



## "THANK YOU FOR DOING BUSINESS IN THE CITY OF COLUMBIA"

### Business Licensing Division

Office: (803)545-3345 Fax: (803) 988-8025

<https://businesslicensing.columbiasc.gov/>

***Congratulations on your new venture! We are excited that you chose to bring your business to the City of Columbia. Provided below are next steps and helpful information for you to reference.***

#### Understanding Business Licensing:

- Every business needs a business license, including home-based businesses. However, some businesses may be exempt from paying the fee (such as a verified non-profit).
- A business license is valid only in the jurisdiction in which it was obtained.
- Every physical location requires its own business license.
- Business licenses are valid for the current owner only—no transfers.
- Business license fees are based upon gross revenue, type of business (indicated by the NAICS code, the Federal North American Industrial Classification System), and location (in or out of the city).
- Businesses that conduct more than one business activity, may be subject to additional Business Licenses

#### What to expect after applying for your Business License

Now that we have your application, here are the next steps:

##### **For In City Business** (A business whose physical location is within the city limits of Columbia)

*ALL commercial locations are subject to inspections*

- Zoning Approvals/ Pay \$10 zoning fee
- Inspection Approvals (Building, Engineering, Fire, DHEC Departments)
  - Fire Department: (803) 545-3700
  - Building Department: (803) 545-3222 -New Construction and Renovations to Existing Buildings
  - Wastewater Compliance: (803) 476-0882

*(You will be contacted to schedule these inspections. If you don't hear from the inspectors after 10 days, please reach out to the appropriate contact above)*

- Pay Business License Fee
- Business License will be issued

**\*Note:** As a business owner, it is your responsibility to ensure you are in compliance with the departments above

##### **For Out of City Business** (A business whose physical location is outside the city limits of Columbia)

- Pay Business License Fee
- Business License will be issued

#### **All Business...**

- Licenses Expire Yearly on: April 30<sup>th</sup>
- Licensees must report the gross income from the previous year to renew their license. (Exemptions apply for certain businesses)
- Penalties begin accruing starting May 1st

## Understanding Hospitality & Tourism Tax

**Local Hospitality Tax** - A 2% fee imposed by the City of Columbia on the purchase of prepared or modified food and/or beverages intended for immediate consumption or carry out.

**Tourism and Development Fee** - A 3% fee to be imposed on hotels, motels and other accommodations in the City of Columbia

*Hospitality Tax (HT) and Tourism and Development fees (TDF) are due on or **before the 20th** of each month. Please return payment with provided coupons*

*A 5% penalty per month in addition to the Hospitality Tax & Tourism and Development Fees must accompany all delinquent remittances.*

### ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS ARE REQUIRED IF YOU ARE:

#### **Food Service Business ( Restaurant, Food truck, Caterers & other commercial food establishments)**

- Completed DHEC Inspection Letter
- Commissary kitchen permission letter
- Site permission letter (must be signed by owner)
- HT Tax Coupon each month (see above)
- Wastewater Compliance

*\*Note: Extended Hours Permit is required if selling any alcohol after 2am (Mon-Sat)*

#### **Accommodation Businesses ( Hotels, motels and all other accommodation services)**

- Tourism Tax (TDF) Coupon each month (see above for details)

#### **Vehicle for Hire (Taxi, Shuttles, Limousines)**

- Signed and notarized Certificate of Convenience & Necessity
- 10 year driver's record from DMV
- SLED Report
- Proof of Insurance
- Letter specifying number of vehicles to be placed in service
- Photo of vehicle
- Submission of letter per Section 24-102
- ORS Certificate

### **Other Helpful Information**

You can find more information and FAQ's on hospitality and/or accommodation taxes, busker, single-event, or group event permit and close of business on our website below. You would need to notify our office if you change the name of your business and/or address. Please access the website for the forms needed for the items in this section.

If your business is closing or no longer operating in The City of Columbia, it is critical to complete a **Close Business Form** so we can finalize and properly close out your account

**You can find the Business License Ordinance & Codes, along with other helpful information on our website:** <https://businesslicensing.columbiasc.gov/>

**To renew your Business License, please visit:** Self Service Portal - <https://access.columbiasc.gov/selfservice#/home> or MASC - <https://www.localblrenewal.com/>

Updated 4/26/23

# Commercial Revolving Loan Fund

## OVERVIEW

The Commercial Revolving Loan Fund (CRLF), has funds available to lend to qualifying small businesses located in the City of Columbia. The goal of the commercial revolving loan program is to foster economic development and improve the number and caliber of job opportunities in the City of Columbia. The program offers assistance to start-up and existing businesses for expansion, creation or retention of jobs, and assistance in the redevelopment of commercial corridors and the elimination of blight.

