

“Guide to Doing Business in Wolfeboro”

Starting, Relocating or Expanding your Business in Wolfeboro

Congratulations! You are planning on starting, relocating or expanding a business in Wolfeboro. The Wolfeboro Area Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Wolfeboro welcome you. You have chosen a beautiful place to grow a business. This community offers a wealth of recreational and cultural experiences, excellent medical care, many historic sites and some of the most beautiful scenery in all New England.

To help you succeed in your business venture, the **Wolfeboro Area Chamber of Commerce** in conjunction with the **Town of Wolfeboro Planning and Development Office** provides this ***“Guide to Doing Business in Wolfeboro”***. In it you will find the various steps you will want to take in your business development process. These guidelines are suggestions only. In addition to the steps outlined, there may be more you wish or need to do.

Included in this guide is a listing of organizations and agencies you may wish to contact for assistance. We recommend you confer with the Planning and Development Office located in the Wolfeboro Town Hall at 84 South Main Street or call (603) 569-5970. The Planning and Development Office will provide you with free technical assistance and referrals along with permitting assistance. The town planner can also act as a liaison between you, your business, and various town departments.

We also suggest that you visit the Chamber of Commerce at 32 Central Avenue in the historic Railroad Depot. Our staff will be happy to introduce you to other members of the business community, and to help identify local sources for services and products you may require to open your business. In addition, the Chamber can acquaint you with the other agencies you may wish to consult. Please call (603) 569-2200 or visit: www.wolfeborochamber.com

Starting a new business, expanding or relocating an existing business can be a daunting task. Your Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee hopes this guide will be helpful as you begin your planning process.

Best Wishes,

Wolfeboro Area Chamber of Commerce
Wolfeboro Planning and Development Office

Overview: Start Up Basics

The following is a general overview of the steps you need to take if you are planning on starting, relocating or expanding your business in Wolfeboro.

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I. THE BUSINESS PLAN

One of the first steps in starting, relocating or expanding a business is the development of a comprehensive business plan. The business plan is a formal document explaining in some detail your plan to develop a successful business. It is very important for many reasons including:

- Preparing a business plan forces you to think through every aspect of your business. As you draft your plan, the strengths and weaknesses of your business ideas will become clearer. Adjustments and modifications can be made to help guarantee your success.
- It will be used by your lender or investor to determine their willingness to provide financing.
- It will assist the Town in understanding your business intention so as to provide complete and accurate permitting advice.
- It will serve as an assessment tool for you to measure your progress and success.

A failure to plan is a plan to fail.

Treat the business plan as a living document - one in which you nurture, learn from, modify with the changing times and that eventually brings life to your business.

In general, a good Business Plan will contain the following:

A. Introduction

1. Provide a detailed description of the business and its goals.
2. Discuss the ownership of the business and the legal structure. *Consult with an attorney and accountant to review the legal and financial benefits of your choice.*
 - a. Sole Proprietorship
 - b. Partnership – General or Limited
 - c. “C” Corporation
 - d. Subchapter “S” Corporation
 - e. Limited Liability Company (LLC) or Limited Liability Partnership (LLP)
3. List the skills and experience you bring to the business.
4. Discuss the advantages you and your business have over your competitors.

B. Marketing

1. Discuss the products/services offered.
2. Identify the customer demand for your product/service.
3. Identify your market, its size and locations; explain how your product/service will be advertised and marketed.
4. Explain the pricing strategy.

C. Financial Management

1. Explain your source and the amount of initial equity capital.
2. Develop a monthly operating budget for the first three years.
3. Develop a monthly cash flow for the first three years.
4. Provide projected income statements and balance sheets for a three-year period.
5. Discuss your break-even point.
6. Explain your personal balance sheet and method of compensation.
7. Discuss who will maintain your accounting records and how they will be kept.
8. Provide "what if" statements addressing alternative approaches to any problem that may develop.

C. Operations

1. Explain how the business will be managed on a day-to-day basis.
2. Discuss hiring and personnel procedures.
3. Discuss insurance, lease or rent agreements, and issues pertinent to your business.
4. Account for the equipment necessary to produce your products or services.
5. Account for production and delivery of products and services.

D. Concluding Statement

1. Summarize your business goals and objectives, and express your commitment to the success of your business.

Need help writing your business plan or need it reviewed?

