



BUSINESS START UP GUIDE



Prepared by:

Main **S**treet **W**auchula, **I**nc.

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P: 863.767.0330
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Dear Friends,

On behalf of the citizens of our community, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the City of Wauchula, located in the Heartland of Florida on the beautiful Peace River. Our City is a truly special community with traditions and values that we hold dear. They have enriched our past and guide us into the future. Whether Wauchula is your home or you are just visiting, we hope you will take advantage of all we have to offer; from events to shopping and dining as well as business opportunities, there is something for everyone.

Please know that our family of elected and appointed City officials and employees are dedicated to providing excellent City services and amenities, and are here to serve you. Should you have any concerns, you are invited to contact our City office or attend one of our City commission meetings which are held on the second Monday evening of every month.

Having lived in Wauchula for the majority of my life, I have a deep love for the City, its people, its history and its traditions as well as a genuine interest in its future. As Mayor, I personally invite you to discover or explore the many great things Wauchula has to offer.

All the best,

Keith Nadaskay, Mayor

THANK YOU MAIN STREET WAUCHULA BENEFACTORS



OPENING A BUSINESS CHECK LIST

- Small Business Development Center:** It is recommended that business owners meet with a representative from the SBDC to discuss ideas and plans. The SBDC provides **FREE** consultation to help business owners create a business and fully explore the business idea/concept including a budget. Outcomes of this plan may impact decisions made regarding business size, location, items sold, financial needs, etc. that should be determined prior to opening a business. A SBDC representative can be reached at (863) 784-7378.
- Checking the Zoning** of a property **prior to signing a lease or purchase** will help minimize any possible delays, costs or the inability to use the property due to improper zoning. Check to see if your use is a permitted or conditional use. A conditional use will require a public hearing and an additional fee. See section IV for more zoning details.
- Check Building Regulations:** Check to see if any interior renovations or building permits are needed for the building for your specific type of business to operate. See section V for more information.
- Sign your Lease or Purchase agreement:** Sign only after all research has been completed, and you are sure the business will be able to operate at that location.
- Register your Business:** The Florida Division of Corporations requires all business entities to be registered in order to do business in the state. It also requires registration of fictitious names and trademarks. Registering with the State of Florida is an easy process and may be done online. For information regarding the registration of your business or to file with the state, visit <http://sunbiz.org/startbus.html>.
- Obtain a State License (if necessary):** Please contact the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulations at 850-487-1395 to see if a state license is required for your business or visit: <http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/services.html>.
- Obtain a Permit from the Health Department:** Any business engaging in food service, child care, or health care services must obtain a permit from the State Health Department. For more information on how to obtain a permit, visit <http://www.myfloridaeh.com/community/>.
- Workers Compensation:** You may be required to provide Worker's Compensation coverage to your employees. For more information, please call the Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security at 850-413-1609 or visit: <http://www.myfloridacfo.com/wc/employer/index.html>
- Apply for a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN):** www.irs.gov
- Apply for a Sales Tax Certificate:** www.myflorida.com/dor
- Apply for Alcohol License (if applicable):** To obtain an application from the State of Florida, visit: <http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/abt/ABTServices.html> or call 850-487-1395. Additional local laws apply. Call 407-518-2140 for local information.
- Impact Fees:** Impact fees shall be due at time of permit issuance. See V-D for more details.
- Certificate of Occupancy:** Once building construction for your property has been completed, impact fees have been paid, and a final building inspection has been performed by the County Building Inspector, a Certificate of Occupancy will be issued for your building. This allows you to legally occupy the building. See V-E for more details.
- Business Tax Receipt:** Obtaining a Business Tax Receipt is the final step in opening your business to the public. Any person pursuing a trade, business or vocation must obtain a Business Tax Receipt from the City of Wauchula prior to conducting business. See section VI-A for more details.
- Signage:** When the time arrives for you to open your doors to the public, it's important to realize that there are certain rules regulating how you can advertise your business. See section VI-B for more details.

