



Food Truck Startup Roadmap



**ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**

CITY OF DURHAM



DURHAM
COUNTY

Development
Services Center



Food Truck Startup Roadmap

✓ Plan Your Business

Create a business plan for your food truck.

The business plan is a written, viable plan of action to guide your success.

[Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina has great resources to help with your business plan.](#)

Determine your business legal structure.

Before selecting a business structure, consult your attorney and/or accountant [as each structure carries with it unique legal and tax consequences.](#)

Register your business.

Your business must be registered. It's a good idea to [perform a name search online](#) or in office to determine if the proposed business name has already been filed. If you've [organized as an LLC register with the N.C. Secretary of State.](#) [Corporations also register with North Carolina](#) as well.

If you're organized as a sole proprietorship or general partnership, [file with the Durham County Register of Deeds](#) and pay the \$26 file fee.

Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS.

Also known as a Federal Tax ID Number, you'll need an EIN if you will be hiring employees, forming a partnership, or corporation. [Read more about EINs and apply online for yours with the IRS.](#)

Sign up for a State Tax ID.

To collect sales and use taxes, [you'll need to register the N.C. Department of Revenue.](#) You will receive information from the Department of Revenue on sales and use tax reporting and remittance requirements.

Learn about available financial resources.

Small business owners in North Carolina have [financial resources available at the federal level](#) and [right here in North Carolina.](#)

Business Resources

Business Planning

<https://edpnc.com/start-or-grow-a-business/start-a-business/small-business-resources/>

Legal Structure

<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch/choose-business-structure-types-chart>

EIN Info & Application

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>

Business Name Search

<http://www.sosnc.gov/search/index/corp>

LLC State Registration

<https://edpnc.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Limited-Liability-Company-Articles-of-Organization.pdf>

Corporation State Registration

<https://edpnc.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Instructions-for-Filing-Corporation-Articles-of-Incorporation.pdf>

County Register of Deeds

<http://www.dconnc.gov/government/departments-f-z/register-of-deeds>

NC Department of Revenue

<https://eservices.dor.nc.gov/ncbusreg/>

Financial Resources (Federal)

<https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs>

Financial Resources (State)

<https://edpnc.com/start-or-grow-a-business/start-a-business/small-business-resources/#sec2>

Plan Your Location

Determine your food truck business office location.

If your business office is not within Durham County, you may be able to skip this step, and move on to the next.

If your office is in your home, which is within Durham County, then you would need to [obtain a Home Occupation Permit](#). A fee of \$26.00 is required per permit. Per the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Section 5.4.4 on Home Occupation, You may park one commercial vehicle at your home.

If your office is within a business location (such as a Commissary or Restaurant), then you would need to [obtain a Business Verification Letter](#). A fee of \$15.60 is required for each letter. If you have more than one vehicle in your Food Truck fleet, then the vehicles above the one you can park at your house will have to be parked somewhere else. If there is sufficient parking, the commissary or restaurant you operate out of may be the place.

Determine where you will store food and supplies.

Food truck food service permits are required to have an approved Shared-Use Kitchen where all food is produced, supplies are stored and cleaning is performed. Domestic residences are not allowed to be shared-use kitchens under State law. Contact the [Durham County Environmental Health Department online](#), email healthinspector@dconc.gov, or call 919.560.7800 for guidance on this question. Only food businesses licensed by the State Department of Agriculture may use their home for storage and production of their food products.

Location Resources

UDO Uses & Zones

<http://www.codepublishing.com/NC/Durham/#/5.1.html>

Zoning Atlas

<http://durhamnc.gov/423/Zoning-Atlas>

Zoning Form

<http://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2674/Business-Verification-Letters-PDF>

Historic Locations

<http://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1347/Work-Requiring-a-Certificate-of-Appropriateness-with-Classification-Chart-PDF>

Review the mobile food unit requirements.

Get familiar with [Durham County Health Department's specific requirements for food trucks](#).

Complete a Mobile Food Unit Plan Review Application.

[Durham County's application for food trucks and carts must be filled out and submitted](#). There's a \$75 fee with this application.

Ensure one employee is a certified food protection manager.

Review the [North Carolina Food Code Manual](#).

Provide a Mobile Unit Operating Schedule.

Durham County Health Department [requires you to submit a monthly operating schedule](#).

Complete a Shared Use Kitchen Agreement.

[This agreement for shared use kitchens is a required part of your plan](#) for Durham County Health Department.

Review North Carolina's Mobile Food Unit Inspection Items.

The [North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services](#) has a [sanitation rule set](#) for food establishments.

Contact Durham County Plan Review Specialist.

Call (919) 560-7800 at least 5 but not more than 30 business days prior to projected opening date to schedule the permitting evaluation.

Get Your Food Truck Inspected.

You can [review Durham County Public Health forms, applications, and fees here](#). Make sure you receive a copy of the inspection report and findings.

