

A Guide to Starting your Business in Roswell



ROSWELL [inc]

building business | connecting community

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617 Atlanta Street
Suite 100
Roswell, GA 30075
678-823-4004
www.roswellinc.org

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Welcome to the City of Roswell!

We are excited to have you here and honored that you have chosen Roswell as the home for your business. We think you've made a great choice. Roswell has been a thriving business district since the 1850's. The city has grown significantly, but never lost sight of its famous historic and community charm. The beauty and livability of Roswell has not gone unnoticed; Roswell has received numerous accolades, including being named in the Top 100 Best Places to Live by CNN, the 3rd Best Places to Raise Your Family by Former's and the 18th Safest City by City Crime Rankings.

We Are Here To Help Build Your Business and Connect to the Community

Roswell Inc is the primary resource in the City of Roswell for economic development and business assistance. Numerous departments within the City of Roswell, specifically the Community Development Department, are also committed to helping you find the ideal location so we can get your business up and running. There are a few specific requirements our City's businesses must meet, but do not be daunted or discouraged. There are also plenty of resources and services to guide you through the process.

This guide is intended to serve as an easy to understand general overview of what you'll need to know and where assistance may be found when opening a business in Roswell. We describe the process in a sequence of steps, though be aware that some steps may (and should) be taken simultaneously. We also include a few helpful tips and contact information to help expedite the process.

While setting up your business here, we would like you to be aware of a few things. Naturally, the City has certain standards and regulations in place to ensure quality development and safety. These include:

- Zoning Approvals - Required to ensure that the type of business and the buildings are appropriate for the neighborhood. Other permits may be required for specific business types, such as, but not limited to restaurants, residences you plan to convert into businesses and businesses located in a historic area.
- Building Permits - Required to ensure compliance with State building and life safety requirements.
- Certificate of Occupancy - Ensures that all the required improvements have been met and the building is ready to be occupied by your business.
- Sign Permits - Requires for identification of your business.
- Business License - Required to operate a business. There are two types of business licenses in Roswell:
 - Home Occupation
 - Commercial Business Registration

If you have questions, concerns, or you find that additional assistance is required, please contact Roswell Inc at:

617 Atlanta Street
Suite 100
Roswell, GA 30075
678-823-4004
www.roswellinc.org

Additional information on specific processes or permits is also available through the City of Roswell Community Development Department at:

38 Hill Street
Suite G-30
Roswell, GA 30075
770-641-3780
www.roswellgov.com

8th largest city
in Georgia



Step 1

Determine a Location Strategy

As the lead agency for economic and business development in the City of Roswell, Roswell Inc is equipped to provide guidance in finding the right location as well as advice on available incentives that may benefit your business.

The first step is to formulate a location strategy. A location strategy is as vital an element to success as a business plan or marketing strategy. There are numerous items to consider when evaluating what location and type of property will best complement your short and long term model. While each business is a unique entity with unique needs, there are a few common considerations that will play a role in choosing the best location; the Roswell Inc has created a checklist to help aid in this decision. To obtain information on permitting and zoning matters, please contact the Community Development Department.



****Location Checklist:**

Zoning:

- Is the location zoned for this type of business
 - Street parking
 - Sound ordinances (relevant to restaurant and nightclub type businesses)

Permitting:

- Are there any specific permitting issues that are required

Location:

- Foot Traffic: if foot traffic is important to your business, does the area provide a high enough volume for success
- Drive-By Traffic/Signage: if a key factor in your marketing plan is sending your message via storefront signage
 - Are there signage restrictions that would impede signage view-ability
 - Are there signage restrictions that would not allow the signage to be illuminated (viewable in the evening)
- Parking:
 - Does the location provide ample parking for clientele and employees
 - Public Transit:
 - Is the location convenient to public transportation; this may be more important with regards to staffing vs. clientele
- Anchor:
 - Is there an “Anchor” business in the neighborhood that will help increase traffic? For example a restaurant would gain traffic if located next to a movie theater

If you have questions, concerns, or you find that additional assistance is required, please contact Roswell Inc or the City of Roswell Community Development Department.

***this checklist is intended to be used as a basic guideline - each proprietor should formulate an individual checklist based upon specific needs*

Step 2

Choose a Building or Property for your Business

Now that you have a location strategy it is time to choose a location. You may want to enlist the help of a real estate broker, or check with a Roswell Inc representative at 678-823-4004 for broker listings.

Once you have identified a site that meets your location and budgetary strategy, it is time to ensure the business is approved for the chosen site. Do not move forward with any purchase or leasehold obligations until you have confirmed the location is approved for your type of business.

