The City of Orlando strives to promote a dynamic business ecosystem comprised of both entrepreneurial and enterprise firms to drive our local economy, creating jobs and opportunities for the entire region.”

– Mayor Buddy Dyer

cityoforlando.net/economic
Welcome to the City Beautiful!

Congratulations on your business endeavor and thank you for choosing our dynamic and growing City as the home for your business. Here, you will find a pro-active and business-friendly government, making Orlando one of the best and least expensive cities in the nation to launch and operate a business.

This guide is designed as a resource for small business owners, entrepreneurs and experienced executive teams and will provide an overview of what you need to know to start and operate a business in the City of Orlando. This guide also provides information on state and local incentives and identifies our local economic development partners. I hope you will find this comprehensive brochure full of useful contacts and information to make starting and operating a business in the City as convenient and easy as possible.

Thank you for your tremendous contribution to our community. Through your vision, innovation and hard work, you enhance our community and continue to diversify Orlando’s economy.

Sincerely,

Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer
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STEP 1: ZONING

- As you begin to identify an appropriate space within the City of Orlando for your new business to locate, it is critical to verify the zoning of the property. The City of Orlando’s Zoning Maps and Tables allow for multiple uses but not all uses are permitted in all zoning districts. To confirm the zoning of your property, please contact the Planning Division at 407.246.2269 and ask for the Planner on Call.

- In addition to a verbal zoning confirmation, you may apply for a Zoning Verification Letter. This letter is issued by the Planning Division and states the property address, zoning and whether a specific use is permitted. The application for a Zoning Verification Letter can be obtained at: cityoforlando.net/city-planning/application-forms.

STEP 2: CHANGE OF USE/OCCUPANCY

- The Florida Building Code and the Orlando City Code classify buildings and portions of buildings (tenant spaces) based on the use and occupancy. The use and occupancy of buildings and tenant spaces change as new owners and tenants move in and out of spaces. There are basic components required in all buildings and tenant spaces, some of which vary depending on the use and occupancy proposed. It is important to confirm the permitted use and occupancy of the space in which you intend to locate. This can help mitigate unforeseen costs to your business. For use and occupancy confirmation, please contact the Permitting Services Division at 407.246.2271.

STEP 3: RENOVATIONS

- Are you proposing to improve your building or space in any way? Adding partition walls, installing counters and moving electrical outlets are examples of improvements that require permits. All permits can be obtained from the Permitting Services Division located on the first floor of City Hall. For more information on permits, please visit cityoforlando.net/permits.
STEP 4: IMPACT FEES

- The City of Orlando collects transportation and sewer impact fees for commercial development. When a building or tenant space changes use and/or occupancy, it may incur additional impact fees. For a complete list of impact fees, please visit cityoforlando.net/permits/commercial.

STEP 5: SIGNAGE

- It is important to ensure the signage for your new business is code compliant. Before designing and purchasing any signage, you are encouraged to review the City of Orlando's sign brochure which includes a step-by-step guide to help you navigate and understand the sign code. A copy of the brochure can be obtained at cityoforlando.net/permits/commercial. If you have specific questions about your proposed signs, please contact the Planner on Call at 407.246.2269.

STEP 6: BUSINESS TAX RECEIPT (BTR)

- Before opening your doors, you will need to obtain a City of Orlando Business Tax Receipt (BTR), formerly known as an occupational license. Since 1975, the City of Orlando has issued licenses to those businesses, professions or occupations that have locations and branch offices within our City limits. The business tax receipt is proof of payment of the business tax and it is required before a business opens. For more information on business tax receipts, please contact the Business Tax Receipt Office of the Permitting Services Division at 407.246.2204.
The Mayor’s Business Assistance Team consists of City staff with expertise from various City departments and is available and prepared to provide support and answer any questions you have about launching and/or operating your business in the City of Orlando.

The Mayor’s Business Assistance Team typifies the City’s pro-business attitude and was created to ensure that businesses within our community have every opportunity to succeed. The cross-departmental Team consists of City staff with expertise from disciplines such as Transportation, Code Enforcement, Solid Waste and Public Works and fulfills a vital need by assisting the Business Development Division in resolving issues for business clients.

For more information, please contact the Mayor’s Business Assistance Team at 407.246.2222.
BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (BAP)
Offsets 50% of permit fees, impact fees and right-of-way infrastructure improvements for new and expanding businesses within City limits.

The Business Assistance Program is a matching grant program designed to encourage small businesses to locate, expand or redevelop in the City by providing matching funds to assist in off-setting development fees, including sewer and transportation impact fees and building permit fees. Maximum fee assistance is 50% of fees assessed against the project up to $20,000.

SMALL BUSINESS FAÇADE PROGRAM (SBFP)
Provides new and existing commercial property and business owners, in the City of Orlando, assistance with costs related to physical improvements in the City’s commercial corridors.

The Small Business Façade Program provides an interest free deferred loan for façade improvements to new and existing commercial property and business owners in the City of Orlando to provide assistance with costs related to design and façade improvement expenses such as painting, wall repair or cleaning, window repair or replacement, new or replacement signage, landscaping, lighting, streetscape and door repair or replacement. Businesses must be a small business as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Applicants must provide at least 50% of the project cost. The maximum award amount is $20,000.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT FEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NPAP)
Provides impact fee assistance to qualifying 501(c) 3 organizations providing social services to City of Orlando residents.

