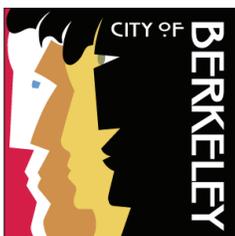
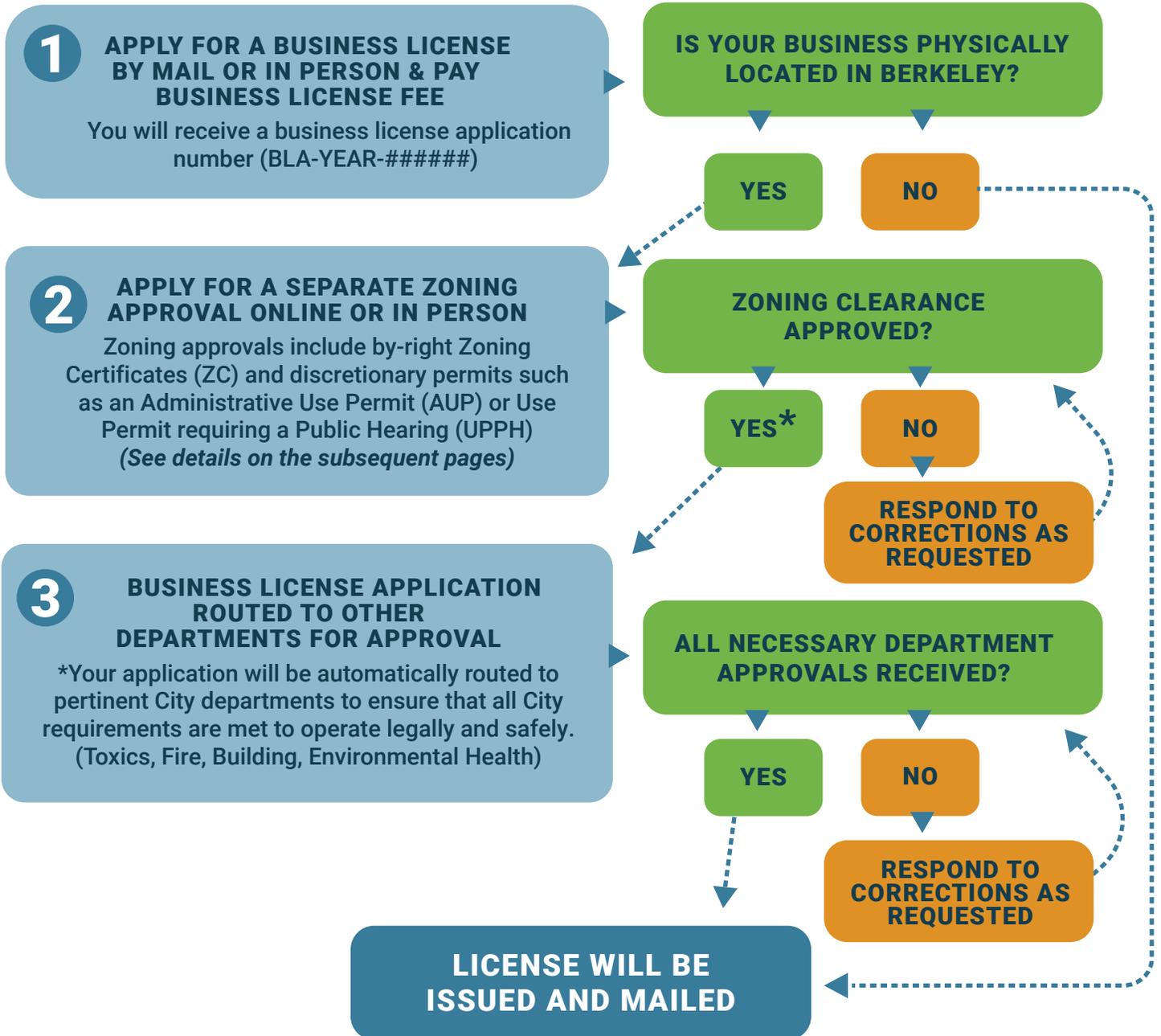


# GENERAL BUSINESS LICENSE INFORMATION

**STARTING A NEW BUSINESS? OPENING A NEW LOCATION?  
TAKING OVER AN EXISTING BUSINESS WITH A NEW FEIN/SSN?**



All persons or businesses conducting business within the City of Berkeley, directly or indirectly, are required to have a current business license and pay an annual business license tax.

The application process may take one or many steps, depending on the nature of your business and your business location.

