

START-A-BUSINESS GUIDE: WOOD COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

WELCOME TO WOOD COUNTY

Wood County is more than a location—it's a community where businesses grow, employees thrive, and opportunities are endless. Whether you're launching a startup, expanding an existing business, or relocating, our guide will help you navigate every step of starting a business here.

1. REFINE YOUR BUSINESS IDEA

- ☐ Define your product or service and your target market.
- ☐ Conduct market research to identify demand and competition.
- ☐ Decide on your business model: physical location, online, home-based, or hybrid.

2. WRITE A BUSINESS PLAN

- ☐ Outline your goals, strategies, and financial projections.
- ☐ Include marketing, operations, and workforce plans.
- ☐ Resources: [WV Small Business Development Center](https://wvsbdc.com/) (SBDC) (<https://wvsbdc.com/>)

3. CHOOSE A LEGAL STRUCTURE

- ☐ Options: Sole Proprietorship, LLC, Corporation, Partnership.
- ☐ Consider liability protection, tax benefits, and administrative requirements.
- ☐ Designate a registered agent for LLCs or corporations.

5. NAME YOUR BUSINESS

- ☐ Select a unique business name and verify availability via the [WV Secretary of State](http://sos.wv.gov) (sos.wv.gov).
- ☐ Register a DBA ("Doing Business As") if needed.

6. REGISTER YOUR BUSINESS

- ☐ Create an account on the [WV One Stop Business Portal](http://business4.wv.gov) (business4.wv.gov)
- ☐ Register with the [WV Secretary of State](http://sos.wv.gov) (if applicable). (sos.wv.gov)
- ☐ Obtain a Business Registration Certificate from the [WV State Tax Department](http://tax.wv.gov/business/businessregistration). (tax.wv.gov/business/businessregistration)

6. OBTAIN AN EIN (EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER)

- ☐ Apply via the [IRS](https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/get-an-employer-identification-number). (https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/get-an-employer-identification-number)
- ☐ Required for taxes, hiring, and opening a business bank account.

7. CHOOSE A LOCATION & COMPLY WITH LOCAL REGULATIONS

- ☐ Choose a location for your business or make space in your home to run it
For available Wood County, West Virginia properties for sale or for lease, please visit: www.woodcountypropertydatabase.com
- ☐ Schedule a courtesy walk through (if buying or leasing a property)
Before buying or signing a lease on a property you're interested in, please consider scheduling a courtesy code walk through to ensure you're educated about what improvements must be made to the building to be compliant with code and to receive a certificate of occupancy.

City of Parkersburg

City Code Office Fire Chief - Jason Matthews
304-424-8594 304-424-8470
jason.matthews@parkersburgwv.gov

City of Vienna Code & Inspection department at (304) 295-5070, Ext. 348.

- ☐ Get appropriate business insurance

8. LICENSES, PERMITS, & COMPLIANCE

- ☐ Identify necessary local, state, and federal licenses.
- ☐ Verify zoning and building requirements with [Wood County Building & Zoning Office](https://woodcountywv.com/county-offices/building-permits/) (<https://woodcountywv.com/county-offices/building-permits/>)

Wood County does not have zoning regulation in county unincorporated districts.

Wood County, West Virginia

Levi Brady, Building Permit/Compliance Officer

1 Court Square, Suite 204

Parkersburg, WV 26101

304-424-1988

304-424-0194 fax

lbrady@woodcountywv.com

Vienna, West Virginia

For zoning requirements, please call the building code & inspection department at (304) 295-5070, Ext. 348.

Williamstown, West Virginia

For zoning requirements, please call the City of Williamstown at (304) 375-7761

Parkersburg, West Virginia

Anyone who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or modify any electrical, gas, mechanical, or plumbing system, is required by law to obtain a building permit before the work has begun. (https://parkersburgwv.gov/departments/building_code_enforcement/building_permits.php)

Apply Online! You can now submit an online application for your building permit as the first step in your permit process. (<https://parkersburgwv.rja.revize.com/forms/6109>)

A zoning permit may be required before work can proceed. Contact Claya Rake, City Planner at planning@parkersburgwv.gov or (304) 424-8558

[Parkersburg, West Virginia](#) –

A business license application can be downloaded here: <chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://cms2.revize.com/revize/parkersburg/Document%20Center/Department/Finance/Business%20License%20Application%20.pdf?t=202409191438050&t=202409191438050>

- ☐ Set up insurance (e.g., workers' compensation for employees).

