

# ATL IN BUSINESS

The Atlanta-preneur's startup path.

**This Starter Kit will aid the following business types: Food Retail Establishments (i.e. grocery store) and Food Establishments (i.e. restaurants). This kit should serve as a general guideline to opening these specific types of business.**



For best use, we recommend this guide be viewed online with clickable links.

STEPS TO HELP ATLANTA-PRENEURS GET STARTED IN THE FOOD ESTABLISHMENT BUSINESS:

## Step 1: Register with the Georgia Corporations Division

**eCorps.sos.ga.gov → Online Services → Create a User Account**

The first step in creating a business is registering with the Georgia Corporations Division. Business corporations, nonprofit corporations, professional corporations, limited partnerships (LP), and limited liability companies (LLC), are formed in Georgia by [filing with the Corporations Division of the Office of Secretary of State](#). In some instances, the above entities that form in other states choose to file with the Georgia Secretary of State as “foreign” entities. Once you register your business, you will receive a Secretary of State Control Number needed to complete **Step 2. To see the cost of incorporating, please see the [filing fee guide](#).**

For help choosing how to incorporate your business, review the [Which Legal Entity Is Right For Your Business](#) guide. You may also want to review [Georgia's First Stop Business Guide](#). If you need any additional information, contact:

**Georgia Secretary of State Corporations  
Division**

2 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.

Suite 313

Atlanta, GA 30334

Number: 404.656.2817



It's always important to verify zoning requirements **before** you chose a business location as you may have to incur additional costs if your location isn't zoned for your particular business. To find out how a property is zoned, visit the [City of Atlanta Office of Zoning](#) and review official zoning maps or call 404.330.6145.

## Step 2: Obtain Federal Tax ID, State Tax ID, and GA Sales and Use Tax Numbers

All businesses are required to obtain a Federal and State tax identification number. Further, any business that is selling tangible personal property and certain services must get a GA sales and use tax.

**Obtain a Federal Tax ID Number:** Also known as an Employer Identification Number or EIN, this number must be obtained via the [Internal Revenue Service](#). You can apply for an EIN number online by visiting <https://www.IRS.gov> → File → Businesses and Self-Employed → Business Topics → Employer ID numbers.

**Obtain a State Tax ID and Sales and Use Tax number:** A Georgia state tax ID and a sales and use tax number can be obtained at the same time by visiting: <https://gtc.dor.ga.gov> → Register a New Georgia Business. After your online submission, you should receive your specific tax account numbers within 15 minutes by email.

Additional information on what qualifies as a [nontaxable sale](#) and how to obtain a [certificate of exemption](#) can be found on the [Georgia Department of Revenue website](#) → Taxes → Business taxes → Sales & Use Tax.

## Step 3: Secure Your Regulatory Permit(s)

[AtlantaGa.gov](#) → Government → Departments → Finance → Revenue → Regulatory Permit Directory

Certain business requires regulatory permits/licenses **before** a business license can be issued. The type of regulatory permit(s) you will need depends on the type of business you will have or what you will serve. Below are key permit contacts for food retail and food service establishment. **Please note depending on your business and services offered you may need to apply for more than one permit.** For a full list of permitting agencies, visit the City of Atlanta [Regulatory Permits Directory](#).



### **Alcoholic Beverages, Beer & Wine, Restaurants (serving alcohol)**

Regulatory Agency: Atlanta Police Department – License and Permit Unit  
Address: 3494 Donald Lee Hollowell Pkwy., Atlanta, GA 30331  
Phone: 404.546.4470  
Website: [www.atlantapd.org](http://www.atlantapd.org)

**\*For a full review of what you need to complete the alcohol permitting process see [Step 6](#) below.**



### **Bakery, Grocery Store, Meat/Seafood & VEH, Food Sales**

Regulatory Agency: Georgia Department of Agriculture  
Address: 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. SW, Atlanta, GA 30334  
Phone: 404.657.4801  
Website: [www.agr.georgia.gov](http://www.agr.georgia.gov) → Divisions → Food Safety Division  
→ Licenses



### **Restaurants/Food services**

Regulations, routine inspections of food service establishments and education and training for food service operators and manager is conducted by the [Georgia Department of Public Health](http://www.dph.georgia.gov), but required health department permits are issued by the County where your business will be located. Please choose the county where your business will be located to get more information on the permitting process.