Businesses should apply for a license no later than 30 days from the start of business in the City of Berkeley to avoid penalties and interest.

A business license is proof that a business license tax has been paid. It does not, by itself, authorize the conduct or continuance of any business, nor does it avoid the need to obtain required zoning, building, or health permits, or toxic or fire code inspections.

# BUSINESS LICENSE INFORMATION

**FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS BELOW TO COMPLETE YOUR BUSINESS LICENSE APPLICATION PROCESS IN THE CITY OF BERKELEY**

## 1 APPLY FOR A BUSINESS LICENSE AND MAKE PAYMENT

### COMPLETED WITH THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT

**APPLY FOR A BUSINESS LICENSE: FILL OUT AN APPLICATION, CALCULATE THE TOTAL TAX DUE, AND MAKE PAYMENT TO "CITY OF BERKELEY".**

Depending on your type of business and physical location, the application process takes a few days to several weeks to complete the review and approval process.



#### COSTS

Typically, the cost to apply for a license is as follows:

1. Registration fee: **\$25**
2. Minimum tax
  - For most businesses: **\$51**
  - For rental properties: **\$77**
  - For non-profits (include copy of IRS exemption letter): **\$26**
3. State-Mandated Fee: **\$4**



#### SUBMIT

You may return your application and payment by mail to:

Finance Department Revenue Collection  
1947 Center Street, 1st Floor  
Berkeley, CA 94704

Or in person at the:

[Customer Service Center](#)  
1947 Center Street, 1st Floor  
Monday–Thursday  
8:30AM–2:00PM

After paying your Business License Fee, you will receive a **Business License Application (BLA) number**.

Before a business license can be issued, the business must pay all associated taxes and fees and obtain all necessary approvals, permits, and licenses. After the business license is issued, all Berkeley businesses are responsible for the timely filing of the [annual business license renewal](#) and payment.

Please note that payment of the business license tax does not constitute zoning, building, fire, health, or toxic review and approval. If additional approvals, permits, or licenses are necessary, it is your responsibility to obtain these and pay all associated taxes or fees.



# HELPFUL TIPS WHEN APPLYING:

## 1. BUSINESS NAME

If the business name differs from the owner's legal name, an applicant must present either:

1. **A Fictitious Business Name (FBN) Statement:** [file here](#) for a FBN for a business located in Alameda County.
2. **LLC or Corporation documentation:** [Check with the California Secretary of State](#) to verify that the business status is active.

## 2. BUSINESS START DATE

This is the date the business began business activity in Berkeley. If an application is not filed and paid in full within 30 days of the business start date, penalties and interest apply.

## 3. BERKELEY LOCATION

This is the physical address in Berkeley. PO Boxes are not allowed. If the business is not physically located in Berkeley but conducts business within Berkeley, this field should be left blank. For example, out-of-town contractors who perform jobs within Berkeley should leave this blank.

## 4. MAILING ADDRESS

This address will be used for correspondence and all mailings; it is also where the physical business license will be mailed along with vehicle decals, if applicable.

## 5. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY

The detailed business description informs the City of the business activity the business will be conducting. This is critical in properly identifying the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code and to assign the corresponding tax code per Berkeley Municipal Code 9.04.

**IF YOUR BUSINESS IS PHYSICALLY LOCATED OUTSIDE BERKELEY AND COMPLIANT WITH ALL LICENSING REQUIREMENTS, YOU WILL RECEIVE A BUSINESS LICENSE.**

**IF YOUR BUSINESS IS PHYSICALLY LOCATED IN BERKELEY YOU MUST OBTAIN ZONING CLEARANCE, A SEPARATE APPROVAL GRANTED BY THE CITY'S PLANNING DEPARTMENT. IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED A ZONING APPROVAL, GO TO STEP TWO.**

SEE NEXT PAGE

## 2

# APPLY FOR A ZONING CLEARANCE

## COMPLETED WITH THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

### APPLY FOR ZONING CLEARANCE FOR YOUR BUSINESS LICENSE

Depending on how your business is categorized in the Zoning Ordinance, you will need one of three distinct approval types:

- (1) a Zoning Certificate (ZC),
- (2) an Administrative Use Permit (AUP), or
- (3) a Use Permit with a Public Hearing (UPPH).

If your business use is allowed by right, you can apply for a Zoning Certificate. Zoning Certificate types depend on the type of business you operate and thus could be either a ZC for a business license (ZCBL), which is the most common one needed for a Business License, or a Zoning Certificate for a Home Occupation (ZCHO), if you operate your business out of your residence.

