

FORT BEND BUSINESS Start-Up Guide

The Advocate for Business Excellence in Fort Bend County



WELCOME TO THE NATION'S FASTEST GROWING COUNTY

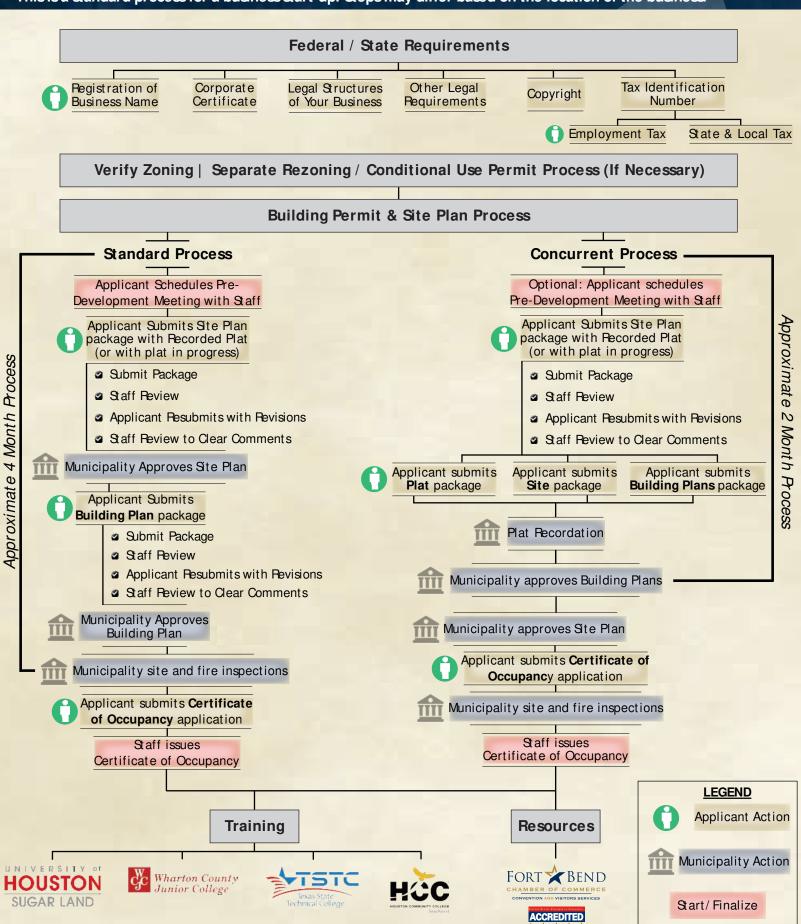
The Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce would like to welcome you to Fort Bend County and assist you in your quest to create a successful business. The Fort Bend Business Start-Up Guide is a resource for business and entrepreneurs of all types; whether you are looking at Fort Bend County as a possible location for your existing business or are thinking about starting a new business in Fort Bend, this guide can assist you in finding the proper resources. It contains information about contacting agencies, obtaining permits and licenses, and explains the different types of business structures that exist in Texas.

Fort Bend County has much to offer and is a prime location for your business. With a population of over 700,000, Fort Bend County is home to seventeen cities, small to large, each with its own unique flavor and outstanding characteristics. Fort Bend is the fastest growing county of the ten largest counties in Texas and is consistently ranked in the Top 3% of the Nation's counties in 5 key demographic measures. A recent study published by Rice University identifies Fort Bend County as the single most diverse county in the United States. Fort Bend is known for high academic standards and an incredibly skilled and educated workforce. Our business climate is flourishing and Fort Bend County is an ideal area for your business to grow.

We wish you much success and prosperity! Your Fort Bend Chamber Representatives stand ready to assist in any way we can.

BUSINESS START-UP PROCESS

This is a standard process for a business start-up. Steps may differ based on the location of the business.



LEGAL ASPECTS OF STARTING A BUSINESS

Deciding what form of legal entity your business will take is an important decision. This will have an impact on the future of your business including your protection under law and the rules and regulations that will apply to your business. It is recommended that before you enter into any of these forms of business, a professional tax consultant, accountant and/or attorney should be consulted before determining which legal business structure is most appropriate for the requirements of the business and owner(s). After determining the most suitable legal structure, please contact the Secretary of State to complete the necessary registration requirements.

THERE ARE SIX BASIC BUSINESS STRUCTURES IN TEXAS:

- Sole Proprietorship
- General Partnership
- Limited Partnership
- Corporation (C or S)
- Limited Liability Company (LLC)
- Registered Limited Liability Partnership

Sole Proprietorship

A sole proprietorship exists when a single individual operates a business owning all assets, is personally liable for all debts and business ownership is limited to the life of the individual proprietor. It makes no legal distinction between personal and business debts and does not require a separate income tax return.