Regulations Resources

Mobile Food Requirements

<http://www.dconc.gov/home/showdocument?id=20709>

Mobile Food Application

<http://www.dconc.gov/home/showdocument?id=21486>

Monthly Schedule

<http://www.dconc.gov/home/showdocument?id=4408>

Shared Kitchen Agreement

<http://www.dconc.gov/home/showdocument?id=21468>

N.C. Food Service Establishment Rules

<https://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/docs/rules/294306-26-2600.pdf>

Food Code Manual

<http://ehs.ncpublichealth.com/faf/docs/foodprot/NC-FoodCodeManual-2009-FINAL.pdf>

Schedule an Evaluation

<http://dcpublichealth.org/services/environmental-health/forms-applications>

Where To Go for Your Registration

Apply for the Durham Food Truck Registration.

This registration has to be renewed each year, with a given registration starting each July 1. You will need to present your Health Inspection Certificate each time you apply for a registration. [The Street Vendor Registration Form is available through the Planning Department](#). You can also pick up the application at the Development Services Center, on the Ground Floor of Durham City Hall.

Know where you can go.

The City Code of Ordinances describes where in the right-of-way you can operate your food truck (see 54.91). This information is also provided in [a FAQ sheet available from the DSC](#). For normal operation in the public right-of-way, food trucks must be located in Commercial zoning districts (those zoned CC, CI, CN, CG, IL, SRP, IP, MU, DD, and CD). See [Durham's](#)

[Zoning Atlas for graphic representation](#) of where these districts are located. You can always contact the DSC and request the zoning for a particular part of town via [a MOJO information request](#).

Whether on private property or in the public right-of-way, food truck operators need to have special permission, such as a [Special Event Permit](#) per the City Municipal Code of Ordinances to operate outside of a commercial zoning district.

Visit Durham's Development Services Center to learn more, or to ask for help in determining what your options may be.

You can contact the [DSC](#) by [MOJO](#), [email](#), or [in person](#).

Registration Resources

Where You Can Operate

<http://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1120>

Durham Zoning Atlas

<http://durhamnc.gov/423/Zoning-Atlas>

MOJO Info Request

<http://dsc.durhamnc.gov/ImageRepository/Document?documentId=137>

Special Event Permit

https://library.municode.com/nc/durham/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH54SASOBURE_ARTIISASOSTRI-W

DSC Website

<https://dsc.durhamnc.gov/>

Contact DSC by MOJO

<http://dsc.durhamnc.gov/189/Get-help-or-submit-application>

Contact DSC by Email

https://dsc.mojohelpdesk.com/login/create_request#/ticket-form/32468

Visit DSC

<https://dsc.durhamnc.gov/180/About-the-DSC-and-its-partners>

Employer Requirements

Hire employees.

The [Durham NCWorks Career Center](#) can help you find the talented workers you need for your food truck.

Check if you need unemployment insurance.

Use the [Division of Employment Security's site](#) to see if you need to comply.

Obtain Workers' Compensation Insurance.

For 3 or more employees, you'll likely need workers' compensation insurance. [Learn more at N.C. Industrial Commission](#).

Complete Federal Form I-9. [Form I-9](#) is used for verifying the identity and employment authorization of individuals hired for employment in the United States.

Employer Resources

Find Workers

<https://durhamnc.gov/572/NCWorks-Career-Center>

Unemployment Insurance

<https://des.nc.gov/DES>

Worker's Comp

<http://www.ic.nc.gov/>

Form I-9

<https://www.uscis.gov/i-9>

Plan Your Opening

Open a Business Bank Account.

[Business banking offers limited personal liability protection](#) by keeping your business funds separate from your personal funds.

Create a Marketing Plan

The Small Business Administration can help you with a [sample marketing plan](#).

Place Your Business on Google

[Listing your business with Google](#) is an important step today.

Opening Resources

Banking

<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch/open-business-bank-account-fees-benefits>

Sample Marketing Plan

<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/manage-your-business/marketing-sales>

Google Business

<https://www.gybo.com>

Staying Successful + Resources

Post Required State and Federal posters and permits.

You can [print required posters for free from the N.C. Dept. of Labor](#).

Prepare for Inspections.

Once permitted the establishment is inspected on a regular basis. Regular inspections and visits are not announced or scheduled. Ensure food service workers are following required laws and have good hygiene.

Learn more about business recordkeeping.

As a new business owner, you need to know your [federal tax responsibilities](#).

Prepare for taxes.

The [N.C. Dept of Revenue](#) holds regular [Tax Seminars](#) throughout the year.

Other Durham Resource Partners

- [Small Business Center at Durham Tech](#)
- [Small Business Technology & Development Center](#)
- [The Institute](#)
- [Durham Small Business Advisory Committee](#)
- [Business Link: North Carolina](#)

General Resources

Required Posters

<https://www.labor.nc.gov/safety-and-health/publications/state-and-federal-workplace-poster-requirements/ncdol-labor-law>

Federal Tax

<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p583.pdf>

N.C. Tax Seminars

<http://www.dorncc.com/business/smallbusseminars.html>

Durham Tech

<https://www.durhamtech.edu/sbc/>

Tech & Development Center

<http://www.sbtcd.org/offices/nccu/>

The Institute

<http://www.theinstitutenc.org/>

Small Business Advisory

<http://durhamnc.gov/462/Small-Business-Advisory-Committee>

Business Link: North Carolina

<http://blnc.gov>

Connect for Additional Assistance



**ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**

CITY OF DURHAM

Office of Economic & Workforce Development

801 E. Main Street, Suite 5-100
Durham, NC 27701

[Visit us online](#) or call (919) 560-4965