

## Opening a Restaurant in the City of Lakeland

*Thank you for choosing Lakeland for your business. Opening a restaurant is a significant undertaking that takes vision, cooperation and patience. To help in this process, we created this document to serve as a roadmap as well as a checklist. The information in this guide is intended to show you what you'll need to open a restaurant in Lakeland.*

Please take special note:

Prior to choosing your location, contact the Planning and Zoning Department and determine what is the zoning of your prospective site and what will need to be done to the site to meet regulations.

**Planning and Zoning**  
**Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm**  
**863-834-6011**  
**228 S. Massachusetts Av**  
**Lakeland, FL 33801**

### Here are your 5 steps to success:

1. Get Zoning and Location Approval
2. Obtaining your Licenses & Hire a consultant
3. Develop a Business plan
4. Will my proposal trigger a Change of use?
5. Obtain Building Permits- If necessary



*Continue to the back portion of this document for an in-depth analysis of each step.*

If you have any questions, contact the Community Development Department

**Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm**  
**863-834-6011**  
**228 S. Massachusetts Av**  
**Lakeland, FL 33801**

For a more comprehensive guide please review the City of Lakeland's Business Start-up guide at [www.lakelandgov.net](http://www.lakelandgov.net)



This manual is specific to the requirements of the City of Lakeland and does not include all of the information about potentially applicable state and federal requirements. Please contact the Business Tax Office for assistance with state and federal regulations and requirements.

**1. Get Zoning and Location Approval:**

- There are many factors to consider such as proximity to customers, similar business clusters, parking needs, proper zoning, and tenant buildout to name a few.
- Before signing a lease or purchasing a property we strongly urge you to contact a City of Lakeland Planner at 824-6011 to discuss your potential location and business type.
- All Businesses are unique and each potential location may have different needs based on zoning, previous use, scope of work and the improvements you are proposing.

**2. Obtaining Your Licenses:**

- [Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation](#) is responsible for licensing and inspecting all retail food businesses in Lakeland.

These 4 Licenses have to be completed before you can apply for a Business Tax License:

**1. Fictitious Name Registration** - If you do not use your full name (first & last) in your business name, the State of Florida requires you to register. To register contact the Department of State Division of Corporations (850)245-6058 or register on-line <https://efile.sunbiz.org/ficregintro.html>. We also have registration packets available at the Business Tax Office.

**2. State Sales Tax Number** - Department of Revenue – Lakeland Office  
115 S Missouri Av #202 (2nd floor)  
Lakeland, FL 33801  
(863) 499-2260

**3. Social Security Number or Federal Employer ID** - IRS – Lakeland Office  
2133 Harden Blvd  
Lakeland, FL 33803  
(863) 904-3399

**4. State Licensure**- You can apply for your State License online through this [link](#) on the FL DBPR website.

**Acquiring Your Business Tax License:**

- After you have completed the 4 steps listed above, you are required to obtain a Vendor's License through the [Business Tax Office](#) located on the first floor of City Hall.

**Obtaining a Liquor License (If applicable):**

- If your restaurant will be serving alcoholic beverages, you must obtain a liquor license from the [Florida DBPR](#).

**Hiring a Consultant:**

- Your consultant will likely have significant experience with the Building Code and permissible designs, required safety, elements, and experience on submitting compliant plans, and the other required permit documentation to the Building Inspection Division and other departments.

**3. Develop a Business Plan:**

- How to incorporate, securing start-up financing, marketing plans, pricing strategies, budgets and money management are just a few of the areas you'll want to have figure out before committing to a successful plan for a restaurant. Follow this link for a more comprehensive guide on creating a [Business Plan](#).

**4. Will my proposal trigger a Change of use?:**

- The Change of Use guide will help you understand what a Change of use is. A representative from the City staff will determine what needs to be completed to help you achieve success as efficiently as possible.

**5. Obtain Building Permits- If necessary:**

- If you are not hiring a consultant, it would be in your best interest to contact the [Building Inspection Division](#) with your proposed idea for the staff to determine if you will need a permit.

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