

CONTACTS

COLEMAN A. YOUNG MUNICIPAL CENTER, 2 WOODWARD AVENUE

Buildings, Safety, Engineering and Environmental Department

BSEED Development Resource Center

Room 434 | (313) 224-2372 | drc@detroitmi.gov | detroitmi.gov/drc

BSEED Property Maintenance Division

Room 412 | (313) 628-2451

BSEED Business License Center

Room 402 | (313) 224-3179

Office of the Assessor

Room 804 | (313) 224-3011 | <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/office-chief-financial-officer/ocfo-divisions/office-assessor>

Treasury Revenue Collections

Room 105 | (313) 224-2389 | RevenueCollections@Detroitmi.gov

Department of Appeals & Hearings (DAH)

Room 1004 | (313) 224-0098 | <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/department-appeals-and-hearings>

DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health

3245 E. Jefferson

Room 100 | (313) 876-0135

KEY TERMS

Blight violation: violations given when an owner fails to maintain their property. If the issue is not corrected, a ticket is issued.

By Right vs. Conditional Use: Not all uses are allowed in all buildings/neighborhoods. Some uses are permitted "by right" in your zoning designation, and some uses (conditional) require special exemptions.

FOIA: Freedom of Information Act, is a federal law that grants the public access to information possessed by government agencies.

Historic Designation: A zoning designation in historic districts that has specific requirements.

Legal use: The legally permitted purpose of a property, as permitted by the City of Detroit.

Lein: Outstanding debt on property that can inhibit the transfer of the property.

Main Street Designation: A zoning designation that has specific requirements established by the state.

Personal Property Taxes: The State of Michigan requires business owners to pay taxes on their personal property. This is the tangible property that is used to make a profit (equipment, cash registers, shelves, etc.). The owed personal property tax follows the equipment, not the building.

Plan Review: The process of submitting building plans for approval (conditional land use, building permits etc.)

Variance: A variance is a request to deviate from current zoning requirements. If granted, it permits the owner to use the land in a manner not otherwise permitted by the zoning ordinance.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

5 phases to opening your business
in the City of Detroit



I'M CONSIDERING SIGNING A LEASE OR PURCHASING A BUILDING

Before you commit to a property you should confirm that your intended business is allowed on that plot of land and within the building as it is currently classified by the City of Detroit. This requires checking to see if your building or location is properly zoned for your planned business, and if the last legal use matches the intended use of your business. If the location zoning and legal use does not match your planning business, consider the time and money you would invest in changing the use and/or undergoing a zoning variance application before you proceed. Most importantly, know that the change is not guaranteed and there are many factors that can influence whether you are allowed to establish your business type on that land. Additionally, take some time to research the licensing requirements for your type of business with the State of Michigan and City of Detroit. The steps required and recommended to make it through this process are outlined by City department in the following chart.

DO YOU NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT?

Contact your District Business Liaison (DBL)

District 1: Tenecia Johnson
(313) 460-0775
tjohnson@degc.org

District 2: Ammie Woodruff
(313) 510-8261
awoodruff@degc.org

District 3: Md-Abdul Muhit
(313) 452-7704
mmuhit@degc.org

District 4: Martell Bivings
(313) 510-5288
mbivings@degc.org

District 5: Lynn Wiggins
(313) 452-1926
lwiggins@degc.org

District 6: Luz Meza
(313) 510-2488
lmeza@degc.org

District 7: Brianna Walker
(313) 515-6979
bwalker@degc.org

WAS THIS GUIDE HELPFUL?

We appreciate your feedback:
bit.ly/detroitopen4biz



Icon Key

- In-Person
- Call
- Mail
- Online
- Email
- Required
- Recommend
- Form
- Fee

	What					How	Who & Where	Form/Fee	
	✓					Conduct land use and zoning check to confirm 1) whether the proposed use is conditional or by right and 2) check for Historic District or Main Street designations.		BSEED Development Resource Center	
	✓					Check for "dangerous buildings" cases on property.		BSEED Property Maintenance Division	
	✓					Check for previous building violations with property maintenance.		BSEED Property Maintenance Division	
	✓					Contact the Business License Center to find out if your business type requires a Business License Certificate from the City of Detroit.		BSEED Business License Center	
		✓				Check classification of building.		OCFO Office of the Assessor	
		✓				Check how many parcels are part of your project.		OCFO Office of the Assessor	
			✓			Check for delinquent Personal Property Taxes.		OCFO Treasury Revenue Collections, DivDat Kiosk	
				✓		Conduct pre-purchase/lease inspection to check for previous issues (especially for an existing or former restaurant space).		DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health	
				✓		Check plan review and license requirements, even if you're not planning to build or renovate the space.		DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health	
					✓	Check for outstanding blight violations.		Department of Appeals & Hearings	

Other Recommended Steps

- Check for lein on property
- Ensure all personal tax returns are paid and filed
- Request information on outstanding fees
- File a FOIA request to the Fire Department and Fire Marshal division for past & outstanding violations or environmental information (this can be done through a private consultant and costs \$200-\$300) or go to Detroit Public Safety HQ (1301 3rd Ave) and ask for outstanding permit fees
- For restaurants: have a good idea what your menu will be

- and the equipment you need; make sure the space is the right size and there are enough gas and electric circuits for your project
- Consider conducting a baseline environmental assessment
- Communicate with the State liquor control if you will be requiring a liquor license
- Check for tax incentives & know when these incentives expire. Determine how this impacts your business plan
- Require the seller to get a Tax Clearance and provide to the buyer before purchasing