



The Lawrence Township **BUSINESS MANUAL**

PREPARED BY

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Introduction

Welcome to Lawrence

**FROM MAYOR
JOHN RYAN**



As a 37-year resident of Lawrence Township, I understand and appreciate the important role businesses have in our community. From mom-and-pops, to commercial chains and large educational and pharmaceutical businesses, our local economy is robust and thriving! And the diverse economic districts throughout our community offer something for everyone to enjoy. As we set our sights on the future, it's important that we preserve what makes Lawrence a unique place to operate a business, and continue to develop resources that support the success of our business community. To that end, we hope the Lawrence Township Business Manual provides the business community with essential information on municipal services to give them the best opportunity to succeed.

Reflections from

**FROM MUNICIPAL MANAGER
KEVIN NERWINSKI**



Over the past 5+ years as Municipal Manager, I've seized upon opportunities to redevelop public infrastructure and maximize the use of our resources in order to ensure the economic vitality of Lawrence Township. Thoughtful and strategic capital improvement projects, if managed correctly, positively impact the quality of life for residents, resulting in a desirable locale for businesses. But we can do more for businesses than stewarding economic development. Challenged by our Mayor and Council Members to do more for our business community, we strive to develop services, resources and campaigns that position local businesses to be better connected with the community. The Lawrence Township Business Manual is the first step toward that goal, and we hope it will foster a mutually beneficial partnership between the Municipality and its local businesses.

THE LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP BUSINESS MANUAL

Lawrence Township is an extraordinary place to live, work, and operate a business. It is uniquely positioned to offer both quality of life and a robust local economy, and the Township is committed to fostering a vision that preserves this delicate balance. To this end, we aim to continually assess the needs of the community and provide as many resources as we can to our local businesses.

Consequently, the purpose of this manual is to create a snapshot for new or established businesses in the Township to help navigate the application and permit process, as well as to provide essential information on the resources necessary to start and sustain your business. This is not intended to be a legal, comprehensive, or highly technical document. It's purpose is to be an informative, user-friendly starting point for businesses.

We recommend that you consult an attorney and other professionals to help you navigate the process. However, we hope that this manual positions you and your business to succeed in Lawrence.

- COMMUNITY AIDE & GROWTH AND REDEVELOPMENT



Why Lawrence?

Lawrence Township's strong economy, recreational and entertainment opportunities, diverse population, world-renowned educational institutions, and geographic location position Lawrence to be an ideal cultural and economic hub. The Township is a community of 22 square miles located in the center of Mercer County, New Jersey. Princeton and West Windsor Townships border it on the north. Its southern neighbor is the City of Trenton, the state capital. It is bordered on the east by Hamilton Township and on the west by Ewing and Hopewell Townships. The Township and its surrounding communities host one of the largest concentrations of diversified research and development activities in the nation. Among the country's largest corporations that pursue such activities are Educational Testing Service and Bristol-Myers Squibb, both of which are in Lawrence. Smaller corporate and office complexes are concentrated at the various Interstate 95 interchanges within the community. Three large retail establishments serve township residents, as well as residents of neighboring communities. The Quaker Bridge Mall, a regional enclosed shopping mall anchored by two major department stores; the Mercer Mall; and the Lawrence Shopping Center provide retail opportunities within the Township's borders. Lawrence Township is uniquely positioned within commuting distance by mass transit to both Philadelphia and New York, approximately 33 and 54 miles in distance, making it an ideal economic hub.



Historic Lawrence

Lawrence Township was founded in 1697 and was originally known as Maidenhead, named by the early settlers after a Thames River village just west of London. At that time, Maidenhead was part of Burlington County, the colony of West Jersey. The eastern boundary of Maidenhead, the Province Line, was the dividing line between the two original colonies of East and West Jersey. These were united into New Jersey in 1702. In 1714, the Township became part of the newly-constituted Hunterdon County. The Township was legally incorporated through an act of the State legislature in 1798. In 1816, the municipality was renamed Lawrence, after Captain James Lawrence, commander of the frigate Chesapeake and one of the naval heroes of the War of 1812. In 1838, Mercer County was formed from parts of Hunterdon, Middlesex, and Burlington Counties. The Township's boundaries and geographic relationships have remained the same with the exception of the southern border. Lawrence claimed an area of East Trenton from 1844 to 1882. It then became an independent jurisdiction known as Millham Township until it once again became part of Trenton in 1888.



LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP: MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Lawrence Township adopted a Council-Manager form of government in 1970. The Council-Manager Plan form of government was established under "The Faulkner Act" (N.J.S.A. 40A:69A-81, et seq.).

