



HELPFUL INFORMATION for STARTING A BUSINESS IN BEDFORD

This publication is designed to provide information on a wide variety of resources available to new and existing businesses in the Town of Bedford. Information on the responsibilities and regulations governing business in Virginia is also included. We hope you find this resource helpful.

Step by Step Guide

Step 1: Circuit Court Clerk's Office

If the business will be operated under a name other than that listed on the business license application, the applicant may register his/her Trade or Fictitious Name with the Bedford County Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

Register the Trade or Fictitious Name – Information Required

1. The trade name
2. Name and address of the applicant
3. Physical address of the business operation
4. Type of business
5. The entity type (sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation)
6. Signature notarized or signed before Deputy Circuit Court Clerk

Submit the name registration form to the Circuit Court Clerk's Office with \$10.00 fee (\$12.00 for corporations). Payment can be made by cash, check or money order. Corporations must also submit an attested copy of the trade name registration form to the State Corporation Commission.

Step 2: Planning & Community Development Office

All individuals or organizations wishing to start a business in the Town of Bedford must contact the Office of Planning & Community Development. The following information is provided to help guide you through the process.

All businesses require a zoning permit and a business license. The type of zoning permit required will depend upon what type of business you're starting. If you're working from your home, you'll need a Home Occupation permit. If you're working in a commercial space, you'll need an Occupation permit.

Home Occupation Permit

A home occupation permit is required for all businesses locating in residential zoning areas. The applicant is required to sign a Home Occupation Permit certifying that he/she agrees to comply with all Town of Bedford home occupancy permit regulations as set forth by the [Bedford Town Code](#).

Occupation Permit

A zoning permit for occupancy is required for all businesses locating in commercial or industrial zoning areas. Depending on what kind of changes you're making to the existing structure to accommodate your business, you may have to obtain a building permit from the [County of Bedford](#).

Regardless of the type of zoning permit required, you will need to provide the following information:

1. Owner of property
2. Type of business
3. Use and intensity of business
4. Payment of all outstanding real estate taxes
5. Location
6. Name, addresses, telephone numbers and other contact information.

NOTE: If the applicant is *not* the property owner, a letter signed by the property owner allowing the operation of the business on the property must be provided at the time of application.

Depending on the type of business to be operated on the property (examples: professional office, beauty salon, machine shop, restaurant, etc.), other permits or licenses may be required by the Commonwealth, the County, or other agencies. Some types of business may require a building inspection. If you're unsure, please contact the [Bedford County Department of Economic Development](#).

All food-related businesses (service or manufacturing) must contact the [Health Department](#) and the [US Department of Agriculture](#) prior to the application for Occupation Permits to ensure Health and USDA requirements are met.

State law requires that individuals or organizations in the construction industry may be required to have a Class A, B or C contractor's license issued through the [Virginia Department of Professional & Occupational Regulation](#) depending upon the type of work performed.

Applicants for Home Occupation or Occupation Permits must apply in person at the Town of Bedford Office of Planning & Community Development. When in doubt, call prior to visiting the Office to ensure all application requirements can be met at that time. However, you can find the business license application on our website, print it and fill it out ahead of time. Get the [business license application](#) in .pdf format and save time.

Home Occupation Permits require a fee of **\$25.00**. Occupation Permits require a fee of **\$20.00 only if** the nature of the new business at your location is different from the nature of the prior business at that location. For example, if you're planning on opening a bakery in a building that used to be a

bakery, there is no fee. If you're opening a retail flower shop in a building that used to be a bakery, the fee would be assessed.

Business License

After getting a Home Occupation or Occupation permit, the next step is to get a business license from the Town of Bedford. That is also done in the Office of Planning and Community Development.

Information Required on a Business License Application:

1. Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) or Social Security Number
2. Sales Tax Account Number (if required)
3. Applicant name
4. Trade name
5. Mailing address
6. Physical address (location of the business)
7. Type of operation
8. Telephone numbers
9. Contact person

The [Bedford County Commissioner of the Revenue's Office](#) can assist applicants in obtaining a Federal EIN, completing the Name Registration Form and with obtaining a Virginia Sales Tax account number. In addition, the Commissioner's office has federal, state and local tax forms for individuals and businesses.

Once the business is registered and has a valid zoning permit, the business license can be issued. The application fee for a business license in the Town of Bedford is **\$30.00** regardless of type of business.

The Town of Bedford Collections Department accepts cash, checks or money orders for the payment of business license and zoning permit fees. Credit cards are **not** accepted at this time.

We expect that the total process (Circuit Court Clerk's Office, zoning permit, and business license) averages 45 – 60 minutes.

Additional Resources & Contact Information

For information on water and sewer connections and fees, please contact the [Bedford Regional Water Authority](#). For Electric connections, please contact the [Town of Bedford Utilities Department](#).

You may wish to register your new business with the [Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce](#). If your business will be located in Bedford's Centertown area, you may wish to contact or join [Bedford Main Street](#). The [Bedford County Department of Economic Development](#) has many resources and can help you get started here in Bedford. If your business is art-related, you may wish to contact the [Bedford Artisan Trail](#). Finally, especially for restaurants and service providers, you may wish to contact the [Bedford Welcome Center](#).

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Demographics At a Glance - Town of Bedford

Total Population (2010 US Census) 6,222
Median Age (2010 US Census) 40.0
Persons per square mile (2010 US Census) 921
Mean Travel Time to Work 18.7 minutes
Civilian Labor Force (2007 Economic Census) 3,434
(includes employees who work in the Town but live elsewhere)
Unemployment Rate (2007 Economic Census) 7.1%
Median Household Income (2007) \$34,647
factfinder2.census.gov
[Virginia Workforce Connection](#) (statistics)