- ☐ Obtain any required inspections or occupancy permits.

All commercial buildings and apartment buildings consisting of 3 units or more must also submit plans to the WV state fire marshal's office for approval (304) 558-2191

Wood County, West Virginia

woodcountywv.com/files/docs/county-offices/building-permits/bpform.pdf

Parkersburg, West Virginia

A business license application can be downloaded here: <https://cms2.revize.com/revize/parkersburg/Document%20Center/Department/Finance/Business%20License%20Application%202.pdf>

Please visit https://parkersburgwv.gov/departments/finance/business_license.php for information regarding business licensing and permitting within the City of Parkersburg. For questions please contact Heidi Jones at (304) 424-8581 or via email: heidi.jones@parkersburgwv.gov for instructions on submitting your paperwork

Vienna, West Virginia

For a building permit, please visit the City Building front office located at 609 29th St, Vienna, WV 26105 or call the code & inspection department at (304) 295-5070, Ext. 348.

Effective building codes for Vienna: vienna-wv.com/DocumentCenter/View/176/Planning-and-Zoning-Code-PDF

Williamstown, West Virginia

For new development, a prospective business would need to call the City of Williamstown at 304-375-7761 and request to present to City Council. Then, Council would have the prospective business present to the Planning Commission.

For remodeling, a prospective business would need to call the City of Williamstown at 304-375-7761 and request to present to City Council. Then, Council would have the prospective business present to the Planning Commission. Then, the business would need to bring in a set of blueprints, copies of contractor's licenses + liability insurance, fill out a permit application and remit a \$10 fee plus \$2 per thousand of development.

Any plans for remodel/construction of business would need submitted to WV State Fire Marshall for approval, then copy of approval submitted to City Zoning Official along with contractor's license, liability insurance, blue prints and fees.

8. OPEN A BUSINESS BANK ACCOUNT

- ☐ Separate personal and business finances.
- ☐ Consider a business credit card to manage cash flow and expenses.

9. SET UP ACCOUNTING & TAX SYSTEMS

- ☐ Choose accounting software or hire a bookkeeper.
- ☐ Plan for payroll, sales tax, and other regular filings.
- ☐ Keep accurate records from day one.
- ☐ Apply for a sales tax number if needed

Tips from: <https://www.taxjar.com/blog/file/register-sales-tax-permit-west-virginia>

1. Who needs a sales tax permit in West Virginia?

Retailers doing business in West Virginia need a sales tax permit. You can find out what conditions create sales tax nexus in West Virginia here.

2. How do you register for a sales tax permit in West Virginia?

You can complete the form WV/BUS-APP or register online at Business for West Virginia. <https://tax.wv.gov/Documents/TaxForms/busapp.pdf>

3. What information do you need to register for a sales tax permit in West Virginia?

- Personal identification info (SSN, address, etc.)
- Business identification info (EIN, address, etc.) - Always use your home business or business address, even if you are located outside West Virginia.
- NAICS code

Date you began doing business in West Virginia (Not sure what to enter here? Read more about "[When to Register for a Sales Tax Permit](https://www.taxjar.com/blog/file/when-to-register-for-sales-tax-permit)" (<https://www.taxjar.com/blog/file/when-to-register-for-sales-tax-permit>))

4. How much does it cost to apply for a sales tax permit in West Virginia?

It's free to apply for a sales tax permit, but other West Virginia business registration fees may apply. Some businesses based in West Virginia may be required to pay a \$30 business registration fee. You can find out more about that here. Not applicable if you're a nonprofit or agriculture/farming account.

5. How long does it take to receive your West Virginia sales tax permit?

West Virginia doesn't specify how long it takes to receive your sales tax permit, but for most states it's within 2-3 weeks at most.

