



ROCKY MOUNT  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
THE CENTER OF IT ALL

## Business Development Guide



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## Introduction

The city of Rocky Mount along with the Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce values the success of your new business or development project. We also recognize that local government code ordinances and state guidelines are somewhat overwhelming to navigate. We believe it is essential to provide our public with proper access to accurate development information, which could be the link in clearing public confusion and providing clarity on our procedures and duties versus public requirement to follow local ordinance and State regulations.

Simultaneously, the city realizes that successful businesses and new development reflects measurable growth throughout Rocky Mount; therefore, we desire to see your businesses and development projects succeed. This document was created with the goal of establishing transparency across the city concerning its [Development Procedures](#) and with the intent of bringing awareness to misconstrued and oftentimes misunderstood Land Development Code and North Carolina Building Code requirements.

As you embark down the path of development, whether minor or major, the city welcomes you and embraces the feedback you may have as we build the city together and encourages you to use us as your main resource and advocate for information.

To receive guidance through our development and permitting processes, we recommend that you contact our **Development Liaison at (252) 972-1389**, who can assist with questions or direct you to the proper professional concerning your question or concern.

## Home-Based Businesses

If you plan to operate a home-based business, please familiarize yourself with the city's Residential Zoning Uses, to be certain that your style of business and its functions are permissible in the district your home is located in. In the event your home requires alterations or renovation for operation, you'll need to submit the proper documentation for approval (*see Step 2*). If you still have questions concerning a home occupation, please contact our Zoning Officer at 252-972-1114. Click [here](#) to access the Home Occupation Permit and the Group Home Questionnaire (*if applicable*).

## Flooding: Protect Your Investment

Rocky Mount sits on the Tar River, which has played an essential role in how this city has progressed and advanced in its 200-year history. Even so, it has also been the cause of a few major floods over the years. As a business owner in Rocky Mount, you must be aware of the potential losses due to flooding. The Department of Development Services has created a [Flood Awareness](#) page in accordance with our Land Development Code Chapter 9 [Flood Plain Protection](#) for property owners in the city. This is to ensure that citizens have access to the proper resources in case a flood occurs.

If you would like to find out if your property is in a flood zone, click the Flood Awareness link above to learn more on proactive flood measures or click [here](#) to access the **North Carolina Flood Information System (FRIS)**.



# 1

## Know your Zoning and Land Use

*Q: What type of business do I plan to open? Which location will I use for my business? Does my business fit the zoning designated for the location I want?*

Verifying the zoning of your potential building or land should be the first step when starting your business or development project and will save you time and money in the future. You can verify or check city zoning and area designations using our Interactive [Zoning Map](#).

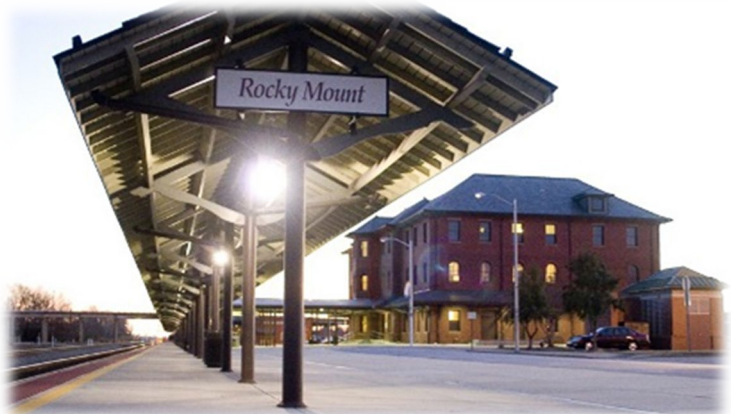
After you have verified the zoning of a space you're interested in, go ahead and check out the permitted uses allowed in those zoned areas. They are listed in [Chapter 5 of the Rocky Mount LDC](#). This is good to know because you can determine if there are any other requirements pertaining to a building's permitted use, so that you can align your business type with the area zoning and what is allowed or "permitted" in a building. You will also benefit in verifying if there are any additional code restrictions associated with those uses and whether a **Special Use Permit** is required for your business based on its functions (*see Rocky Mount Code of Ordinance Chapter 5 [Sec. 503. Zoning Use Tables](#) for info on special use*).

Take note that our zoning districts are regulated in accordance with the [Rocky Mount Code of Ordinances](#), which illustrates location, size, and use standards for buildings, structures, and land throughout the city.

If you are aware of the last permitted use of the building you are interested in, this could prove to be helpful in allowing you to expediate the process of opening your business. It's especially essential if the proposed use of the building was the same as the previous permitted use (*see Step 2*).

Before signing a lease, we recommend that you contact our staff or apply for a **Certificate of Occupancy** (*see Step 2 and Step 4*) to fully hash out specific permitted uses, zoning, fire, and safety related concerns that are related to the building. Please visit our Development Services [Zoning](#) page if you'd like clarity on the types of businesses, buildings and/or sites you are interested in, to find out if it matches an area's designated zoning.

*If you are unsure about how the zoning classification of your potential project will be classified, please contact the Development Liaison or Project Coordinator for assistance.*



## 1.1 Commercial Zoning Districts Across Rocky Mount Suited for Small Business Use:

**(OI) Office and Institutional District** - The OI District is intended to provide space for general and professional office, medium or high-density housing and related activity to meet the professional services, institutional function office and residential accommodation needs of the community.



**(B-1) Neighborhood Commercial District** - The B-1 District is intended for local retail and personal services of limited size and service area that provide for the regular needs and convenience of those residing in the adjacent residential neighborhoods.



**(OI-2) Office Mixed Use District** - This is a mixed-use district that allows office, residential and limited business. This permitted use allows and satisfies the service and convenience needs of the surrounding neighborhood. These uses are primarily pedestrian oriented.



**(B-2) Commercial Corridor District** - The B-2 District is established for major retail and service activities removed from the central business district, with major arterial access and with adequate open space and parking.



**(MA) Medical Arts District** - The MA District is for hospitals, medical and dental clinics, medical and dental offices, and labs; pharmacies, blood-collection facilities, and related activity to meet the needs of the community.



