

Overview

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to help prospective business owners with the mechanics of starting a business in Lexington, Virginia. Other recommended resources are:

- [Virginia Resource Guide for Small Businesses](#)
- [City of Lexington, Virginia Website \(Business page\)](#)

If after reviewing this guide, you need further assistance or cannot find the information you're looking for, feel free to contact the Main Street Lexington Staff (info@mainstreetlexington.com | 540.319.4181).

Out of Scope

This guide is not intended to help prospective business owners determine whether or not they have a viable business concept, conduct market research, or address operational questions about their business. These questions should be directed to organizations whose mission is to help entrepreneurs with business planning, such as the [Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center](#).

Legal/Administrative

Register with State Corporation Commission

Before you can start a business you must either register your entity with the [State Corporation Commission \(SCC\)](#) and/or register your business name. Use this link to:

- Register a Doing-Business-As (DBA) or fictitious name
- Make Application for an LLC or non-stock corporation
- Find out more about the reporting and regulatory requirements of the various forms of business organization (sole proprietorship, partnership, LLC or corporation)

Use the following links to read more about specific topics:

- [Annual Registration Fees](#)
- [Annual Reports](#)
- [Business Entity Names](#)
- [Fictitious Names](#)

- [Foreign Business Entities](#)
- [Registered Agents](#)
- [SCC eFile](#)
- [Virginia Nonstock Corporations](#)

Secure Business License

If your business resides in the City of Lexington, you must obtain a business license from the Lexington Commissioner of the Revenue's office, located at City Hall, 300 E. Washington Street, First Floor (540.462.3701). Their pamphlet, "[Opening a New Business in the City of Lexington](#)," briefly explains business licensing and tax requirements. You will need your Federal and State Tax ID number (see below), and a check for the filing fee.

Register for Federal and VA Tax ID

Before you start a business you must obtain a federal ***and*** state Tax ID number.

- Federal ID number (referred to as the Employer Identification Number [EIN]) – The application can be made online on the Internal Revenue Services' website. Follow this link to [apply for a Federal EIN](#).
- Virginia ID number – You can register online and obtain a Virginia Tax ID number, register with the Virginia Employment Commission, and find out about the collection and remittance of sales tax and other use taxes. Follow this link to connect to online services at the [Virginia Department of Taxation](#).

Register to Collect Sale Tax & Employee Withholding Tax

When you register with the State of Virginia for your Tax ID, you will answer questions about your business. If your business will be required to collect sales tax from customers and/or will hire employees, the application process will provide you with instructions on when to file and how to remit these taxes.

Register with Employment Agencies

The [Virginia Department of Business Assistance](#) provides help with employment, financing and general business advising. Its Business One Stop website offers a wide variety of information and resources to new and existing businesses.

Real Estate

Available Property

Main Street Lexington strives to maintain and provide helpful information about available properties to business owners. For information about available properties, consult the Main Street Lexington website or contact the staff at 540.319.4181.

Approvals

Before you commit to any property renovations, you should consult with the City's Planning Director to understand what types of permits/approval you will need. These may include a Site Plan Review and/or an Architectural Review Board (ARB) review (see below). Understanding these requirements up front will help you plan your renovation schedule and could help you save time and money as you prepare for your opening. The Planning Director's office is on the second floor at City Hall, 300 E. Main Street.

Acceptable Use vs. Conditional Use

If you have a specific business and location in mind, consult the City's Planning Director to determine whether, for the location in mind, your business will be considered "Acceptable Use" (also known as "by right" use). If a "Conditional Use" permit is needed, a recommendation from the City's Planning Commission and approval by City Council may be needed. The Planning Director will explain the process for requesting a Conditional Use permit.

Architectural Review Board (ARB)

If you want to make any changes to the exterior of a business site in Lexington, or intend to place signage on or in front of the building, you probably will need to receive approval from the ARB. For more information about ARB requirements, meeting schedule, fees, and other information, please visit the [ARB page](#) on the City's website:

Renovations

Before beginning renovations, including interior renovations, consult the Lexington Building Inspector, whose office is located in the Planning and Development office on the second floor at City Hall, 300 E. Washington Street. The Building Inspector can advise you on how to obtain building permits, arrange inspections, and secure a Certificate of Occupancy on completion of your renovations.

Business Loans

If you need a business loan, you can contact one of the local banks:

Bank Name	Phone
Bank of Botetourt	540-463-7224
BB&T	540-463-5743
Carter Bank and Trust	540-464-9654
City National Bank	540-464-9400
Cornerstone Bank	540-462-3888
SunTrust	540-463-5373
Wells Fargo Bank	540-463-2070
WoodForest National Bank	540-463-2390

Promoting Your Business

You may opt to promote your business through traditional print advertising, a website, social media, and/or radio. Following are options to consider:

Print Advertising

- [The News-Gazette](#) (weekly publication)
- [The Rockbridge Advocate](#) (monthly publication)

Radio

- [3WZ](#)
- [WREL](#)

Social Media

- Lexington GPS – a mobile app for [iPhone](#) and [Android](#) devices, sponsored by The News-Gazette



Quick Guide to Starting a Business in Lexington

- Facebook – if you create a Facebook page for your business, Main Street Lexington staff will help promote your business by “Sharing” your Facebook posts.

Main Street Lexington also can be a great resource to help promote your business, through a variety of promotional activities programmed throughout the year. For more information, contact the Main Street Lexington office.