The governing body consists of five council members elected at large who serve four-year terms. The elections are partisan and occur every two years in November. The Mayor is elected by the council members and serves a two-year term. Council acts by majority vote to enact legislation and set policy for the municipality. It appoints the Municipal Manager, who acts as the chief executive and administrative official of the municipality. The Municipal Manager is primarily responsible for the municipal government's day-to-day operations, prepares the municipal budget, appoints and removes department heads, and attends council meetings with voice but no voting rights. The Town Manager and Town Clerk attend all Town Council Meetings, the latter serving as Secretary and as custodian of all minutes, ordinances, resolutions, bonds, deeds and contracts.

TOWNSHIP COUNCIL



John T. Ryan
Mayor



Chris Bobbitt
Council Member



Catherin MacDuff
Council Member



Michael Powers
Council Member



James Kownacki
Council Member

CENSUS DATA & STATISTICS

Population (2020) **33,077**

Population Growth (2010-2020) -395

Population Growth Percent -1.2%

Population per Square Mile 1,517

Economy

Median Household Income \$110,215

Per Capita Income (2020) \$50,237

Total Retail Sales (2012) \$ 1.1 billion

Retail Sales per Capita (2012) \$33,086

Total Accommodation and Food Service Sales (2012) \$77.8 million

Total Manufacturer's Shipments (2012) \$165 million

Labor and Education

Labor Force Participation (% pop. age 16+) 66.9%

Unemployment Rate (Oct. 2021) 3.5%

High School Graduation or higher 93.2 %

Bachelor's Degree or Higher 57.7%

Language other than English spoken at Home 32%

Housing

Owner Occupied Housing Unit Rate 68.9%

Median Value of Owner Occupied Housing Units \$340,700

Technology

Households with a Computer 94.3%

Households with Broadband Internet 89.2%

Municipal Resources



WHERE TO BEGIN...

Whether you are a
NEW OR EXISTING
BUSINESS

start with...



CONTACT



cdinwoodie@lawrencetwp.com



Call Us
609-844-7074

ONBOARDING

1 COMMUNITY AIDE

- Business Registrar
- Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies
- Shop Lawrence

2 ENGINEERING

- Business Occupancy Application
- Commercial Sign Permit Application
- Outdoor Seating Permit Application
- Home Occupation Application

3 CONSTRUCTION

- Construction Permit Application
- Application for Certificate
- Certificate of Occupancy
- Contractor's License Application

4 FIRE MARSHALL

- Annual Fire Registration
- Application for Fire Safety Permit
- Alarm System Registration

5 HEALTH DEPARTMENT

- Retail Food Establishment License Application
- Retail Food Establishment Plan Review Application

5 MUNICIPAL CLERK

- Gathering Permit
- Retail Liquor License

Disclaimer this is not a comprehensive list of all the permits and applications you may need to operate a business in Lawrence Township. Please refer to the full list of **forms** for available services.

COMMUNITY AIDE

The Community Aide should be the first point of contact for businesses. The CA helps businesses navigate through the permit and license application process, and provides general support to give a business the optimal chance to meet its goals and succeed in an always competitive market.

RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONIES

If you're planning a Grand Opening, we can help with a ribbon cutting ceremony attended by an elected official. Photos will be posted on our website, social media, and newsletter. This is a great way to gain exposure with the Lawrence Township community.



Shop
Lawrence

A new campaign that supports the local business community, and encourages residents to shop close to home.



EVENTS







DIGITAL MEDIA





AWARDS





ENGINEERING

| Business Occupancy Application | Download File |
|--|---|
| If your business is moving into a physical location, you will need to fill out a Business Occupancy Application to determine whether the location is zoned for your intended use. |  |
| Commercial Sign Application | Download File |
| A permit is required before the installation of any signage that promotes your business. |  |
| Outdoor Seating Permit Application | Download File |
| The Outdoor Seating Permit Application lists the requirements necessary to approve outdoor seating, such as: handicap accessibility, exceptions, distance from traffic, and plans. |  |
| Home Occupancy Application | Download File |
| If you plan on having a home-based business in your residence, you will need to fill out a Home Occupancy Application. It lists the provisions necessary to be approved as per the Land Development Ordinance. |  |

CONSTRUCTION

| Construction Permit Application | Download File |
|--|---|
| If your business will be doing construction you will need to specify the proposed work in this application. |  |
| Application for Certificate | Download File |
| This is the application you will need to complete in order to receive a Certificate of Occupancy. It requests a description of work / use, and specifications filed with the Construction Permit application. |  |
| Certificate of Occupancy | Download File |
| This is the document that will be completed by a Township official and demonstrates that your construction has been completed in accordance with State Code and per plans. |  |
| Contractors License Application | Download File |
| In order to complete building work in Lawrence Township, the contractor will need to be licensed with the municipality. The application requests personal identifiers and professional information from the contractor. This applies only to contractors not licensed with the state of NJ. Good for a year. |  |