**(B-3) Regional Commercial District** - The B-3 District is intended for regional retail and personal services of significant size and service area that provide for the larger needs and convenience of those residing in the Community and surrounding areas.



**(B-4) Central Business District** - The CBD District is intended to provide space for personal and business services and the general retail trade of the core business center of the community. It is designed to accommodate a wide variety of commercial uses in the traditional downtown business area and related areas of mixed commercial enterprises.



**(B-5) Business Service District** - This B-5 District is intended for business and warehouse support services that support the regular needs of the primary activities in the B-4 District, along rail sidings and primary streets.



### **Industrial Districts**

**(I-1) Light or (I-2) Heavy Industrial District** – The I-1 District provides locations for industries that do not, by their nature, create nuisances. The purpose of the I-2 District is to provide locations for manufacturing and related industries that may, by nature, create nuisances. It is designed to preserve land for industry in a location beneficial to industries and to prohibit non-industrial uses.



### **Overlay Districts**

This district highlights the types of uses associated with each Permitted Use as listed in the LDC. Those uses are accommodated through an allowable **Conditional Use overlay (CU)**. If necessary, a CU may be requested through our rezoning process to accommodate other special use exceptions in most zoning districts. Subject to approval.

*(Please see the Rocky Mount [Development Services Zoning](#) page for more info on zoning regulations)*

# 2

## Certificate of Occupancy

*Q: Why do I need to fill out a C/O application? The building I'm in has a different previous use than my business, do I need to submit design plans to change anything in the building? Do I need to hire a General Contractor for my project?*

It is important to realize that when you are clear on Rocky Mount development requirements and procedures, the better prepared you'll be in getting your project up and running. Did you know that before any structure or building is to be structurally altered, moved, improved, or erected, a building permit must be obtained as pursuant to the Rocky Mount LDC (*see Rocky Mount Code of Ordinance [Chapter 7 Sec. 702. Building Permit!](#)*). When you are guided by the Development Services team, and you understand which route to take before signing a lease or purchasing a building, you enhance your ability to use time in a positive manner to build your business.

Initially, a **Certificate of Occupancy (C/O)** may be the start of your business folder in Rocky Mount if your business model requires occupying a building. We have two C/O types that are delineated by how a building is to be used or changed. To get a better understanding of the Certificate of Occupancy and what options you have when occupying a building, you can view the **Requirements for a Change of Occupancy/Use** by clicking [here](#).

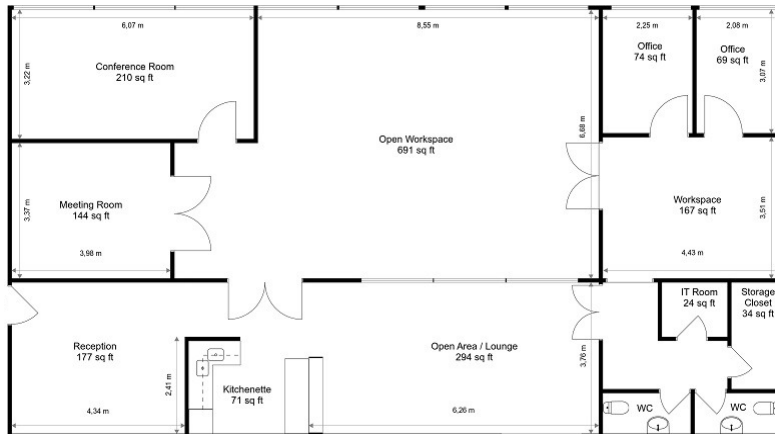
Applying for a C/O to occupy a building is the point at which all the functional needs of your potential building space will be thoroughly understood and critiqued according to how the operations of your business interact with the building space. You can view our Certificate of Occupancy form by accessing the [Documents and Forms](#) page.

Once you have applied for a C/O, a **preliminary inspection** can then be requested as a courtesy to you to help navigate through the aspects of development associated with the building and business. Be mindful, that pursuant to the Rocky Mount LDC, you may also be required to submit **plans** drawn to scale (*see above*), showing dimensions of the lot and the existing building; simultaneously noting **all existing** or **proposed** repairs, alterations, and erected structures.

To understand the potential flow of starting your business after submitting a C/O, see the **Architectural Review Process to Certificate of Occupancy Flow Chart** on page 12. If design plans are needed for your business, please consult a design professional, a general contractor, or contact our Development Liaison for more direction on the Rocky Mount development requirements.



Figure 1. Example Floor Plan



*(The figure on the left represents an example floor plan drawn by a design professional. Refer to the Rocky Mount LDC [Sec. 712. - Site Development Plans](#) and to our [Development Procedures](#) for clarity on plan submittal.)*

## 2.1 Preliminary Inspection

Our preliminary inspection is intended as an **informative** meeting, meant to provide answers for those “Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How” questions you may have. It also sheds insight into our development processes as related to the local Land Development Code. Rest assured that your preliminary inspection will be conducted by seasoned officials who all work together in advising you on the specific building modifications needed for your space to get your business operating.

If your preliminary inspection reveals that there are no major structural changes required to occupy the building to start your business, opening your business has become a lot more streamlined. A **Field Inspection Sheet** will be issued, providing you with documentation of what is needed to receive your Certificate of Occupancy and business utilities after all associated fees have been paid. If temporary utilities are present, you will need to switch service over into the business name for proper billing and collections through the [Business Express Hub](#). This link is provided to give you quick access to all the necessary information needed to get your new services connected through the Business and Collection Services Department or you can call 252-972-1110 for assistance.

## 2.2 Site Plan Submittal for Commercial Projects

Site plans may need to be submitted for your business depending on the size and estimated cost of your project. If your preliminary inspection reveals that major changes or improvements are required to occupy the building to start your business, then the city **highly** recommends you consider working with a **licensed** design professional or General Contractor (GC).

Again, after requesting a preliminary inspection, a **Field Inspection Sheet** will be provided at the end of the inspection. From there, you or your hired licensed professional can properly analyze and calculate site plan configurations and building improvement assessments in accordance with the permitted uses of your building, and its development requirements. *(Permitted uses of the building, and development requirements can be found in the [Rocky Mount Code of Ordinances](#) and the [2018 North Carolina Building Code](#))*

If you decide to work with a **licensed** design professional, that individual will be able to determine the occupancy classification, occupancy load and restrictions, space layout, and the



previous use of your building. These factors are all based on the operations and functions of your business and derive from the zoning of the building and its permitted uses. Procuring professional assistance to iron out the specifics of these important factors is essential to getting your project started properly. For this reason, we strongly encourage you to work with a GC or a licensed design professional.