The Not-for-Profit Assistance Program provides eligible not-for-profit organizations impact fee assistance for construction projects. Impact fees are off-set at 50%; the applicant is responsible for the remaining 50% of these costs. Maximum award is $50,000.

TRANSPORTATION IMPACT FEE WAIVER (TIF)
Assists in new business development -- and subsequent job creation -- by reducing impact fees for small businesses locating or expanding in an existing space.

The Transportation Impact Fee Waiver (TIF) exempts small businesses from paying change-in-use transportation impact fees when locating or expanding in existing space. This reduces financial barriers for businesses seeking to expand or locate within the City and also encourages the development of vacant space, rather than new construction. In addition, exempting the fees allows the business to direct more of their funds to growing their business and creating jobs.

For additional information about these programs, please visit cityoforlando.net/business-development.
DOWNTOWN FAÇADE AND BUILDING STABILIZATION

The Downtown Façade & Building Stabilization Program provides grants valued between $5,000 and $40,000 for improvements to buildings made within the Downtown Orlando CRA.

MINORITY/WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MEBA)

The Minority/Women Entrepreneur Business Assistance Program offers assistance to retain existing and attract new minority-owned businesses to the Parramore neighborhood. Award amounts vary per client and include assistance for business retention/relocation expenses, purchase of capital equipment, marketing of business and services and business start-up expenses. Maximum award is $40,000.

For additional information about these programs, please visit cityoforlando.net/business-development.
ORLANDO ECONOMIC ENHANCEMENT DISTRICT (OEED)

The OEED is a Brownfield designation comprised of the contiguous areas of sites that have the perception of contamination. Incentives are available from the state of Florida for the redevelopment of OEED sites.

ORLANDO/ORANGE COUNTY ENTERPRISE ZONE (EZ)

The Orlando/Orange County Enterprise Zone is a state of Florida program that encourages the retention and expansion of businesses within the designated area by offering various tax credits and refunds. The program aims to stimulate the creation of new jobs and to enhance the social and economic well being of affected neighborhoods. The Enterprise Zone program is scheduled to sunset on December 31, 2015.

QUALIFIED TARGET INDUSTRY TAX REFUND PROGRAM (QTI)

Encourages quality job growth by providing a tax refund to organizations bringing new high wage, targeted industry sector jobs to Florida.

The Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program (QTI) is a tool available through the state of Florida that provides tax refunds for high-wage jobs created by targeted growth industries or headquarter operations with a wage of at least 115% above the state of Florida, Orange County or Orlando-Kissimmee MSA annual average wage. Tax refunds range from $3,000 - $10,500 per job. The City of Orlando provides a 20% match.

ROAD FUND

The Road Fund, an Enterprise Florida tool, offers up to $3 million in grants to alleviate transportation problems for the location or expansion of headquarter operations or manufacturing/recycling facilities. Recipients of Road Fund dollars must also be approved for QTI.

URBAN JOB TAX CREDIT PROGRAM (UJTCP)

The Urban Job Tax Credit Program is a state of Florida economic development program that is designed to encourage job creation in Florida’s urban areas. Eligible businesses must fall within specific Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes.

For additional information about these programs, including boundary maps for geographically-based incentives, please visit cityoforlando.net/business-development.
Black Business Investment Fund
301 East Pine Street, Suite 175
Orlando, Florida 32801
407.649.4780
bbif.com
The Black Business Investment Fund (BBIF) is a non-profit 501(c)4 CDFI certified lending institution that specializes in aiding minority business owners in building their management capacity and in accessing capital.

Hispanic Business Initiative Fund
3201 East Colonial Drive, Suite A20
Orlando, Florida 32803
407.649.4780
hbiforl.org
The Hispanic Business Initiative Fund (HBIF) is the leading Hispanic economic development, non-profit organization in Central Florida that specializes in providing bilingual assistance to Hispanic entrepreneurs trying to establish or expand their business in Central Florida.

National Entrepreneur Center
3201 East Colonial Drive, Suite A20
Orlando, Florida 32803
407.420.4848
nationalec.org
The National Entrepreneur Center is a unique public-private partnership dedicated to the development, growth and success of small businesses. Through a cooperative effort of a diverse group of business support organizations, the National Entrepreneur Center offers professional business assistance, quality educational programming and access to practical industry expertise.
The SCORE Association, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is dedicated to entrepreneurial education, and the formation growth and success of small businesses and its mission of providing face-to-face and email business consulting to help small businesses evaluate plans, stabilize, grow, innovate and succeed.

