

CITY OF COLUMBIA RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES

OFFICE OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES
803.545.3950
obo.columbiasc.gov

BUSINESS LICENSE DIVISION
803.545.3345
finance.columbiasc.gov/business-licensing

COLUMBIA WATER
803.545.3300
columbiascwater.net

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
803.734.2700
www.choosecolumbiasc.com

FIRE DEPARTMENT
803.545.3700
colafire.net

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
803.545.3222
planninganddevelopment.columbiasc.gov

BUILDING INSPECTIONS
803.545.3420
planninganddevelopment.columbiasc.gov/development-inspections

BUILDING REVIEW & PERMITTING
803.545.3483
planninganddevelopment.columbiasc.gov/commercial-permit-applications-checklists

ZONING
803.545.3333
planninganddevelopment.columbiasc.gov/zoning

BUSINESS LIAISON
Greg Williams
803.737.2030
Gregory.Williams@columbiasc.gov

The business liaison coordinates and communicates with local business owners, within the City of Columbia, and developers to help navigate the approval process for projects, as well as, resolve friction points or issues within the City.

OTHER GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

SOUTH CAROLINA SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE
803.737.0400

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
803.734.2170

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION
803.898.8161

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE/ABL SALES TAX & WITHHOLDING
844.898.8542

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR MINORITY AFFAIRS
803.333.9621

SOUTH CAROLINA BUSINESS ONE STOP
803.898.5690

Registering your business as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise:

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & SPECIAL PROGRAMS
803.737.6426

SOUTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF SMALL & MINORITY BUSINESS CONTRACTING & CERTIFICATION
803.734.5044

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR MINORITY AFFAIRS
803.898.5690

RESOURCE PARTNERS



RICHLAND COUNTY OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY
It is the Richland County Office of Small Business Opportunity's (OSBO) responsibility to provide a race- and gender-neutral procurement tool for the County to use as its efforts to ensure that all segments of its local business community have a reasonable and significant opportunity to participate in County contracts for construction, architectural & engineering services, professional services, non-professional services, and commodities.

803.576.1540
osbo@richlandcountysc.gov
www.richlandcountysc.gov/Government/Departments/OSBO/Home



SC SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS
SC SBDC offers free consulting, low-cost seminars and links to resources for existing and start-up businesses. SC SBDC consultants work with companies in all stages of development - from a person with an innovative product but no idea how to move forward to the owner of a company looking to capture new markets. SCSBDC offers one-on-one consulting, educational programs and training, and access to resources (regulations, grants, guidelines, laws, and best practices).

803.777.0749
scsbdc@sc.edu
www.scsbdc.com



RICHLAND LIBRARY
Richland Library helps to accelerate economic growth by supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses at every stage of their development. They offer free resources, such as: career coaching services for helpful information on resumes, job interviews, networking, and applications; one-on-one mentoring appointments with our entrepreneur-in-residence; and innovative equipment through our Library of Things to set up a home office, create a new product or market your company.

803.799.9084
contactref@richlandlibrary.com
www.richlandlibrary.com/i-am-small-business-owner



BENEDICT COLLEGE WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER (BCWBC)
The BCWBC serves as the first gender focused statewide entrepreneurial initiative for socially and economically disadvantaged small and minority-owned businesses throughout the state of South Carolina. While providing assistance to all businesses, their efforts primarily focus on women, particularly minority women that historically experience more social and economic disparities than their counterparts. BCWBC offers customized business one-on-one counseling, lender referrals and loan package preparation assistance, seminars and classes (web-based), review and feedback on written business plans, networking opportunities to find mutual support, access to resources and business referrals, certification assistance and review, and local and global business development.

803.705.4641
info@bcwbc.org
bcwbc.org



US SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION SOUTH CAROLINA DISTRICT OFFICE
SBA offers assistance to small business owners and entrepreneurs. It is the only cabinet-level federal agency fully dedicated to small business and provides counseling, capital, and contracting expertise as the nation's only go-to resource and voice for small businesses.

803.765.5377
SouthCarolinaDO@sba.gov
www.sba.gov/offices/district/sc/columbia

BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS IN THE CITY OF COLUMBIA



NORTH COLUMBIA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
2965 North Main Street
Columbia, SC 29201
803.900.2664
info@northcola.org
<https://nomacolumbia.com/>



CITY CENTER PARTNERSHIP, INC.
1201 Main Street, Suite 150
Columbia, SC 29201
803.233.0620
info@citycentercolumbia.sc
<https://mainstcolasc.com/>



CONGAREE VISTA GUILD
701 Gervais Street, Suite 150-118
Columbia, SC 29201
803.269.5946
abby@vistacolumbia.com
<https://www.vistacolumbia.com/guild>



DEVINE STREET ASSOCIATION
2909 Devine Street
Columbia, SC 29205
803.608.6161
dsafuture@gmail.com
<https://devinestreetcolumbiasc.com/>



FIVE POINTS ASSOCIATION
532 Congaree Avenue
Columbia, SC 29205
803.748.7373
info@fivepointscolumbia.com
<https://fivepointscolumbia.com/>



GREATER ROSEWOOD MERCHANT ASSOCIATION
2910 Rosewood Drive, Suite 5
Columbia, SC 29205
919.614.2080
rosewoodmerchants@gmail.com
www.rosewoodmerchants.org

NAVIGATING *through* REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

STARTING A BUSINESS IN THE CITY of COLUMBIA



DEAR COMMUNITY BUSINESS PARTNER,

The City of Columbia is eager to work with local entrepreneurs and businesses who are just beginning their journey or looking to expand within our city limits. We value all businesses and aim to ensure they receive the highest quality of services possible during all stages of business development. We are strategically aligned with professional organizations, public and private entities that provide value-added resources and services for the small business owner.