*“...the city **highly** recommends you consider working with a **licensed** design professional or General Contractor (GC).”*

You will find that pursuant to [N.C. General Statute Sec. 87, Article 1](#) a **Licensed General Contractor (GC)** is **REQUIRED** when the total construction or the improvements of a construction project is greater than or equal to \$30,000. The statutes state that a licensed GC must personally superintend and manage all aspects of the construction site. Your GC is also responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and listing all subcontractors that will be used. Be sure to evaluate each contractor you are interested in hiring to ensure that the development of your project goes as planned, which is what to expect from a good contractor. Simultaneously, a **Lien Agent** may need to be designated pursuant to [Chapter 44-A, Article 2](#) of the NC General Statutes, but only if the total cost of the project is equal to or exceeds \$30,000 ([Click here to learn more](#)).

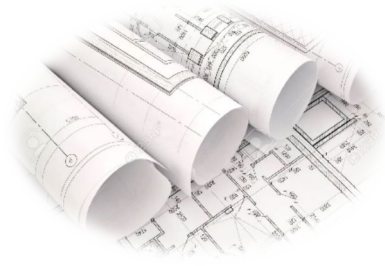
Owner-occupants of buildings who do not desire to use a GC may do so if the total improvement cost does not exceed \$30,000. If you believe that you fall under these requirements, please submit an [Owner Exemption Affidavit](#) form, with site plans (with an Appendix B) via email to [devserv@rockymountnc.gov](mailto:devserv@rockymountnc.gov) or by fax to 252-972-1590. By signing and submitting the affidavit, you waive the requirement for a licensed General Contractor but simultaneously accept all the responsibilities placed on a licensed General Contractor under [Article 1 of Chapter 87 of the General Statutes of North Carolina](#).

We understand that not every construction project is the same, and most are relatively different in nature pertaining to size, and cost. So, please reach out to your local design professional, engineer, or General Contractor for a more accurate and detailed breakdown of your project to understand all its pertinent specifics.

### 2.3 Plan Review Process for Commercial Projects

Depending on the reported monetary cost, the square footage or whether your project is considered new construction or a renovation to an existing building, your project plans may go through one of two review processes. So, whether you're working with a design professional or not, once your plans have been submitted, you will be informed of what improvements are needed for the construction of your project to begin.

Our **Architectural Review** process facilitates small scale commercial business development and mostly accommodates projects in each of our zoned districts. When site plans are submitted, a **Comment Letter** is sent to the owner or the GC of the project before the Architectural Review process is complete, addressing each necessary trade improvement needed (*building, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical if applicable*). Fire and life safety measures may be included into the comment letter and are usually based on functional features of the business. If you have taken the steps to hire a design professional your plans may less likely be scrutinized for plan revisions due to professional knowledge of state and local building regulations and requirements. So, if no revisions are necessary, your architectural plans are usually approved in **seven to 10 business days**.



Our **Development Review Committee (DRC)** facilitates large-scale construction projects involving commercial, multi-family, industrial projects, minor/major subdivisions, planned building groups and additions to existing buildings. Design professionals and General Contractors are led through the development procedural requirements of the city. The DRC team has city staff members who are knowledgeable in planning, floodplain development, public works, environmental services, storm water management, erosion control, surveying, traffic and parking, fire and life safety, energy resources, and technology (*Please view our [Development Procedures](#) page for development classifications and checklist related to your size project*).



After site plans have been submitted for review, a DRC team **comment letter** is created with detailed instructions mapping out suggested revisions. This ensures that site development complies with the Rocky Mount Land Development Code. **Keep in mind that civil plans are required for some projects under Rocky Mount LDC [Sec. 712](#) in order to facilitate compliant development throughout the city.** (*Please see 2018 North Carolina Administrative Code and Policies Section [204.3.5 Design Professional Seal Required](#) for cost and square footage minimums that invoke necessary requirements*).

Once you have satisfied all suggested revisions in the DRC comment letter, and the plans have been reviewed and approved, you will be notified via email from our Construction Development Coordinator concerning the approval of your project. A list of all associated fees that must be paid before a building permit is issued will be included in the email.

*(All Planned Building Groups and Major Subdivision Plans are reviewed by the Development Review Committee and approved by the Planning Board, must be reviewed by DRC at least ten (10) days prior to Planning Board Meeting to be placed on the agenda.)*

Throughout the life of your project, you have full access to professional knowledge and expertise to assist with the potential uncertainties of the development process. For your convenience our Inspections Division offers a [Pre-Application Conference](#) which is meant to help you understanding our development procedures and assist with plan submittal. You can find more information regarding site plan review requirements, checklist, and submittal information on our **Development Procedures** page or by clicking [here](#).

# 3

## Permits and Inspections

*Q: Why do I need a building permit? Why does my project need to be inspected? I have signed a lease agreement and need to alter the building; do I need a building permit?*

*What permits do I need to open my business? What is the order of inspections?*

Applying for permits and requesting inspections are key to opening your business, especially if you have altered your business site or building in any way. It is important to stay up to date on the specific requirements associated with permitting and inspections and how they work in conjunction with our Land Development Code.

In accordance with our [LDC](#) and the [NC GS 160D-1110](#), when planning to construct, reconstruct, alternate, repair, remove, or demo a building or site, you must submit and receive a building permit for your development project or build site. The building permit is your permission from the city to change your site or building according to the plans you have submitted to the Development Services Department. After you have submitted your project plans, and they have been approved, the issuance of a building permit is your ticket to start construction on your building or your site. Please take note that it is the responsibility of the permit holder to schedule each required inspection at the appropriate time during the development process.