General Partnership

A general partnership exists when two or more individuals or businesses join to operate on business. Under the general partnership, a separate business entity exists, but creditors can still look to the partners' personal assets for satisfaction. General partners often share equally in assets and liabilities. It requires an annual partnership income tax return, separate from the partner's personal returns.

Limited Partnership

A limited partnership is a partnership formed by two or more individuals or entities and having one or more general partners and one or more limited partners have limited debt obligations.

Corporation

A corporation is created when two or more individuals, partnerships or owners join together to form a separate entity for the purpose of operating a business in Texas. A corporation has its own legal identity, separate from its owners. The corporation safeguards the business owners' personal assets. Taxation of the corporation varies depending on the type of corporation formed: C Corporation or S Corporation. A C Corporation is often taxed at a rate higher than an individual. The owners are not taxed personally for profits, however, the owners do pay personal taxes on any salaries and/or dividends and the corporation is also taxed on the dividends. An S Corporation may personally deduct losses the same as a partnership. It also offers alternative methods of distributing the business income to the owners with no added cost to the incorporation process.

Limited Liability Company (LLC)

The limited liability company (LLC) is an unincorporated business entity, which shares some of the aspects of S corporations and limited partnerships, yet has more flexibility than some of the more traditional business entities. The LLC provides owners with limited liability and pass-through tax advantages without the restrictions imposed on S corporations and limited partnerships.

Registered Limited Liability Partnership

A registered limited liability partnership is similar to a general partnership, but differs in that a partner is not individually liable, under some circumstances, for debts and obligations of the partnership arising from errors, omissions, negligence, incompetence or malfeasance committed in the course of partnership business by other partners.



You must contact these agencies:

Fort Bend County Clerk

Permit: "DBA" or Assumed Name

An Assumed name, or DBA, is required to be filed in each county in which you do business. A DBA is a public notice – it does not permit others from using the same name.

301 Jackson Street Richmond, TX 77476 281-341- 8685 cclerk@fortbendcountytx.gov www.fortbendcountytx.gov

Texas State Comptroller

Permit: Texas Sales Tax Permit

Texas levies a 6.25% sales tax on tangible personal property, some types of labor and services. A sales tax permit and sales tax bond is required of all businesses selling, renting, leasing, or providing taxable items or services. Corporations are required to pay franchise taxes. Local taxing jurisdictions (cities, counties, special purpose districts and transit authorities) can also impose up to a 2% sales and use tax for a maximum combined rate of 8.25%. Also collected are taxes on amusement machines, motor fuels, minerals, vehicle tires & batteries and motor vehicles. Operating without a valid sales tax permit is a crime and is punishable for up to a \$500 fine for each day in operation without permit.

Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts Lyndon B. Johnson State Office Building 111 East 17th Street Austin, Texas 78774 1–800–252–5555 www.comptroller.texas.gov www.comptroller.texas.gov/taxpermit

Field Offices in Houston:

Houston Northwest 1919 North Loop West, Ste. 510 Houston, Texas 77008-1354 713-426-8200

Houston Southwest 7011 Harwin Drive, Ste. 186 Houston, Texas 77036-2151 713-783-1665

Internal Revenue Service

Filing: Employer ID Number, Federal Tax ID Number 281-721-7021 www.irs.gov

Houston (Downtown) 1919 Smith Street Houston, TX 77002

Houston (NW) 12941 I-45N Houston, TX 77060 Houston (SE) 8876 I-45 S Houston, TX 77017

Houston (SW) 8701 S. Gessner Houston, TX 77074



File an Employer ID Number (EIN) Application Form if you pay wages to one or more employees. Sole proprietors with no employees may use their social security number. Corporations, partnerships or non-profit 5O1(c)(3) organizations must have EIN's – ask for Publication 583, Publication 1635 and the "Employer's Tax Guide."

Fort Bend County Appraisal District

Filing: Rendition of Business Personal Property

Owners of business personal property as of January 1st of each year must file a rendition, a listing of business personal property assets, between January 1st and April 15th of every year. Assets include inventory items, raw materials, lease-hold improvements, machinery and other equipment, furniture and fixtures, computer equipment and vehicles used for business purposes. Property must be located in the taxing jurisdiction for more than a temporary period.

