



Starting a business in El Cerrito

WELCOME TO THE CITY OF EL CERRITO!

We are glad that you have chosen our city as the location for your new business. The City of El Cerrito understands the importance of the business community and the impact that successful growing businesses have on our community. To that end, the City's Economic Development Division has been set up to attract new businesses to our community and to offer services and programs to assist in the growth and success of our existing businesses.

The following information is provided to assist you through the process of establishing your business in El Cerrito. At any time throughout this process, feel free to contact Dwayne Dalman, Economic Development Project Manager at (510) 215-4362 for assistance.



1. Create A Business Plan

There is no way to eliminate all the risk associated with starting a business. However, you can improve your chances of success with proper planning and preparation. A good way to start is by creating a Business Plan. The following resource partners can assist you with this process:

Business Development Center
3803 San Pablo Dam Road, 2nd Floor
El Sobrante, CA 94803
(510) 223-9900
www.wccbdc.org

Contra Costa Small Business Development Center
2425 Bisso Lane, Ste 200, Concord, CA 94520
(925) 646-5377
www.contracostasbdc.com

Small Business Administration (SBA)
The SBA has a large number of programs and services to help your business start, grow and succeed.
San Francisco District Office
455 Market Street, Sixth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 744-6820
SBA Help Desk, (800) 827-5722
www.sba.gov

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)
SCORE provides training, mentoring and free counseling services to small business owners and entrepreneurs.
492 9th Street, Suite 350
Oakland, CA 94607
(510) 273-6611
www.eastbayscore.org



2. Check Zoning Regulations

Before you sign a lease or apply for any business permit, it is important that you check with the El Cerrito Planning Division to ensure that the proposed use is allowed on the property. Some uses may require additional permits, while some may not be allowed at all. Most businesses will only require Planning Division preliminary review (an over the counter procedure), while some will be required to go through environmental review and obtain a use permit (up to a 3–6 month process involving a public hearing).

City of El Cerrito Planning Division
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 215-4330
www.el-cerrito.org—See Planning

If you plan to operate a business out of your home, you will need to visit the Planning Division for a Home Occupation permit.

3. Decide on a Business Structure

If you will be establishing a corporation, S corporation, partnership, or limited liability company, you must register with the Secretary of State.

California Secretary of State
San Francisco Regional Office
455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 14500
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 557-8000
www.sos.ca.gov/business/business.htm

4. Register a Fictitious Name

If you intend to name your firm anything other than your own name, you must file a Fictitious Business Name Statement with the County Clerk.

Contra Costa County Clerk–Recorder
555 Escobar Street, Martinez, CA 94553
(925) 335-7900
<http://contra.napanet.net/depart/elect/clerk/index.html>

5. Get a Business License

The City of El Cerrito requires that any person who transacts and carries on any business, trade, profession, calling, or occupation in the city, or who provides a service within the city, must procure a Business License and pay the appropriate fees. For more information about a business license, please visit or call the Financial Services Dept. Business license applications can also be downloaded online.

City of El Cerrito Financial Services Department
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 215-4310
www.el-cerrito.org—See Financial Services

6. Obtain Important Permits

To help you determine what regional, state, and federal licenses and permits your business may need, the State of California has a permitting website located at www.calgold.ca.gov. Below are some common permits that are required.

■ USE PERMIT

Each parcel in the City has been assigned a zoning designation that describes which land uses are permitted outright and which land uses require a use permit. Depending on the type of use and zone, the Planning Manager and/or the Planning Commission is responsible for approving a use permit. Additionally, you should inquire about parking requirements for your project.

You may need a parking exception use permit through the Planning Commission. For more information, the El Cerrito Planning Division has prepared a guide to walk you through the development process.

■ DESIGN REVIEW

Any changes or alterations to the exterior of a commercial building or parking lot will require design review approval. A Design Review application is available on the City's web page or at City Hall through the Planning Division.

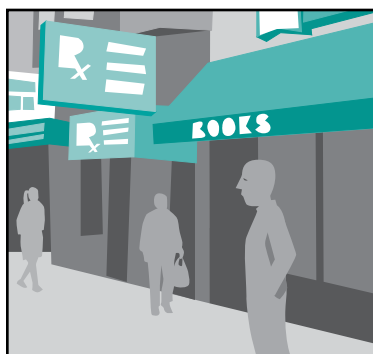
■ SIGN PERMIT

Before ordering or installing a new sign or modifying an existing sign for your business, please contact the Planning Division. Most signs require approval by Planning. Some only require administrative design review, while other multi-tenant commercial buildings may require a sign program, approved by the Design Review Board. All temporary signs, such as banners, require preliminary review by Planning and approval from the City Building Official.