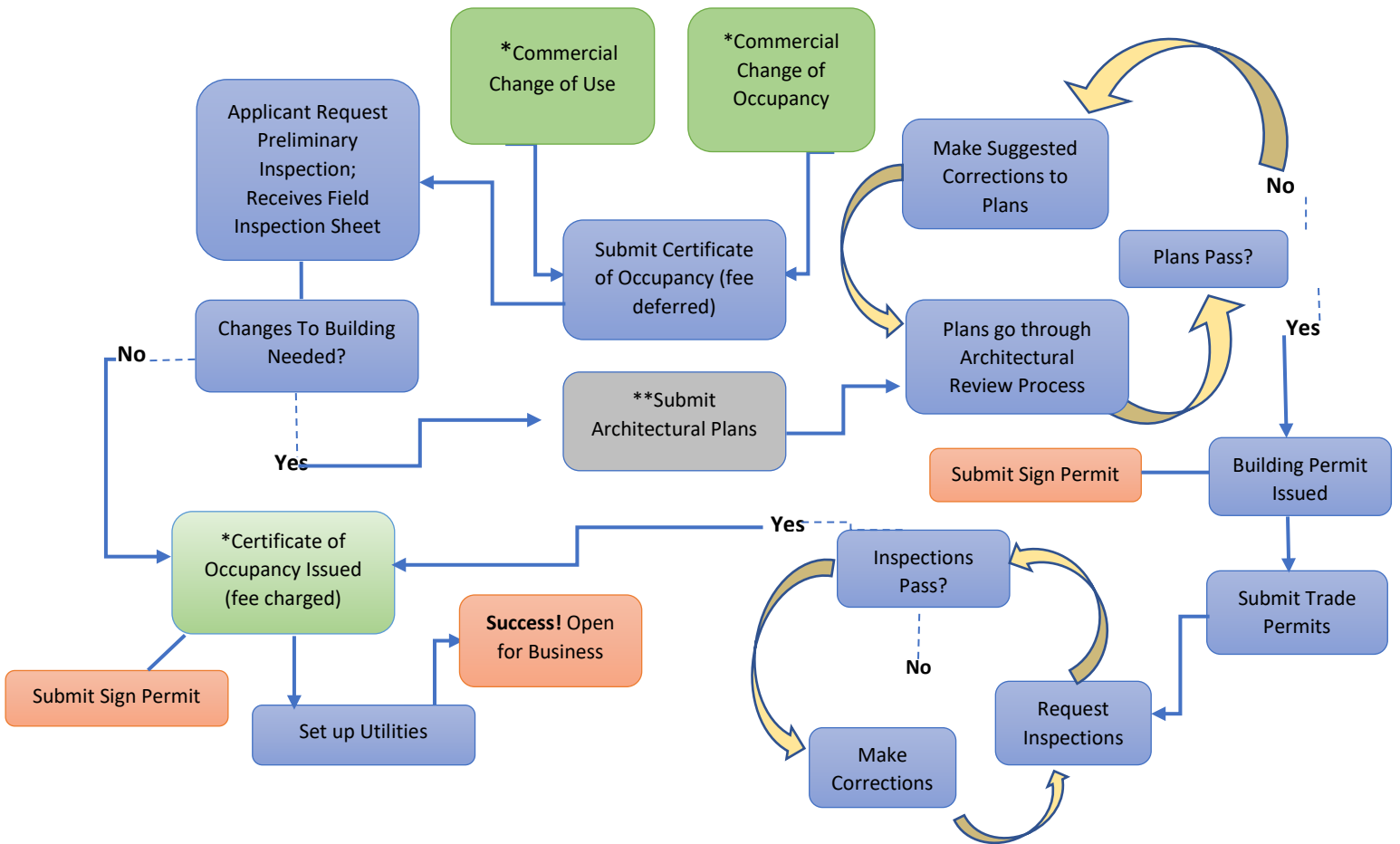
***\*\*WARNING\*\* If work at the project site is either completed prior to obtaining a permit or concealed prior to a proper inspection, or both, penalties could include, but are not limited to a \$250 fine.*** (Learn more about the Rocky Mount Code of Ordinance and building permit regulations by clicking [here](#).)

During the life of your project, at the necessary time, you must apply for each trades permit - installation, mechanical, plumbing, or electrical - and schedule each inspection after the work has been completed. Please keep in mind, that in order for your project to progressively move forward, all work completed in the project must meet the minimum requirements set in the [2018 North Carolina Building Code](#), the [2018 Existing Building Code](#) or the [Rocky Mount Code of Ordinances](#). Depending on the path of your project and its specific needs, from design to plan approval to the start of construction on the site, the order of inspections could vary, but usually follows the listed order:

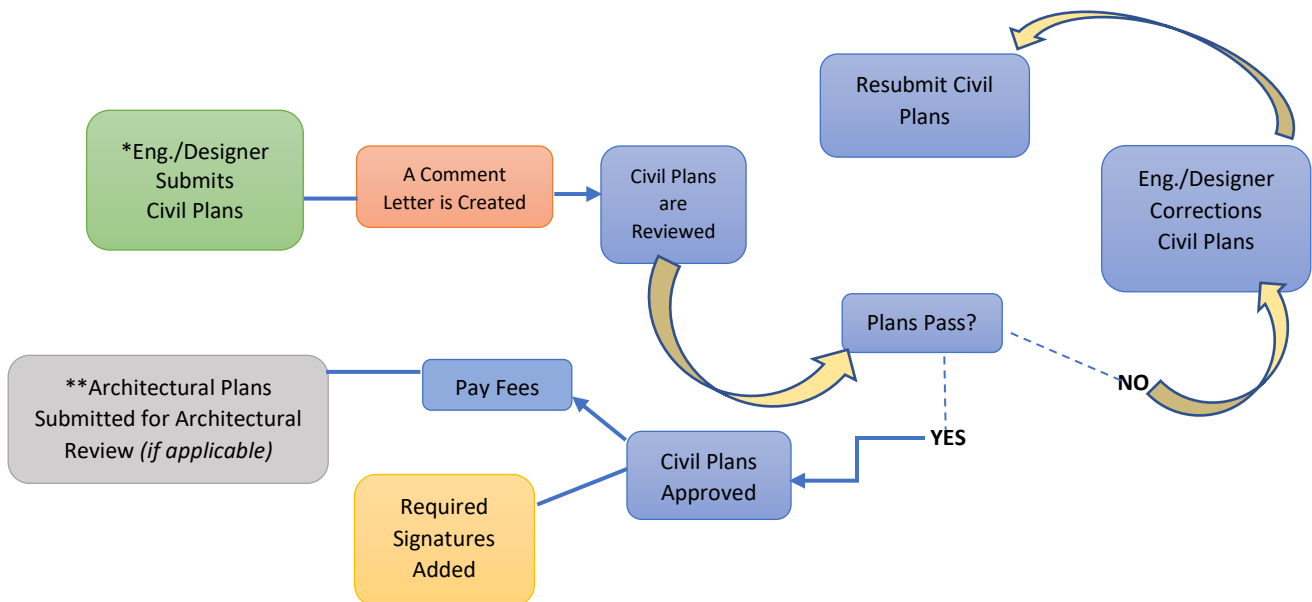
- Footing Inspection
- Foundation Inspection
- Rough-in Inspections
- Electrical, Mechanical (HVAC), and Plumbing Inspections
- Building Rough-in
- Insulation Rough-in
- Final Inspection

