



## Steps to Starting a Successful Business In Maryland and the Town of Bel Air:

1. Contact the state of Maryland Dept. of Assessment & Taxation to get a "Trade Name Application."
2. Contact Internal Revenue Service to get an "EIN."
3. Contact MD Comptroller of the Treasury to set up a business tax account via the "Combined Registration Online Application."
4. Contact the Harford County Clerk of the Circuit Court to apply for a "Trader's License": 20 West Courtland Street; 410-838-4952.
5. Search the Maryland Department of Labor and Licensing website for state business/occupational license requirements and poster notices.
6. Choose your business location. Contact the Bel Air Dept. of Economic Development to review criteria before you sign your lease: 410-838-0584.
7. Contact Chrissy Mullaney at Town of Bel Air Department of Public Works (410-638-4546) to get your Use & Occupancy Certificate (U & O). Any structural modifications (interior or exterior) will require a Building Permit. Four sets of architect sealed plans are required. Building permit process takes 4-6 weeks.
8. Contact Laura Bianca-Pruett at the Town of Bel Air Department of Planning (410-638-4540) to get your sign permit.
9. If serving alcohol, it will require a Special Exception from the Board of Appeals. Contact Rowan Glidden at the Town of Bel Air Department of Planning (410-638-4540). Also, contact the Harford County Liquor Board (410-638-3028) to schedule a hearing.

### Recommendations:

- a. Contact the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to develop your business plan. They are located at: 2021G Pulaski Highway, Havre de Grace, MD 21078; 410-386-8390. Contact Ryan Del Gallo. Email: rdelgallo@carrollcc.edu
- b. Join the Harford County Chamber of Commerce: 108 S. Bond Street; 410-838-2020. Contact: Angela Rose.
- c. Join the Bel Air Downtown Alliance. They are located at 5 N. Main Street, Suite 2B; 443-823-1797. Contact: Jenny Falcone.
- d. Hire a business attorney to review your documents.
- e. Hire an accredited accountant to review your financial statements on a regular basis.

### Do's and Don'ts!

- *Do research square footage costs and find out the going rates – not necessarily what other people are paying*
- *Do contact the Bel Air Economic Development Department for a personalized business consulting session*
- *Don't open a business without a solid business plan. Know what you need to bring in to keep afloat!*
- *Don't sign a lease until you have your business plan, know the area and surrounding businesses, and understand the criteria involved in getting your Use & Occupancy Certificate (U & O)*

*In order to get your U & O you will need to pass code inspections from Town of Bel Air and Harford County. For example, if you are opening a restaurant, you will need to get a permit from the Health Department. Regardless of your product, you may need to make improvements, repairs or install ADA ramps or restroom facilities to your establishment, so please keep this in mind before signing your lease. You cannot open for business if you do not have your U&O! Agencies you may be dealing with: Health Dept., State Fire Marshal., Bel Air Planning Dept., Bel Air Public Works, Harford County Permits Dept., Harford County Liquor Board.*

**Resources:**

*Small Business Administration (SBA)*

*Maryland Dept. of Commerce – Maryland Is Open For Business ([open.maryland.gov](http://open.maryland.gov))*

*Harford County Office of Economic Development – The Ground Floor*

*Maryland Small Business Development Center*

**Things to Consider when selecting your site:**

*Town of Bel Air Development Regulations (i.e. signage)*

*Water and sewer hook-up fees*

*Parking requirements based on your type of business and your building*

*ADA accessibility*

*International Building Code (IBC) Standards*