Section I: CHOOSING A LOCATION

Location can be considered one of the determining factors of any successful business. When looking for the property best suited for your business, consider the following factors:

ZONING

The City of Wauchula has zoning requirements in place which determine appropriate locations for different types of businesses. Before deciding upon a property, it's best to contact the City of Wauchula Planning & Zoning Department to determine if the zoning of that property is appropriate for your business. You can find Wauchula's zoning map online at http://www.cityofwauchula.com/commdev/wauchula_zoning.pdf.

Note: Checking the zoning of a property **prior** to signing a lease or purchase will help minimize any possible delays, costs or the inability to use the property due to improper zoning.

The following list provides brief descriptions of the various commercial zoning districts. Each zoning district in the City is accompanied by a list of specific uses that have been determined as suitable for that district. Please contact the Planning & Zoning Department at 863-773-9193 to ensure that the location you have chosen is suitable for your business.

A. Commercial Zoning Classifications Explained

P-1 (Professional/Neighborhood Commercial): The P-1 professional/neighborhood commercial district is intended primarily to meet the limited shopping and service needs of surrounding neighborhoods; and to provide a buffer zone between residential and commercial. The uses are generally for convenience, are generally retail commercial and neighborhood services, such as dry cleaning drop off, laundromat, general store, flower shop, and sometimes include gas stations. Considerations for allowing businesses in the neighborhoods should be: distance from other services, amount of foot traffic in the area, and the general compatibility of the use with the neighborhood.

C-1 (Downtown Commercial) and HC-1 (Historic Downtown Commercial): The purpose of this district is to provide a commercial district that is more pedestrian oriented than Highway Commercial; that uses parking lots and street parking rather than on-site parking for each use.

C-2 (Highway Commercial/Light Manufacturing): The purpose of this district is to provide areas for a variety of commercial and light industrial uses that generate a high volume of traffic, have large parking needs or must be located on a highway, including retail commercial uses, light industrial uses, highway business uses and other business establishments that are clean, quiet and free of hazardous or objectionable elements, such as noise, odor, dust, smoke or glare.

I (Industrial): It is the intent to permit all uses allowed in Commercial districts plus uses that involve outdoor storage and outdoor activity including, but not limited to lumber and building supplies, heating and air conditioning, sheet metal, welding, plumbing, electrical, laundry and dry cleaning, bakeries, bottling plants, printing, light manufacturing and processing, and similar uses.

B. Special Exceptions

A special exception use is a type of use that is essential to or would promote the public health, safety, or welfare in one or more districts, but that would impair the integrity and the character of the district in which it is located, or in adjoining districts, **unless restrictions or conditions** on location, size, extent and character of performance are imposed. Once granted, a special exception runs with the owner of the property. If ownership changes, the special exception must be applied for again. Applications for special exception uses are heard and decided upon by the City of Wauchula Planning & Zoning Board. The application form (*Zoning Application*) can be obtained from the Planning & Zoning Department or online at <http://cityofwauchula.com/commdev/formsindex.html>. Typical uses requiring a special exception are drinking establishments, restaurants with bars/lounges, flea markets, plant nurseries, clinics, medical laboratories and private schools.

C. Conditional Uses

Conditional Uses are those uses that have some special impact or uniqueness such that their effect on the surrounding environment cannot be accurately determined in advance of the use being proposed for a particular location. As a result, a conditional use is subject to the highest standard of review. Conditional uses require approval of the Planning & Zoning Board and the City Commission. Typical uses requiring a conditional use are shopping center/superstores (greater than 150,000 sq ft), auto salvage yards, junkyards, hospitals and airports.