Many Roswell businesses are operated within a home or residence. We refer to these businesses as “Home Occupations.” If this applies to you, keep in mind that there are specific requirements associated with the operation of a home-based business.



Tip: Always check with your apartment manager or landlord before applying to the City and starting a home-based business.



Tip: It is important that you collect the information above BEFORE signing a lease or purchase property, so you can be sure the location you choose allows your type of business.

Step 3

Review Planning and Zoning

Is the site appropriately zoned for your business? Has the site/ building been used for this type of business in the past? Your business may have unique requirements or require certain permits or approvals. Staff in the Planning and Zoning Division (P&Z) will be available to help you through all the steps necessary and provide you with the following:

- Identification of the steps that match your specific needs
- Clarification on the sequence of steps
- Advice on zoning requirements, including information on parking, historic districts, signs and any other requirements laid out by the City of Roswell Unified Development Code
- Processing the schedule - if some zoning approval is needed
- Contacts in other departments
- Meetings with key City personnel
- Help identifying and resolving problems

Of course, each business is unique, so the steps may vary. You will be advised as to which steps are required for your particular business and how to ensure a speedy process.

Contact:

Community Development Department
Planning & Zoning Division
38 Hill Street, Suite G-30
Roswell, GA 30075
770-641-3774
www.roswellgov.com



Step 4

Review Building Code Regulations

Your specific business needs may include the alteration of walls, structural elements and/or specialized equipment within the building; you may even want to add an expansion. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of the building occupants, it may be necessary to make some property modifications in accordance with the Building Code and other City requirements.



Tip: To determine what modifications or renovations your specific process will require, or what may be required by Code, a meeting with the appropriate staff can be scheduled. This will allow you to decide whether you can afford the cost and time required for making any commitments to the location you have selected. In some instances, it may be necessary to hire a design professional (engineer or architect) to prepare plans, drawings, etc.

Before starting any construction work, be sure to obtain any required construction permit(s). The Chief Building Official is available to meet with you to answer questions relative to permit requirements and applications. The number of permits required is dependent on the type and scope of work being performed. Additional permits may be required for each major trade doing work on your property. Those permits include, but are not limited to:

- Building Permits
- Mechanical Permits
- Electrical Permits
- Plumbing Permits

During the construction phase, the City will send inspectors to your site to perform periodic inspections to ensure that the work is done in accordance with applicable local and state laws regarding building codes and approved plans. To schedule an inspection or check results call 770-641-3784. When construction is complete, your contractor should schedule a final inspection of the work. After the final inspection is approved, you will be issued a Certificate of Occupancy that will allow you to occupy the building.

Contact:

Community Development Department
Permits & Inspection
38 Hill Street, Suite G-30
Roswell, GA 30075
404-641-3780
www.roswellgov.com



Tip: Because any number of factors could delay the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, the City strongly recommends that you do not schedule or announce grand openings prior to receiving the C.O.



Tip: Opening a business in the historic district or in any older building often poses unique building code challenges. Please be sure to arrange a walk-through of the building with a member of the Building & Inspection staff prior to beginning work so any unanticipated challenges may be minimized.

Step 5

Other City and State Regulations

In addition to local requirements, some businesses (daycare, restaurants, etc.) are subject to separate State regulations that require obtaining additional operating permits. The following are examples of some potential regulations:

Restaurants only:

Fulton County Health & Wellness Department
404-332-1801
www.fultoncountyga.gov/dhw-home

Bakeries & Cafés:

Department of Agriculture
404-565-3647 or Toll Free 800-353-5852
www.agr.georgia.gov

State Licenses:

For state license requirements, contact:

Georgia's Secretary of State Licensing Board Division
237 Coliseum Drive
Macon, GA 31217-3858
478-207-2440
www.sos.ga.gov/plb

Day Care:

State License for Daycare
404-657-5562
www.dec.state.ga.gov

Alcoholic Beverage License:

If you plan to sell alcoholic beverage in your place of business, you will need to obtain a license from the City of Roswell;

Legal Department
38 Hill Street, Suite 110
Roswell, GA 30075
770-594-6185
www.roswellgov.com

Sign/Banner Permit:

Temporary Sign Permits for banners and grand openings are allowed, but they must be approved and permitted.

Community Development Department
38 Hill Street
SuiteG-30
Roswell, GA 30075
404-641-3780
www.roswellgov.com

Step 6

Obtain a Federal Employee Identification Number

A Federal Employee Identification Number (EIN) is required for most businesses. Only sole proprietors with no employees and/or no Keogh plan are exempt from having an EIN. To obtain an EIN, complete IRS Form SS-4, available from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

Contact:

IRS
404-338-7962
www.irs.gov

41.95 square miles in size



Step 7

Obtain a Georgia State Tax Number

The State of Georgia requires businesses to obtain a State Tax Number. All information can be obtained at the Georgia Department of Revenue.