■ CITY OF EL CERRITO BUILDING PERMIT

A Building Permit is needed for all new construction in the City of El Cerrito. In most cases, a permit is also required for replacement of existing construction, additions, remodeling and commercial tenant improvements. Building Permits are how the City regulates construction to ensure it is safe for occupancy and use. If you are thinking of signing a lease, buying/renovating a building or new construction, please visit or call the City Building Division.

City of El Cerrito Building Division
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 215-4360 • www.el-cerrito.org—
See Building



■ REGIONAL & COUNTY PERMITS

Restaurants and Food Vendors: Certain businesses which handle food (sale, preparation) must be approved by the Contra Costa County Health Department. This approval is designed to ensure compliance with County sanitation codes. Food preparation is not allowed under a home occupation permit.

Contra Costa County Health Services
Department of Environmental Health
2120 Diamond Blvd., #200, Concord, CA 94520
(925) 692-2500
www.cchealth.org/groups/eh/

To sell alcoholic beverages from your business, you must obtain an Alcoholic Beverage License.

California Dept. of Alcoholic Beverage Control
1515 Clay Street, Suite 2208, Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 622-4970
www.abc.ca.gov

If your business discharges matter into the air, a permit from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District may be required.

Bay Area Air Quality Management District
939 Ellis Street, San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 771-6000
Compliance Assistance Hotline, (415) 749-4999
www.baaqmd.gov

■ STATE PERMITS

Wholesale and Retail Businesses: If your business will involve sales, you will need to obtain a Seller's Permit from the State Board of Equalization.

California State Board of Equalization
(800) 735-2929
www.boe.ca.gov/info/reg.htm

■ UTILITIES

Water: East Bay Municipal Utility District
375 11th Street, Oakland, CA 94607
(866) 403-2683 • www.ebmud.com

Gas & Electricity:
Pacific Gas & Electric, (800) 743-5000
New or upgraded service, (877) 743-7782
www.pge.com

Refuse Collection: East Bay Sanitary Company
1432 Kearney Street, El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 237-4321

Sanitary District: Stege Sanitary District
7500 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 524-4667 • www.stegesd.dst.ca.us

Recycling: El Cerrito Recycling Center
7501 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 215-4350
www.ecrecycling.org





7. If you will have employees:

Obtain your Employer Identification Numbers or Federal Taxpayer Identification Number

■ FEDERAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS

Internal Revenue Service
(800) 829-1040
www.irs.gov

■ STATE EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

Employment Tax Office
(916) 654-8706
(888) 745-3886
www.edd.ca.gov

■ PAY EMPLOYEE TAXES

For information regarding employee withholdings, self-employment tax and other business tax withholdings contact the Internal Revenue Service.

Internal Revenue Service
1301 Clay Street, Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 637-2487
www.irs.gov

■ WORKERS COMPENSATION

Workers compensation insurance is required for all California employers. Premiums are based on the job each employee performs and their total wages. In California, most small employers are insured by the State Compensation Insurance Fund (State Fund).

State Compensation Insurance Fund
(877) 405-4545
www.scif.com

8. Recruit and Train Employees

Through the Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board's direct service providers, such as the One-Stop Career Centers, employers are offered a job posting service; candidate recruitment, screening, and referral; testing and interviewing facilities; subsidized customized employer-based training; and tax credit assistance.

Workforce Development Board
of Contra Costa County
2425 Bisso Lane, Suite 100, Concord, CA 94520
(925) 646-5239
www.wdbccc.com

9. Open a Checking Account for Your Business

Separate business and personal accounting is essential when you file your tax return. Contact the financial institution of your choice directly.

10. Additional Resources to Help your Business Grow

- **EL CERRITO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
10848 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 233-7040
www.elcerritochamber.org
- **OBDC SMALL BUSINESS FINANCE**
519 17th Street, Suite 700
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 763-4297
www.obdc.com
- **BAY AREA GREEN BUSINESS PROGRAM**
(925) 646-2286
www.greenbiz.ca.gov
- **EL CERRITO LIBRARY**
6510 Stockton Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 526-7512
www.ccclib.org
- **SHOP EL CERRITO**
www.shopelcerrito.com
- **CALIFORNIA TOOLS FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS**
www.toolsforbusiness.info



El Cerrito City Hall
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530