#### Fulton

Regulatory Agency: Fulton County Health Department  
Address: 130 Peachtree St., Atlanta, GA 30303  
Phone: 404.613.5700  
Website: [www.fultoncountyga.gov](http://www.fultoncountyga.gov) → Departments and Agencies → Board of Health → Environmental Health  
→ 6 Food Services

#### DeKalb

Regulatory Agency: DeKalb County Board of Health  
Address: 445 Winn Way, Suite 320, Decatur, GA  
Phone: 404.508.7900  
Website: [www.dekalbhealth.net](http://www.dekalbhealth.net) → Environmental Health → Food Safety → Opening a Food Service Operation

#### Regulations, Routine Inspections, Education and Training

Regulatory Agency: Georgia Department of Public Health  
Address: 2 Peachtree Street, NW 15th Floor, Atlanta, Georgia  
30303  
Phone: 404.657.2700  
Website: [www.dph.georgia.gov/foodservice](http://www.dph.georgia.gov/foodservice)



### **Food Services ALL/ Grease Trap**

All food service providers operating in the City of Atlanta must obtain a Food Service Wastewater Discharge Permit through the Department of Watershed, including Food Trucks.

Food Service Wastewater Discharge Permit

Regulatory Agency: City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management

Address: 72 Marietta Street, Atlanta GA 30303

Phone: 404.546.1400

Website: [www.atlantaga.gov](http://www.atlantaga.gov)

**\*For a full review of what you need to complete a Food Service Wastewater Discharge Application, see Step 5 below.**



### **Vending (Food trucks, flea markets, kiosks, carts)**

Private Property & Flea Markets

Regulatory Agency: Atlanta Police Department – License and Permit Unit

Address: 3493 Donald Lee Hollowell Pkwy., Atlanta, GA 30331

Phone: 404.546.4470

Website: [www.atlantapd.org](http://www.atlantapd.org)

Public Property

Regulatory Agency: City Planning – Office of Housing and Community Development, Economic Development Division

Address: 68 Mitchell Street, SW, Suite 1200, Atlanta GA 30303

Phone: 404.330.6103

Website: [www.atlantaga.gov](http://www.atlantaga.gov)

**\*For a full review of what you need to complete the vending permitting process, see Step 7 below.**



### **Cottage Food Establishment (Food operators producing products out of home kitchens)**

Regulatory Agency: Georgia Department of Agriculture

Address: 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. SW, Atlanta, GA 30334

Phone: 404.657.4801

Website: <http://agr.georgia.gov/cottage-foods.aspx>

## Step 4: Obtain Your Business License

### AtlantaGa.gov → Government → Departments → Finance → Revenue → Apply for a Business License

A business license or “occupational tax registration certificate” is required of all businesses operating within the city limits of Atlanta. A business license is required per location of your business.

To receive a business license, you must complete a [New Business Tax Application](#). To complete your application, you will need to ensure you have the following information and documents:

- [SAVE Affidavit](#)
- [Notarized E-Verify Affidavit](#)
- [Copy of Applicants Government Issued ID](#)
- Date of Incorporation and Secretary of State Control Number (See [Step 1](#))
- [Employer Identification Number \(EIN\)](#) (See [Step 2](#))
- [State Taxpayer ID Number](#) (See [Step 2](#))
- Regulatory Permit(s) (See [Step 3](#))

Cost: \$75 non-refundable registration fee and the \$50 non-refundable zoning review fee. New Business applications are processed by the Office of Revenue:

**Department of Finance - Office of Revenue**

55 Trinity Ave SW,  
Suite 1350  
Atlanta GA 30303  
Phone: 404.330.6270  
Email: biztax@atlantaga.gov

Applications are then routed to the [Office of Zoning](#) to review and verify if a business can exist in the desired location. Zoning conducts research to verify that there is permitted use based on district regulations. Some licenses may require site inspections or further research to determine approval. Please note that it is recommend that you confirm that your business location is zoned for your intended use **before** you start the business registration process or permitting.

### **Annual Business License Deadlines:**

License Expires: December 31

Renewal Deadline: February 15

Payment Deadline: April 1



**Please note that all the subsequent steps are business type dependent and may or may not apply to your business.**

## **Step 5: Obtain a Food Service Wastewater Discharge Permit (Business Dependent)**

**Atlantaga.gov → Government → Watershed Management → Watershed Forms → Watershed Protection**

All food service facilities are required to complete a Food Service Wastewater Discharge permit application and a subsequent inspection that confirms that you have a properly working grease trap.

### **What is a grease trap?**

A grease trap is a device or interceptor that is designed, installed, and operated in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications to separate and retain fats, oils, and grease from liquid waste and allow the remaining liquid waste to discharge into the City's sewer collection system.

Instructions on how to fill out an application can be found on the [online](#). For the application and additional guidelines, please contact the Department of Watershed.

### **City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management**

72 Marietta Street, Atlanta GA 30303

404.546.1400

[www.atlantaga.gov](http://www.atlantaga.gov)

## **Step 6: Alcohol Permit (Business Dependent)**

**AtlantaPD.org → Business → Alcohol Licenses**

In order to serve or sell alcohol, you must obtain permits both from the City and the State. It is recommended that you first obtain your City or local permit and then your state permit.

