business at the same location. This determination is made by the Planning Division.
- If the proposed business is planning any **new exterior construction or structural alteration on buildings** at the business location.

The application for *Site Plan Review* outlines the necessary items that must be included on Site Plans as part of this process. All *Special Land Uses* are required to submit a Site Plan. In most cases, where a Site Plan is required, review and approval is performed by the Planning Commission and City Council. *Site Plan Review* applications are available at the Department of Technical & Planning Services.

### Key Review Dates:

The **City Council** meets on the **first and third Mondays** of each month.  
The **Planning Commission** meets on the **second Monday** of each month.  
The **ZBA** meets the **fourth Tuesday** of the month.

*After all the above factors have been considered, and all the Zoning Ordinance requirements have been satisfied, the business license application will be processed for approval.*



## Resources for Small Businesses

### Local/Regional Sites

#### **Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce**

1 Woodward Avenue, Suite 1700  
PO Box 33840  
Detroit, MI 48232-0840  
(313) 964-4000  
[www.detroitchamber.com](http://www.detroitchamber.com)

#### **Better Business Bureau, Southeast Michigan**

30555 Southfield Rd., Suite 2000  
Southfield, MI 48076  
(248) 644-9100  
[www.detroitbbb.org](http://www.detroitbbb.org)

#### **Oakland County Planning & Economic Development Services**

1200 N. Telegraph, Dept. 412  
Pontiac, MI 48341  
[www.co.oakland.mi.us/c\\_serv/ced/index.html](http://www.co.oakland.mi.us/c_serv/ced/index.html)

#### **Automation Alley Technology Cluster**

55 E. Long Lake Rd., Suite 108  
Troy, MI 48098  
Phone (800) 427-5100  
Fax (248) 335-7526  
[www.automationalley.com](http://www.automationalley.com)

#### **Oak Park Career Center**

22180 Parklawn  
Oak Park, MI 48237  
(248) 691-8437  
[www.oakparkcareercenter.org](http://www.oakparkcareercenter.org)

### Statewide Sites

#### **Michigan Department of Environmental Quality**

P.O. Box 30473  
Lansing, MI 48909-7973  
1(800) 662-9278  
[www.deq.state.mi.us](http://www.deq.state.mi.us)  
(To ensure environmental compliance.)

#### **Michigan Department of Consumer & Industry Services**

525 W. Ottawa  
P.O. Box 30004  
Lansing, MI 48909  
(517) 373-1820  
[www.cis.state.mi.us](http://www.cis.state.mi.us)  
(For State unemployment insurance registration.)

#### **Michigan Department of Treasury**

430 W. Allegan St.  
Lansing, MI 48922  
Phone (517) 373-8030  
Fax (517) 241-2233  
[www.treas.state.mi.us](http://www.treas.state.mi.us)  
(For information on Michigan Single Business tax, sales tax, and state income taxes.)

### National/Federal Sites

#### **Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)**

409 3rd Street, S.W., 6th Floor  
Washington D.C. 20024  
(800) 634-0245  
[www.score.org](http://www.score.org)

#### **U.S. Small Business Administration**

Patrick V. McNamara Building  
477 Michigan Avenue Suite 515  
Detroit, MI 48226  
(313) 226-6075  
[www.sbaonline.sba.gov](http://www.sbaonline.sba.gov)

#### **U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration**

111 N. Canal Street  
Suite 855  
Chicago, IL 60606-7204  
Phone (312) 353-7706  
Fax (312) 353-8575  
[www.doc.gov/eda/](http://www.doc.gov/eda/)

#### **U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics**

230 S. Dearborn Street  
Room 960  
Chicago, IL 60604  
(312) 353-1880  
[www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)

#### **Internal Revenue Service**

(800) 829-1040  
[www.irs.ustreas.gov](http://www.irs.ustreas.gov)