

Welcome to the City of Watervliet



Dear Friends,

Starting and operating a business is both challenging and rewarding. Small businesses provide the majority of new job opportunities in the United States. However, not everyone has the entrepreneurial initiative to develop an idea for a business into an active and thriving enterprise. Developing or expanding a business is under your leadership, and there are many services available in the City of Watervliet to assist you in this process.



This guide was created to provide a list of resources available to assist you in starting or expanding your business in the City of Watervliet. This should also serve as a general guideline of the process and requirements for establishing a business enterprise in the City of Watervliet.

Feel free to call on the many contacts and organizations that are listed here as resources.

Best wishes on the success of your business venture!

Sincerely,

Michael P. Manning
Mayor

The Business Plan

The first step towards creating your business starts with the “Business Plan”. This plan is an essential map that projects your next 3-to-5 years of business and outlines the course your company plans on following to grow your revenues.

The plan should include the following:

Executive Summary: A snapshot of your business plan overall and a description of your company profile and your goals.

Company Description: This should provide an overall description of what your company does and how you are different from other businesses that share the same market as you.

Market Analysis: Ensure that you research the industry you are going to be entering, the market and your competitors.

Organization & Management: All businesses follow some form of management structure. Detail the way your business will be organized and managed.

Service or Product Line: Describe what your company sells or what services your business will offer. How will this benefit your customers? What is the lifecycle of your product?

Marketing & Sales: How will you market your business? What is your sales strategy?

Funding Request: If you will receive outside funding to help your business, this information should be included in your plan.

Financial Projections: Analyze your market and set clear goals so you will be able to allocate your resources efficiently. Be sure to include Historical and Prospective financial data.

Appendix: Include resumes, leases, permits and any additional information that is pertinent to your business.

Register a Business

Once you have written your business plan and you have chosen a name you will need to register with Albany County and New York State.

Due to legal, liability and financial concerns you should consult with an attorney and a financial advisor for assistance on how best to proceed with this step.

How to File a DBA in Albany County: A “DBA” (shorthand for “doing business as”) is officially referred to as an “Assumed Business Name” in New York State law. Section 130 of the State's General Business Law sets out the requirements and conditions of DBAs.

Banks require a certified copy of your filed DBA before they will allow you to open a bank account for your new business.

To download a blank DBA form and for filing instructions please visit the Albany County Clerk's website at www.albanycounty.com/departments/clerk

New York State Department of State Division of Corporations, State Records and Uniform Commercial Code: The Division examines, files, and maintains numerous documents vital to business and state government including state and local laws, oaths of office, trademarks, certificates of incorporation, and Uniform Commercial Code Article 9 financing statements. The Division is also responsible for the authentication of public documents for use in other countries.

Their website may be found at www.dos.ny.gov/corps

Entrepreneur Training

There are a number of economic development organizations that offer training and educational courses for new and existing business owners. These courses vary in length but provide valuable information towards starting and running a business. The courses cover topics from planning, management, and marketing and help identify potential financial resources.

Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region: The Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region is a non-profit community development financial institution serving the Capital Region of New York State.

In conjunction with the College of St. Rose the group holds several eight-week training courses throughout the year which focus on business planning and management. These programs are designed to help start-up and expanding micro enterprise businesses.

Tuition is \$160 (subject to change) and includes class materials. The group also holds various workshops throughout the year on topics of interest to small businesses and a free legal clinic. For more information contact them at (518) 436-8586 or visit www.cdclf.org

Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce: The Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber's Entrepreneur Boot Camp is New York State's Entrepreneurial Assistance Program (EAP) – administered locally by the Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber and funded by the Empire State Development Corporation. The program is designed to provide business assistance to aspiring entrepreneurs, increase the formation of new businesses and strengthen the operations of businesses during the early stages of development.

This 12-week course educates entrepreneurs on the critical skills necessary for business growth and expansion. The classes blend classroom and individual training with lectures by prominent business experts, followed by question-and-answer sessions.

Guest lecturers cover topics including: branding, advertising, legal issues, presentation skills, accounting and more. Guidance for improving sales and attaining financing is also provided.

Northeast NY SCORE: SCORE, supported by the US Small Business Administration, offers free and confidential mentoring services to new and existing businesses and not-for-profit organizations. Services cover all phases of business operations, including financing, strategy, sales generation, and buy/sell endeavors

For more information please visit: www.northeastny.score.org

New York State Small Business Development Center: The New York State Small Business Development Center (New York SBDC) provides management and technical assistance to start-up and existing businesses across the state. The New York SBDC is administered by State University of New York and funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration, the State of New York, and host campuses.