2801 B.F. Terry Blvd. Rosenberg, TX 77471 281-344-8623 www.fbcad.org

If a business is operated in a home, review the deed restrictions and contact the homeowner's association. You can obtain a copy of your deed restrictions through the Fort Bend County Clerk at 281–341–8685.



Fort Bend County Courthouse

Contact the number listed below for permit, license and regulatory information required by the city in which you plan to run your business.

CITY OF MEADOWS PLACE

One Troyan Drive Meadows Place, TX 77477 281-983-2950 www.cityofmeadowsplace.org



Alarm System, Application | Building Permits | Certificate of Compliance/Occupancy | Commercial Permits | Development Plat | Electrical Licenses | Food Dealer/Health Permits | Government Procurement | Permits & Code Enforcement | Planning & Zoning | Purchasing | Wastewater Capacity Reservation

CITY OF MISSOURI CITY

1522 Texas Parkway Missouri City, TX 77489 281-403-8500 www.missouricitytx.gov



Building Permits | Certificate of Compliance/Occupancy | Commercial Permits | Development Plat Electrical Permit | Food Dealer/Health Permits | Permits & Code Enforcement | Government Procurement Planning & Zoning | Purchasing

CITY OF RICHMOND

402 Morton Street Richmond, TX 77469 281-342-5456 www.richmondtx.gov



Alarm System, Application | Building Permits | Certificate of Compliance/Occupancy | Development Plat Electrical Licenses | Food Dealer/Health Permits | Permits & Code Enforcement | Development Plat Government Procurement | Planning & Zoning | Purchasing | Police Department Permits Wastewater Capacity Reservation | Commercial Permits (281-232-6871)

CITY OF ROSENBERG

2110 Fourth Street Rosenberg, TX 77471 832-595-3300 www.rosenbergtx.gov



Alarm System, Application (832-595-3500) | Building Permits | Certificate of Compliance/Occupancy Commercial Permits | Food/Dealer Health Permits | Government Procurement | Permits & Code Enforcement Planning | Purchasing | Wastewater Capacity Reservation | Police Department Permits (832-595-3700)

CITY OF STAFFORD

2610 South Main Stafford, TX 77477 281-261-3900 www.cityofstafford.com



Alarm System, Application (281-261-3950) | Police Department Permits | Building Permits (281-261-3940)
Certificate of Compliance/Occupancy | Commercial Permits | Electrical Licenses | Food/Dealer Health Permits
Permits & Code Enforcement | Planning & Zoning | Development Plat | Government Procurement
Purchasing | Wastewater Capacity Reservation

CITY OF SUGAR LAND

2700 Town Center Blvd. Sugar Land, TX 77479 281-275-2700 www.sugarlandtx.gov



Alarm System, Application | Building Permits | Certificate of Compliance/Occupancy | Commercial Permits | Electrical Licenses | Food/Dealer Health Permits | Government Procurement | Permits & Code Enforcement | Planning & Zoning | Development Plat | Purchasing | Police Department Permits | Wastewater Capacity Reservation

Other Resources

Texas Workforce Commission

www.twc.state.tx.us Employers ID # 1-800-252-3642

Texas New Hire Program

www.twc.state.tx.us/businesses/new-hire-reporting New Hire Reporting 512-463-2222

Texas Workers' Compensation Commission

www.tdi.state.tx.us/wc Workers' Compensation General Information 512-676-6000 OR 1-800-578-4677

To report Unsafe Working Conditions or Create a Workers' Compensation Claim

1-800-252-7031

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

www.eeoc.gov Information regarding Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1991, Americans with Disabilities Act, Equal Pay Act of 1963, Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

OSHA-U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration

www.osha.gov Safety Regulations 281-286-0583 OR 1-800-321-6742

Immigration and Naturalization Service

www.uscis.gov 1-800-375-5283 Employee eligibility verification of those authorized to work in the U.S.

U.S. Department of Labor

www.dol.gov 1-866-487-2365 Information regarding minimum wage requirements, overtime, and child labor recording under the Fair Labor Standards Act

Secretary of State, State of Texas

www.sos.state.tx.us 512-463-5555 Texas trademark information

United States Patent and Trademark Office

www.uspto.gov 1-800-786-9199

Copyright Office, Library of Congress

www.copyright.gov 202-707-3000



Business Development & Training Agencies

University of Houston Small Business Development Center - Houston

www.sbdc.uh.edu

281-491-8086: Fort Bend Office 713-752-8444: Houston Office

2302 Fannin, Ste. 200

Houston, TX 77002

University of Houston campuses offer free business consulting and fee-based training seminars to help entrepreneurs start, manage and grow their companies.

