

Key Contacts

Department of Land Use Management
 Jeffrey Morrisette, Director of Land Use Management
 Town Hall, Phone: 978-692-5524
 jmorrisette@westfordma.gov

Town Planner / Planning Board / Zoning Board of Appeals
 Joseph Giniewicz, Town Planner
 Town Hall, Phone: 978-692-5524
 jginiewicz@westfordma.gov

Building Commissioner / Building Department
 Henry Fontaine, Building Commissioner
 Town Hall, Phone: 978-692-5527
 hfontaine@westfordma.gov

Town Clerk's Office
 Patty Dubey, Town Clerk
 Town Hall, Phone: 978-692-5515
 pdubey@westfordma.gov

Town Manager's Office / Select Board
 Kristen Las, Town Manager
 Town Hall, Phone: 978-692-5501
 klas@westfordma.gov

Health Department
 Rae Dick, Health Director
 Town Hall, Phone: 978-692-5509
 rdick@westfordma.gov

Conservation Resource Planner / Conservation Commission
 Matthew Salem, Conservation Resource Planner
 Town Hall, Phone: 978-692-5524
 msalem@westfordma.gov

Assessor's Office
 William Naser, Principal Assessor
 Town Hall, Phone: 978-692-5504
 wnaser@westfordma.gov

Economic Development Committee
 Joan Bennett, Chair
 jbennett@westfordma.gov

Town Hall
 55 Main Street, Westford, MA 01886
 Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 www.westfordma.gov

Permitting Timeframe and Licenses/ Permits by Department, Board, or Commission

Please note that there can be a variety of timeframes for any given proposal depending on the type of business, proposed location, and other factors. The timeframes below are approximate, and it is the goal of all departments, boards, and commissions to issue permits as soon as possible. Some timeframes may run concurrently.

Permit and Responsible Board / Department	Estimated Timeframe
Planning Board	
Site Plan Review Special Permit Subdivision Plan Stormwater Management Permit	3 to 6 months
Zoning Board of Appeals	
Comprehensive Permit	3 to 6 months
Special Permit Variance	2 to 4 months
Conservation Commission	
Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) Notice of Intent (NOI) Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD)	2 to 3 months
Building Department	
Building Permit & Commercial Permits (for New Dwellings, Additions, Pools, Decks, Tenant Fit-ups, etc.)	Up to a month
Building Permit for Roof/Siding/Doors/Windows Certificate of Occupancy Plumbing, Gas, Electrical, & Sheet Metal Permits Sign Permit	1 day to 1 week
Board of Health*	
Food Service Establishment Permit Mobile Food Trucks Supermarket & Farmers Market Permits Tobacco Sales Hazardous Materials Storage Well Drilling Permit Body Art Establishment / Practitioner Motels/Hotels Family Camp Ground, Children's Recreation Camps Stabling, Piggery	30-45 days
Sewage Disposal & Septic Systems	45 days
Select Board	
Alcoholic Beverage, Common Victualler, and Other Licenses	4 to 6 weeks
Town Clerk	
Business Certificate / Doing Business As (d/b/a) Form	1 to 5 days

*This is not a complete list of Health Department Permits

Westford Business Permitting Quickstart

An Overview to Assist You in Starting, Buying, or Growing Your Business!



Introduction

We want your business, and we want you to succeed. Westford's goal is to promote a positive permitting experience by outlining some of the steps commonly required to obtain the various licenses, permits, and approvals for starting or expanding your business – along with the estimated timelines whenever a permit or approval is required from a town department, board, or commission.

Where to Start

Your initial point-of-contact for business and non-profit development is the Town Planner who can be reached at 978-692-5524. Once your objectives are understood, you may be guided to other departments for information regarding permitting requirements specific to your business.

We recommend you also begin with either a Pre-Application Meeting with town staff or, for more complex projects that may involve permits from multiple town departments or boards, a meeting with the Westford Technical Review Group, comprised of various town staff and on occasion, a representative from the Economic Development Committee. To request a meeting, please contact the Town Planner.

Public Hearing Procedure

Some permits and approvals require a public hearing before they can be granted. A public hearing provides citizens, especially abutters, with a forum to comment on your project.

The board or commission that issues such permits will schedule the hearing after receiving your application and will place required notices in a local newspaper. These notices are also posted with the Town Clerk and mailed to abutters.

