

STILL NEED MORE HELP?

Need some technical assistance?

The State of Illinois business website (at http://www.business.illinois.gov/management_guides.cfm) has a wealth of information in the form of management guides on topics such as:

- Help Guide on Financial Statements
- Help Guide on E-Commerce
- Help Guide on Franchises

You'll also find industry-specific guides in many areas, including grocery stores, restaurants, and child care programs.

Could your business use a financial boost?

The State of Illinois, on its website at <http://business.illinois.gov/assistance.cfm>, publishes information on **Federal and State grants, loans, and other financial incentives.**

There are two local **revolving loan funds** – the City of Freeport Revolving Loan Fund and the Freeport Community Development Corporation Revolving Loan Fund. Please call us at 815-235-8202 for more information.

The **Northwest Illinois Development Alliance (NIDA)** has many resources to assist local businesses and start-ups. They can help you with many things, from site selection to financing expertise. You can reach them at (815) 233-1356 or visit their website at <http://www.freeport-il-econ-dev.com>.

CITY OF FREEPORT

230 West Stephenson Street

Freeport, IL 61032

(815) 235-8202

(815) 599-5819 fax



GUIDE TO STARTING YOUR NEW BUSINESS

Welcome to Freeport!

This brochure provides a brief overview of the business start-up process. Please use this brochure, as well as the many resources listed in it, as a guide. If you have questions along the way and you're not sure where to turn, please call the Community Development Department at (815) 235-8202. We're happy to help.



Prepared by:

**The Department of Community Development
City of Freeport**

230 West Stephenson Street
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(815) 235-8202

STARTING YOUR BUSINESS—STEP-BY-STEP

Start with a Plan!

Successful businesses start with a Plan. And if you plan to seek financing or other forms of financial assistance, your lender or funder will require one, too. If you need some help preparing a business plan, the State of Illinois has an instructional guide at http://business.illinois.gov/step_by_step_guides.cfm.

Need more help than that? The **Illinois Small Business Development Center** can provide one-on-one assistance with the development of business plans.

Illinois SBDC at Highland College

2998 W. Pearl City Rd.,
Room 205
Freeport, IL 61032
Phone: 815/599-3654
Fax: 815/232-1366



So you have a plan. What's next?

Once you have a plan, you'll need to ensure that you meet the federal and state requirements for your new business. **The State of Illinois Business Portal** (http://business.illinois.gov/step_by_step_guides.cfm) has a wealth of information on many topics, including ownership structures; registering a business name; business tax registration; business licenses; and unemployment insurance.

Don't have access to the internet?
The Freeport Public Library, 100
East Douglas Street, Freeport,
Illinois, has free public access to
computers and the internet.

And the Illinois Small Business Development Center (see contact information at left) can help at this stage of the process, too. Their services include:

- One-on-one business counseling and management assistance
- Help accessing marketing information
- Business financing programs
- Assistance with financial analysis and planning
- Access to business education and training opportunities

Don't forget local licenses and registrations!

Some businesses require a **City of Freeport business license**. Please call the Freeport City Clerk at (815) 235-8203 to ask if your business needs one. Examples of businesses that require City licenses are contractors, taxi companies, establishments selling liquor, hotels and motels, gasoline stations, and more.

If your business is using an **assumed name**, you'll want to contact the Stephenson County Clerk at (815) 235-8289.

The **Stephenson County Health Department** licenses and regulates some businesses, including food establishments, solid waste haulers, and pumping contractors. You can contact the Health Department at (815) 235-8271.



Help starting your new business is only a phone call — or a click — away. The resources in this brochure are ready to help you get started.

Where will you locate your business?

You'll want to ensure that your location is properly zoned. You can call the City's **Zoning Administrator** (815-235-8202) to find out.

If you're planning to operate your business out of your home, you'll need to meet the City's definition of "**home occupation**". The Zoning Administrator (see number above) can help with this question as well.

If your business will be located in the City's **Downtown Historic District**, you'll want to become familiar with the mandatory design review process that must be completed before the City issues any building permits for interior or exterior work. Call the City's Community Development Department (815-235-8202) for more information.

The Freeport Downtown Development Foundation (815-232-9000) is another great resource for businesses in the City's downtown district. This group coordinates downtown promotions and special events and provides general support for downtown businesses.

The City's **Building Department** coordinates the construction process — from site plan review to building plan review to building permits and inspections to sign permits to occupancy permits. You can call them at (815-235-8202) to get started.

When in doubt, please take the time to call us at 815-235-8202. We'll be glad to help.