

How to Open a Restaurant in Westminster

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Step 1: Determine the type of business you want to open

If you need help with market research, choosing a name, determining a legal structure and licensing, formulating a business plan, establishing business tax information or hiring employees reach out to:

- **North Metro Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**
- **Small Business Administration (SBA)**
- **Colorado Business Resource Book**

Step 1b: Determine the type of restaurant you want to open

- Table service
- Drive-thru
- Serving alcohol
- Pre-prepared food

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Step 2: Contact the City of Westminster

Before signing a lease or purchasing a site, contact our team below to ensure the location is appropriate for your business.

- **Economic Development** — The Economic Development team can assist with finding a site for your business, connect you to resources, and aid in facilitating conversations around the requirements below.

For more information, please contact:

Economic Development | ecodevo@cityofwestminster.us | 303.658.2108

- **Zoning** — Factors to consider in selecting a site are the type of building, location, zoning and available parking. Contact the Planning Division for zoning approval prior to signing a lease and prior to submitting building permits.

For more information, please contact:

Planning Division | planning@cityofwestminster.us | 303.658.2092

- **Building** — Check with the Building Division to see if your occupancy type will be allowed in the existing building without making major renovations.

For more information, please contact:

Building Division | permits@cityofwestminster.us | 303.658.2075

- **Grease Traps** — “FOGG retention devices” are required for every food serving establishment. The size, type, and location of the interceptor will depend on the number of seats your restaurant services as well as number of water fixtures. You will need City approval prior to installing your grease trap.

For more information, please contact:

Wastewater Field Operations, FOGG | fogg@cityofwestminster.us | 303.658.2537



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- **Water Taps** — Restaurants use a lot of water by comparison to retail, and have more fixtures too. A tap up-size and/or additional water purchases may be required to provide adequate water service for a restaurant. Total construction and tap fee costs could be \$100,000+, some of which may be paid by the building owner. Please contact Public Works and Utilities prior to signing a lease to see if tap fees will be required.

For more information, please contact:

Drew Beckwith | dbeckwith@cityofwestminster.us | 303.658.2386

- **Backflow and Cross Connection Control** — Backflow protection is required for all businesses. To determine what is right for your type of restaurant, refer to the [City of Westminster Municipal Code, Section 8-7-27](#). A final inspection will be required prior to a new meter installation or through the permitting process. Please refer to www.cityofwestminster.us/backflow for answers to common questions.

For more information, please contact:

Backflow & Cross Connection Control Team | backflow@cityofwestminster.us | 303.658.2477

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Step 3: Register your business name and structure

Search for business name availability and register your business name and structure at:

Colorado Secretary of State

1700 Broadway, Suite 200

Denver, CO 80202

www.sos.state.co.us

303.894.2200

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Step 4: Register with tax authorities on the city, state and federal level

Taxes that may be levied on businesses include income tax, employment tax, sales tax and city business taxes. ([Learn More](#))

City of Westminster

4800 W 92nd Ave.

Westminster, CO 80031

Sales Tax Division

salestax@cityofwestminster.us | 303.658.2065

[Westminster Sales Tax](#)

State: For state taxes and a Sales Tax ID number, visit the Colorado Business Express website, www.colorado.gov/cbe.

Federal: All forms of structure, except sole proprietors with no employees, must obtain a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN), which is also your federal tax ID number.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

www.irs.gov

800.829.1040



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Step 5: Employer responsibilities

A business with employees must register as an employer; pay additional taxes; withhold, match and submit employee withholdings; obtain workers' compensation insurance; and follow other employee eligibility regulations. ([Learn More](#))

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Step 6: Both the City and Counties require food safety permits

Make sure you have the appropriate permits to prepare food and drink.

- **Westminster Business and Liquor License**

City Clerk | licensing@cityofwestminster.us | 303.658.2162

- **County Food Licenses**

[Adams County Health Dept](#)

[Jefferson County Health Dept](#)

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Step 7: Apply for a Westminster Business License and ensure all permits are submitted before you build or remodel a property

Below is a list to help make sure you obtain the correct licensing and appropriate permits to make changes to the property. All permits must be filed with [eTRAKiT](#), our online system to help assure your project is accessible and managed well.

