

HOW TO START A BUSINESS IN MESQUITE

Step 1 - Conduct market research

Market research gives you the ability to gather information on customers and businesses already operating in your potential community. Think of these questions when determining your market:

- Demand: Is there a desire for your product or service?
- Market size: How many people would be interested in your offering?
- Economic indicators: What is the income range and employment rate?
- Location: Where do your customers live and where can your business reach?
- Market saturation: How many similar options are already available to consumers?
- Pricing: What do potential customers pay for these alternatives?

To answer many of these market research questions specific to Mesquite, visit [this](#) webpage.

Step 2 – Create a Business Plan

Your business plan is the foundation of your business and can be a guide for each stage of starting and managing your business. Picking a business plan format that is right for you is critical. Explore the two options below:

- Lean startup business plans are less common but still use a standard structure. They focus on summarizing only the most important points of the key elements of your plan. They can take as little as one hour to make and are typically only one page.
- Traditional business plans are more common, use a standard structure, and encourage you to go into detail in each section. They tend to require more work upfront and can be dozens of pages long.

Vendors and investors will most likely ask for a Business Plan, so this step is crucial.

For Examples of both types of business plans and more information visit [here](#).

Step 3 - Calculate your Startup Costs

Calculate the startup costs for your small business so you can request funding, attract investors, and estimate when you'll turn a profit. Preparing for every cost when starting a business is key to success. Calculating startup costs helps you:

- Conduct a break-even analysis
- Estimate profits
- Secure loans
- Attract investors
- Save money with tax deductions

Step 4 - Establish Business Credit

Poor credit history can be detrimental when applying for a small business loan. It can also lead to higher insurance and be a turnoff for potential partners and suppliers. Good personal credit is crucial because many small businesses have not built financial creditability, so it falls on to the owner to provide their credit score.

Step 5 - Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN)

Employer Identification Numbers are issued for the purpose of tax administration and are not intended for participation in any other activities (e.g., tax lien auction or sales, lotteries, etc.). Visit [this](#) webpage to see if your business is eligible and apply for an EIN online.

Step 6 - Find a location

View the [zoning map](#) and find a location you think best suits your business.

It is highly recommended that you schedule a Pre-application meeting for any new construction, including remodeling and additions. Schedule a meeting at [this](#) link.

It is highly recommended that the Certificate of Occupancy Application is completed by the tenant to ensure continuity of business / city permitting communications.

Use energov.cityofmesquite.com to submit applications online and schedule inspections.

Required inspections:

- Building inspection CO inspection
- Fire CO Inspection
- Backflow CO Inspection (dependent on type of business)
- Health CO inspection (dependent on type of business, such as food handling)

CO inspections are to be requested at the finalization of the remodel/interior finish-out.

Remodel/Interior finish-out trade permits (mechanical, electrical, and plumbing) must pass their final inspections prior to requesting the CO inspections.

For the Building Inspection Department, the building commercial remodel/interior finish- out permit final inspection and building inspection CO inspection will be requested at the same time.

Review the [Business Safety Checklist](#) to make sure your building is up to code.

More information about:

- [Remodel projects](#)
- [New Construction projects](#)
- Operating a business out of the home requires a Home Occupation Registration. The Home Occupation Registration packet is available online at this [link](#) which includes information on how to register and the restrictions for home occupations/businesses.

- Locating in Downtown Mesquite:
 - Contact babell@cityofmesquite.com / 972-216-6450 with questions / inquiries
 - Facade grant program - The City started the Downtown Mesquite Façade Improvement Program in 2019. It was created to encourage improvement of properties within the downtown area. The Facade Improvement Program is accepting applications from downtown businesses. Approved projects are eligible for a 50% reimbursement of the cost, with the maximum reimbursement of \$20,000. [Downtown Mesquite Facade Improvement Grant Policy and Application Form.](#)
 - Design services- The program also includes free design services. [Design Assistance Application Form.](#)
 - IEBC's (International Existing Building Code) implications for adaptive reuse of older properties. Review the code [here](#).