The SBDC emphasizes counseling and training services to women, veterans, people with special needs, and minority clients. For more information please visit: www.nyssbdc.org

Finding a Location

One of the most important decisions towards the success of your business will be the location you choose to provide your services. It is extremely important that you consider the following tips before you settle on a business location.

Determine Your Needs: Explore the following factors including brand image, competition, local labor market, plans for future growth, proximity to suppliers, safety and zoning regulations.

Evaluate Your Finances: While determining what you are able to afford it is important to be aware of these financial considerations including hidden costs, taxes, minimum wage and government economic incentives including loans, grants etc.

Is the Area “Business Friendly”: Research and understand all local and state laws and regulations as they relate to your business. Be sure to check with the City of Watervliet, Albany County and New York State to help ensure that you are taking full advantage of any and all services that are offered.

Watervliet Local Development Corporation: The WLDC is a private not-for-profit corporation established for the purpose of stimulating economic development activities and encouraging business investment in the City of Watervliet.

Its primary objectives include revitalizing the City to increase employment opportunities, attract new business and encourage existing businesses to expand. The WLDC offers unique financing opportunities to business and property owners looking to construct, acquire, rehabilitate and improve buildings or sites in the City.

To learn more please visit: www.watervlietltdc.com

The City of Watervliet Planning Department: This department is responsible for all grant administration in the City including Economic Development, Small Business and Microenterprise grants to help start-up and existing businesses. The department can also provide assistance in relocating your business in the City. For more information please visit: www.watervliet.com

Available Commercial Space: The City of Watervliet has compiled a list of commercial space available throughout the City. To view this list please visit: www.watervliet.com

Commercial and Industrial Real Estate Brokers, Inc.: The CIREB is a professional trade association of realtors that maintains a commercial multiple listing service for the Capital Region and Tech Valley. For more information please visit www.cireb.com

Permits

Once you find your location you will need to review, understand and comply with the local development guidelines. The City of Watervliet's Planning and Building Departments will be able to assist you in this process. All business proposals must comply with the Building Code of NYS and Watervliet zoning, planning and signage ordinances. These are overseen by the Zoning and Planning Boards as appointed by the Mayor. Review by one, or both, of these boards may be necessary before a permit will be issued.

Building and Codes: All building permits must be filed with the Building Department (Room # 8 in City Hall) If all requirements are met, a permit will be issued. If the plan requires a zoning variance, the permit will be denied, and the applicant will be provided with a copy of the variance application and instructions on how to get on the agenda.

Zoning Board: All new businesses and development within the City must first obtain a zoning permit. This may include the requirement of first obtaining a variance, special use permit and/or site plan approvals.

For more information contact the Building Department at Watervliet City Hall 270-3800 ext. 105

Planning Board: Site plan approval by the Planning Board shall be required for all new land use activities. There are exceptions. A copy of Article XI: Site Plan Review is available at City Hall and online as part of the Planning Board application. This board also approves subdivision plans.

For more information contact the Building Department at Watervliet City Hall 270-3800 ext. 107

City Clerk: The Clerk's office issues special licenses:

Vendor Permits: Soliciting door to door, canvassing, distribution of advertising material or flyers requires a permit in the City of Watervliet. Applications are available in this office.

Café and Sidewalk Permits The City Clerk accepts applications and issues permits for outdoor cafes that offer outside dining service. The Clerk works with the Historic Resources Commission to insure that proper design furniture and façade standards are met, and work through the planning process to make sure safety, aesthetic and health issues are considered prior to permit approval. Applications are reviewed by various departments, including Development and Planning, City Engineering, Traffic Safety, and Fire Department.

Special Events Permits: The City permits outdoor events sponsored by restaurants and other specialty establishments, and fundraising activities for not-for-profit organizations. The City Clerk accepts applications and fees and disseminates the application to the various departments for approval. Pending approval by all departments involved, the City Clerk issues the permit and conveys any special guidelines or requirements to the organizers.

To contact the City Clerk visit: www.watervliet.com or call 518-270-3800.

Financing and Loans

Financing & Loan Programs: A number of economic development loan programs are available to assist businesses to grow and create jobs. The funding sources are designed to encourage investment that will expand the commercial tax base for the City of Watervliet. Businesses that are making investments such as purchasing property and equipment and creating new jobs are excellent candidates for the loan programs.

City of Watervliet Planning Department grants: The Planning Department administers Federal and State Planning and Economic Development grants to assist business owners in setting up and expanding their businesses in the City.

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To learn more please visit: www.watervlietldc.com

New York Business Development Corporation (NYBDC): NYBDC's goal is to assist, promote and, through the cooperative efforts of our lending partners, advance the business prosperity and economic welfare of the State of New York by providing loans to small businesses including start-up, early stage and mature businesses with a particular emphasis on minority and women owned businesses.