Contact:

Georgia Tax Center
1-877-423-6711 - Option 2
www.georgiataxinfo.org



Population
of 88,346

Easy access to four
state highways,
including GA-400

Step 8

Obtain a Business Registration

All businesses (commercial and home occupation) must be registered with the City prior to beginning operations. A Community Development representative can assist you in registering your business and completing the business registration application. Please note that even independent contractors, self-employed individuals, businesses with no employees and part-time businesses may also be subject to registration.

Contact:

Community Development Department
Business Registration Division
38 Hill Street, Suite G-30
Roswell, GA 30075
770-594-6235

As a business operating in the City, you may be subject to various taxes including the ad valorem property tax and the occupation tax. The occupation tax is based on the number of employees. **Roswell completely exempts inventory from ad valorem taxes.**



Key Resources, Incentives and Other Considerations

Resources

Roswell Inc -

If you encounter questions during startup and need assistance, contact Roswell Inc at 770-823-4004.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) is an excellent resource for small businesses. Contact SBA at 404-331-0100 or www.sba.gov regarding these frequently asked questions:

- What legal aspects should I consider?
- How can I find qualified employees?
- What are the alternatives in financing a business?
- What do I have to do to get a loan?
- What financial statements will I need?
- What does marketing involve?
- What is my market potential?
- What about advertising?
- Are some locations better than others?
- Is it better to lease or buy my site or building?

Small Business Development Center - provides business consultation services. Consultants can help:

- Develop and update business plans
- Identify sources of capital
- Set up record-keeping systems and analyze financial records
- Identify foreign markets for products and services
- Conduct specialized research geared to specific needs of the business owner
- Create marketing strategies and advertising campaigns



- Explore suitable ways to conform with government regulations
- Increase opportunities to sell to federal, state, and local governments
- Analyze statistical and demographic data

Call the SBDC at Georgia State University at 404-413-7830 or visit www.georgiasbdc.org for assistance.

Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce (GNRCC)

770-993-8806
www.gnfcc.com

Progress Partners (Division of GNFC)

1-866-450-5770
www.progresspartnersatlanta.com

Roswell Incentives

Roswell Opportunity Zone Job Tax Credits

Roswell’s Opportunity Zone program offers the highest and most user-friendly job tax credits in the state! Businesses are eligible for a job tax credit of \$3,500 per job for five years after creating two net new jobs.

Fee Reduction Incentives

The purpose of the City of Roswell Economic Development Incentive Policy is to provide incentives for the retention and/or expansion of existing businesses located within the City of Roswell and to encourage the location or relocation of new targeted businesses within the City. The appropriate purpose and use of incentives is to broaden and diversify the tax base, create new job opportunities for the citizens of the City of Roswell, and promote the economic growth and welfare of the City. This policy is intended to complement incentive programs offered by the State of Georgia.

Freeport Exemptions (Inventory)

Roswell voters have elected to exempt the following types of commercial and industrial inventory

Raw materials and goods-in-process of manufacture or production – 100% exemption

Finished goods produced in Georgia within the last 12 months – 100% exemption

Finished goods stored in Georgia within the last 12 months and destined for shipment out-of-state – 100% exemption

Distribution centers and warehouse inventories are exempt from property taxes if the inventory is destined to be shipped out of the state.

State of Georgia Incentives

To learn about State of Georgia Incentives, visit www.georgia.org.

Other Considerations

Some other questions to consider before starting your business include:

- Is the proposed site readily accessible?
- How is the circulation and traffic flow in the area?
- Are there similar businesses in the area?
- How is waste disposal handled?
- What source of income will I have through start up?

Please, do not hesitate to seek assistance. We want your business to flourish and grow! Welcome to Roswell, a great place to do business.