### YOU CAN APPLY FOR A ZONING CERTIFICATE (ZC) ONLINE OR IN PERSON

#### APPLY ONLINE

##### FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW:

- Register for an account and log in (existing user log in only)
- Click on the Zoning tab
- Click on “Apply for a business-related zoning certificate”
- Accept the terms of the website and click on continue
- Select the radio button by the type of Zoning Certificate you are applying for and click on Continue Application
- Follow prompts and complete the application, including your BLA number from Step One

Your ZC application will be reviewed by land use staff who will reach out via email to request additional information if needed. You will receive an invoice via email if your business is allowed for the zoning district, and once payment is received, staff will approve your Zoning Certificate and the zoning review on your business license application.

#### APPLY IN PERSON

Permit Service Center  
1947 Center Street, 3rd Floor  
at the Zoning Counter

Monday–Thursday  
8:30AM–2:00PM

During your session you will fill out a ZC application, provide your BLA number from Step One, and pay a fee. Many ZCs can be approved over the counter, however, some may require additional review. If staff is able to approve your Zoning Certificate over the counter, they will also approve the zoning review on your business license application.



## **IF NOT APPROVED**

If you apply for a ZC but your business requires an AUP or UPPH, or the use is not allowed in the location, staff will deny the ZC application.

If an AUP or UPPH is required, staff will reach out via email with more information on next steps, and your business license application will be held until zoning is able to approve.

If the use is not allowed, staff will deny the ZC and the zoning review of the business license application, and contact you via email.

## **IF APPROVED**

If you have already received Zoning approval (a Zoning Certificate, Administrative Use Permit, or a Use Permit), please contact the assigned planner or [planning@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:planning@berkeleyca.gov) and provide your BLA number so that they can approve the business license application.

If you do not already have a BLA number, complete step one on the previous pages as described.

## **DISCRETIONARY APPROVALS**

AUPs and UPPHs are discretionary approvals based on criteria found in the Zoning Ordinance. If you require an AUP or UP, it must be approved prior to obtaining a business license.

If your business requires a discretionary approval, but you are moving into a space formerly occupied by a business undertaking the same use, there may already be an approved AUP or UPPH associated with that address. In that case, you can apply for a ZCBL to continue the existing legally established use.

If your business requires a new discretionary approval, please reach out to land use staff at [planning@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:planning@berkeleyca.gov) or visit the zoning counter for more information about the process:

### **Permit Service Center**

1947 Center Street, 3rd Floor

Monday – Thursday

8:30AM–2:30PM (last check in at 2PM)

## **3 ADDRESS OTHER CITY REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**

Once you have received zoning clearance (in the form of a ZC, AUP or UPPH), your business license application will be automatically routed to relevant City departments (e.g. Toxics, Fire, Building & Safety, Environmental Health) for review. Depending on the business type, their approval may take a few days to several weeks. No action is needed on your part if corrections are not needed. If corrections are needed, you will be contacted by the applicable department.

**ONCE FULL PAYMENT AND ALL RELEVANT DEPARTMENTS HAVE APPROVED, THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT WILL MAIL YOUR BUSINESS LICENSE.**



The Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) is an excellent source of information on business licenses, definitions of terms, business classifications, business license tax rates, and zoning regulations. Copies of the BMC are available at all Berkeley Public Library locations and may also be found [here](#).

**For more business license information, please visit [berkeleyca.gov/businesslicense](http://berkeleyca.gov/businesslicense).**