Please note, that the above order of inspections is to be followed for all new commercial construction, and will require approval of trade inspections, fire and life safety, engineering, and a building final. All inspections must **Pass** before a Certificate of Occupancy is issued. You can schedule inspections through our [Citizen Self Service Portal](#) or call our Inspections Division at (252)972-1109/1110/1119.

# Architectural Review Process to Certificate of Occupancy Flow Chart



# Development Review Committee Process Flowchart



The flow charts on the previous page highlight our plan review procedures to illustrate where in the process, permitting and inspections take place. You can see that our procedures for development are relatively seamless when followed and allow for quicker approval of Civil and Architectural plans, which usually takes no later than ten (10) business days. You can learn more about the current Rocky Mount Service fee schedule by clicking [here](#) or call our **Inspections Division at (252)972-1109/1110/1119**.

*(We highly recommend you consider working with a licensed design professional or general contractor to help sort out occupancy classifications, space layout, exiting requirements, and other pertinent requirements that may need to be addressed.)*

### 3.1 Don't forget Your Signage Permit

One of the most important parts of any business is its signage. Unfortunately, signage is thought of until the latter stages of setting up a business. We recommend that you get a jump start on planning out the design of your signage and submit your sign permit to the city early in the process of starting your business. This can be completed when you submit your certificate of occupancy application or when you submit a building permit application (*see flow chart*). Taking care of this step sooner, rather than later, could potentially help you bypass any setbacks to getting your business up and running.



The city of Rocky Mount has regulatory sign specifications in accordance with its Code of Ordinances (*see [Sec. 709.-Signs](#) for sign regulations*) which have been put in place so that there is structure and standards in business development. As you build your business, please understand that a sign permit must be submitted to the city before a sign is erected, enlarged, replaced, or relocated. Along with your application you must include an architectural sign plan that illustrates all dimensions, materials, elevations, structural supports, electrical specifications, and the location of the sign. These are a few of the regulations that apply in each of our zoning districts in exception to height, which is different across each district.

Please take time to familiarize yourself with how the city regulates signage as you develop your business. Our [Permits & Inspections](#) page details how our Inspections Division handles permitting and inspections. You can also find all our permits and applications needed for submittal. Please contact the One Stop Shop at (252)972-1110/1109/1119 if you have additional questions (*Please be aware that failure to obtain a signed permit could result in a fine of \$250*).



# 4

## Signing Your Lease

**Do your due diligence before signing an agreement!**

Those of you who are new to starting up a business, should take time to familiarize yourselves with steps 1-3. Those steps illustrate the due diligence that the city of Rocky Mount recommends you take into consideration before signing *any* agreement to occupy a building. We encourage you to seek help from the city or a professional licensed General Contractor as you figure out the route your business will take during its development. This step is important since a lease or purchase agreement is considered a binding contract. Meaning, if you break the lease or purchase agreement after finding out that the encompassing details about the site or building do not match desired zoning and land use of your business, then you could be subject to certain penalties from the grantor. Therefore, the city encourages you thoughtfully do your own due diligence before signing a lease agreement.

If you feel that this information does not apply to your business development situation, then great, you're ready to move on to "Establishing Utilities." Here is a quick reminder of what you need to check off before signing a lease:

- ✓ Verify the zoning and land use of the potential building or site you are interested in to find out if your business functions are or will be permitted in that space.
- ✓ A Certificate of Occupancy (C/O)
  - Submittal is needed when you are attempting a Change of Use or a Change of Occupancy for a commercial building (*see Step2 Certificate of Occupancy*)
  - Civil and/or Architectural Plans may be required for submittal depending on the needs of your business/development project.
  - Approval of plans is required to start building with an issued Building Permit (*see Step 2*)
- ✓ Be sure to get your permit applications to our Inspections Division to ensure that your project progresses as planned. Call our Inspections Division One Stop Shop at **(252)972-1109/1110/1119** to answer any questions about permitting and inspections.

*Before you sign to lease a building, speak with our Planning or Inspections division, and ask about the zoning and land use of the property. Call (252)972-1109/1110/1119 to speak to a permit technician TODAY!*



# 5

## Establishing Utilities

### How do I set up commercial utilities in Rocky Mount?

The city of Rocky Mount provides water, sewer, electric, and gas services for its citizens and business owners. We are a unique municipality in that we have a community owned electric and natural gas system, and we produce our own water and distribute it for domestic and commercial use. With this type of capability our city can operate at an optimal level. By providing great value to our citizenry through safe, efficient, and reliable electric and natural gas services we can build on better public health and deliver quality public service.

Our solid waste and recycling services are offered through the Public Works Department. Fees for rollout container disposal are added to utility bills. You have the option of adding this service when utilities are set up for your business. If you have calculated that your business will need dumpster services, you also have the option of renting or purchasing one from [Green For Life Environmental \(GFL\)](#) depending on the needs of your business. The city will service your dumpster, or you can outsource your trash pick up to a third party. In the [Downtown Business District](#), there are dumpsters placed around downtown for business use, but business owners can still set up rollout container services if needed.

