

Business Incentives & Assistance

For more info on doing business in Santa Monica, space and opportunities, visit smgov.net/business and SantaMonicaAlliance.com, or call the Economic Development Team at (310) 458-8906. Local business incentives include the Buy Local Santa Monica campaign, free City WiFi, 100gig broadband services, Commute SM and employee bike share, business greening programs, vending cart opportunities, business workshops and more.

For information on the **Santa Monica Sustainable City** program, including free environmental audits, and the Sustainable Quality Awards visit smgov.net/ose/, or call (310) 458-2227.

For information on current **regional, state and federal incentives** for both new and existing businesses, visit the LA County Economic Development Corp. website: laedc.org/businessassistance/ and the State of CA's website: business.ca.gov and the LA Region Small Business Development Center <http://smallbizla.org/> or call (562) 938-5020.

Santa Monica Business Organizations

Santa Monica has four **Business Improvement District (BID)s**: 1) Downtown Santa Monica, 2) Main Street, 3) Montana Avenue, and 4) Pico Boulevard. Each BID was established by local businesses and/or property owners for the purposes of raising funds to enhance the district and promote business and commerce within the assessment area.

The **Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce** provides a myriad of services to the Santa Monica business community, including B2B networking events, tech roundtables, marketing and advocacy support. For membership information, call (310) 393-9825 or visit smchamber.com.

For a full list of all the Santa Monica Business Organizations and support services: smgov.net/business and then click on "Business Organizations" and "Assistance and Incentives" links.

General Business Regulations:

In addition to the City of Santa Monica business license, all businesses must also comply with all City, County and State regulations for zoning, building, health and safety. In addition to the approvals highlighted in this guide, other City of Santa Monica departments may require additional permits or approvals, depending on the business and scope of the project, which may include, but are not limited to:

- [Building & Safety Permits \(Building & Safety Division\)](#)
- [Off-Site Improvement \(Civil Engineering Division\)](#)
- [Certificates of Occupancy \(Building & Safety Division\)](#)
- [Conditional Use Permits \(Planning Division\)](#)
- [Encroachment Permits \(Public Works Department\)](#)
- [Filming Permits \(Public Works Department\)](#)
- [Fire Permits \(Fire Department\)](#)
- [Hazardous Materials Permit and Disclosure \(CUPA program\)](#)
- [Hazardous Waste Permit \(CUPA\)](#)
- [Industrial Waste Permits \(Public Works\)](#)
- [Landscape Requirements for Water Conservation \(Planning Division\)](#)
- [Outdoor Dining Permit \(Planning Division\) + Outdoor Dining License Agreement \(Economic Development\)](#)
- [Sign Permits \(Planning Division\)](#)
- [Underground Storage Tank Permit \(CUPA program\)](#)
- [Urban Runoff Mitigation \(Public Works\)](#)
- [Water/Sewer Service Permits \(Public Works\)](#)

For more information and contact details for all City departments, visit smgov.net or contact the City Information Desk at (310)458-2201.

Tip: A helpful website to assist business in finding the appropriate local, regional and state permit information, along with contact information for the various agencies that administer and issues these permits: calgold.ca.gov/.

Thank you for choosing Santa Monica! We value our businesses.

A Guide to Opening a Business in Santa Monica



Welcome to the City of Santa Monica

We are pleased that you are considering Santa Monica for the location of your business and/or for investment in an already-existing enterprise. This guide is intended as a summary of information you will need to know in order to operate a business in Santa Monica. This is provided as a public service and is not all-inclusive. If you have general questions about business opportunities, Santa Monica's business districts, locations, and economic development programs, please contact:

City of Santa Monica Economic Development Division

Tel: (310) 458-8906

Email: econdev@smgov.net,

or visit our website: smgov.net/business.

If you have questions about the Business License process, taxes and fees, please contact:

City of Santa Monica Business & Revenue Operations Division

1717 4th St., Santa Monica, CA 90401

Tel: (310) 458-8745

Email: business.license@smgov.net

Office hours:

Mon – Thurs 8-5, alternate Fridays 8:30-4:30

Further Information is also available at smgov.net/businesslicense



City Regulations: Planning + Zoning: Prior to opening your business or signing a lease in Santa Monica, please contact the City's Planning Division to determine if the business activity you are planning can be approved for the location you have selected. Planning staff are responsible for implementing the City's Zoning Ordinance, which includes regulations concerning where and under what conditions a business may operate in the city. For more information, visit smgov.net/Zoning, or contact (310) 458-8341.

Helpful Tip: Don't forget to check the parking requirements for the type of business you are planning to open, as well as actual parking and public transit availability at the proposed business location, to ensure that it meets your staff and customer needs.

Business License Tax Information: The City of Santa Monica Municipal Code requires all businesses operating and/or located in Santa Monica to register for a City of Santa Monica Business License. The business license tax year coincides with the fiscal year (July 1st through June 30th). It is the responsibility of the business owner to ensure that the license is renewed and the business license tax is paid each year by the due date (July 1st). Certain charitable, non-profit organizations may be exempt from payment of business license taxes, as well as federal income tax. For more information, contact (310) 458-8745 or visit smgov.net/BusinessLicense.

Building & Safety: Building permits are typically required for any construction, repair, alteration, and/or demolition project, as well as plumbing, mechanical, and electrical system upgrades. Before you erect, construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, improve, remove, convert, demolish, equip, or change the approved use of any building or structure in Santa Monica, be sure to check with the Building & Safety Division at (310) 458-8355, or visit smgov.net/BuildingandSafety to verify if a permit is required.

Prefer to meet with staff? *The City of Santa Monica Public Counter is open 7:30am–5:30 pm Mon–Thurs ; limited Friday hours. Location: City Hall, Room 115, 1685 Main St., Santa Monica, CA 90401*

City Taxes: For information on the various City taxes and fees, including the Utility Users Tax, the Transit Occupancy Tax (for hotels), and Parking Facility Tax, contact the Treasury Office at (310) 458-8741, or visit the smgov.net/Finance

Environmental Programs & Assistance: The Office of Sustainability and the Environment provides information on a variety of programs and services to help businesses comply with environmental requirements, including the single use carryout bag ban, non-recyclable food service container ban, and water conservation measures, which help to protect the Santa Monica Bay and the local environment. For information, visit: smgov.net/ose/, or call (310) 458-2227.

Food-Related Services: For additional requirements in the operation of retail and wholesale food sales, restaurants, lunch wagons, food trucks, ice cream trucks, hotels, motels, hospitals, events featuring food or food booths, etc., contact the Los Angeles County Health Department at (626) 430-5500. If you plan to sell or serve alcoholic beverages, contact the **Alcoholic Beverage Control Board** at (213) 833-6043 and the City Planning Division at (310) 458-8341.

Outdoor Dining Permits + Licenses: Santa Monica encourages and supports outdoor dining in our business districts. For additional information on the City of Santa Monica Outdoor Dining Permit and License Agreement: application, process and fees, visit: smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Permits/Minor-Outdoor-Dining-Permit/ or call (310) 458-8906 for information.

Signs: Signs are regulated by City ordinance as to size, number, location, and height. Prior to installing, altering, or moving a new or existing sign, or posting a temporary sign or banner, contact the City Planning Division. All signs are subject to Planning approval, prior to Building & Safety Division issuing the final sign permit.

Helpful Tip: For sign guidance, visit smgov.net/business → click on the left tool bar under "Permits and Licenses" for the [Sign Guidance for Santa Monica Businesses](#).