

WANT TO START YOUR OWN BUSINESS? **DOWNTOWN VICKSBURG**

Starting a business doesn't happen on its own. Behind every successful venture, there's a moment when someone took the leap and made it happen. Do you have a vision for your own business? A passion you want to share with the world, or products you've always wanted but can never find? Whether it's a great idea or a dream of business ownership, now is the time to take action. This brochure will guide you through the steps to bring your business to life in the heart of Vicksburg's Central Business District (Zone C3), where opportunity and growth await.



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WELCOME MESSAGE



Welcome to Vicksburg, Mississippi - a city where rich history meets entrepreneurial opportunity. Nestled along the Mississippi River, Vicksburg boasts a storied past, from its role in the Civil War to its growth as a river port, and today, it stands as a dynamic community ready to support your business ventures.

The heart of Vicksburg is its vibrant downtown area, where charming historic buildings house a mix of local shops, restaurants, and creative spaces, making it the perfect environment for innovation and growth. Whether you're drawn to the city's deep roots or its promising future, Vicksburg offers a welcoming atmosphere for entrepreneurs looking to make their mark.





WHY DOWNTOWN VICKSBURG?

Strategic Location

Positioned at the intersection of Interstate 20 and U.S. Highway 61, Vicksburg offers easy access for regional trade and logistics businesses. The Port of Vicksburg and rail connections further enhance its appeal for industrial and distribution companies.

Economic and Cultural Benefits

Additionally, business incentives, historic tax credits, and the presence of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers support a strong local economy. This combination of accessibility, economic opportunity, and cultural significance makes downtown Vicksburg a prime location for businesses to thrive. Its historic charm, anchored by attractions such as the Vicksburg National Military Park, draws tourists, boosting hospitality, retail, and entertainment sectors.

Community Support

Downtown Vicksburg features a blend of locally owned shops, restaurants, galleries, and professional services, creating a vibrant, walkable district. With its rich history, scenic views of the Mississippi River, and a strong interest in tourism and culture, downtown Vicksburg provides a unique setting for small businesses to flourish. The community is supportive of entrepreneurship, with resources available to help new ventures succeed, making it an ideal place for those looking to invest in a dynamic and welcoming business climate.

STEPS TO STARTING A BUSINESS

1 Develop a Cash Flow Projection

This is step 1 because you have to know if your business is going to be successful. If your business does not have cash flow, then it will not survive. And if you cannot prove cash flow through projections, then it is not likely that you will receive a loan. This is a critical tool for assessing the viability of your business idea, helping you determine whether it's financially feasible. You can use resources from the Small Business Administration (SBA) to assist with this process. Common projections are for 3 years or more, usually broken down on a monthly basis. Some variables to consider: start up costs, rent, insurance, utilities, software/hardware costs, payroll, cost of goods, revenue, interest, and taxes.

2 Use Market Research to find customers

- **Analyze Local Demographics** – Use census data and local government reports to understand the population, income levels, and consumer behavior in Vicksburg.
- **Study the Competition** – Visit similar businesses, check their pricing, services, and customer base to identify gaps in the market.
- **Contact the Small Business Development Center** to perform market analysis report completed for free.
- **Engage with the Community** – Attend local events, talk to residents, and connect with business groups like the Vicksburg-Warren Chamber of Commerce to gauge demand.
- **Utilize Online Tools** – Google Trends, Yelp, and social media analytics can track local consumer interests and popular businesses.
- **Test the Market** – Run a small pop-up shop, survey potential customers, or offer a limited-time product/service to gather real feedback.

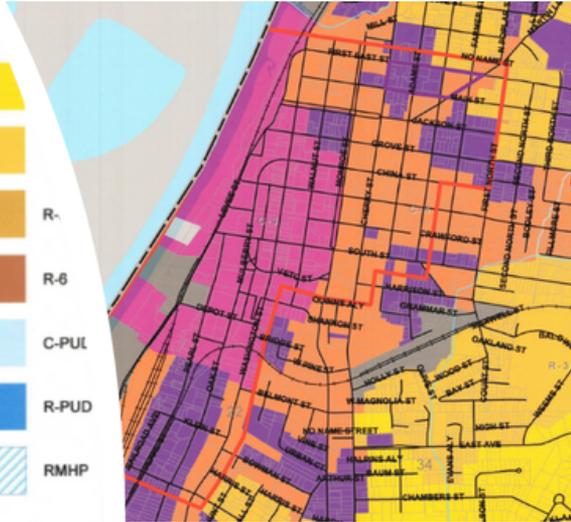
STEPS TO STARTING A BUSINESS

3 Zoning and Local Regulations

Before you get too committed, reviewing the zoning regulations will ensure you can establish your business in your desired location. Check with the City of Vicksburg Community Development office.

Legend

Zoning	
	A-1
	A-2
	C-1
	C-2
	C-3
	C-4
	C-5
	CBR-4
	L-1
	L-2
	MX-1
	MX-2
	R-1
	R-
	R-
	R-6
	C-PUL
	R-PUD
	RMHP



District

STEPS TO STARTING A BUSINESS

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Make Your Business Official

Setting up an LLC (Limited Liability Company) involves a few key steps:

- **Choose a Name** – Pick a unique business name that complies with Mississippi's LLC naming rules and includes "LLC" or "Limited Liability Company." File this with the state through the Mississippi Secretary of State website.
- **Appoint a Registered Agent** – Designate an individual or service to receive legal documents on behalf of the LLC. This is usually the owner of the LLC for small businesses.
- **Create an Operating Agreement** – While not required, this document outlines ownership, roles, and management structure of the LLC. If you're going to have more than one owner, this is really important to keep things outlined for future operations, such as who gets the final say in decision-making and who has the right to dissolve the company. This is something that a lawyer can help you with.
- **Register with the IRS**- Apply through the [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) website to register your company & receive an EIN, necessary for conducting a business.
- **Register your Company with the Secretary of State** – Submit the required form and filing fee to the Mississippi Secretary of State at sos.ms.gov.
- **Register your company with the MS Department of Revenue so that you can pay sales tax and state employment taxes**- This will give your business an account that you will need for filing state taxes. This can be done at tap.dor.ms.gov
- **Open a Bank Account**- Once you have registered your company and have state and federal ID numbers, open a bank account.

