



Vehicle Services Startup Roadmap



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✓ Plan Your Business

Create a business plan for your shop.

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. Note that both the materials and the labor are subject to sales and use tax.

Learn about financial resources available.

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

<https://www.dconnc.gov/county-departments/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

Find a location zoned for your vehicle services business.

The [Unified Development Ordinance \(UDO\) designates zoning of properties in Durham](#). Use the [Zoning Atlas](#) to find properties with the zoning you need.

Note that there are three categories of Vehicle Service; Car Wash, Vehicle Service – Minor and Vehicle Service – Major. [The Commercial Use Categories section of the UDO](#) describes what types of services are provided under each category. [Then use the UDO Use Table](#) to find the correct zoning, along with any applicable [Limited Use Standards that may apply](#). [Learn more about UDO rules governing Special Use Permits](#), as well as the Special Use Permit [application and requirements](#).

Confirm zoning for the location you want.

Send a “[Business Zoning Verification Form](#)” to the City of Durham/Durham County Planning Department. You can also visit the Development Services Center at Durham City Hall.

Choose your design professionals.

Depending on the type of construction, you may need to hire a licensed professional. Contact City of Durham/Durham County Planning Department to determine if you will need to do so.

Check if your location will require historic review.

Some locations and buildings need to have [renovations reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission \(HPC\)](#).

Complete and sign your lease.

To avoid common pitfalls, it is best to review the lease with your attorney.

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>

Develop Your Space

Learn about the City's Development Review Process.

Development Review Section of the Durham [City-County Planning Department](#) reviews plans and serves as case managers for projects.

Obtain a building permit.

Have your general contractor [start the start the building permit process with City/County inspections](#). Your general contractor can [expedite the plan review process by submitting plan documents digitally](#).

Monitor your progress.

Stay current with the [progress of your building plan review status, permits, and Certificates of Compliance online](#).

Apply for a sign permit.

Prior to installation, [a sign permit must be issued per Unified Development Ordinance \(UDO\)](#). Both permanent and temporary signs require permits.

Contact the fire department.

To ensure your building meets the N.C. Fire Code, you should [contact the Durham Fire Department](#). Note: A Change of Use will require a full inspection.

Additional Considerations

- No outdoor storage
- Recycling batteries, tires, fluids, etc.
- V. S. Limited vs full service (body shop)
- Stormwater spill management
- Must work under roof
- Junk vehicle storage limits, screening
- Parking requirements
- Fire prevention rules, inspections
- Stormwater inspections
- Professional qualifications
- Vehicle washing and runoff control

Space Resources

City-County Planning

<http://durhamnc.gov/388/Development-Review-Process-Overview>

Building Permit

<http://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/983/Building-Application-Form-PDF>

Submit & Monitor Digital Plans

<http://durhamnc.gov/467/Dplans>

Monitor Permit Progress

<https://ido4.durhamnc.gov/DurhamWeb/>

Sign Permits

<http://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10717/Sign-Permit-Application-and-Checklist>

Fire Department

<http://durhamnc.gov/620/Fire-Department>

Outdoor Seating Permit

<https://dsc.durhamnc.gov/245/2544/Outdoor-Seating-Permit?activeLiveTab=widgets>

NC Motor Vehicle Regulations

Complete the Mechanic/Inspector Certification Application.

Then [submit the application \(Form SL-18\)](#) to the North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles.

Complete the Station Operations Form Application.

Then [submit the application \(Form LT-355\)](#) to the North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles.

Complete the Safety Equipment/OBD Inspection Station Application.

Then [submit the application \(Form SL-3\)](#) to the North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles.

NC Motor Vehicle Resources

Mechanic/Inspector Certification Application

[https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/DMV/DMV%20Documents/LT-310%20Action%20Form%20for%20Inspector-Mechanic%20Certification-Renewal%20\(6-20%20Revision\).pdf](https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/DMV/DMV%20Documents/LT-310%20Action%20Form%20for%20Inspector-Mechanic%20Certification-Renewal%20(6-20%20Revision).pdf)

Station Operations Form Application

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/DMV/DMV%20Documents/LT-355%20Action%20Form%20for%20Individuals%20Responsible%20for%20Day-To-Day%20Station%20Operation.pdf>

Safety Equipment OBD Inspection Station Application

[https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/DMV/DMV%20Documents/LT-300%20Station%20Application%20\(7-7-20%20Revision\).pdf](https://connect.ncdot.gov/business/DMV/DMV%20Documents/LT-300%20Station%20Application%20(7-7-20%20Revision).pdf)

Employer Requirements

Hire employees.

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

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.

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.

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](#)
- [Durham E3](#)

General Resources

Required Posters

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

Federal Tax

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

N.C. Tax Seminars

<https://www.ncdor.gov/business-and-income-tax-seminars>

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>

Durham E3

<https://forwardcities.org/ecosystems/e3durham/>

Connect for Additional Assistance



**ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**

CITY OF DURHAM

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