If your utilities will not be handled through a landlord or management company, then you'll need to establish utilities for your business from the city. Setting up your commercial utilities account is simple once you have been approved for a Certificate of Occupancy. Our Business & Collection Services Center has created three non-residential categories to assist with deposit calculations: small business, commercial and industrial. After all fees and deposits have been collected, your official C/O will be issued, giving you access to set up utilities under your business name (*access online Pay Online [here](#)*). In lieu of a cash deposit, commercial customers may provide the city with a surety bond or irrevocable letter of credit in the amount of the specified deposit, and it must be written by an insurance company or bank authorized to do business in North Carolina.

To learn more about how to establishing a new utility account you can visit our [Business & Collection Services page](#) or contact a representative at 252-972-1210 and via email at [businessexpress@rockymountnc.gov](mailto:businessexpress@rockymountnc.gov).

- Access online Utility Bill pay [here](#) or copy the URL below into your browser. <https://rockymountnc.gov/pay-online/>.
- Visit our Environmental Services Division to learn more about recycling, rollout containers, and dumpster service. Contact a representative at 252-467-4800, option 7. <https://rockymountnc.gov/environmental-services/>.
- Visit our Water Resources Department to learn about water treatment FAQ's. <https://rockymountnc.gov/water-resources/>.
- Visit our Energy Resources page to learn more about our Electric and Natural Gas service areas. <https://rockymountnc.gov/energy-resources/>.

# 6

## More To Consider When Starting Your Business

In conjunction with all the documentation required for submittal before starting any major construction in the city, you may also need to comply with other county and state requirements depending on your business functions, along with applying for a business license and paying all associated fees.

- **Housing Code:** Whenever a building has failed to meet standard code requirements for human habitation, depending on its condition, the building may be deemed non-inhabitable according to Rocky Mount Code of Ordinances. If a building is currently under code and it is deemed non-habitable then all code violations MUST be remedied to the minimum code requirements before a Certificate of Occupancy is issued for that parcel. Click [here](#) to read more about **Chapter 11 – Housing Code** or contact our Community Code Division to speak someone about a building of interest.
- **Alcohol Serving Establishments (or events):** Per [NC General Statute 18B-904\(f\)](#) an applicant will need to obtain a retail, commercial or special event permit to serve alcohol from and adhere to all requirements set by the North Carolina ABC Commission. Compliance with local fire and life safety, zoning, and building guidelines determined in the Rocky Mount Code of Ordinances is required. Applicants must also submit the [Local Government Opinion](#) and all necessary forms to the city Manager’s office. A representative from the Rocky Mount Police Department will conduct a background check to determine applicant suitability before issuing approval.
- **Food Service Establishments and Mobile Food Units:** An applicant will need to comply with Nash/Edgecombe County and North Carolina health regulations. Before you start your business, a civil or architectural plan must be submitted for review to the County Health Department for both food service establishments and mobile food units. Please be mindful that you must comply with the Rocky Mount Code of Ordinances [Article II. Sec. 21-29. Fats, Oils, and Greases](#) and [North Carolina Environmental Quality](#) guidelines on the proper disposal of food byproducts. Please view the links below to access your county website for more information on specific requirements.  
[Edgecombe County Health Department](#)  
[Nash County Health Department](#)
- **Sidewalk Dining Establishments:** Per the [Rocky Mount Code of Ordinance, ARTICLE VII](#) Sidewalk Dining is defined as, “Any restaurant located in the central city area may serve food and beverages on adjacent city sidewalks and pedestrian ways upon the issuance of a sidewalk café permit and pursuant to the provisions of this article.” If you would like to operate a sidewalk dining establishment (*where permitted*) you will need to submit a Sidewalk



Café Application and pay all associated fees. If alcoholic beverages are served, all state and local regulations and requirements will need to be met *(see second bullet point)*.

# 7

## Open For Business

### **Congratulations! You're ready for the Grand Opening!**

You've done it! Now it's time to celebrate your business with a grand opening event, but keep in mind that events such as these may be subject to approval by the city through a [Temporary Use Permit](#) . If you're planning a special promotional event outside your business that will include but is not limited to tents, tables, signs, music equipment etc., then a Temporary Use Permit is necessary. Such permits must be submitted at least 10 days prior to the event start date and are good for a maximum of 10 calendar days with a limit of six short-term or seasonal uses a year. Feel free to reach out to our Zoning Officer for more information at 252-972-1114 *(Click [here](#) to view LDC Sec. 508. – Temporary Uses)*.

Again, congratulations and we, at the **city of Rocky Mount** and the **Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce**, wish you and your business the very best! See below for resources to help with business startup



## **Resources for Starting Your Business**

- **U.S. Small Business Administration** [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)  
With a goal to provide entrepreneurs and small businesses with support, the SBA is a great source for launching your business. The agency aids in acquiring funds, business counseling, business planning and management and a host of other resources to start your business.  
**Phone:** 800-827-5722
- **The Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC)** [www.sbtdc.org](http://www.sbtdc.org)  
The SBTDC provides in-depth management counseling and education services designed to help business owners make better decisions in achieving their business goals.  
Greenville, NC Office:  
**Phone:** 252-737-1385; [ecu@sbtdc.org](mailto:ecu@sbtdc.org)  
Willis Building  
300 East First St,  
Greenville, NC 27858
- **North Carolina Department of Commerce** [www.nccommerce.com](http://www.nccommerce.com)  
This agency connects businesses with the site locations, workforce, and the infrastructure they need to succeed in one of the nation's top states for business. It also connects local communities with the grants and funding they need to attract new business and ensure future prosperity.  
**Phone:** 919-814-4600; [info@nccommerce.com](mailto:info@nccommerce.com)  
301 North Wilmington Street  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-1058
- **The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC)**  
<https://edpnc.com>  
Is focused on recruiting new businesses to the state, supporting the needs of existing businesses, connecting exporters to global customers, helping small business owners get their start, and attracting tourists and visitors from all over the world.  
**Phone:** 919-447-7777  
Wells Fargo Capitol Center  
150 Fayetteville St, Suite 1200  
Raleigh, NC 27601
- **North Carolina Department of Revenue (NCDOR)** [www.ncdor.gov](http://www.ncdor.gov)  
The NCDOR is where you will need to ensure your business is registered for tax purposes but there are also many other resources that the connect you to other NC agencies and services.  
**Phone:** 877-252-3052  
PO Box 25000  
Raleigh, NC 27640-0640