D. Home-based Occupations

Home-based occupations are an accessory use in a residence consisting of an occupation carried on entirely within a dwelling with no more than two (2) non-family, non-resident employees, where no evidence of the home occupation is noticeable from off the premises; and where no traffic in excess of that which is customary in residential areas is generated. Typical home-based occupations include, but are not limited to, personal services furnished by a musician, artist, beautician, seamstress, notary public; home party product and catalog sales such as Avon, Tupperware and Princess House; insurance work; computer work; and professional services such as an architect, accountant or lawyer. For specific inquiries as to whether or not your business qualifies as a home-based occupation, contact the Planning & Zoning Department at (863) 773-9193. Home-based Occupations also require a Business Tax Receipt. Please see **Article VI: Opening Your Doors** for further information on Business Tax Receipts.

E. Sale of Alcoholic Beverages

The sale of alcoholic beverages is regulated by the State of Florida. Applications can be obtained online at <http://www.myfloridalicense.com>. You must get approval from the City of Wauchula Planning & Zoning Department that your location is zoned appropriately for the sale of alcoholic beverages before making an appointment with the State for permit issuance.

Section II: BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS

A. Building Permits

If you are planning new construction or alterations to an existing site, a Building Permit must be obtained prior to beginning work. In order to obtain a building permit, you must get a sign-off from the City Planning & Zoning Department on the proposed work. The application form (*Determination of Sign Off*) is available in the office or online at <http://cityofwauchula.com/commdev/formsindex.html>. Be prepared to submit a site plan, drawn to scale, depicting property lines and all existing and/or proposed improvements. Once approved, this sign-off is then taken to the Hardee County Building Department to be made a part of your building permit application. Hardee County issues all building permits on behalf of the City of Wauchula. All questions related to permit fees and building permit application requirements must be addressed to the Hardee County Building Department.

The City of Wauchula Planning & Zoning Department contact information is as follows:

126 S. 7th Avenue
Wauchula, FL 33873
(863) 773-9193
(863) 773-0436 (fax)

The Hardee County Building Department contact information is as follows:

401 W. Main Street
Wauchula, FL 33873
(863) 773-3236
(863) 767-0360 (fax)

B. Site Plan Review

In most cases, projects involving construction will require Site Development Plan Review to be performed prior to the issuance of a building permit. The Planning & Zoning Board shall review and approve Site Development Plans. For sites up to five (5) acres, the Development Director may review and approve Site Development Plans. Applications are available at the City of Wauchula Planning & Zoning Department and online at <http://cityofwauchula.com/commdev/formsindex.html>. Five (5) copies of the site plan, drawn to scale, will be required. If you have questions as to whether your project will require Site Development Plan Review or for more information, please contact the Planning & Zoning Department at 863-773-9193.

C. Certificate of Appropriateness

If your project involves exterior alteration, new construction, demolition or relocation affecting a historic property, or a property in the HC-1 zone, a Certificate of Appropriateness will be required before the project can commence. Ordinary repairs and maintenance which do not substantially change the design or character of the building will not require a certificate of appropriateness. All applications will be reviewed and decided upon by the Historic Preservation Board of the City of Wauchula. Application forms can be obtained from the Planning & Zoning Department and online at <http://cityofwauchula.com/commdev/formsindex.html>.

D. Impact Fees

Water and Sewer Tap and Impact Fees are required for new development or any intensification or change of use for existing property. These fees fund the capital improvements necessary to absorb increases in traffic and serve residents or users of these developments. The tap and impact fees for commercial development vary depending upon specific use, size and location. Please contact the City of Wauchula Customer Service Department at 863-773-3131 for more specific fee information.

E. Certificate of Occupancy

Once building construction for your property has been completed, impact fees have been paid, and a final building inspection has been performed, a Certificate of Occupancy will be issued for your building. This allows you to legally occupy the building. For questions regarding Certificates of Occupancy, please contact the Hardee County Building Department at 863-773-3236.