[The Atlanta Police Department](#) regulates alcohol permits for business located in the City of Atlanta. The permitting process requires you file an application, complete an interview, go before the License Review board, receive approval from the Mayor and pay the required fees. Below are additional details on each step. Please note that after you complete your City permitting process you must still get a state permit.

## Step 6(1) Required Documents to file an alcohol license application

- Two original copies of the [Alcoholic Beverage Application](#)
- Federal Clearance Letter - May be obtained from the [Federal District Court](#) (see the Clerk of Court) Richard B. Russell Building, 75 Red Turner Drive S.W. Atlanta, GA 30303, 22nd Floor. Cost \$31.00 cash, credit, or debt.
- Certificate of Residence - (in one of 13 Metro-Atlanta counties) Probate court of the county in which you reside may sign the certificate-verifying residency. [Fulton](#): 404.613.4070; [DeKalb](#) 404.371.6236.
- Proof of Citizenship or LPR Status ([SAVE Affidavit](#))
- [E-Verify Affidavit](#)
- Three Letters of Reference (with name, address, and telephone numbers)
- Valid photo identification
- Two small color photos (size 2X2)
- A certified survey of the proposed premises
- Certificate of Incorporation (see [Step 1](#))
- Lease or valid documents
- Financial Documents (like bank statements for the preceding 6 months)
- Menu (if a restaurant)
- Floor plan – A drawing of the alcohol license premises including the customer service area (if restaurant, club, bar, etc.), must accompany the application. This includes measurements of total square footage of service area
- A certified statement that verifies your establishment meets parking requirements according to 10-57(3).

## Step 6(2) Investigator Interview

After you have obtained all of the required documents and completed two original applications, you will need to make an appointment with an investigator for an interview. You may submit the application in person while you are at the interview. **To schedule an interview, call 404.546.4470.**

Appointments should be made 48 hours in advance and are scheduled for Monday thru Wednesday from 9:00 am – 2:00 pm. The following will take place at your interview:

- Your Investigator will review your applications with you and make sure it is accurate and complete.
- You and any corporate agents and the first 5 officers will be fingerprinted. \$20 per person. Cashier's check or money order only. Cards and cash are not accepted.
- A background check will be conducted. \$50 processing fee. Cashier's check or money order only. Cards and cash are not accepted.

**If you're application is complete and accurate, your Interviewer will provide you with the following documents:**

- A copy of your application packet to take to the City of Atlanta Department of Planning.
- Authorization to place a legal notice of advertisement. Signed by APD.
- A tentative date for your License Review Board hearing.
  - If your Interviewer finds that your NPU authorization form and legal notice of advertisement have not been completed by the date of your hearing your hearing will be pushed to the next hearing date.

### **Step 6(3) Place an advertisement with the AJC**

Before you can go before the License Review board, you must place a legal notice of advertisement with the Atlanta Journal Constitution of your intent to sell alcohol at a business. Legal notice of advertisement with the AJC must be placed at minimum of two (2) times on different days and at least ten days prior to the scheduled License Review Board hearing date.

#### **Atlanta Journal Constitution**

Email: LegalClass@ajc.com

Number: 404.526.5081.

### **Step 6(4) Obtain Department of Planning and NPU Authorization**

Before you can go before the License Review board, you must receive signed authorization from the City of Atlanta Department of Planning and the Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) Chairperson of where your business will be located.

To get these signatures take the copy of the application packet given to you by APD to:

#### **Department of Planning - Office of Zoning & Development**

55 Trinity Ave, SW, Atlanta GA

Suite 3350

Number: 404.330.6145

The Office of Zoning will then give you a Notice to Appear before the NPU with a date, location time, and contact information. *You must attend the NPU meeting when your application is to be reviewed to answer any questions the NPU may have.* If the NPU votes to approve your application, the NPU chairperson will sign and submit back to the Office of Zoning who will also sign and submit to the License and Review Board. Please note that NPU's only meet once a month.



### **Step 6(5) License & Review Board Hearing**

After your application is signed off on by the NPU and City Planning, it will go before the License and Review board that will voting on your application. Current meeting agendas and meeting minutes are available [online](#). If steps 6(3) and 6(4) have not been completed before your hearing date your APD Interviewer will move your application to the next available hearing.