The funds may be used to make loans that banks might not ordinarily fund on their own or to provide gap financing beyond what is offered by a bank for a project. Small businesses unable to receive financing from other lenders at reasonable rates and terms may be eligible for the Commercial Revolving Loan Fund.

### ? To be eligible, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- + Businesses must be located within the corporate city limits of the City of Columbia
- + Project must eliminate blight or create or retain jobs
- + Certain funds require participation of private lenders and can only be used to fund part of a project

### \$ Commercial Revolving Loan Funds may be used for the following:

- + Building construction or rehabilitation
- + Business conversion or expansion
- + Purchase of real estate, machinery, equipment, supplies, or materials
- + Working capital

# Business Spotlight Program

## OVERVIEW

The Business Spotlight Program was created to recognize and showcase local area businesses who are vital to the City's growth and prosperity. Through this program, members of the community are exposed to a variety of businesses who have displayed their growth in both sales and workforce capacity, have demonstrated diversity in their workplace, have a good reputation within the community and have displayed their generosity by giving back to the community and local charitable organizations.

Businesses who receive the honor of being featured as one of our "Spotlights" are brought before City Council to be rewarded for their strong work and generosity and receive a one year free membership with the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce.

Our new address, website, and email address are as follows:

Address: 1401 Main Street 4th Floor  
Website: [www.columbiasc.gov/OBO](http://www.columbiasc.gov/OBO)  
Email: [OBO@columbiasc.gov](mailto:OBO@columbiasc.gov)



We Are Columbia

For additional information regarding the Office of Business Opportunities' programs and resources, please contact:

PHONE: (803) 545-3950

EMAIL: [OBO@columbiasc.net](mailto:OBO@columbiasc.net)

[www.columbiasc.net/OBO](http://www.columbiasc.net/OBO)

@ColumbiaOBO

1225 LADY STREET, 1ST FLR. SUITE 102, COLUMBIA, SC 29201



We Are Columbia

## Office of Business Opportunities:

Providing Assistance to Columbia's Small Businesses





## OUR MISSION

The Office of Business Opportunities is committed to supporting initiatives that benefit small, women and minority owned businesses in the City of Columbia. This objective is accomplished by providing creative financing, technical assistance and education to build the capacity of these businesses.



# Business Education Opportunities

## OVERVIEW

The city builds capacity for small, women and minority owned businesses in the retail, services, and construction industries through education and training, networking, increased access to contracts, capital, and other business opportunities. Additionally, budgeting, sales strategies, management team roles, operational systems and business plan implementation are key areas of emphasis. The OBO and its partners introduce comprehensive entrepreneur educational programs, which provide entrepreneurs with business insight, leadership skills and professional networking connections while starting and growing their businesses.

# Contractor and Supplier Diversity

## OVERVIEW

With Contractor and Supplier Diversity, the City works to accelerate the viability and strategic growth of procurement and contracting opportunities for small, women, and minority-owned business enterprises. Our goal is to build capacity, increase access to contracts and capital and support inclusive relationships between private and public sectors in the City of Columbia through certification training, mentoring, match-making, and technical assistance.

# Facade Improvement Program

## OVERVIEW

The Facade Improvement Program aims to improve the appearance of commercial corridors throughout the city that are significantly deteriorated. Through this forgivable loan program, business property owners and/or business tenants are able to make improvements to the front and other exterior portions of commercial buildings that can be seen from the public right-of-way, including signage, fencing, awnings, etc.



**To be eligible, applicants must meet the following requirements:**

- + Businesses must be located in a targeted corridor
- + Businesses must meet any matching requirement



**How can Facade Improvement Funds be used?**

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| + Window   | + Masonry / Carpentry repairs                          |
| + Doors    | + Repair / Install architectural detail                |
| + Awnings  | + Iron Bar removal and disposal from windows and doors |
| + Painting | + Storefront remodeling                                |
| + Lighting | + Parking lot paving / Enhancements                    |
| + Signage  | + Landscaping, hard-scape and planting materials       |
| + Fencing  | + Security camera monitoring system                    |

## EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION - BUSINESS

COLUMBIA-RICHLAND 911 COMMUNICATIONS

## BUSINESS INFORMATION

BUSINESS NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: (     )     -     \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF ENTRY/UPDATE:     /     /     \_\_\_\_\_

## EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

\* EMERGENCY CONTACT PERSONEL WILL BE  
CALLED IN THE ORDER LISTED, BEGINNING AT ONE  
AND CONTINUING DOWN THE LIST.