Section III: OPENING YOUR DOORS

A. Obtaining a Business Tax Receipt (F.K.A. Occupational License) for your Business

Obtaining a Business Tax Receipt is the final step you need to take in order to open your business to the public. Any person pursuing a trade, business or vocation, including home-based occupations must obtain a Business Tax Receipt from the City of Wauchula prior to conducting business. These licenses must be renewed annually by September 30th and a license tax must be paid. A new license must also be obtained if the business will be transferring location or ownership, or if a separate branch location of the same business is opened. The application process will actually assist you in ensuring that all requirements have been met for your location, including the appropriate zoning for your type of business. Items that may be requested include an electrical inspection (for locations that have not had utilities connected for a year or more), a fire inspection, copies of any required state licenses and/or Health Department Certificates. Please contact the City of Wauchula Customer Service Department at 863-773-3131 for more information and to get an application. The application form (*Business Tax Receipts Form*) can also be obtained online at <http://cityofwauchula.com/forms/index.html>.

B. Signage

The City of Wauchula encourages the use of signs which are compatible with their surroundings and appropriate to the type of activity to which they pertain. In order to accomplish this, certain regulations have been adopted in regards to on-site commercial signs. The City's sign regulations are available online at <http://www.cityofwauchula.com/commdev/LUDC/article4.pdf>. All signage must be permitted by the City of Wauchula Planning & Zoning Department, and in some cases, by the Hardee County Building Department too. Please contact the Planning & Zoning Department for further information at (863) 773-9193.

Section IV: IMPORTANT NUMBERS

UTILITY SERVICE:

Peace River Electric Cooperative
210 Metheny Road
Wauchula, Florida 33873
Phone: (800) 773-3737
www.precoco.org

Progress Energy
299 1st Avenue North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
Phone: (800) 700-8744
www.progress-energy.com

City of Wauchula
126 South 7th Avenue
Wauchula, Florida 33873
Phone: (863) 773-3131
www.cityofwauchula.com

TELEPHONE SERVICE:

CenturyLink Experience Center
311 US Highway 27 North
Sebring, Florida 33870
Phone: (863) 471-1023

Comcast
12641 Corporate Lakes Dr.
Fort Myers, FL 33913
Phone: (863) 773-4703

INTERNET PROVIDER:

CenturyLink Experience Center
311 US Highway 27 North
Sebring, Florida 33870
Phone: (863) 471-1023

Rapid Systems
1211 North Westshore Boulevard,
Suite 711
Tampa, Florida 33607
Phone: (813) 232-4887

Comcast
12641 Corporate Lakes Dr.
Fort Myers, FL 33913
Phone: (863) 773-4703

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:

Animal Control: (863) 773-2320
Animal Refuge: (863) 773-9531
Circuit Judge: (863) 773-6547
City of Bowling Green Administration: (863) 375-2255
City of Bowling Green Police Department: (863) 375-3549
City of Wauchula Administration: (863) 773-3535
City of Wauchula Customer Service: (863) 773-3131
City of Wauchula Municipal Airport: (863) 773-0963
City of Wauchula Police Department: (863) 773-3265
Clerk of Courts: (863) 773-4174
County Judge: (863) 773-3174
Cracker Trail Museum: (863) 735-0119
Division of Motor Vehicles: (863) 773-9144
Hardee County Agri Civic Center: (863) 773-6698
Hardee County Building Department: (863) 773-3236
Hardee County Commissioners' Office: (863) 773-6952
Hardee County Correctional Facility: (863) 767-4500

Hardee County Emergency Management: (863) 773-6373
Hardee County Fire/Rescue: (863) 773-4362
Hardee County Health Department: (863) 773-4161
Hardee County Landfill: (863) 773-5089
Hardee County Library: (863) 773-6438
Hardee County Manager: (863) 773-9430
Hardee County Property Appraiser: (863) 773-2196
Hardee County Recreation Complex: (863) 773-3872
Hardee County Sheriff's Office: (863) 773-0304
Hardee County Tax Collector: (863) 773-9144
Pioneer Park: (863) 735-0330
Superintendent of Schools: (863) 773-9058
Supervisor of Elections: (863) 773-6061
Tag Agency: (863) 773-6365
Town of Zolfo Springs Administration: (863) 735-0405
Town of Zolfo Springs Police Department: (863) 735-1213
Veteran's Services: (863) 773-9853

Economic Development Council: (863) 773-3030
Community Redevelopment Agency: (863) 767-0330
Main Street Wauchula: (863) 767-0330
Hardee County Chamber of Commerce: (863) 773-6967

Section V: INCENTIVES

Businesses may qualify for a number of incentives depending on nature of the business and the location of the business. Please contact each agency individually to determine qualifications and eligibility criteria.