## Financial Incentive Programs

City of Rocky Mount		
Financial Grant	Description	Requirements
<b>Residential Production Grant Program</b> <a href="#">Click here for Guidelines</a> <a href="#">Click here for Application</a>	<p>The Residential Production Grant Program is intended to fund the development of residential housing within downtown. The incentive amount is \$7,500 per residential unit created up to a maximum of \$150,000.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligible projects may include new construction, building rehabilitation or adaptive reuse.</li> <li>• Project must result in the creation of residential units not previously available for occupancy.</li> <li>• Renovations must be substantial to the extent that the completed units are of a finished quality and ready for occupancy.</li> <li>• All new or renovated units must be consistent with the overall quality standards.</li> <li>• Eligible projects will include residential as part of mixed-use development or commercial property converted for residential as single use.</li> </ul>
<b>Downtown Building Assistance Program</b> <a href="#">Click here for Guidelines</a> <a href="#">Click here for Application</a>	<p>The Downtown Building Assistance Program is a 50% matching grant up to \$40,000. This incentive is intended to fund interior and exterior downtown building improvements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can fund building improvements, fixtures, affixed furniture and equipment, signage.</li> <li>• Must conform to Historic Preservation Design Guidelines if within HPC district.</li> <li>• One grant per property within five years.</li> <li>• Property must qualify for Certificate of Occupancy at completion of project.</li> <li>• Property must be located within the Downtown Transitional area (Grand, Grace, Raleigh, Atlantic, Lexington).</li> <li>• Any commercial or mixed-use property.</li> </ul>
<b>Accelerated Façade Improvement Grant</b> <a href="#">Click here for Guidelines</a> <a href="#">Click here for Application</a>	<p>The AFIG is a \$5,000 non-matching grant, to stimulate downtown recovery and revitalization activity, designed for expedited access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligible properties must be located within the Downtown Core (Within boundary of Franklin Street, Goldleaf Street, Atlantic Avenue., Raleigh Boulevard).</li> <li>• Allowable uses will include (but not limited to): Brick or wall surface cleaning, patching, and painting of façade walls, signage or lighting, canopy, awning installation/repair, window and/or door replacement/repair, mortar joint repair, railings and ironwork repair or addition, cornice repair and/or replacement, replacement/repair to exterior steps.</li> <li>• One-page application (with required documentation).</li> <li>• Must meet any historic preservation requirements.</li> <li>• Reimbursement with proof of payment and final inspection.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Development Incentive Grant</b>  <a href="#">Click here for Guidelines</a>  <a href="#">Click here for Application</a></p>	<p>The Development Incentive Grant is a rebate of increased property taxes, reimbursed annually over five years (100% year 1, 80% year 2, 60% year 3, 40% year 4, 20% year 5) for city, county, and MSD (Municipal Services District) taxes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be substantial rehabilitation, defined as: \$40 per sq ft., at least one floor habitable, investment equal triple pre-improvement tax value.</li> <li>• No dollar maximum.</li> <li>• Rebate is determined by property tax value after improvements (minus) the original pre-improved tax value.</li> <li>• Property must be located within the boundaries of the Downtown Overlay District (DIG Area) (Goldleaf, Church, Hammond, Atlantic).</li> <li>• Any residential, commercial, mixed-use property.</li> <li>• Construction must be completed, and CO received within 24 months.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Roof Repair &amp; Replacement Grant</b>  <a href="#">Click here for Guidelines and Application</a></p>	<p>Funds the replacement or repair of roofing systems. The grant will reimburse 50% of roof repair cost up to a maximum of \$10,000.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes entire roofing system including gutter and drainage systems.</li> <li>• Repair must be permitted and pass final inspection.</li> <li>• Eligible properties must be located within the Downtown Core (Within boundary of Franklin Street, Goldleaf Street, Atlantic Avenue, Raleigh Boulevard).</li> <li>• Any commercial or mixed-use property.</li> <li>• One grant per property within 5 years.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Historic Tax Credits</b></p>	<p>Historic Tax Credits are an excellent way to alleviate the burden of renovation costs to historic buildings, and downtown is a prime place to put these resources to work for you!</p>	<p>Click <a href="#">here</a> to learn more about Historic Tax Credits</p>

If you would like to access more information on the incentives offered through the City of Rocky Mount, you can do so by entering this URL into your browser.  
<https://downtownrockymount.com/business-development/incentives/>

## Nash County

Financial Grant	Description	Requirements
<p><b>Retail and Small Business Economic Development Incentive Program</b></p>	<p>Designed to benefit large businesses and industries, Nash County provides this economic development incentive to new and/or expanding small businesses or industries within the County which is based on job creation and project investment as determined by the Board of Commissioners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must meet all <a href="#">Qualifying Properties and Investments</a> thresholds.</li> </ul>

## Edgecombe County

Financial Grant	Description	Requirements
<p>See Entrepreneurial Organizations*</p>		

State of North Carolina		
Financial Grant	Description	Grant Recipient Rating Criteria
<a href="#">Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG)</a>	A discretionary incentive that provides sustained annual grants to new and expanding businesses measured against a percentage of withholding taxes paid by new employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The location of the project.</li> <li>The county tier designation - more on the state's economic tier system can be reviewed here.</li> <li>The number of net new jobs created in North Carolina.</li> <li>The wages of the jobs, compared to the given county average wage.</li> <li>The level of investment made in the state.</li> <li>The company's industry sector, and that industry's alignment with the state's targeted industry sectors.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">One North Carolina Fund (OneNC)</a>	A discretionary cash-grant program created to assist the Governor in responding quickly to competitive job-creation projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project must be competitive with locations outside North Carolina and remain competitive until the grant is formally awarded.</li> <li>The project must meet the county average wage requirement.</li> <li>The local government must match the grant via cash, fee waivers, in-kind services, infrastructure improvement or donations of land, buildings, or other assets.</li> <li>The company must provide health insurance and pay at least 50% of the premiums for participating employees.</li> <li>The company must meet statutory occupational safety and environmental compliance requirements.</li> </ul>

