

# RESOURCE GUIDE

## for Small Businesses



Small businesses are the foundation of Westford's local economy—and their needs often differ from those of larger corporate neighbors. Whether you are an entrepreneur with a bold new idea, a longtime local business owner, or a company looking to grow in our vibrant community, the Town of Westford is committed to helping your business succeed.

To better serve our business community, the town has launched **Discover Westford**—a new business development initiative designed to make it easier to start, operate, and succeed in Westford. Through Discover Westford, you'll gain streamlined access to key contacts, community partnerships, permitting guidance, networking opportunities, and personal assistance from the Economic Development Committee.

### GETTING STARTED

To help you get started, here are a few specific items 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) 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** - Review requirements relevant to some 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 applicable [zoning requirements](#) for your proposal.
- **Home-Based Business** - Consult with the Building Commissioner to determine if permitting is required.
- **Accessibility Requirements** - Consider special requirements for persons with disabilities (e.g., blind, deaf, mobility impaired, etc.). The [Building Department](#) can provide guidance about 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)** - State regulations 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** - 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](#).



**WHAT KIND OF PERMITS DO YOU NEED?**

The [Assistant Town Manager](#) serves as the point of contact for the town’s land development boards and pre-application and technical review meetings. The director helps applicants navigate a project through the development review process by identifying appropriate zoning and other applicable land development permits, filing fees, and anticipated time frames for each permit. A complete guide to the town’s permitting process may be found on the [town’s website](#).

<b>WILL YOUR BUSINESS...</b>	<b>YOU MAY REQUIRE...</b>	<b>WHO TO CONTACT...</b>
Open a brick-and-mortar store?	A building permit	<a href="#">Town Planner</a> at (978) 692-5524
Locate in existing, new, or planned construction?	A business certificate and an occupancy permit. You may also require a building permit.	<a href="#">Town Clerk</a> at (978) 692-5515 and the <a href="#">Building Commissioner</a> at (978) 692-5527
Occupy office or professional space?	A business certificate and an occupancy permit	<a href="#">Town Clerk</a> at (978) 692-5515 and apply for permit online at: <a href="https://permits.westfordma.gov/newapp.php">https://permits.westfordma.gov/newapp.php</a>
Change the use of property?	A site plan review	<a href="#">Town Planner</a> at (978) 692-5524
Require parking for employees and visitors?	A determination that parking requirements are met	<a href="#">Building Commissioner</a> at (978) 692-5527
Establish a home office?	A business certificate	<a href="#">Town Clerk</a> at (978) 692-5515
Have clients or customers visit the home office?	Accessibility accommodations	<a href="#">Building Commissioner</a> at (978) 692-5527
Sell meals or be involved in food preparation?	Food service establishment permit and a weights and measures seal	<a href="#">Board of Health</a> at (978) 692-5509 <a href="#">Sealer of Weights and Measures</a> at (978) 337-9951
Sell alcoholic beverages?	Alcohol beverage license	<a href="#">Town Clerk</a> at (978) 692-5515
Offer entertainment in any form?	An entertainment license	<a href="#">Town Manager’s Office</a> at (978) 692-5501
Involve medical, dental, or related lab services of any kind?	Review by the Board of Health	<a href="#">Board of Health</a> at (978) 692-5509
Store, process or transport hazardous materials; i.e. chemicals, solvents, etc.,	Hazardous Materials Storage Permit	<a href="#">Board of Health</a> at (978) 692-5509
Require an exterior sign?	Sign permit	<a href="#">Building Commissioner</a> at (978) 692-5527
Require a planned occupancy date?	An occupancy permit and may benefit from an initial pre-application meeting	<a href="#">Building Commissioner</a> at (978) 692-5527 and/or <a href="#">Town Planner</a> at (978) 692-5524
Need to plan for multiple permits?	Technical review	<a href="#">Town Planner</a> at (978) 692-5524
Operate by a special permit?	Special permit	<a href="#">Town Planner</a> at (978) 692-5524
Require a major building expansion of more than 2000 sq ft?	Site plan approval	<a href="#">Town Planner</a> at (978) 692-5524
Require site development?	Site plan approval	<a href="#">Town Planner</a> at (978) 692-5524
Generate water usage greater than 5,000 gallons per day?	Approval from the Water Department	<a href="#">Town Planner</a> at (978) 692-5524
Change the use of the property?	Planning Board review	<a href="#">Town Planner</a> at (978) 692-5524
Require any exterior alterations to the building or the site?	Planning Board review	<a href="#">Town Planner</a> at (978) 692-5524
Require site expansion of more than 1000 sq ft	Planning Board review	<a href="#">Town Planner</a> at (978) 692-5524
Operate within 100 feet of wetlands or in a riverfront area? Impact a priority habitat?	Request for determination (RFD)	<a href="#">Conservation Resource Planner</a> at (978)-692-5524

# Small Business PARTNERS



Businesses in Westford have access to regional and state-sponsored organizations that provide data, research, support, and development opportunities. In tandem with the Town of Westford and Westford Economic Development Committee, Westford businesses have the expert resources and assistance needed to ensure success.

For information, contact the [Assistant Town Manager - Land Use and Economic Development](#).



### [495/MetroWest Partnership](#)

Serves as regional leader in cultivating sustainable growth by coordinating, educating, and advocating for solutions to regional constraints and limited natural resources.



### [Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce](#)

Provides resources, advocacy, information networking, and marketing for members.



### [Massachusetts Executive Office of Economic Development](#)

Prioritizes economic opportunity for residents, collaborative leadership in communities, and an environment that supports job creation and business growth.



### [Massachusetts Office of Business Development](#)

Assists businesses relocating or expanding in Massachusetts with a focus on job creation and retention as well as capital investment.



### [MassDevelopment](#)

Offers unique financing, real estate, and community development solutions to grow businesses, creates opportunity, and energize cities and towns across Massachusetts.



### [Middlesex 3 Coalition](#)

Allows businesses, government entities, and academic institutions to cooperate and solve challenges like transportation, workforce, real estate, infrastructure, permitting, and sustainability to improve economic growth.



### [Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce](#)

Supports and promotes businesses, stimulates economic development, and serves as a resource to improve the quality of life for the region.



### [Small Business Administration](#)

Provides help with SBA funding programs, counseling, federal contracting certifications, and disaster recovery, as well as connects small businesses with partner organizations, lenders, and other community groups.



### [WestfordCAT \(Cable Access Television\)](#)

Dedicated to using public access resources to enhance a free and diverse exchange of ideas and interests that foster community participation and education.