Step 7- Register with applicable agencies

File state documents and fees. In most cases, the total cost to register your business will be less than \$300, but fees vary depending on your business structure. The information you'll need typically includes:

- Business name
- Business location
- Ownership, management structure, or directors
- Registered agent information
- Number and value of shares (if you're a corporation)

Visit [here](#) to find the forms needed to register with the state based on your business structure.

Registering your business name through Dallas County - To file or record a business name (Assumed Name or Doing Business As) with the Dallas County Clerk's office, you can either go into the County Clerk's office, or follow the mail-in instructions below.

- The owner(s) must be present and;
- Provide a valid government issued ID;
- Complete the form and have it acknowledged by a deputy.

General Steps to Follow

- Decide on the name of your business.
- Search the County Assumed Names records for the availability of the name of the business [here](#).
- It is always best to search all variations of the business name.
Example: the name Dandz should be searched d and z, dandz, z&z, d&z.

Find the form at [this](#) link.

Walk In: Complete form; all owners must be present with valid government issued ID to have the form recorded.

- Mail In: Submit a notarized copy of the Assumed Name form along with a self-addressed stamped envelope. Please include a cashier's check or money order when submitting.

Step 8 – Apply for licenses and permits

Most small businesses need a combination of licenses and permits from both federal, state, and local agencies. The requirements and fees vary based on your business activities, location, and government rules.

You'll need to get a federal license or permit if your business activities are regulated by a federal agency. Check to see if any of your business activities are listed [here](#), and then check with the right federal agency to see how to apply. Including If you manufacture, wholesale, import, or sell alcoholic beverages at a retail location. Requirements and fees depend on your business activity and the agency issuing the license or permit. It's best to check with the issuing agency for details on the business license cost.

Information on the sale of alcohol can be found [here](#).

Food Sales

Prior to opening a food sales establishment, the restaurant operator must apply for a health permit by contracting the City of Mesquite health division at 972-216-8138. A sales establishment is defined as any restaurant, convenience store, grocery store, or retail operation that sells or conveys food products.

To open a Food Sales Establishment or remodel an existing facility:

- Purchase Health Permit
- Contact the Health Division to schedule a pre-opening inspection
- Expect routine inspections on a quarterly basis

Visit [here](#) for more information.

Step 9 - Open a business bank account

As soon as you start accepting or spending money as your business, you should open a business bank account. Common business accounts include a checking account, savings account, credit card account, and a merchant services account. Merchant services accounts allow you to accept credit and debit card transactions from your customers.

Business accounts often come with extra perks such as:

- Protection. Business banking offers limited personal liability protection by keeping your business funds separate from your personal funds. Merchant services also offer purchase protection for your customers and ensures that their personal information is secure.
- Professionalism. Customers will be able to pay you with credit cards and make checks out to your business instead of directly to you. Plus, you'll be able to authorize employees to handle day-to-day banking tasks on behalf of the business.
- Preparedness. Business banking usually comes with the option for a line of credit for the company. This can be used in the event of an emergency, or if your business needs new equipment.
- Purchasing power. Credit card accounts can help your business make large startup purchases and help establish a credit history for your business.

What you need to open a business account:

- Employer Identification Number (EIN) (or a Social Security number if you're a sole proprietorship)
- Your business's formation documents
- Ownership agreements
- Business license

Step 10 – Open and get involved with your community

Many businesses choose to have a soft opening and then a grand opening.

Donate, source your inputs locally, and/or sponsor an event. Getting involved can help boost your business within the community. Visit [this](#) webpage to find more ways to engage in the community.

Additional Resources

- Governor's [Small Business Handbook](#)
- Governor's [2022 Texas Business License and Permits Guide](#)
- Complimentary [business mentoring](#)
- [Kaufman County](#)
- [Dallas Metropolitan Small Business Development Center \(SBDC\)](#)
- [North Texas Small Business Development Center \(SBDC\)](#)
- [Texas Wide Open for Business](#)
- [Greater Dallas Hispanic Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Greater Dallas Workforce Solutions](#)