As we continue our commitment to our small business community, we encourage new and existing businesses to use this Navigating Through Regulatory Requirements brochure as a tool to navigate the City's regulatory process and departments. As we continue to streamline this process, we have hired a professional business liaison. This team member serves as an important resource as we coordinate and communicate with local business owners and developers to help them understand the approval process for projects, as well as, resolve friction points or issues with the City.

As Columbia's City Manager, I certainly understand the vital role small businesses play in our communities. Whether you are new to the area or a longtime resident, navigating the city services you need when starting or growing your business can be overwhelming. Be assured, the City of Columbia's staff is devoted to providing you with sound guidance and clear advice in ensuring this great city is rooted into making a big impact on the success of your business. As you use this brochure, feel free to contact the departments listed to handle your requests in a business friendly and timely manner.

We are delighted that you chose Columbia to start, grow, or expand your business!

Teresa Wilson,
City Manager



STEPS & TIPS *for* STARTING YOUR BUSINESS

STEP

1

DEVELOP BUSINESS PLAN/ MODEL, EXPLORE INCENTIVES, AND RESOURCES



HELPFUL TIP
Allow enough planning time for the review of plans and construction schedule.

STEP

2

SELECT BEST LOCATION/PROPERTY



HELPFUL TIP
Do not sign a lease or purchase before speaking with zoning.

STEP

3

CONTACT ZONING, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



HELPFUL TIP
Before arrival, visit Planning and Development website.

STEP

4

REVIEW BUILDING CODES, AND MEET W/ FIRE MARSHAL, BUILDING INSPECTION, UTILITY & ENGINEERING, DHEC, AND SCDOR



HELPFUL TIP
Ask for a courtesy inspection as far in advance as possible.

STEP

5

REVIEW STATE AND CITY BUSINESS REGULATIONS



HELPFUL TIP
Be sure to familiarize yourself with regulatory requirements to avoid undoing costly mistakes.

STEP

6

REGISTER YOUR BUSINESS WITH SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE



HELPFUL TIP
Research what business structure will be best for you

STEP

7

OBTAIN A FEDERAL EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER



HELPFUL TIP
Make sure you have the necessary insurance for your business.

STEP

8

OBTAIN SC SALES TAX NUMBER (IF APPLICABLE)

STEP

9

APPLY FOR A COLUMBIA BUSINESS LICENSE



HELPFUL TIP
Make reasonable financial projections for your first year in business before applying for a business license.

STEP

10 OPEN

CONSIDER JOINING BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS, THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU (BBB).

NOTE: A business license will be issued after signatures are completed by the Fire Marshal, Building Official, Utility & Engineering, and in some cases DHEC, and SCDOR.

OFFICE OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

MISSION: The Office of Business Opportunities (OBO) is committed to supporting initiatives that benefit small, minority, and women owned businesses located in, or that want to do business with, the City of Columbia. This is accomplished by providing creative financing and funding, technical assistance, and the City's utilization of local, minority, and women owned businesses to ensure that our funds contribute to the economic growth of all communities.

COMMERCIAL RETENTION & REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Provides financial assistance to start-up and existing businesses for expansion, creation, and retention of jobs, and assistance in the redevelopment of commercial corridors within the City of Columbia. This program aims to improve the appearance of businesses along the corridors throughout the city that are significantly deteriorated.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

Provides business development assistance and courses for start-ups and existing businesses looking to expand and grow on various topics including: marketing, use of social media, business plan development, finances, legal issues, and more.

CONTRACTOR & SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

Provides training and support for city initiatives designed to increase local contractor's capacity to compete for government contracts and other procurement opportunities. We are also responsible for the implementation of the City's Disparity Study Goals and Objectives. Programs include: Mentor Protégé; Local Business Enterprise; and Columbia Disadvantaged Business Enterprise. The City of Columbia currently has a 15% citywide DBE goal, determined by the City Manager, to ensure minority/ women owned businesses are being utilized by all city departments.

STAFF

Director
Ayesha Driggers
803.545.3955
Ayesha.Driggers@columbiasc.gov

Administrative Specialist
Shontay Cooper
803.545.3950
Shontay.Cooper@columbiasc.gov

Grants Coordinator
Tonya Porter-DeBerry
803.545.3953
Tonya.PorterDeBerry@columbiasc.gov

Commercial Loans
Bret Whiting
803.545.3259
Bret.Whiting@columbiasc.gov

Commercial Retention & Redevelopment Program
Carla Eichelberger
803-545-3381
Carla.Eichelberger@columbiasc.gov

Contractor & Supplier Diversity Programming
Cassandra Fletcher
803.545.4185
cassandra.fletcher@columbiasc.gov

Kalenna Ginyard
803.545.3960
Kalenna.Ginyard@columbiasc.gov

Latonya Germany
803.545.3049
Latonya.Germany@columbiasc.gov



We Are Columbia

CITY OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES
1401 Main Street, 4th floor
Columbia, SC 29201
803.545.3950
@CityofColumbia | obo.columbiasc.gov