FIRE MARSHAL

| Annual Fire Registration | Download File |
|---|---|
| <p>All Lawrence Township businesses will need to complete the Fire Code Registration annually. The registration, standards, and fees are based on a statewide Uniform Fire Safety Code and applies to all structures.</p> |  |
| Application for Fire Safety Permit | Download File |
| <p>If your business conducts an activity with fire, or occupies a temporary space, it will need to fill out a fire safety permit.</p> |  |
| Alarm System Application | Download File |
| <p>If your business has a physical location, it will need to register its alarm system. This application requests information on the type of building, type of alarm system, emergency contacts, and insurance contacts.</p> |  |
| Annual Fire Inspection | Contact |
| <p>All businesses are inspected annually. Common Fire Code violations:</p> <p>Blocked passageways and exit doors; Exit signs and emergency lights; Exits locked or blocked; Fire extinguishers; Fire alarms; Sprinkler systems; Smoke detectors; Carbon monoxide detectors; Electrical: extension cords and surge detectors, multi-plug adapters, open wiring; Space heaters; Missing fire rated ceiling tiles; Storage: Sprinkler/ceiling clearance, clearance from heaters (36" space required), storage in exits or exit enclosures and stairwells; Kitchen hoods (restaurants), cleaning and inspections; Compressed gas cylinders must be secured.</p> <p>There is a zero-tolerance policy regarding fire code violations. Compliance with state and local laws will be strictly enforced.</p> |  |

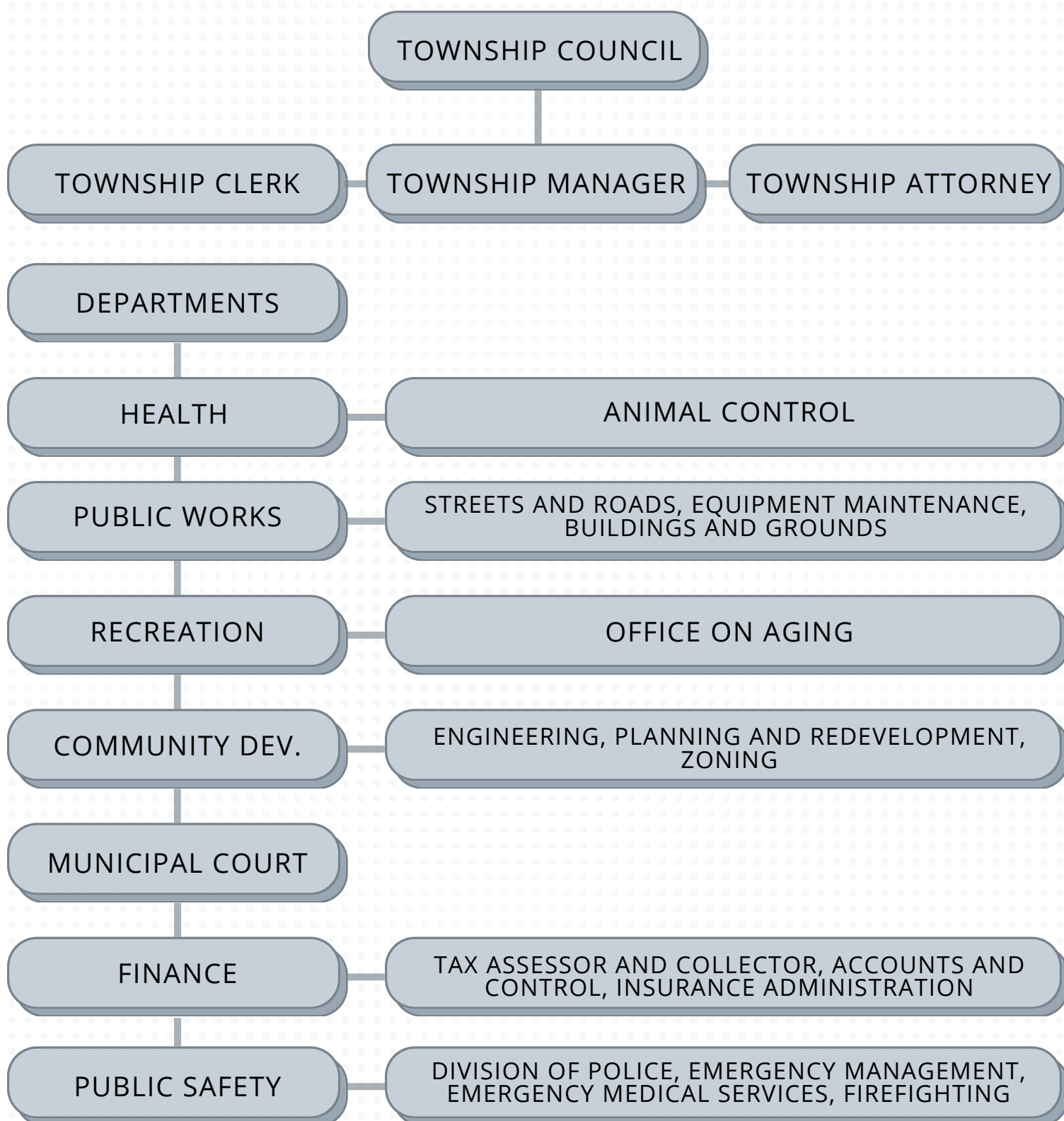
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