- **City Clerk's Office** — each Westminster business will go through multiple steps before the approval is given to the City Clerk's Office to issue a license that allows your business to operate legally within the City of Westminster. The full process could take 4-6 weeks.

City of Westminster

4800 W 92nd Ave.

Westminster, CO 80031

City Clerk's Office

licensing@cityofwestminster.us | 303.658.2161

[Westminster Business Licensing](#)

Application will be routed to the following divisions for review and approval, pending the type of license you are submitting for. NOTE: All divisions must approve the issuance of a license before a business can legally operate.

Planning Division — this will determine, based on current zoning ordinances, if the business description on the application is an "allowed use" at the intended business address.

- o **New Construction or exterior renovations** to an existing building, an Official Development Plan (ODP) must be approved by the City.
- o **Signage:** Signage is regulated by the [City of Westminster Municipal Code, Title 11, Chapter 11](#). In addition to this Code, signage may also be regulated by a sign program in the Official Development Plan.

For more information, please contact:

planning@cityofwestminster.us | 303.658.2092 | [Westminster Community Development](#)



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Building Division — this will determine that the business meets the required building codes to operate the type of business described. To ensure compliance, the division may also do a site inspection. Site inspections will typically be performed on all new builds, remodels, assembly uses, and automotive repair facilities. Someone from the Building Division will contact a business representative directly to schedule a licensing inspection if one is needed for the approval. The issuance of a business license does not take the place of, or mean that the applicant does not need to obtain a building permit for construction work. Building permits are required for most building construction activities, including any plumbing, mechanical or electrical work.

Find our online permitting [here](#).

Find our building permit fee schedule [here](#).

o **New Construction:**

- Permits needed: Building permit will include water/sewer tap. Irrigation tap, fire suppression, signs, fences and retaining walls will require a separate permit if applicable.
- Timeline for new construction building review first comments will be within 6 weeks.

o **Tenant finish/remodel:** Building permits will be required for any modifications or improvements to the building. It is recommended that you work with a design professional or architect if you are not familiar with construction practices. If changing anything on the exterior or roof or adding outside seating area will require authorization from the planning dept.

- Permits needed: Building permit may include additional water tap fees. Irrigation tap, fire suppression, signs, fences and retaining walls will require a separate permit if applicable.
- Timeline for tenant finish building review first comments will be within 4 weeks depending on the complexity of the project.

For more information, please contact:

permits@cityofwestminster.us | 303.658.2075

Online permitting system, [eTRAKiT](#)

[Westminster Community Development](#)

Fire Department — this will address any safety concerns as well as fire code compliance. This applies to new and existing buildings, tenant improvements, change of occupancies, and residential uses. The use, modification, or additional of required fire protection systems will be reviewed. If there is a concern, someone from the Fire Department will contact a business representative directly to schedule a licensing inspection.

o **Operating a Food Truck:**

If you are operating a Food Truck that will provide goods in the City of Westminster, you are also required to submit your current county tags and schedule a truck inspection with the Fire Department. This inspection is required each year.

For more information, please contact: 303.658.4500

Sales Tax Division — this will ensure the requested reporting frequency is appropriate for the type of business indicated. That Division will automatically mail out information to the tax correspondence address provided regarding the collection and remitting of Sales/Use Tax to the city. This mailing will provide the account number generated and the set filing frequency but it does not mean that the issuance of the license has been approved. **Any sales tax collected, or use tax due, prior to receiving a city business license must still be remitted timely. A blank sales tax return is on our website.**

For more information, please contact:

salestax@cityofwestminster.us | 303.658.2065



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Step 8: License Approval or Denial

- **Approval** — Once the City Clerk's Office receives all of the approvals, a license will be generated in your licensing portal. You can print it out so that you have the license available upon request at the business and keep your account number handy for any question and tax filings.
- **Denial** — Should a division have grounds to deny a license, a letter will be mailed indicating the reason for the denial.

Open Your Business

Congratulations and welcome to Westminster!

Westminster's Department of Economic Development offers a variety of programs and services to help new and expanding businesses.

Westminster Economic Development

For more information, please contact:
ecodevo@cityofwestminster.us | 303.658.2108



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COLORADO

4800 W 92nd Ave. | Westminster, CO 80031
www.westminstereconomicdevelopment.org