

Small business

Navigating Council processes

2026–27

Getting started

Our Local Business Support team connects you to resources, tools, programs, networks and more to help your business growth and development.

This factsheet provides links for navigating:

- requirements to start a small business
- understanding where your business can operate (development approvals)
- building, fit out, and renovations
- food business approval and licences
- permits for public land
- business support available.

Starting a small business

Visit our [Level Up Your Business Website](#) for up-to-date information on starting a business. Learn how Council supports small business at [Business | Sunshine Coast Council](#). You can also contact the team via email businessdevelopment@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au.

Development approval

Before selecting a location, leasing a premise or commencing a fit-out, visit Council's [Planning and Development for Business](#) for information on development approvals, zoning requirements, building approvals and business fit-out considerations.

Basic zoning information is available free of charge via Council's [AI development assistant tool](#).

Construction and fit out

A development building work permit is required for alterations and additions to existing commercial and industrial buildings including tenancy fit outs for:

- new commercial and industrial buildings
- existing commercial and industrial buildings including retail shops, offices and replacement or renewal of shop fronts.

You can contact a private certifier for relevant building approvals. [Plumbing](#) approvals may be required from Council.

Food businesses must adhere to the [Design and Fitout Guide for Food Businesses](#).

Liquor licence

The Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation (OLGR) issue [Liquor licences](#). You can request a [planning search](#) and [written advice](#) from Council to seek planning advice about the suitability of your site. Neither Council, nor OLGR issue licences or permits for BYO.

Licence and permits

View more information on Council [Permits and licences](#) on our website.

Fixed food business

Starting a new food business. See website for details: [Fixed food business licence](#)

1. Planning approval – your site must be appropriately zoned.
2. Building approval – private certifier.
3. Plumbing and trade waste approvals.
4. Food business plan assessment to meet fit out requirements for food businesses - [Design and fit out guide for food businesses](#).
5. Food Licence Application – with [food safety supervisor](#) details.
6. [Footpath dining permits](#) may be granted in accordance with council requirements.

Mobile food business

A mobile business licence is linked to the address the vehicle is garaged.

1. Food business plan for assessment - [Design and fit out guide for food businesses](#).
2. Food licence application – with [food safety supervisor](#) details.
3. Itinerant vendor – a [Low-use / low-impact permit](#) is required to stop roadside on public land while serving customers.

Temporary food business

If you are planning on selling food at a market stall or event you may need a food business licence. Utilising an approved commercial kitchen to prepare food is an economical option for preparation. [Market stalls and temporary food business licence](#).

Mobile business

To conduct a commercial activity on public land [Low-use / low-impact permits](#) or [High-use / high-impact permits](#) are required.

Goods on a footpath

Shop owners may want to display their goods on council footpaths. A ["Footpath trading application"](#) is required.

For a successful business launch please allow sufficient timeframes for different permits.

Advertising signs

All advertising signage on the Sunshine Coast is regulated to ensure safe placement of signage. [Advertising devices](#) information is on our website.

Some movable advertising devices are self-assessable, including A-Frame signs.

Events

If you wish to hold an event in a park, on a beach or road, you will require a permit from council. View more information on obtaining [a temporary event or regulated activity permit](#).

Grants

Council's Grant Guru [Sunshine Coast Funding Finder](#) portal is available free of charge to our community for information on external grants.

Waste services

Reduce your waste costs by choosing the right bin and collection options for your business. View [Commercial waste bins](#) on our website to see how recycling more can help you save.

Doing business with Council

Explore the [Doing Business with Council](#) webpage for information on procurement opportunities, supplier requirements and resources to help strengthen your capability when tendering for government contracts. Subscribe to the [tender alert](#) service to receive real-time notifications of new opportunities.