Additional Resources

Business Registration

Community Development
Department
770-641-3780
www.roswellgov.com

Economic Development

Roswell Inc
770-823-4004
www.roswellinc.org

Greater North Fulton Chamber
770-993-8806
www.gnfcc.com

Progress Partners
1-866-450-5770
www.progresspartnersatlanta.com

Georgia Certificate of Registration

Georgia Department of Revenue
Sales & Use Tax Division
1-877-423-6711
www.etax.dor.ga.gov

Georgia Withholding Tax Number

Georgia Dept. of Revenue,
Taxpayer Services Division
1-877-423-6711
www.etax.dor.ga.gov

Incorporation, Trademarks / Service Mark Registration

Georgia Secretary of State,
Corporations Division
Trademark
404-656-2881
www.sos.ga.gov

Incorporations
404-656-2817
www.sos.ga.gov

U.S. Dept. of Commerce,
Trademark Office
1-800-786-9199 Option #1
www.uspto.gov

Industry-Specific Licensing

Georgia Dept. of Revenue,
Alcohol & Tobacco Tax Unit
404-417-4900
www.etax.dor.ga.gov

Sales & Use Tax Division,
Registration Unit
1-877-423-6711
www.etax.dor.ga.gov

Georgia Dept. of Agriculture
404-656-3685
www.agr.georgia.gov

Health & Wellness Dept., Fulton
County
404-612-4000
www.fultoncountyga.gov/dhw-
home

Minimum Wage Requirements

U.S. Dept. of Labor Waged Hour
Division
1-866-487-9243
www.dol.gov/whd/

Georgia Dept. of Labor,
Inspection Division
404-656-3018
www.dol.state.ga.us

Miscellaneous

Better Business Bureau
404-766-0875
www.bbb.org/atlanta

Other Government Agencies

Georgia Dept. of Economic
Development
404-962-4000
www.georgia.org

U.S. Dept. of the Census, SE
Office
404-730-3832
www.census.gov

U.S. Dept. of Commerce
404-730-3833
www.commerce.gov

U.S. Government Bookstore
202-512-0132
www.bookstore.spo.gov

Other Related Organizations

American Marketing
Association
770-270-0619
www.ama.org

Georgia Dept. of Labor, North
Metro Career Center
404-679-5200
www.dol.state.ga.us

Georgia Institute of
Technology, Enterprise
Innovation Institute
404-894-2222
www.innovate.gatech.edu

Quick Start
404-253-2800
www.georgiaquickstart.org

Roswell Community Development

Planning & Zoning (signage)
770-641-3774
www.roswellgov.com

Building & Inspections
770-641-3780
www.roswellgov.com

Fire Marshal
770-641-3730
www.roswellgov.com

Small Business Administration

Information (All Depts.)
404-331-0100
www.roswellgov.com

Service Corp of Retired
Executive (SCORE)
404-331-0121
www.atlanta.score.org

Small Business Development (and Outreach) Centers

University of Georgia SBDC,
Atlanta (GSU)
404-413-7830
www.georgiasbdc.org

Startups and Expansions

Georgia Dept. of Community
Affairs
404-679-4940
www.dca.state.ga.us

Georgia Institute of
Technology, Advanced
Technology Development
Center (ATDC)
404-894-3575
www.atdc.org

Federal, State, and Local Licensing and Registration Requirements

Requirements	Application	Contact Agencies
Certificate of Occupancy	New Buildings or new uses of existing facilities/buildings	City of Roswell Community Development Dept., Building and Inspection Division
Federal Employment Identification Number (EIN)	All businesses	Internal Revenue Service
Georgia Certificate of Registration	All foreign-based companies	Georgia Secretary of State, Corporations Division
Georgia Certificate of Registration	Persons, firms or corporations selling, soliciting, manufacturing, etc. tangible personal property	Georgia Dept. of Revenue, Sales & Use Tax Division Centralized Taxpayer Registration Unit
Georgia Employer Status Report	All employers doing business in Georgia	Georgia Dept. of Labor, Unemployment Insurance Division
Incorporation, Trademark/Service Mark Registration	Optional for any business	Georgia Secretary of State, Corporations Division
Industrial Permit	Industrial businesses requiring permits for wastewater, air and water emissions, solid and hazardous wastes, etc.	Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division

Requirements	Application	Contact Agencies
Industry-specific Licensing	1. Liquor, beer and wine businesses 2. Cigar or cigarette dealers 3. Motor fuel or motor carrier fuel distributors 4. Food processing or grocery sales operations 5. Eating establishments	Georgia Department of Revenue, 1-2. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Unit 3. Sales and Use Tax Division Registration Unit 4. Georgia Dept. of Agriculture 5. Fulton County Health and Wellness Department
Business Registration	All businesses	City of Roswell Community Development/Business Registration
Trade Name Registration	Any business operating under a name other than that of the owner	County Clerk of Superior Court

Disclaimer: Although all information in this document has been carefully compiled to ensure maximum accuracy, Roswell Inc and the City of Roswell will not accept responsibility for errors, omissions or other inaccuracies. Roswell Inc and the City of Roswell does not assume responsibility for the quality of advice or assistance provided by any of the resources listed in this document.

Median age -
37.2

Median household
income - \$84,595

2010 Census

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