## CONTACT 1

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: (     )     -     \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE/PAGER: (     )     -     \_\_\_\_\_

## CONTACT 2

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: (     )     -     \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE/PAGER: (     )     -     \_\_\_\_\_

## CONTACT 3

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: (     )     -     \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE/PAGER: (     )     -     \_\_\_\_\_

## CONTACT 4

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: (     )     -     \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE/PAGER: (     )     -     \_\_\_\_\_



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ALARM COMPANY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ALARM COMPANY 24 HR PHONE #  
(     )     -     \_\_\_\_\_

## BUSINESS HOURS

MONDAY	OPEN: _____	CLOSE: _____
TUESDAY	OPEN: _____	CLOSE: _____
WEDNESDAY	OPEN: _____	CLOSE: _____
THURSDAY	OPEN: _____	CLOSE: _____
FRIDAY	OPEN: _____	CLOSE: _____
SATURDAY	OPEN: _____	CLOSE: _____
SUNDAY	OPEN: _____	CLOSE: _____

## FOR 911 CENTER USE

<input type="checkbox"/>	NEW CONSTRUCTION
<input type="checkbox"/>	ESTABLISHED BUSINESS/NEW NAME/OWNER
<input type="checkbox"/>	ESTABLISHED BUSINESS/NEW ADDRESS
<input type="checkbox"/>	NEW BUSINESS/ESTABLISHED ADDRESS
<input type="checkbox"/>	NEW BUSINESS/NEW ADDRESS
<input type="checkbox"/>	BUSINESS CLOSED

DATE RECEIVED \_\_\_\_\_

TELCOM. NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE CAD MODIFIED     /     /     \_\_\_\_\_

TELECOM. NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE HOLD ON TO THIS FORM AND USE IT AS OFTEN AS NEEDED TO UPDATE THE INFORMATION LISTED  
ABOVE. WHEN THE FORM IS COMPLETED YOU CAN FAX IT TO US AT (803) 255-8139 OR MAIL IT TO US AT

COLUMBIA-RICHLAND 911 COMMUNICATIONS

1800 LAUREL ST.

COLUMBIA, SC 29201

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS FORM AND THE INFORMATION ON IT, PLEASE CONTACT  
COMMUNICATIONS ADMIN OFFICE AT 803-988-8005

Form 2022-005 11/30/22



April 21, 2023

The City of Columbia Business License Division will be accepting applications for Business Licenses for Short Term Rentals.

In accordance with the recently passed Short-Term Rental (STR) Ordinance 2023-037, the City of Columbia Police Department's Code Enforcement Division will begin taking applications for STR Permits beginning on May 4, 2023.

Obtaining a City of Columbia Business License DOES NOT GUARANTEE that you will be approved for a Short Term Rental Permit. Permits must be APPROVED by Code Enforcement. (Business License Fees will NOT be refunded for businesses, which do not pass Code Enforcement regulations outlined in the STR ordinance).

Process for obtaining a Business License:

1. Fill out a Business License Application (you can fill out a paper application, download and email the fillable form from our website, or apply online at the link on our website.)
2. Include a list of all Short Term Rental Property addresses
3. In City Locations: Obtain Zoning Clearance (this step will be initiated by our office)
4. Pay \$10.00 zoning fee
5. Receive Tourism Development Fee (TDF) payment coupons and information for each rental site
6. Pay license fee and receive Business License

Once the license is issued, you **must** contact Code Enforcement to begin the Short Term Rental Permit Application Process.

Please keep in mind that if you rent on your own or third party rental platform, you are required to collect and remit the three percent local Tourism Development Fee to the City of Columbia. The Business License Division will set up your account when you apply for your license. If you use a licensed property management company, then it is your responsibility to ensure that the company is collecting and remitting the local TDF on your behalf.

You may also want to check with the SC Department of Revenue for their requirements on a SC Retail Number.

Thank you for your interest in a City of Columbia Business License. Please feel free to call our office with questions at (803)545-3345.



# COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

*"Policing Excellence through Community Partnerships"*

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Short-Term Rental Regulations:

### ***What is a Short-Term Rental?***

*Short-term rental (STR)* means the use and enjoyment of a dwelling unit, or portion thereof, for a duration of less than 30 consecutive days in exchange for valuable consideration. Hotels, motels, bed and breakfast establishments, and inns are excluded from this definition.