| Retail Food Establishment Plan Review Application | Download File |
|--|---|
| If your business sells or gives food to consumers, and is moving into or expanding a location, you will need to submit this application. |  |
| Retail Food Establishment License Application | Download File |
| Your pre-existing business that sells or gives food to consumers will need to register yearly for a Retail Food Establishment License. |  |

MUNICIPAL CLERK

| Gathering Permit | Download File |
|---|---|
| If your business is having a public event or gathering of more than 50 people you might need to submit an application. Call Clerk to clarify. |  |
| Alcoholic Beverage Licenses | Inquire |
| The Clerk keeps a record of the available licenses in Lawrence Township. |  |

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP: DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW



**COMMUNITY AIDE**

Acts as a channel of communication between the municipality and the community.

(609) 844-7074

cdinwoodie@lawrencetwp.com

**CONSTRUCTION**

Reviews all permit applications and construction plans for new construction and alterations.

(609) 844-0282

preilly@lawrencetwp.com

**ENGINEERING**

Reviews development applications and administers zoning guidelines.

609-844-7087

ssnook@lawrencetwp.com

**FINANCE**

Compiles and monitors annual budget, maintains accounting records, and invests funds.

(609) 844-7011

ymartINETTE@lawrencetwp.com

**FIRE MARSHALL**

Administers fire code standards for all buildings and investigates all fires in the town.

(609) 844-7018

kbarkalow@lawrencetwp.com

**HEALTH**

Provides public health services to residents, and inspects businesses for health safety.

(609) 844-7000

klevine@lawrencetwp.com

**MUNICIPAL CLERK**

Serves as secretary to Town Council, and issues licenses and permits.

(609) 844-7000
clerk@lawrencetwp.com

**MUNICIPAL MANAGER**

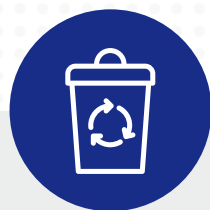
Acts as the chief executive and administrative officer of Township government.

(609) 844-7005
manager@lawrencetwp.com

**POLICE**

Serves the residents of Lawrence Township by investigating crime and responding to emergencies.

(609) 896-1111
lawrencepolice@lawrencetwp.com

**PUBLIC WORKS**

Maintains roads, garbage and yard waste collection, maintains township properties.

(609) 844-7074
jbrokofsky@lawrencetwp.com

**TAX ASSESSOR**

Establishes the value of land and improvements, keeps records of assessments and properties.

(609) 844-7040
kpjohnson@lawrencetwp.com

**TAX COLLECTOR**

Responsible for the billing and collection of taxes and sewer user fees.

(609) 844-7041
taxcoll@lawrencetwp.com



ENERGY

Lawrence Township's energy needs related to electricity, gas, heating, and billing are serviced by PSE&G.



INTERNET

Lawrence Township is served by two main internet providers: Comcast and Verizon.



WATER

Lawrence Township is served by three different water companies: Trenton Water Works, Aqua New Jersey, and New Jersey American Water Company. Check with the Engineering Department to see which services your area.



WASTE

Food waste and garbage collection is provided by an independent contractor, Solterra, and Mercer County is responsible for collecting recyclables. Leaves and brush are collected by zone and schedule by the Public Works Department.