#### **License and Review Board**

55 Trinity Ave, SW Atlanta, GA 30303

2nd Floor, Committee Room 2

Meetings take place twice a month

### **Step 6(6) Signature from the Mayor**

All alcohol licenses/permits require a signature from the Mayor. Applications for alcohol licenses are routed to the Mayor once the License Review Board approves your application. A Fire Inspection must be completed before the Mayor can sign off. If you need to check on the status of an application that is currently awaiting the Mayor's signature, you can reach out to:

#### **Office of the Mayor**

55 Trinity Ave SW

Suite 2400

Atlanta, GA 30303

Number: 404.330.6100

### **Step 6(7) Fee payment & local license**

Once the Mayor's Office receives all the information and approves with signature, the application will be sent to the City of Atlanta Department of Revenue. You will then be notified that you can go pay your fees and pick up your license at the Office of Revenue. For a list of annual license fees, please see the fee table located on [atlantapd.org](http://atlantapd.org).

#### **Department of Finance - Office of Revenue**

55 Trinity Ave SW,

Suite 1350

Atlanta GA 30303

Phone: 404.330.6270

Email: biztax@atlantaga.gov

### **Step 6(8) Obtain your state alcohol license**

Alcohol cannot be sold or served unless a license has been approved by the state. Applications and the required [documentation](#) can be submitted online via <https://qtc.dor.ga.gov> → Register a Permit Account. The state won't process your application until the local application is complete.

**Georgia Department of Revenue**

Atlanta Headquarters

1800 Century Centre Blvd. NE, Atlanta, GA 30345

Phone: 1.877.423.6711

Email: [atdiv@dor.ga.gov](mailto:atdiv@dor.ga.gov)

## Step 7: Obtain Your Vending Permit (Business Dependent)

If your business is outdoors and/or portable like a food truck or a kiosk, then you will need a vending permit. There are two types of vending permits and each is controlled by a different regulatory agency. To determine which is the right fit for you, please read below:

1. [Private property vending permit](#) - The City of Atlanta Police Department License and Permit Unit regulates vending on private property and flea markets. For the [application](#) process and required documents, visit [www.atlantapd.org](http://www.atlantapd.org) → **business** → **vending permits -public property**. Please note that all food sales require that you obtain a Health Permit from your county office before you apply for a vending permit. See [Step 2](#) above.
2. [Public right of way vending permits](#) - The City of Atlanta Public Vending Program offers designated locations for vending on City property. The application process is dependent of the type of vending you are interested in. For more information on all public right of way vending permits, visit [www.atlantaga.gov/vending](http://www.atlantaga.gov/vending) or email question to [vending@atlantaga.gov](mailto:vending@atlantaga.gov). All of the programs below are regulated by City Planning.
  - [Carts & Kiosks](#) - The City of Atlanta provides vending opportunities in the public right-of-way from 18 City-owned kiosks and at 29 designated cart locations on City sidewalks, plazas and parks all within Downtown Atlanta. Carts must be non-motorized, must be removed when not in operation and must be approved as meeting the City's design specifications. All available locations are offered through yearly lotteries that take place around early March.

- [Food Trucks](#) - The Right of Way Food Truck Vending Program allows food trucks to vend in designated vending zones within City streets. Central Atlanta Progress also coordinates a Food Truck Friday event on Fridays from May to September.
- [Motor Vehicles](#) (i.e. Ice Cream Trucks, Rolling Stores) - The City allows vendors to sell ice cream or other prepackaged food and/or non-alcoholic prepackaged beverages out of motor vehicles without stopping or standing to do business for more than 30 minutes. These vendors must follow specific operational guidelines regarding location and sound equipment as listed in the application packet. Motor Vehicle Vendors are not restricted to a specific operational area and are not a part of the lottery selection process.

### Additional Resources:



#### Waste Disposal Services

The City of Atlanta does not provide ongoing waste services for individual businesses. Businesses needing long term waste disposal services will have to contact a private resource.

Please note that dumpsters and other large waste containers must meet specific storage location and distance requirements to prevent rodent, insect, or other kind of infestation. Failure to do so will result in a citation.



#### Parking

If you will be building your own parking lot, you may want to review the ATLinBusiness Construction/Repair starter kit. If your business location is without private parking, you may be interested in the following information:

Downtown Atlanta [parking](#), [MARTA](#), [Bike](#) and [Streetcar](#) maps provided by Central Atlanta Progress

[AtlantaDowntown.com](#) → [Do business](#) → [Maps](#) → [Interactive Maps](#)



#### American with Disabilities Act ADA

The (ADA) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities, such as buying an item at the store, going to the movies, or enjoying a meal at a local restaurant. Businesses that serve the public must modify policies and practices that discriminate against people with disabilities; comply with accessible design standards when constructing or

altering facilities; remove barriers in existing facilities where readily achievable; and provide auxiliary aids and services when needed to ensure effective communication with people who have hearing, vision, or speech impairments.

To get more Information on ADA requirements for business visit

[www.ada.gov/business](http://www.ada.gov/business).