A. Community Redevelopment Agency Grant Program

The purpose of the CRA Commercial Grant Program is to restore and improve commercial buildings within the Community Redevelopment Agency District in an effort to improve the area in ways that contribute to the physical, economic, social and aesthetic well-being of the City of Wauchula. Moreover, it is the intent of this program to encourage improvements to private properties that go well beyond what is required under the City of Wauchula's Land Development Regulations to enhance the form, function and design quality of this redevelopment district.

Grant categories are:

- Matching Exterior Grant – 50% reimbursement of project with a maximum of \$7,500
- Design Assistance Grant – 50% reimbursement of project with a maximum of \$3,000
- Matching Revitalization Grant – 50% reimbursement of project with a maximum of \$5,000
- Commercial Life Safety Compliance Grant – 50% reimbursement of project with a maximum of \$5,000

*No work for which a grant is sought should begin until authorized by the CRA and grant agreement has been signed.

For grant applications or questions:

- <http://www.cityofwauchula.com/commddev/CRA/CommercialGrant.pdf>
- 107 E. Main Street, Wauchula, FL 33873
- (863) 767-0330

B. Hardee County Chamber of Commerce Marketing Grant Program

The purpose of the Hardee County Chamber Marketing Grant Program grant is to encourage sustainability and economic growth to the Hardee County business community by providing reimbursable matching grants to Chamber members for general marketing and website design and/or enhancement.

Grant categories are:

- General Marketing – 50% reimbursement of advertising cost up to \$250.
- Website Design and/or Enhancement – 50% reimbursement of the costs for website design and/or enhancements up to \$500.

For grant applications or questions:

- 107 E. Main Street, Wauchula, FL 33873
- (863) 773-6967

C. Mosaic Agreement

The purpose of the Mosaic Agreement is to use Economic Development dollars as incentives to attract new business/industry. These funds are given on a case by case basis.

For grant applications or questions:

- 107 E. Main Street, Wauchula, FL 33873
- (863) 773-3030

D. Economic Development Authority Grant

The purpose of the EDA Grant is to promote economic development among businesses/municipalities. Incentives are given in the areas of job creation, infrastructure or economic development grants. These grants are awarded based on the review and pleasure of the EDA Board and what the board feels will produce the highest return for the County. The EDA has grant cycles that open for 30 days based on a schedule voted on by the board.

For grant applications or questions:

- 412 W. Orange Str., Rm 103, Wauchula, FL 33873
- (863) 773-9430

E. Enterprise Zone Tax Credits

Residents or businesses that reside within the Enterprise Zone of the County are eligible for sales tax credits (in the form of a reimbursement) for several categories: Employee tax credit, building materials, equipment tax credit.

For grant applications or questions:

- 107 E. Main Street, Wauchula, FL 33873
- (863) 773-3030

F. Main Street Wauchula Grant Programs

The purpose of the Main Street Wauchula Grant Program is to improve both the aesthetic and architectural qualities of the buildings in downtown Wauchula as well as assist new businesses with getting a successful start.

Grant categories are:

- Façade Grant – 50% reimbursement for the project with a maximum of \$2,500.
- Business Assistance Program – Funds 50% of utility deposit up to \$2,500. In addition, applicant can pay remaining deposit in installments over a 12 month period.

For grant applications or questions:

- www.mainstreetwauchula.com under the “Doing Business” link
- 107 E. Main Street, Wauchula, FL 33873
- (863) 767-0330