General Resources

EXAMPLE BUSINESS CHECKLIST

- ___ Create a business plan that includes a go-to market strategy and start up costs
- ___ Choose form of legal ownership (sole proprietor/ partnership, LLC, Corporation or other)
- ___ Register the business with the IRS to obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- ___ Identify and obtain any state and local special permits or licenses required for operation
- ___ Align zoning requirements for the business type and location
- ___ Identify any needs for building permits based on location and renovations
- ___ Select financial reporting and tax remuneration methodologies and/or assistance
- ___ Identify and engage with sources of funding
- ___ Review and select payroll process
- ___ Define methods of Intellectual Property (IP) protection associated with the business
- ___ Ensure compliance with regulations affecting the your business
- ___ Schedule inspections required with applicable agencies
- ___ Schedule building inspection to obtain Certificate of Occupancy
- ___ Determine plan for opening day operations

Every business needs to be legally incorporated, and choosing the right structure will require you to consult an attorney, CPA and/or business counselor. Following is an overview of some common business structures:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Sole Proprietorship | This is the simplest type of business structure and not a legal entity. There's only one owner, and the owner is linked to their business, making them liable for all losses, legal issues, and debt. It may not provide access to certain tax benefits and may be difficult to raise capital. |
| LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY (LLC) | This business structure protects its owners from personal responsibility for its debts or liabilities. It is a hybrid entity that combines the characteristics of a corporation with those of a partnership or sole proprietorship. |
| GENERAL PARTNERSHIP | This type of business allows for multiple owners who agree to share all assets, profits, and liabilities of the business. Because of its simplicity and tax benefits, it's one of the most common legal entities. |
| C CORPORATION | This structure is common among large companies, because it offers asset and liability protection, lower tax rates, and public stock issuance. Owners are taxed separately from the company, creating a double-taxation situation. They are highly regulated. |
| S CORPORATION | This entity is similar to partnerships in that all profits, losses, deductions, and credit are passed through to shareholders for federal tax purposes, with the benefit of limited liability and relief from the "double-taxation" of C Corps. |
| B CORPORATION | While not a formal legal status, this private certification process through B LAB demonstrates a company's commitment to "social and environmental performance". |
| ESOP | This employee benefit plan gives workers ownership interest in the company, in the form of shares of stock. The sponsoring company (i.e. the selling shareholder) and participants may receive various tax benefits. This corporate-finance strategy is used to align the interests of employees with shareholders. |



| Business Associations | Address | Contact |
|---|---|---|
| <u>Princeton Mercer Regional Chamber</u> | 619 Alexander Rd Suite 101, Princeton, NJ 08540 | (609) 924-1776 info@princetonmercercor.org |
| <u>African-American Chamber of Commerce</u> | 379 W State St, Trenton, NJ 08618 | (609) 571-1620 info@aaccnj.com |
| <u>Burlington Mercer Chamber of Commerce</u> | 485 Hamilton Ave, Trenton, New Jersey 08609 | (609) 298-7774 info@burlingtonmercercamber.org |
| <u>Latino Merchants Association</u> | 100 Division St, Trenton, NJ 08611 | (609) 807-1492 |
| <u>Guatemalan Merchants Association</u> | 802 Chamber st Trenton, NJ 08611 | (240) 604-2297 info@gt-merchants.com |

**Mercer County Office
of Economic
Development**

MCOED provides a variety of business development programs and workshops to help small and large businesses in the County build growing, successful companies. They offer workshops, mentoring, financial assistance, and other services.

**The New Jersey
Business Action
Center (NJBAC)**

NJBAC helps businesses thrive, grow, and succeed across New Jersey. They are able to connect you with the appropriate experts to reach your goals, and find solutions for your unique business needs.

Business NJ Gov

Business.NJ.gov is your one-stop for learning about State and sometimes federal and local opportunities and regulations in New Jersey. Explore a rich library of content on registering, hiring, funding and more.

**NJ Department of
Labor (NJDOL)**

NJDOL handles the programs and services for statewide workforce development. They set the standard for wage compliance, occupational health, unemployment, temporary disability, and more.

**New Jersey
Sustainable Business
Registry**

This organization recognizes and promotes sustainable businesses in New Jersey, and also helps businesses become more sustainable.

**NJ Department of
Treasury**

The Treasury oversees pensions and benefits, and taxation.

**Internal Revenue
Service (IRS)**

The IRS handles all federal tax records, and issues an Employer ID Number (EIN).

SBA

SBA is the only cabinet-level federal agency fully dedicated to small business and provides counseling, capital, and contracting expertise as the nation's only go-to resource and voice for small businesses.

**Small Business
Development Center
(SBDC)**

SBDC Programs deliver professional, high quality, business advising and technical assistance to existing small businesses and pre-venture entrepreneurs

If you have any questions about this business manual or municipal services, please reach out to the Community Aide.



CONTACT



cdinwoodie@lawrencetwp.com



609-844-7074