University of Houston Fort Bend County

Small Business Development Center - Missouri City www.fortbend.sbdcnetwork.net 281-499-9787 2440 Texas Parkway, Ste. 220 Missouri City, Texas 77489

University of Houston Fort Bend County

Small Business Development Center – Rosenberg www.fortbend.sbdcnetwork.net 281–341–5027 117 Lane Drive, Ste. 31 Rosenberg, Texas 77471

University of Houston Fort Bend County

Small Business Development Center – Katy www.fortbend.sbdcnetwork.net 281–717–1140 1773 Westborough, Ste. 226 Katy, Texas 77449

IRS Small Business Tax Workshops

www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&-Self-Employed/
Texas-Tax-Workshops-Meetings-and-Seminars

Offers free Small Business Tax Workshops weekly covering business tax returns, tax benefits, and obligations.

Houston Community College System - Small Business Resources

www.hccs.edu/continuing-education/ www.hccs.edu/district/departments/small-business-entrepreneurship 713-718-8267 3100 Main Street, Suite 12E14 Houston, TX 77002

Provides online workforce development and continuing education services for businesses and their employees.



Business Development & Training Agencies Continued

U.S. Small Business Administration Houston District Office

www.sba.gov/tx/houston 713-773-6500 8701 S. Gessner Dr., Ste. 1200 Houston, TX 77074

SBA helps Americans start and grow their small business through its main programs of counseling, contracting (doing business with the federal government), and access to capital.

- Free counseling and low-cost workshops are offered by SBA and its resource partners (SCORE, Small Business Development Centers, and the Women's Business Center).
- SBA lenders provide small businesses with an array of financing options from the smallest needs in micro-lending to substantial debt and equity investments.
- SBA with other federal agencies award 23 percent in prime contract dollars to small businesses. SBA contracting programs include 8(a) Business Development, HUBZone, Woman Owned Small Business (WOSB), Economically Disadvantaged Woman-Owned Small Business (EDWOSB), Small Disadvantaged Business, and Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business.

SCORE - Service Corps of Retired Executives

www.houston.score.org 713-487-6565 8701 S. Gessner Dr., Ste. 1200 Houston, TX 77074

A resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the Houston Chapter has 13O+ volunteer business people who share their expertise across 62 industries. Through free 1-on-1 business mentoring and no fee or low cost workshops, SCORE mentors provide the education and tools necessary to help small businesses succeed.

WBC - Womens Business Center

www.wbea-texas.org/womens-business-center 713-681-9232 9800 Northwest Freeway, Ste. 120 Houston, TX 77092

The Houston Women's Business Center (WBC) is committed to inspiring and empowering women who want to start or expand their business. The WBC provides support to entrepreneurs in education, scholarships, and matchmaking with corporate and government contracting offices.

COUNTY-WIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS



JACK BELT

Exectuive Vice President
281-242-000

jbelt@fortbendcounty.org

Greater Fort Bend

Economic Development Council

One Fluor Daniel Dr.

Sugar Land, TX 77478

www.fortbendcounty.com



JOE ESCH
Director, Economic Development
281-403-8695
jesch@missouricitytx.gov
City of Missouri City
1522 Texas Parkway
Missouri City, TX 77459

www.missouricitytx.gov



ANGELA FRITZ
Director. Economic Development
281-346-8874
afritz@fulsheartexas.org
City of Fulshear
30603 FM 1093
Fulshear, TX 770441
www.fulsheartexas.gov



BOB GRAF
Consultant
281-983-2931
meadowsplaceedc@yahoo.com
City of Meadows Place
1 Trojan Dr.
Meadows Place, TX 77477
www.cityofmeadowsplace.org



LANCE LACOUR

President/CEO
281-396-2200

lancelacour@katyedc.org

Katy Economic Development Council
6301 S. Stadium Dr.

Katy, TX 77494

www.katyedc.org



Bret Gardella
Director, Economic Development
832-595-3339
bgardella@rosenbergtx.gov
City of Rosenberg
3825 Hwy. 36 S.
Rosenberg, TX 77471
www.rosenbergtx.gov



CAMERON GOODMAN

Director, Economic Development
281-342-5456
cgoodman@richmondtx.gov

City of Richmond
402 Morton St.

Richmond, TX 77469

www.richmondecodev.com



ELIZABETH HUFF
Director, Economic Development
281-275-2777
ehuff@sugarlandtx.gov
City of Sugar Land
2700 Town Center Blvd.