**For further assistance establishing a business in Berkeley, contact the [Office of Economic Development](#).**

# CONTACT INFORMATION FOR DOING BUSINESS IN BERKELEY

TOPIC	CITY RESOURCE AND LOCATION	HOURS	CONTACT INFORMATION
<b>General City Services &amp; Concerns, Business License Status</b>	311 Call Center Information Technology Department	Monday to Friday 8:00AM – 5:00PM	(510) 981-2489 <a href="mailto:customerservice@berkeleyca.gov">customerservice@berkeleyca.gov</a>
<b>Business License Applications, Payments &amp; Renewals</b>	Customer Service Center Finance Department 1947 Center Street, 1st Fl.	Monday to Thursday 8:30AM - 2:00PM	(510) 981-7200 <a href="mailto:buslic@berkeleyca.gov">buslic@berkeleyca.gov</a>
<b>Land Use/ Zoning Permit</b>	Zoning Counter, Permit Service Center Planning Department 1947 Center Street, 3rd Fl.	Monday to Thursday 8:30AM – 2:30PM (Final check-in 2:00PM) Closed every Friday	(510) 981-7410 <a href="mailto:planning@berkeleyca.gov">planning@berkeleyca.gov</a>
<b>Building and Safety Review</b>	Building and Safety Division, Planning Department	n/a	(510) 981-7440 <a href="mailto:planning@berkeleyca.gov">planning@berkeleyca.gov</a>
<b>Fire Prevention Review</b>	2100 MLK Jr Way, 2nd Fl.	Monday to Friday 8:00AM – 5:00PM	(510) 981-5585 <a href="mailto:BFDfireprevention@berkeleyca.gov">BFDfireprevention@berkeleyca.gov</a>
<b>Environmental Health Review (food, pool, tobacco, cannabis, tattoo permitting)</b>	Permits and Inspection Environmental Health 2180 Milvia Street, 2nd Fl.	Monday to Thursday 8:30AM – 12:00PM 1:00PM – 4:00PM  Closed every Friday (Appointments Only)	(510) 981-5310 <a href="mailto:envhealth@berkeleyca.gov">envhealth@berkeleyca.gov</a>
<b>Toxics Review</b>	Toxics Management Division	n/a	(510) 981-7460 <a href="mailto:toxics@berkeleyca.gov">toxics@berkeleyca.gov</a>
<b>Refuse Services</b>	Zero Waste Public Works 1201 Second Street	Monday to Friday 8:00AM – 5:00PM	(510) 981-7270 <a href="mailto:pwrecycle@berkeleyca.gov">pwrecycle@berkeleyca.gov</a>
<b>Business Creation or Expansion</b>	Office of Economic Development 2180 Milvia Street, 5th Fl.	make appointments by phone or email	(510) 981- 7530 <a href="mailto:OEDmailbox@berkeleyca.gov">OEDmailbox@berkeleyca.gov</a>

## OTHER GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

IF YOU NEED A...	RESOURCE AND LOCATION	HOURS	CONTACT INFORMATION
<b>Fictitious Business Name</b>	Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office 1106 Madison St. Room 136 Oakland, CA 94612	Monday to Friday 8:30AM – 4:30PM	(510) 272-6362 <a href="http://www.acgov.org">www.acgov.org</a>
<b>Business Entity Name (LLC, Corporation, Partnership, etc.)</b>	Secretary of State 1500 11th Street Sacramento, CA 95814	Monday to Friday 8:00AM to 5:00PM	(916) 657-5448 <a href="http://bizfileonline.sos.ca.gov">bizfileonline.sos.ca.gov</a>
<b>Federal Tax ID, Non-profit certification</b>	Internal Revenue Service 1301 Clay Street Oakland, CA 94612	Monday to Friday 8:30AM – 4:30PM	Individual: (800) 829-1040 Business: (800) 829-4933 <a href="http://www.irs.gov">www.irs.gov</a>
<b>License - Contractors, Auto Repair, etc.</b>	California State Department of Consumer Affairs 1625 North Market Blvd, Suite N Sacramento, CA 95834	Monday to Friday 8:00AM – 4:45PM	(800) 952-5210 <a href="http://www.dca.ca.gov">www.dca.ca.gov</a>
<b>Seller and Wholesale Permits</b>	State Board of Equalization 1515 Clay Street, Suite 303 Oakland, CA 94612	Monday to Friday 8:00AM – 5:00PM	(800) 400-7115 <a href="http://www.boe.ca.gov">www.boe.ca.gov</a>
<b>Alcohol License</b>	Alcoholic Beverage Control Department 1515 Clay Street, Suite 2208 Oakland, CA 94612	Monday to Friday 8:00AM – 5:00PM	(510) 622-4970 <a href="http://www.abc.ca.gov">www.abc.ca.gov</a> <a href="mailto:oak.direct@abc.ca.gov">oak.direct@abc.ca.gov</a>

# CHECKLIST

## GETTING A BUSINESS LICENSE IN THE CITY OF BERKELEY

- 1. Submit Business License Application by mail or in person to the Finance Department
- 2. Pay business license fee
- 3. Receive Business License Application number (BLA-YEAR-#####)
- 4. Gain Zoning Approval (Zoning Certificate or a discretionary zoning permit) online or in person from the Planning and Development Department
- 5. Address all corrections requested by City departments (Zoning, Toxics, Fire, Building & Safety, Environmental Health)
- 6. Submit missing documentation or make corrections, as requested
- 7. Receive a business license via US Mail
- 8. Submit business license renewal and pay corresponding taxes each calendar year prior to March 1 to avoid any penalties and interest\*



\*All business licenses need to be renewed annually