### ***Who needs to get a Short-Term Rental Permit?***

All owner-occupied and non-owner-occupied short-term rentals made available to occupants for periods of less than 30 consecutive days in the municipal limits of the City must get a short-term rental permit prior to renting.

### ***Is a Business License required?***

Yes. A Business License must be obtained prior to getting an STR permit. For Business License questions please contact their office at 803-545-3345 or email [businesslicenseemail@columbiasc.gov](mailto:businesslicenseemail@columbiasc.gov).

### ***I have a Business License; Do I still need a STR permit?***

Yes. A STR permit is also required for all short-term rental units in the City of Columbia.

### ***How much does the permit cost?***

The cost of the permit is \$100 a year per unit for owner-occupied and \$250 a year per unit for non-owner-occupied. There is also an annual application fee of \$50.

### ***What is the difference between an owner-occupied and non-owner-occupied STR?***

*Owner-occupied* means a dwelling unit that is lawfully classified as owner-occupied by the County and is receiving the 4% special assessment ratio.

*Non-owner-occupied* means a dwelling unit that is not owner-occupied and is used and/or advertised for rent for transient occupancy by guests.

### ***Where do I get the permit?***

The application is available online at <https://columbiapd.net/short-term-rentals/> or available for pick up in the Code Enforcement Division at 920-A Hemlock Drive.

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CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

920-A Hemlock Drive, Columbia, SC 29201

(803)545-3430

***How long is the permit good for?***

Permits are effective from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> each year. Renewal applications must be received on or prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>. Any renewal applications received after July 1<sup>st</sup> will incur a \$100 late fee.

***Can anyone get the rental permit?***

A short-term rental permit will only be issued or renewed to an owner or a responsible local representative having his or her place of residence or business office within 45 miles of the STR property. If residing outside of 45 miles of the STR property, the owner may only obtain a permit if he or she has a responsible local representative.

***What is a responsible local representative?***

*Responsible local representative* means a person having his or her place of residence or business office within 45 miles of the short-term rental property and designated by the property owner as the agent responsible for operating such property in compliance with the City's ordinances and having been authorized by appointment to accept service of process on behalf of the owner pursuant to Rule 4(d)(l) of the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure.

***What if I have more than one STR?***

A short-term rental permit is required for each STR unit. A separate application for each unit must also be submitted.

***What if I already have a residential rental permit with the City?***

The residential rental permit is only good for long-term rentals. You will need to get a short-term rental permit for all STR's effective May 4, 2023.

***Can I have a unit that is available for both long-term and short-term rentals?***

Yes. If the unit will ever be available for short-term rental, an STR permit is required. A short-term rental permit allows you to also rent the unit long-term, however it does not work the other way around. You cannot have a long-term permit and rent short-term.

***Are there any parking requirements?***

Yes. There should be two parking spaces made available on the property for each dwelling unit. Also, please contact Parking Services to see if there are additional parking requirements for on-street parking in the area. Their phone number is 803-545-4015 and email is [ParkingServices@columbiasc.gov](mailto:ParkingServices@columbiasc.gov).

***When do I need to get an STR permit?***

The STR ordinance becomes effective on May 4, 2023. All current STR owners will have 120 days from that date to get the permit without penalty. Any new STR will need to have the permit prior to renting the unit out.



## Tourism Development Fee (TDF) Frequently Asked Questions

The Tourism and Development Fee (TDF) is a 3% fee\* to be imposed on hotels, motels and other accommodations in the City. This fee is dedicated to the purpose of increasing the attraction of, and improving the services provided to tourists.

*\*3% of Gross Receipts (Less Allowable Deductions, which are the Gross Proceeds received from the lease or rental of sleeping accommodations supplied to the same person for a period of 30 continuous days)*

**A) Who is responsible for collecting and remitting the Tourism and Development Fee?**

Any business which provides sleeping accommodations to the same person or persons for a period of less than 30 days is required to collect and remit TDF to the City of Columbia.

**B) How will TDF be remitted?**

The TD Fee is to be remitted to the City of Columbia on a monthly basis, payable by the 20th day of each month. Each remittance should be accompanied by a completed and signed Tourism Development Reporting Coupon. This fee should not be remitted to the State of South Carolina. This fee is not a local option sales tax.

**C) Is this the same fee that is paid to the state?**

No. The state of South Carolina collects an Accommodations Tax. The Tourism Development Fee (TDF) is payable to the City of Columbia for the purpose of improving services to tourists.