Small Business Development Center
3201 East Colonial Drive, Suite A20
Orlando, Florida 32803
407.420.4850
bus.ucf.edu/sbdc

The Small Business Development Center located in the National Entrepreneur Center provides business seminars, free one-on-one counseling for small business owners and a variety of services to assist local businesses.
Enterprise Florida, Orlando Headquarters
800 North Magnolia Avenue
Suite 1100
Orlando, Florida 32803
407.956.5600
eflorida.com

Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI) is a public-private partnership serving as Florida’s primary organization devoted to statewide economic development. EFI focuses on a wide-range of industry sectors including clean energy, life sciences, information technology, aviation/aerospace, homeland security/defense, financial/professional services and manufacturing.

Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission
301 East Pine Street
Suite 900
Orlando, Florida 32801
407.422.7159
orlandoedc.com

The Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission (EDC) is a not-for-profit public/private partnership that serves Orange, Seminole, Lake and Osceola counties and the City of Orlando. The EDC works to meet the needs of today’s industries and create a competitive economic climate where businesses can thrive. To meet this goal, the EDC provides key services and support, which range from relocation and expansion expertise to long-term planning with regional community partners. The EDC is also home to the Metro Orlando Film Commission, which markets the region as a top production location.
Orlando Main Street

Orlando Main Street is an economic development program specifically targeted to provide technical assistance, training and staff support to urban commercial districts in the City of Orlando. The districts seek to develop long-term strategies to increase the economic power and viability of their district and the businesses they serve.

Orlando Main Street advocates strengthening our commercial districts by enhancing their one-of-a-kind assets: distinctive architecture, a pedestrian-friendly environment, personal service, local ownership and a sense of community.

For more information, visit cityoforlando.net/mainstreet or contact the Main Street Coordinator at 407.246.3259.

UCF Business Incubator – Orlando

3218 East Colonial Drive, Suite G
Orlando, Florida 32803
321.281.8383
Incubator.ucf.edu

The UCF Business Incubator – Orlando opened in December, 2007 and is a partnership between the City of Orlando and the University of Central Florida to facilitate smarter, faster startup and growth of emerging companies so those companies will become financially successful, high growth companies in the community.

UCF Business Incubator – Orlando clients are provided an array of business development services and resources to help accelerate growth. The formal incubation process takes place through a series of strategic and tactical working sessions. Regular education and networking programs are also designed to address the shared needs identified among participants.

Clients graduate the program upon achieving a level of financial and corporate growth that enables them to become a viable second stage company.
CITY OF ORLANDO ............... 407.246.2121

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Main Line .................. 407.246.2821
Business Development Division .... 407.246.2821
City Planning Division ............ 407.246.2269
Code Enforcement ................ 407.246.2686
Downtown Development Board/ Community Redevelopment Agency (DDB/CRA) ............ 407.246.2555
Mayor's Business Assistance Team .... 407.246.2222
Permitting Services ............... 407.246.2271
PROMPT (Permitting & Code Enforcement) ........ 407.246.4444

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Main Line .......................... 407.246.2708

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Main Line .......................... 407.246.2266
Solid Waste Management ............ 407.246.2314

ORLANDO POLICE DEPARTMENT
Non-emergency Complaint Desk ........ 321.235.5300
Information Desk .................... 407.246.2470

ORLANDO FIRE DEPARTMENT
Non-emergency Information ........... 321.235.5200

ORLANDO UTILITIES COMMISSION SERVICE
Main Line .......................... 407.423.9018

ORANGE COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Main Line .......................... 407.836.5312
Health Department ................... 407.858.1400

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS
Minority and Woman Business Enterprise . 407.246.2623
Graffiti Report Hotline ............... 407.254.4723
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
RECENT PROGRAM SUCCESSES

Golf Channel  
I4 Kitchen Bath Outlet  
Integrity Flooring  
Jet Blue  
Mazor Robotics  
Mosaic Hair Studio  
Nona Blue  
PowerDMS  
Publix Distribution Center  
Oh Que Bueno

Orange Cycle  
Orlando City Soccer  
Orlando Immunology Center  
Siemens Wind Turbine Training Center  
Sushi Lola’s  
SWEAT  
TravelClick  
United States Tennis Association

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
City Hall, 6th Floor
400 S. Orange Ave.
P.O. Box 4990
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Fax 407.246.2848
cityoforlando.net/economic
Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer
Phone: 407.246.2221 Fax: 407.246.2842
E-mail: Buddy.Dyer@cityoforlando.net

District 1 Commissioner Jim Gray
Phone: 407.246.2001 Fax: 407.246.3010
E-mail Jim.Gray@cityoforlando.net

District 2 Commissioner Tony Ortiz
Phone: 407.246.2002 Fax: 407.246.3010
E-mail: Tony.Ortiz@cityoforlando.net

District 3 Commissioner Robert F. Stuart
Phone: 407.246.2003 Fax: 407.246.3010
E-mail: Robert.Stuart@cityoforlando.net

District 4 Commissioner Patty Sheehan
Phone: 407.246.2004 Fax: 407.246.3010
E-mail: Patty.Sheehan@cityoforlando.net

District 5 Commissioner Regina I. Hill
Phone: 407.246.2005 Fax: 407.246.3010
E-mail Regina.Hill@cityoforlando.net

District 6 Commissioner Samuel B. Ings
Phone: 407.246.2006 Fax: 407.246.3010
E-mail: Samuel.Ings@cityoforlando.net