Sugar Land, TX 77478

www.sugarlandecodev.com



PATTI WORFE
Director, Economic Development
281-261-3907
pworfe@staffordtx.gov
City of Stafford
2610 S. Main
Stafford, TX 77477
www.staffordtxedc.com

FORT BEND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE RECOMMENDED READING FOR SUCCESS

Book Titles

7 Habits of Highly Successful People Stephen R. Covey

Sean Patrick

Joseph McCormack

John Jantsch

Jocko Willink & Leif Babin

Rod Brace

Chris McChesney, Sean Covey & Jim Huling

Authors

Adam Grant Jim Collins

Jim Collins Jim Collins

Bob Bura & John David Mann

Keith Ferrazzi Orrin Woodward Patrick Lencioni Darren Hardy

Seth Godin

Michael E. Gerber Peter F. Drucker

Bob Burg & John David Mann

Douglas Conant & Mette Norgaard

Seth Godin Keith Ferrazzi

Who's Got Your Back Ken Blanchard

Awakening Your Inner Genius

Brief **Duct Tape Marketing**

Extreme Ownership

Four Conversations

Four Disciplines of Execution

Give & Take

Good to Great

Great by Choice

How the Mighty Fall

It's Not About You

Never Fat Alone

Resolved: 13 Resolutions For Life

The Advantage

The Compound Effect

The Dip

The E Myth Revisited

The Five Most Important Questions

The Go-Giver **Touch Points**

Tribes

Zap the Gaps

WHAT IS THE FORT BEND CHAMBER?

At the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce, we are proud to partner in the success of Fort Bend County ensuring that Fort Bend is the foremost location for economic development and business prosperity. In 2014, the United States Chamber of Commerce awarded the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce with 5-Star Accreditation for its sound policies, effective organizational procedures, and positive impact on the community.

Here, you can meet premier business leaders in the County and have access to a multitude of opportunities to network, further your career, hear success stories, stay up to date on community and industry news and socialize. As the voice of business in Fort Bend County, the Chamber strives to understand the legislative issues important to our members.

For over 4O years, the Fort Bend Chamber has diligently fulfilled its mission as the advocate for business excellence in Fort Bend. We create, enhance and promote the thriving economic environment in which we work and live. Through available Divisions, we bring value to our members.

Graduates of our sought-after Fort Bend Leadership Forum program are serving in leadership positions throughout our community. Its sister program, the Leadership Excellence for Nonprofits builds organizational effectiveness within our philanthropic community. High school students have the unique opportunity to experience how volunteerism and philanthropy coexist to serve the community in our Youth in Philanthropy program. The Chamber Young Professionals Division ensures that the Chamber is delivering value to the future leaders of Fort Bend County.

Through the Fort Bend Convention & Visitors Services, we provide our visitors and new residents resources that highlight the great amenities and attractions in Fort Bend County. Under the Chamber's banner, the Farmers Market at Imperial operates year-round and is the largest certified farmers market in Texas. Not to be outdone, the Sugar Land Wine & Food Affair attracts thousands of wine and food aficionados to our area each year.

As a Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce member, this is just a snapshot of what you have access to, all right here in one of America's most dynamic and fastest growing counties, where success is just around the Bend.

M.A.I.N. BENEFITS OF JOINING FORT BEND CHAMBER

Marketing tools to highlight your company on a regional platform, deliver your message to customers and community stakeholders, and establish your brand presence in association with the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce.

Advocate on behalf of Fort Bend businesses to create a catalyst for economic prosperity, tourism and community involvement.

Information to keep you in touch, informed, involved and an integral part of the Fort Bend community.

Networking to allow valuable connections be made and build collegial business relationships on the executive level.

FORT BEND CHAMBER BUSINESS DIRECTORY

The business cards below are Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce members that have agreed to provide an initial consultation meeting at no charge. Please use them as a resource to starting your business.

Michael J. Dobert, SPHR, SHRM-SCP

Principal/ Owner

Sugar Land, Texas
O: 281.494.2985
M: 281.889.9075
mdobert@hrinalignment.com
www.hrinalignment.com

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Vice President | Banking Center Manager ppowell@capitalbanktx.com | NMLS #1454227

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FORT BEND CHAMBER BUSINESS DIRECTORY

The business cards below are Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce members that have agreed to provide an initial consultation meeting at no charge. Please use them as a resource to starting your business.



Tariq Zafar | Partner 77 Sugar Creek Center Blvd., Suite 401 Sugar Land, TX 77478

Phone: 281.340.2074 | TZafar@wongfleming.com



FARHA AHMED

ATTORNEY

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