**D) What if the payment is late?**

A 5% penalty per month in addition to the Tourism Development Fee must accompany all delinquent remittances. The penalty for violation can accrue up to a maximum of 100% on the original monthly fee. Additionally, violators may be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, subject to a \$500 fine and/or imprisonment for up to thirty (30) days for disregard of this Ordinance.

**E) Are there are exclusions to the ordinance?**

Yes. Meeting and conference room rentals are excluded as well as lodging rentals to the same person or persons for a continuous 30 days.

**F) What if I don't rent my unit every month?**

If there is \$0.00 gross receipts for a particular month(s) then you must still remit the coupon, and report \$0.00.

**G) Is local TDF the same as State TDF?**

No. SC charges an accommodations tax, this is a City of Columbia fee dedicated to the purpose of increasing the attraction of, and improving the services provided to tourists.

**H) What if I lose my coupons can I get more?**

Payment Coupons for TDF will be provided by the Business License Division. If you lose these coupons, or need additional coupons, you can visit our website and print off a copy to submit or you can call our office and we will be happy to email you an electronic copy.



We Are Columbia

## Rental Property Questionnaire

\_\_\_\_\_ Do you offer long-term rentals? (Continuous rental to the same person(s) for 30 days or more)

\_\_\_\_\_ Do you offer short-term rentals (STRs)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do you employ a Property Management Company? If so please provide their information:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Acknowledgements

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that I must be in compliance with all applicable City of Columbia Ordinances including Business License, Parking and Code Enforcement.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that Short Term Rentals (STRs) are responsible for paying City of Columbia Tourism Development Fees (TDF) monthly by the 20<sup>th</sup>.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that my business license and/or STR Permit are not transferrable.

You may attach additional pages or an Excel Spreadsheet if needed.

Address of Property	Owner Occupied Y/N	Long Term Rental Y/N	Short Term Rental Y/N	Property Mgt. Company

Please see included documents from Code Enforcement and Parking Services for your reference.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**CITY OF COLUMBIA**  
South Carolina

# Parking Services

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Short-Term Rental Regulations:

***How do I know I'm in a residential permitted area?***

You may find our GIS map, located at <https://gisinweb.columbiasc.ads/cocgis/>, to confirm your property is in a residential parking permitted area.

***Are there any parking requirements?***

Yes. There should be two parking spaces made available on the property for each dwelling unit.

***In addition to two on-site parking spaces, the below may be applicable:***

If your short-term rental is in a residential permitted area, you will need a parking permit. If not, you risk getting your vehicle ticketed or towed.

If your short-term rental is not in a residential permitted area, you may park on street at first come first serve basis.

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*City of Columbia*  
**Parking Services**  
820 Washington Street  
Columbia, SC 29201  
(803)545-4015

			<b>Due Date:</b>
<b>Previous Month's Gross Receipts:</b>	<b>Tax Rate: 3%</b>	<b>Penalty (if paid after the due date): 5% per month</b>	<b>Total Due:</b>
	<b>Business Name:</b>		
	<b>Business Address:</b>		
	<b>Signature:</b>		

Return Payment To: City of Columbia Business License, P.O. Box 7997, Columbia, SC 29202-7997

			<b>Due Date:</b>
<b>Previous Month's Gross Receipts:</b>	<b>Tax Rate: 3%</b>	<b>Penalty (if paid after the due date): 5% per month</b>	<b>Total Due:</b>
	<b>Business Name:</b>		
	<b>Business Address:</b>		
	<b>Signature:</b>		

Return Payment To: City of Columbia Business License, P.O. Box 7997, Columbia, SC 29202-7997

			<b>Due Date:</b>
<b>Previous Month's Gross Receipts:</b>	<b>Tax Rate: 3%</b>	<b>Penalty (if paid after the due date): 5% per month</b>	<b>Total Due:</b>
	<b>Business Name:</b>		
	<b>Business Address:</b>		
	<b>Signature:</b>		

Return Payment To: City of Columbia Business License, P.O. Box 7997, Columbia, SC 29202-7997

			<b>Due Date:</b>
<b>Previous Month's Gross Receipts:</b>	<b>Tax Rate: 3%</b>	<b>Penalty (if paid after the due date): 5% per month</b>	<b>Total Due:</b>
	<b>Business Name:</b>		
	<b>Business Address:</b>		
	<b>Signature:</b>		

Return Payment To: City of Columbia Business License, P.O. Box 7997, Columbia, SC 29202-7997