For more information please visit: www.nybdc.com

The Capital District Community Loan Fund, Inc. (CDCLF): A nonprofit financial institution with a mission to work in partnership with economically underserved people and communities. CDCLF provides loans, training and technical assistance to micro entrepreneurs, small businesses and nonprofit groups. For small businesses in Watervliet, services include: loans up to \$10,000 for start-up, and up to \$35,000 for expanding microenterprise businesses. For more information call (518) 436-8586, visit www.cdclf.org, or stop by 255 Orange Street, Albany, NY.

AI Tech Loan Fund: The AI Tech Loan Fund is a Technology Acceleration Loan Fund created to promote high-tech Industry. The funds generated from the repayment of the AI Tech Loan Fund must be used to create and retain jobs in Albany County. The Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce is the agent for the Albany County Business Development Corporation which administers the AI Tech Trust Fund. The current amount available for request is \$50,000 – \$500,000.

Technology Acceleration Fund (TAF): A subset of the AI Tech Loan Fund is designed for growing technology companies located in Albany County that have a high probability of creating new employment opportunities and can develop rapidly after receiving funding. TAF is ideal for companies that have between one and five employees and can double that in two or three years. They must demonstrate a need for financing, a clear purpose for funding and a plan for repayment. TAF loan amounts are typically in the \$150,000 to \$250,000 range.

New York State Energy and Development Authority (NYSERDA): Smart Loan Fund Interest rate reductions are available on loans from participating lenders for energy efficiency improvements and renewable technologies. For more information on all of NYSERDA Loan Funds go to www.nyserda.org or contact a local certified NYSERDA contractor at the Environmental Business Association of New York at (518) 432-6400 or go to www.eba-nys.org

New York State Small Business Development Center: The New York State Small Business Development Center (New York SBDC) provides management and technical assistance to start-up and existing businesses across the state. The New York SBDC is administered by State University of New York and funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration, the State of New York, and host campuses.

The SBDC emphasizes counseling and training services to women, veterans, people with special needs, and minority clients. For more information please visit: www.nyssbdc.org

Business Assistance

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To learn more please visit: www.watervlietltdc.com

Center for Economic Growth: CEG is a private, member supported economic and business development organization dedicated to developing and promoting efforts to attract high-tech innovative services to bolster local businesses. CEG assists local manufacturing and technology companies with effective business strategies, training and assistance through sponsored programs and technical consulting services.

CEG programs include: SMART Start, which unites emerging technology-related companies with investors and professional service providers; TVAN connects entrepreneurs with potential investors; and the Venture Bplan series, a monthly forum where start-up ventures are invited to present their business plans and financial needs before a panel of investors and a general audience. For more information, call (518) 465-8975 or visit www.ceg.org

The Community Loan Fund, Inc.: The Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region is a non-profit community development financial institution serving the Capital Region of New York State.

Incorporated in 1985, their mission is to promote sustainable community development efforts for economically underserved people and communities. We provide access to capital by pooling investments and donations from socially concerned individuals and organizations, and re-lending it to non-profit organizations for housing and community improvement, to micro enterprises for business development, and to individuals for home ownership and repair. We also offer training and technical assistance programs.

For more information call (518) 436-8586 or (518) 434-1730, visit their website at www.mycommunityloanfund.org or stop by 255 Orange Street in Albany.

Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce: The Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber represents 2,200 businesses and organizations of all types and sizes and from throughout the Capital Region that employ more than 110,000 area residents. The Chamber strives to be a catalyst for growth and prosperity for their members and the Capital Region by providing leadership, advocacy and resources.

For more information, call (518) 431-1400 or visit www.acchamber.org

Employees and Training

Capital Region Workforce Investment Board: The Workforce Investment Act created a local business-led Board of Directors called the Workforce Investment Board (WIB). The WIB's mandate is to conduct strategic planning, create policy, and provide oversight and accountability for adult and youth training programs funded through WIA.

The Capital Region WIB was formed to serve Albany, Schenectady, and Rensselaer counties and oversees job training programs in each of the counties. Services are delivered at 3 One Stop career centers for adult, dislocated worker, and youth.

For more information please visit their website: www.capreg.org

Capital District Women's Employment and Resource Center: WERC is a private, not-for-profit organization that works to advance women's success in the workplace by building their economic and personal independence.

Participants are trained in Career Readiness Services, Computer Literacy and Job Development. The Center has a full-time Employment and Training Coordinator on-site to assist participants in finding employment and employers in hiring qualified employees.

For more information please contact WERC at 518-462-7600 ext. 184 or visit their website: www.cdwerc.org