There are a number of resources available that will provide free one-on-one assistance and a confidential review of your plan. Don't forgo consultation – a second, third or fourth set of eyes will only serve to improve and strengthen your plan. Resources available include:

- Wentworth Economic Development Corporation, Inc. (WEDCO), located at 7 Center Street (Citizens Bank Bldg. lower level), Wolfeboro. WEDCO is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) regional economic development corporation. It was founded for the sole purpose of promoting economic growth in the Eastern Lakes Region. Their primary purpose is to create jobs for area residents by assisting established or developing businesses by providing business development services and financing. To contact them call (603) 569-4216 or visit: www.wedco-nh.org
- NH Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) is a statewide network with multiple locations providing management and technical assistance to small business owners. It is an outreach program of the University of NH's Whittemore School of Business and Economics, and a partnership program with the U.S. Small Business Administration, State of NH Department of Resources and Economic Development, University System of NH, and the private sector.

- Visit: www.nhsbdc.org
- Or contact the SBDC Seacoast Office 18 South Main St., Suite 2A
Rochester, NH 03867 (603) 330-1929
- Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) is partially funded by the SBA and provides counseling services to small business owners. To contact them please visit:
 - www.score.org
 - www.scorelakesregion.org
- Contact the appropriate Trade Association related to your business. They provide a wealth of industry specific information and guidance is available through the trade associations.

Things to do during the Business Planning Stage

1. Register the business name with the NH Secretary of State:

If you are doing business under any name but your own, you are required to register with the Secretary of State. For information on how to register your business, contact the Secretary of State's office:

- Telephone number: 603-271-3244 (note that the phone is a voice mail system and you may not get through to a person).
- Website address: www.state.nh.us/sos/corporate/

If you are a domestic corporation (incorporated in New Hampshire): reserve your corporation name and register by selecting forms number 1, 11 and SRA. If you are a foreign corporation (incorporated in another state): reserve your corporation name and register by selecting forms number 1, 40 and SRA.

To protect your company's trade or service mark you must also register it with the Secretary of State. To register business trade or service names go to:

<http://www.sos.nh.gov/corporate/tradenameleader.htm>

2. License to operate the business:

Depending on the type of business as well as the location of the business you may need a license to operate your business. Check with the Town Planning and Development Office to learn about local requirements. The State also requires that some occupations and businesses be licensed. For information on licensed occupations, visit the State of New Hampshire Occupation Index. For food service businesses, contact the Bureau of Food Protection at 603-271-4673.

3. Obtain a Federal Tax Employer Identification Number (EIN):

Generally all businesses need an EIN. To obtain an EIN you will need to fill out Form SS-4. You can find the form online at www.irs.gov/smallbiz (click on Employer ID Numbers). You may apply for an EIN in a variety of ways, including online, phone or fax.

- To obtain the EIN by phone call 800-829-4933 from 7 am to 10 pm.
- To obtain the EIN by fax follow the instructions on the SS-4 Form.
- To obtain the EIN online - EIN Individual Request - Online Application (<https://sa1.www4.irs.gov/modiein/individual/index.jsp>)

4. Contact an insurance agent:

In addition to property and casualty, liability and business interruption insurance you may also need Workers Compensation insurance.

5. Contact the Department of Employment Security and Labor:

Employment Security:

- You must register with this Department to cover unemployment benefits.
- Telephone number: 603-228-4424
- Website address: <http://www.nhes.state.nh.us>
- *Look under Employers, then under Unemployment Compensation if you have further questions, call 603-229-4349

Department of Labor:

This Department covers two areas: Workers Compensation and Inspection.

Workers Compensation:

Although you do not have to register with this department, since your insurance carrier will give the state notice of new coverage, you should review the website to understand New Hampshire law.

- Telephone number: 603-271-3599
- Website address: <http://www.labor.state.nh.us/> (click on "Businesses" and "Workers compensation").

Inspection:

This area covers minimum wage/hourly, safety, boiler/elevator, and apprentice issues. If you are buying a building with an elevator, boiler, or pressure vessel, then you need to contact this office.

- Telephone number: 603-271-3170
- Website address: <http://www.labor.state.nh.us/> (click on "Business" and "Boiler" or other categories that apply to you).