In most cases, you or a representative will be required to attend the hearing to present your application. The board will offer comments and questions, then solicit comments from the public in attendance. The board may continue the hearing to a future meeting to allow for additional discussion or time for applicants to provide more information, or may vote on your project. If approved, written decisions can take from several days to up to two weeks to be issued following the hearing.

Developing Your Business Plan and Securing Financing

A business plan is an important document that can help guide you to make strategic decisions and communicate your business' vision when applying for financing. Your budget and business plan should take the following into account:

- Start-up costs, including licenses and fees
- A budget for short- and long-term operations
- A marketing strategy
- Research into competitors in the region

Westford has many partner organizations that can assist in making your business successful: Westford Economic Development Committee; Westford Business Association; Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce; Merrimack Valley Small Business Center; MassHire Greater Lowell Career Center; MA Small Business Development Center Network, US Small Business Administration.

Getting Started

To help you get started, here are a few specific things every business owner should consider:

Building Permit – If you will be undertaking any construction or modifications of an existing building, you will likely require a Building Permit from the Building Department. Signs also require a Sign Permit from the Building Department.

Business Certificate – Most business owners need a Business Certificate, or Doing Business As (d/b/a). This certificate allows you to open a commercial bank account and helps prevent others from using your business name. The application form is available at the Town Clerk's Office and requires the signature of the Building Commissioner prior to the Town Clerk's issuance of the certificate.

General Bylaws – These include requirements relevant to some types of businesses, such as the sale of alcoholic beverages; food establishments; development projects, including earth removal; hazardous materials storage; farming; and fees.

Zoning Bylaw – Consult the Building Commissioner and Town Planner to make sure that your business/property meets any applicable zoning requirements for your proposal. The Building Commissioner can provide a zoning opinion clarifying what permits may be required (if any) from the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals.

Home Based Business – If you are running a business out of your home, you should consult with the Building Commissioner to determine what type of permitting, if any, is required.

Accessibility Requirements – Depending on your proposal, you may need to consider special requirements for persons with disabilities (e.g., blind, deaf, mobility impaired, etc.). The Building Department can provide you with guidance about the applicability and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (AAB) regulations.

Legal structure – Whether incorporating or forming a limited partnership, the MA Corporations Division requires an excise tax and filing fee. Sole proprietors do not require registration, but you should conduct a name check with the MA Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) – These state regulations are enacted to protect wetland area resources such as lakes, bordering vegetated wetlands, and streams. If you will be undertaking any construction or exterior modifications, and have any wetland resource areas in proximity, you may require a Determination of Applicability or Order of Conditions from the Conservation Commission.

Westford Non-zoning Wetlands Bylaw – These local regulations bolster the state's WPA and create additional requirements for review. If you will be undertaking any construction or exterior modifications, and have any wetland resource areas in proximity, you may require a Determination of Applicability or Order of Conditions from the Conservation Commission.



Town Departments, Boards, & Commissions

Department of Land Use Management (DLUM)

The DLUM contains the following departments and key staff, as supervised by the Director of Land Use Management:

- **Building Department** – Building Commissioner; Records Supervisor; Building, Plumbing, Gas, and Electrical Inspectors
- **Planning Department** – Town Planner, Assistant Planner, Permitting Program Assistant
- **Zoning Department** – Building Commissioner, Town Planner, Assistant Planner, Permitting Program Assistant
- **Conservation Department** – Conservation Resource Planner, Assistant Planner, Permitting Program Assistant

This department provides staff assistance to the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Conservation Commission.

Health Department

Key Staff: Health Director, Assistant Director, Health Agent, Public Health Nurse, MRC Coordinator, Food Inspector, Administrative Assistant

This department provides staff assistance to the Board of Health.

Department of Public Works (DPW)

The DPW contains the following departments and key staff:

- Director of Public Works
 - **Engineering Department** – Town Engineer, Assistant Town Engineer
- This department is an in-house consultant to the town permitting boards which primarily includes the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Conservation Commission
- **Highway Department**
 - **Water Department** – Water Superintendent

Town Clerk's Office

Key Staff: Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk

This Office issues business certificates (or d/b/a's), and administers and issues various licenses on behalf of the Select Board including Class I and II Used and New Car Licenses, Common Victualer Licenses, Liquor Licenses, etc.

Additional Information

For some types of businesses, you may need additional federal and state permitting. Some licenses or permits may need to be renewed on a routine basis.

For questions or more information, please contact the Town Planner.

The complete Westford Business Permitting Guide can be accessed by scanning this QR code or going to this link: <https://www.westfordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7894/Westford-Business-Permitting-Guide-2-20-19>