6. Do you have to renew your West Virginia sales tax permit?

You do not need to renew your West Virginia sales tax permit.

- ☐ Business & Occupancy Tax Setup
For Business & Occupancy Tax in City of Parkersburg please call, (304) 424-8581. For city service user fee within City of Parkersburg please call, (304) 424-8495. To pay for a business license online, head over to online bill pay portal and use the link for Business License. (<https://parkersburgwv.municipalonlinepayments.com/parkersburgwv>)

City of Vienna please call (304) 295-4541, Ext: 332.

10. SECURE FUNDING

- ☐ Explore loans, grants, and investment opportunities.
- ☐ Consider local programs such as the [Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Council \(MOVRC\) Revolving Loan Fund \(www.movrc.org/loan-program\)](http://www.movrc.org/loan-program)
- ☐ Prepare financial forecasts for lenders or investors.

11. BRANDING & MARKETING

- ☐ Register a domain and create a website.
- ☐ Develop branding, logos, and marketing materials.
- ☐ Create a marketing plan for social media, local advertising, and community outreach.
- ☐ Setup a business email

12. HIRE & TRAIN STAFF

- ☐ Identify staffing needs and recruit skilled employees.
- ☐ Establish payroll, benefits, and workplace policies.
- ☐ Access workforce resources via Wood County Economic Development.

13. LAUNCH & OPERATE

- ☐ Consider a soft launch or grand opening and submit a press release to local news.
- ☐ Track key metrics: sales, customers, and expenses.
- ☐ Regularly review and update your business plan.

14. MAINTAIN COMPLIANCE & PLAN FOR GROWTH

- ☐ Renew licenses and permits on schedule.
- ☐ File annual reports with the WV Secretary of State.
- ☐ Stay connected with Wood County Economic Development for growth resources and incentives.
- ☐ Join local chambers and business networks to expand opportunities.

15. IF OPENING A RESTAURANT

- ☐ Determine health and safety laws.
- ☐ Contact the health department to acquire a plan review form, this form must be submitted 45 days in advance of construction.
- ☐ Submit an application to operate to the health department at least one week before opening.
- ☐ Complete a walk through approximately one week before opening in order to give the owner plenty of time to fix any issues.

Mid- Ohio Valley Health Department
1824 Murdoch Ave
Parkersburg, WV 26101
304-485-7374
www.movhd.com

INCENTIVES

[City of Parkersburg Incentives](#)

- New Business Tax Credit
- Vacant Building Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program
- New Housing Construction Tax Credit Program
- Annexation Development Tax Credit
- \$200/quarter B&O exemption for eligible businesses that apply
- Real Property Improvement Tax Rebate Program
- Facade Grant
- Site Readiness Funding

The Strategic Site Readiness & Investment Initiative (SSRI) is a grant program designed to accelerate economic development in Parkersburg by improving the readiness of key commercial and industrial sites. By funding up to 50% of eligible project costs (maximum \$25,000), the initiative supports site improvements such as infrastructure, environmental assessments, and access upgrades to attract private investment, create jobs, and enhance long-term growth. Eligible businesses and developers must demonstrate project readiness, economic impact, and a 50% funding match.

(https://parkersburgwv.gov/departments/planning___development/incentive_programs.php)

RESOURCES & SUPPORT

[Wood County Economic Development \(www.developwoodcountywv.com\)](http://www.developwoodcountywv.com)

Including: traffics counts, state and county incentives, statistics and more.

[WV Small Business Development Center \(https://wvsbdc.com/\)](https://wvsbdc.com/)

[WV Secretary of State – Business Services \(https://sos.wv.gov/business/Pages/StartWVBus.aspx\)](https://sos.wv.gov/business/Pages/StartWVBus.aspx)

[WV One Stop Business Portal \(business4.wv.gov\)](http://business4.wv.gov)

[IRS EIN Application \(https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/get-an-employer-identification-number\)](https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/get-an-employer-identification-number)

Wood County is Ready for Your Business
With supportive infrastructure, skilled workforce, and a community that welcomes growth, Wood County is more than a place to start a business—it's a place to thrive.