## Coworking

Coworking Spaces		
Organization	Description	Contact
<a href="#">Station Square Suite 136</a>	Co-working office environment offered to the public in the heart of Downtown Rocky Mount at reasonable rate.	<p><b>Address</b> 301 South Church St, Rocky Mount, NC 27804</p> <p><b>Phone</b> 252-388-8020</p>
<a href="#">COIMPACT</a>	A co-working space created to bring all career fields together under one roof in a positive and inclusive environment.	<p><b>Address</b> 821 Word Plaza Rocky Mount, NC 27804</p> <p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:coimpactwtc@gail.com">coimpactwtc@gail.com</a></p>

## Business Organizations

### Local Entrepreneurial & Business Organizations

Organization	Description	Contact
<a href="#">Downtown Development</a>	Focused on bringing businesses back to the downtown corridor through offered incentives and grant opportunities for those that qualify.	<b>Tanika Bryant</b> Downtown Development Coordinator <b>Phone</b> 252-972-1275 <a href="mailto:Tanika.Bryant@rockymountnc.gov">Tanika.Bryant@rockymountnc.gov</a>
<a href="#">Rocky Mount/Edgecombe Community Development Corporation (RMECDC)</a>	The mission of the Rocky Mount/Edgecombe Community Development Corporation Business Development & Resource Center is to provide one-on-one confidential counseling and technical assistance to low to moderate income small or minority business entrepreneurs.	<b>Address</b> 148 S Washington St, Rocky Mount, NC 27801 <b>Phone</b> 252-442-8364
<a href="#">Rocky Mount Mills</a>	A historic part of the Rocky Mount culture turned into office workspace, living quarters and entertainment. Offers startups a place to grow their businesses and learn.	<b>Address</b> 1151 Falls Rd, Rocky Mount, NC 27804 <b>Phone</b> 252-969-0909
<a href="#">Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce</a>	Founded in 1904, it was created to foster economic growth and to advance the commercial, industrial, and civic wellbeing of the region through a strong, expanding business base.	<b>Address</b> 100 Coastline Street, #200 Rocky Mount, NC 27804 <b>Phone</b> 252-446-0323
<a href="#">Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments</a>	The Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments (UCPCOG) administers several federal and state programs within its region and serves as a catalyst for regional progress by focusing leadership, coordination, and planning resources on key regional issues for Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton, and Wilson.	<b>Address</b> 121 W. NASH STREET, WILSON NC 27893 <b>Phone</b> 252-234-5952
<a href="#">Carolina Gateway Partnership</a>	A public-private industrial recruitment agency dedicated to the economic development of the Eastern North Carolina County of Edgecombe, City of Rocky Mount, Town of Tarboro, and Town of Nashville.	<b>Address</b> 386 SW Main Street Rocky Mount, NC 27804 <b>Phone</b> 800-550-0114
<a href="#">North Carolina Rural Center</a>	An organization that has a mission to develop, promote, and implement sound economic strategies to improve the quality of life of individuals living in rural North Carolina, with a focus on low-to-moderate income families and communities	<b>Address</b> 4021 Carya Drive Raleigh, NC 27610 <b>Phone</b> 919-250-4314

## Education and Training

### Local Colleges & Business Training Institutions

Organization	Description	Contact
<a href="#">Edgecombe Community College Small Business Center</a>	Assists in small business start-ups and expansions, through the development of partnerships with businesses in the industry leaders, to focus on providing business counseling, webinars & workshops, and networking, <a href="#">resources</a> , and referrals to the community.	<b>Laura Brown Evans</b> Director – Small Business Center <a href="mailto:evanslb@edgecombe.edu">evanslb@edgecombe.edu</a> Office 125, Center for Innovation, Tarboro Campus 252-618-6655
<a href="#">Nash Community College Small Business Center</a>	With a mission to increase the success rate and number of viable small businesses in North Carolina, this institution offers free confidential business counseling services for new and existing businesses.	<b>Derrick Armstead</b> Director, Small Business Center 252-451-8233 <a href="mailto:darmstead575@nashcc.edu">darmstead575@nashcc.edu</a>  <b>Ruthie Davis</b> Small Business Center Assistant 252-451-8344 <a href="mailto:rdavis282@nashcc.edu">rdavis282@nashcc.edu</a>
<a href="#">Small Business Center Network (SBCN)</a>	Is comprised of 58 Small Business Centers throughout North Carolina, it supports the development of new businesses and the growth of existing businesses by being a community-based provider of training, counseling, and resource information. Provides many resources for new entrepreneurs.	Click <a href="#">here</a> to find a small business center or community college location near you.
<a href="#">Turning Point Workforce Development Board</a>	Focused on increasing business growth through enhancing workforce training, through providing incentives to increase production and profitability throughout the Northeastern region.	<b>Address</b> 110 Fountain Park Drive Suite 22-B Battletoro, NC 27809 <b>Phone</b> 252-443-6175
North Carolina Wesleyan College	With a mission to educate, motivate and empower Eastern NC's next generation of entrepreneurs this program assists the local region in job creation to prosper while providing the community with entrepreneurial resources, through Business Development, Entrepreneurship, Community Engagement and Lifelong learning. It is a HUB for all things business development in the Twin Counties and surrounding region.	<b>Dr. Gena Messer-Knode</b> Director, Eastern North Carolina Center for Business & Entrepreneurship <a href="mailto:GKnode@ncwc.edu">GKnode@ncwc.edu</a>  <b>Phone</b> 919-394-9007

# Contact Us

## City of Rocky Mount

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- **Ryan Johnson**  
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- **Shamir Mitchell**  
Zoning Officer  
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[shamir.mitchell@rockymountnc.gov](mailto:shamir.mitchell@rockymountnc.gov)
- **Permit Technician(s)**  
252-972-1109/1110/1119  
[devserv@rockymountnc.gov](mailto:devserv@rockymountnc.gov)
- **Community Code Administrator**  
252-467-4959

## Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce

- **Alan Matthews**  
Director of Economic Development  
252-446-0323  
[amatthews@rockymountchamber.org](mailto:amatthews@rockymountchamber.org)

