

## Continued Support

The support of your City staff won't end once your doors are open; we stand ready to assist you with all aspects of your business growth and development. So whether you are planning to expand, remodel, relocate or simply want assistance options for your next business venture, the City's Community Development Department staff can assist you with virtually all of your business development needs.

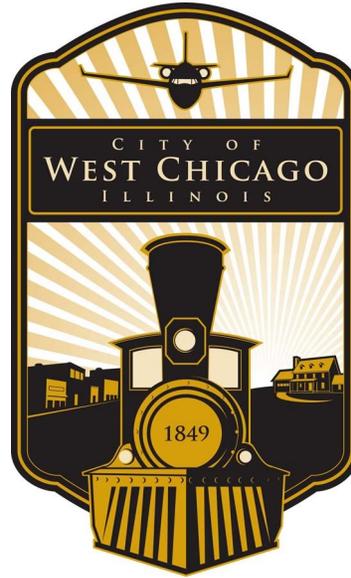
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Envision the future of your business  
in West Chicago.



Learn how the entrepreneurial spirit flourishes here. Visit our NEW website: [westchicagonow.org](http://westchicagonow.org) and see how West Chicago is the right fit for your business. From regional enterprises to small independents, family-owned retailers and/or restaurateurs or specialty niche businesses, **now is the time to start your next business venture here!**

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## WHY NOT START YOUR NEXT BUSINESS VENTURE HERE?



**West Chicago**

*Business works here.*

# Opening a business in West Chicago?

## Let's Get Started

The City of West Chicago is ready to assist you in every aspect of opening a new business in West Chicago. Through a team approach that consolidates virtually all services related to investing within one administrative department, West Chicago has developed a seamless process to take you from concept to ribbon cutting. This guide provides an overview of the 6 easy steps to opening your doors and the resources available to help you succeed.

## Step 1: Contact Us

Whether you are an experienced business operator or just beginning



to cultivate the seed of a great idea, we are committed to helping you succeed. City staff offers individualized services tailored to your unique needs. Need help creating a Business Plan? Financing? Working through the permit process? By tapping into a range of useful resources and business development partners, we can help you to consider your target customers, location requirements, financial needs and marketing strategies.

## Step 2: Site Location & Zoning

One of the most critical decisions is where to locate your new business. Based on your desired customer demographics, traffic patterns and delivery and pick up requirements, the right location can mean the difference between success and failure. We can help you identify an appropriate location and even work with you on lease negotiations with prospective landlords.

Knowing how a site is zoned is essential. Zoning classifications are the local laws that define how private property can be used. They govern the types of uses that are allowed in business corridors and specify parking and signage allowances and restrictions. The City will help you understand all applicable regulations before you begin seeking permits or licenses, sign a lease or install a sign.



## Step 3: Apply

We have streamlined the application process to save you time and unnecessary paperwork. Simply download, complete and submit the Application for Certificate of Occupancy at [westchicagonow.org](http://westchicagonow.org). Once your application has been approved, City staff will contact you to schedule an inspection (provided no permitting work is expected). Building and Fire District staff will inspect your space or building to ensure it meets code. Re-inspections may be needed until you are approved for occupancy. Please complete Step 6 before opening.

## Step 4: Permitting

The financial realities of opening a new business can be significant. That's why it is important to fully understand any requirements for ensuring a safe environment for you, your employees and your customers. We offer a free, preliminary needs assessment of prospective locations to all businesses entering or expanding in West Chicago. During this inspection, City staff will assess improvements that may be required. While not intended to be an official inspection of the work required, a review will be included of walkways and stairs, HVAC equipment, electrical, plumbing, windows, doors, all means of egress including aisles, stairs, exit doors ramps and accessibility, fire safety and public

health safety for food establishments.

A permit is required if you add or modify your building or structure, but please call us to help you to determine if your project requires a permit. To ensure the most timely and cost-effective process possible, we recommend that you:

- ◆ Hire a professional, state-licensed architect to prepare your plans.
- ◆ Make sure your professional contractor is registered and insured, and has the appropriate experience to fully manage your project.

Once your permit application—including your architectural drawings—are received, a Plans Examiner will review your drawings and provide a written response detailing any corrections that need to be addressed. Once all necessary corrections have been resubmitted and approved, we will issue your permit.

*For larger projects, a City representative is available to meet with your architect and contractor to review the project before you submit permit applications and plans.*

## Step 5: Inspections

Your permitted project may require a number of professional inspections, such as plumbing, electrical, fire suppression, etc. Be sure your contractor understands all inspections needed for your project and obtains approvals accordingly.

## Step 6: Certificate of Occupancy (CO)

Once you have passed all final inspections and paid the Business Registration and inspection fees, the City will provide a Certificate of Occupancy verifying that all requirements needed to open have been met.



*Business works here.*