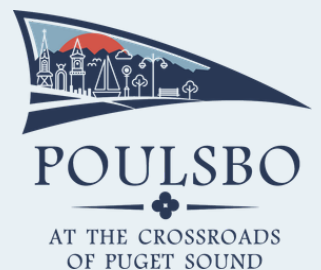




WELCOME TO POULSBO



Your Guide to Starting & Growing a Business

Permits • Licensing • Resources • Connections

Updated October 2026

WELCOME + START HERE



Velkommen til Poulsbo!

Poulsbo is a great place to start, grow, and invest in a business. Our local businesses are an important part of what makes Poulsbo a vibrant place to live, work, shop, and visit.

The City's Planning & Economic Development Department is here to help you understand the City's requirements, navigate the permitting process, and connect with resources that can help your business succeed.

Found the perfect location?

Talk to us before you sign a lease or purchase property. A location that worked for one business may not necessarily work for another. Zoning, parking, building requirements, utilities, and the previous use of a space can all affect what is required to open your business. A quick conversation with City staff early in the process can help identify potential requirements before you make a major investment.



Not sure where to start? Start with us.
Planning & Economic Development
360-394-9748, plan&econ@cityofpoulsbo.com

BEFORE YOU OPEN



What Will My Business Need?

Every business is different. Your location, type of business, building improvements, signage, and site changes determine which permits and approvals may apply.

OPENING IN AN EXISTING SPACE

YOU MAY NEED:

- Zoning/use confirmation
- Business license
- Building or fire review if the use of the space changes

REMODELING A SPACE

YOU MAY NEED:

- Building permit
- Mechanical, plumbing, or electrical permits
- Fire review
- Planning review for exterior changes

BUILDING OR EXPANDING

YOU MAY NEED:

- Land use approval
- Building permits
- Engineering review
- Utility review
- Grading/site development permits

OPENING A FOOD OR BEVERAGE BUSINESS

YOU MAY ALSO NEED:

- Kitsap Public Health District approval
- Fire review
- Grease interceptor or utility coordination
- State liquor licensing, if applicable

ADDING A SIGN

Most permanent signs require City review and/or permits. Different standards apply depending on location and sign type.

WORKING FROM HOME

Home-based businesses may be subject to the City's home occupation requirements.



Not sure what applies? That's normal.

You don't need to figure out the City's codes on your own. Contact PED and tell us what you're proposing, we'll help identify the next steps.



Zoning Map



**Applications/
Handouts**



**Municipal
Code**

YOUR OPENING CHECKLIST

Your Poulsbo Business Checklist

1

BEFORE YOU CHOOSE YOUR SPACE

- ☐ Identify the location you're considering
- ☐ Confirm the proposed business is allowed by zoning
- ☐ Ask whether parking or site requirements apply
- ☐ Ask whether the previous use of the space affects permitting
- ☐ Identify any improvements you plan to make

2

BEFORE YOU START WORK

Depending on your project:

- ☐ Planning approval
- ☐ Building permit
- ☐ Engineering or right-of-way permit
- ☐ Fire review
- ☐ Health District review
- ☐ Sign permit
- ☐ Other state or local approvals

3

BEFORE YOU OPEN

- ☐ Obtain your Washington State business license
- ☐ Obtain your City of Poulsbo business license endorsement
- ☐ Complete required construction and inspections
- ☐ Establish utilities and services
- ☐ Complete applicable health/fire approvals
- ☐ Review City B&O tax requirements
- ☐ Install approved signage

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AFTER YOU OPEN

- ☐ Connect with local business organizations
- ☐ Add your events to community calendars when eligible
- ☐ Explore local marketing and tourism resources
- ☐ Keep City and State licenses current
- ☐ Stay connected with the City

KEEP THIS PAGE!

Use this checklist as a starting point. Not every item applies to every business.

When in doubt, ask. We're happy to help.

SANDWICH BOARD SIGNS

A simple way to let people know you're open.

SANDWICH BOARD SIGNS



Sandwich board signs can help businesses attract pedestrians and let customers know they're open. In Poulsbo, sandwich boards are allowed subject to location, placement, size, and other requirements.



WHERE CAN IT GO? KEEP IT WITH YOUR BUSINESS.

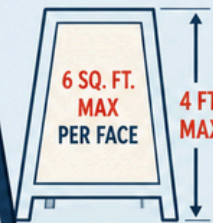
Place the sign directly in front of your business, or in the right-of-way on the same side of the street and immediately adjacent to your business.