Things to do after you have written your Business Plan

A. Meet with Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce to assess the market and determine:

1. How many similar businesses are in the area
2. The demographics of the area as they relate to your target market
3. Whether or not similar businesses have closed in the preceding five years and why they closed.

B. Spend time in local businesses during different seasons (don't assume the summer traffic is the norm).

C. Meet with the Town Planner to determine:

1. Fire Code Requirements for your type of business (be candid about your business plans, including expansion).
2. Change of Use requirements at your proposed location (you will have to go before the Zoning Board of Adjustment)
3. Required Electrical Inspections
4. Required Plumbing Inspections
5. Sewer and Water Regulations and Restrictions
6. ADA Compliance (have your proposed floor plan with you)
7. Whether you will have to go before the Planning Board
8. Required Health Inspections
9. Signage ordinances

C. Preparing to go before the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustments

1. Determine the deadlines for filing your proposals so you can have them reviewed in a timely manner (make sure you get a "drop-dead" date so you don't miss filing or hearing deadlines). See schedule for filing attached to the applicable applications.
2. At the hearing, have multiple copies of your proposals so you can provide each board member with a set of plans.
3. Make sure your plans include off-street parking arrangements if required
4. Explain how you will handle deliveries
5. Know which state laws apply to your type of business and have the appropriate RSA's and applications in your proposal

D. Once you have approvals

1. Stick to the plan the Town Planner, Planning Board and/or the ZBA approved (any changes you make now will require additional reviews and create costly delays)
2. Arrange for adequate insurance
3. Sign your lease or purchase and sale agreement

II. INSIDE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Planning & Development (P&D) is the Town Department which regulates land use, development and zoning for all commercial and residential property within the Town of Wolfeboro. The Department administers several types of permits and helps interpret the zoning ordinances for people planning to locate or expand a business in Wolfeboro.

FAQ's - Frequently Asked Questions

1. When do I need to contact P&D?

Now! A permit (Planning, Zoning, or Building) may be required when you make interior or exterior modifications to a building, change the use of a building or simply put up a sign. If you are just starting a business (including home-based businesses), moving into a new commercial space, or making any significant changes in the type of business you are running, you should check with P&D before you move forward. The P&D staff wants to help you avoid potential problems and wasted time.

2. I found a space for my business, but I'm not sure whether the zoning is appropriate.

You can find out by calling P&D with the location's address. You may need a permit if you are converting the use of a space (e.g., office to retail, retail to manufacturing, residential to office, etc.). It may not be important if you are changing the products or services (e.g., clothing to home products), but it is important if the type of activity is changing. Call P&D at 603-569-5970 to find out.

3. What if I am considering some changes to the exterior of the building?

Bring a copy of your building plans to P&D to determine if it is necessary to go before the Technical Review Committee or the Planning Board.

4. How long will it take to get a permit?

In some cases, P&D will determine that you do not need a permit. If you do need a permit, you may be able to get an "Administrative Approval," which can happen in several days, or you may have to go in front of the Technical Review Committee or Planning Board, which could take a few months. Whether its 3 hours, 3 days or 3 months, the sooner you approach P&D, the better you can plan to ensure you have the necessary permits before you begin operating!

5. How much does a permit cost?

Fees are based on the type of project. Call P&D at 603-569-5970 for current fees, including impact fees, specific to your project.

6. I'm not sure if my space is handicapped accessible.

The Americans with Disability Act (<http://www.ada.gov/>) requires certain building adaptations. Check with the Building Inspector as early as possible, to make sure your space complies.

7. What if I don't get approval for what I want to do?

You are able to appeal the decision, possibly get waivers, or approach the Planning Board about changing the zoning Ordinance. Ask Planning & Development for details.

8. Building Permits

The Planning and Development Department has a broad range of responsibilities including certain permitting and inspection. New buildings, additions, alterations, repairs, demolitions, changes in plumbing, mechanical and electrical systems will require a permit, followed by inspection of the construction.

9. When do I need to contact The Planning and Development Department regarding a permit?

Now, or certainly before the day you want to start your project! They can tell you if you need a building, plumbing or electrical permit. They will schedule inspections for building code, electrical, plumbing, etc.