Off-premises sandwich board signs are not permitted.

Sandwich boards may only be placed on sidewalks in the C-1 Downtown zoning district, and must maintain the required sidewalk width.



HOW BIG? KEEP IT COMPACT.



- Maximum sign face: 6 square feet per side.
- Maximum height: 4 feet.
- One sign per street frontage, with no more than two total per business.
- Signs cannot be elevated off the ground to increase their allowed height.



KEEP THE WAY CLEAR DON'T BLOCK PEOPLE, VEHICLES, OR VISIBILITY.

- Maintain required pedestrian/ADA clearance on the sidewalk.
- Do not obstruct pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, building entrances, steps, or driveways.
- Keep out of sight-vision clearance areas and at least 5 feet from wheelchair ramps.
- Do not place signs in a roadway, traffic island, median, or traffic circle.



WHEN CAN IT BE OUT? ONLY WHILE YOU'RE OPEN.

- May be displayed between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. on days the business is open.
- Must be removed daily.
- Signs left continuously displayed may be removed by the City and the permit may be revoked.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED. Sandwich boards displayed more than 14 days in a calendar year require City registration. There is no registration fee. A current Poulsbo business license number is required.



LICENSES, TAXES + CITY SERVICES

Getting Down to Business

BUSINESS LICENSE

Businesses operating in Poulsbo generally need an endorsed City of Poulsbo business license, issued through Washington State's Business Licensing Service.

➔ <https://poulsbo.gov/licensing/>

CITY B&O TAX

Poulsbo has a local Business & Occupation (B&O) tax. This is separate from Washington State's B&O tax. Requirements, thresholds, forms, deadlines, and filing information can change, so visit the City's B&O Tax webpage for current information.

➔ <https://poulsbo.gov/b-and-o-tax/>



WHO DO I CALL?

ONE CALL IS ENOUGH TO START.

You don't need to know which department you need before contacting the City. Start with Planning & Economic Development: 360-394-9748

Planning & Economic Development

Zoning • Land Use • Signs • Site Development

CONTACT

(360) 394-9748

planning@poulsbo.gov

Building

Construction • Remodels • Building Permits • Inspections

CONTACT

(360) 394-9882

building@poulsbo.gov

Engineering

Utilities • Streets • Right-of-Way • Civil Improvements

CONTACT

(360) 394-9737

engineering@poulsbo.gov

Finance

B&O Tax • City Financial Requirements

CONTACT

(360) 394-9881

finance@poulsbo.gov

Public Works

Water • Sewer • Stormwater • Garbage/Recycling

CONTACT

(360) 394-9888

publicworks@poulsbo.gov



RESOURCES FOR YOUR BUSINESS

**You Don't Have
to Do It Alone**

Poulsbo businesses have access to local and regional organizations that can help with planning, financing, workforce needs, networking, promotion, and growth.

START + GROW

Kitsap Economic Development Alliance

Business assistance, economic development, and regional resources.

Washington Small Business Development Center

Confidential business advising and educational resources.

SCORE

Business mentoring and education.

CONNECT LOCALLY

Greater Poulsbo Chamber of Commerce

Business networking, advocacy, and community connections.

Historic Downtown Poulsbo Association

Resources and promotion for downtown businesses.

Port of Poulsbo

Port and waterfront economic-development resources.

PROMOTE + WELCOME VISITORS

Visit Poulsbo

Visitor information, tourism, and local promotion.

Visit Kitsap Peninsula

Regional tourism and destination marketing.

WORKFORCE + EDUCATION

Olympic College

Western Washington University – Peninsulas

WorkSource / regional workforce resources



WHY POULSBO?

A Great Place to Do Business

Poulsbo serves as a commercial, employment, residential, and visitor center for North Kitsap and the greater West Sound. Its location provides access to the Kitsap Peninsula, Olympic Peninsula, and the greater Puget Sound region.

The City's adopted Economic Development Element specifically describes Poulsbo as North Kitsap's commercial, employment and residential center and emphasizes the relationship between economic vitality, quality of life, and Poulsbo's identity.



GET CONNECTED



You're Part of Poulsbo Now.

Opening a business is about more than permits and licenses. It's also about becoming part of a community.



Calendar of Community Events:

<https://poulsbo.gov/community-events-calendar/>



Velkommen to Poulsbo.
We're glad you're here.

Questions? Start with us.
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