10. Do I need to fill out an application for a permit?

Yes. You must complete the application for Permit. It is strongly recommended that you or your contractors contact Code Enforcement office of P&D during the project's planning stages, or at the same time that your project is being reviewed through the

zoning process. This will help you keep your project on your schedule and let you start on the day you planned.

11. How long does it take to get a permit?

There is very little waiting period. Depending on the size of the project, it could take from less than an hour to an entire week. Most permits are issued without delay. If you have planned far enough ahead, contacted the Code Enforcement office of P&D, provided plans, made phone contact, etc. prior to your project start date, it will not take long for you to obtain the necessary permits and get your project underway.

12. Do I need a separate permit for wiring, plumbing, building, etc.?

Yes. Each trade required to complete your project will be permitted separately, identifying the work being performed and by whom it is being done. Each trade person will secure his or her own permit(s), and each permit fee will be based on the cost of construction for that trade.

13. How much does a permit cost?

All permits have a minimum permit fee when the project costs for labor and material fall below a certain level. For projects over the minimum, the permit fee is calculated for every \$1000 of the construction cost.

14. Do I need to close out permits issued for my projects?

Yes. Obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy is required as part of the permit process. Double check with both the Planning and Development Department and the Code Enforcement Division to be sure that all your projects were closed out after the final inspection was held.

15. Can Code Enforcement office of P&D recommend a contractor to do the work?

No. The service that they do provide through the permit process ensures that all contractors working in Wolfeboro have the proper credentials and observe all state and local life safety codes in construction work.

16. Can I do my own plumbing or electrical work for my business?

No. Generally, plumbing and electrical licenses are required to perform work in Wolfeboro. All work done must comply with all state and local building codes and ordinances.

17. Do I need to provide Plans? If so, what is required to be shown on the plans, and can I draw them myself?

Yes. Code Enforcement office of P&D needs to review your plans. For smaller projects, the plans should show elevation and floor plans identifying all areas and materials. In addition, for larger projects you should add a foundation plan, additional floor plans, cut sections, etc. In some cases you may draw these plans yourself or have a professional do them for you; however, in other cases a professional will need to design plans and affix a valid registration stamp and registration number for the inspector to accept them. Please contact the Code Enforcement office of P&D to determine whether you could or should draw the plans yourself (603)569-5970.

18. How soon can I get an inspection for my project?

Inspections are required for all permits. The inspection schedule is driven by the construction demand, and is on a first-come, first-served basis. Inspectors request a minimum of 24 hour lead time to be able to be at the property for an inspection. From early spring to late fall, and around the holidays, the lead time is longer.

III. CHECKLIST

CHECKLIST		
TASK	DATE REQUIRED	DATE COMPLETED
Business Plan		
Meet with Financial Institution/WEDCO		
Meet with Executive Director, Wolfeboro Area Chamber of Commerce		
Town Process:		
Contact Planning & Development Office		
Technical Review Committee? *		
Planning Board Approval? *		
Zoning Review? *		
Building Permit Required?		
Register Business Name		
Obtain License to Operate (if needed)		
Obtain Employer Identification Number		
Contact Insurance Agent/Review Needs		

* If required see schedule for filing attached to the applicable application.

IX. RESOURCES

NH Secretary of State

Corporate Division
Department of State
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301-4989
(603) 271-3246

www.sos.nh.gov/corporate

NH Small Business Development Centers

Seacoast Regional Office

c/o Rochester Chamber of Commerce
18 South Main Street, Suite 2A
Rochester, NH 03867
(603) 330-1929

www.nhsbdc.org

SCORE

Lakes Region Branch

2 Airport Road
Gilford, NH 03249
(603) 524-3057

www.scorelakesregion.org

Town of Wolfeboro Planning & Development

Wolfeboro Town Hall
84 South Main Street
Wolfeboro, NH 03894
(603) 569-5970

www.wolfeboronh.us

WEDCO - Wentworth Economic Development Corporation, Inc.

Citizen's Bank Building
7 Center Street
PO Box 641
Wolfeboro, NH 03896
(603) 569-4216

www.wedco-nh.org

Wolfeboro Area Chamber of Commerce

32 Central Avenue
PO Box 547
Wolfeboro, NH 03894
(603) 569-2200

www.wolfeborochamber.com