Note: Watch out for scams. As soon as you file your business with the state, you'll start receiving letters in the mail that look very official, offering to file paperwork for you for a fee. These letters look like the service is required, but if you read the fine print you'll see that these are optional. When you file your LLC, you will have the option to attend a virtual meeting with Secretary of State personnel. Don't miss this opportunity to have all of your questions answered.

STEPS TO STARTING A BUSINESS

5 Permits and Licensing

- **Business License (Privilege License):** This is a requirement to operate any business in Vicksburg. The application can be found at vicksburg.org or by visiting the City of Vicksburg Development office at 819 South Street.
- **Food Permit:** This is a requirement for any establishment that prepares, holds, transports, and/or serves food for pay, contact the Mississippi Department of Health at 601-576-7400
- **Seller's Permit:** Needed to collect sales tax on food and beverages.
- **Certificate of Occupancy:** Ensures your building meets safety and zoning codes. Contact the City of Vicksburg Community Development Department.

If you need help contact the Department of Revenue at (601) 923-7300.

STEPS TO STARTING A BUSINESS

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Financial Considerations

Insurance & Liability:

- **General Liability Insurance** protects against third-party claims for bodily injury, property damage, and personal injury (e.g., slander or libel).
 - Essential for all businesses, especially if you interact with customers or clients.
 - Typically, insurance is a security that someone can obtain for loans and commercial leases. The process of shopping around usually takes some time. So start looking early. Any local insurance company can help you decide how much insurance you may need and what it will cost. Make sure to review the policies. You don't want to skimp on coverage, but insurance can make or break your monthly cash flows, so choose wisely. This is another place where your financial projections will come into play. Business insurance will help cover revenue loss during certain scenarios, so if you're projecting a million dollars in sales for the year, your coverage will be more than if you're only projecting fifty-thousand a year in sales. Try to be accurate. With general liability, your policy will usually be audited after a year and adjusted to better match your actual sales.

Funding Options:

- The Small Business Association has a lender match process that will match you up with a SBA loan bank and then with working with the local SBA organization at Hinds CC. Their personnel will work with you throughout the process.

Tax Incentives and Benefits:

- Currently there are four incentives that may be available to a property owner planning to rehabilitate a building within downtown Vicksburg. These incentives are the Main Street Program Façade Grant, the City of Vicksburg Tax Abatement, State of Mississippi Historic.
 - Visit the Vicksburg Foundation for Historic Preservation website at www.preservevicksburg.org to find out more information on these incentives, or call them at 601-636-5010
- Preservation Tax Credit, and the Federal Historic Investment Tax Credit. The tax abatement application for the historic district available at vicksburg.org

STEPS TO STARTING A BUSINESS

7 Marketing Your Business

Promoting your business effectively means getting the word out through multiple channels. Start locally by reaching out to radio stations like The Radio People on 105.5 WBGFM and 101.3 & 104.5 for on-air advertising opportunities. Take advantage of trusted local publications such as The Vicksburg Post, Vicksburg Living, and The Vicksburg Daily News to connect with your community. Build your online presence with a free Google Business Profile (GBP) so customers can easily find you in local searches. Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram are powerful tools for engaging with your audience and showcasing your brand. A well-rounded marketing strategy helps drive traffic, build trust, and grow your business.

8 Community Engagement and Building Relationships

Building strong local connections is key to long-term success. Become a member of the Vicksburg-Warren Chamber of Commerce to network with other downtown businesses and become an integral part of the community. Take time to walk down the historic strip, meet fellow business owners, and exchange ideas and support. For those looking to sharpen their skills and gain a competitive edge, the Chamber also offers an Entrepreneurship BootCamp—a valuable program designed to guide and empower local business owners through practical training and expert insight.



SUCCESS STORIES

“ *Being true to myself and creating from a place of authenticity has also helped me stay grounded. I've been so blessed with the support of friends and family who believed in me—even when this dream felt a little crazy. But above all, it's the support from my amazing customers that keeps me going. Their encouragement, feedback, and love for what I create mean more than words can say. I wouldn't be here without them.*

NATALIE BURKS, OWNER, GLOWE APOTHECARY

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“ *"Being a downtown retailer in Vicksburg's Main Street district is a delight, starting with loyal locals who support businesses like a bookstore despite online alternatives being a dollar or two cheaper. But the other half of the equation is visitors from all over the world who drop in almost daily, amazed by the local culture and rich story we share. It's such a joy to know that they are leaving not only with books but also with favorable impressions etched in their memories."*

KELLE BARFIELD, OWNER, LORELEI BOOKS

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RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

- **Key Contacts:** List of essential contacts for business-related inquiries (city hall, chamber of commerce, small business centers).
 - **Vicksburg - Warren County Chamber of Commerce**
 - vicksburgusa.com
 - Phone: [\(601\) 636-1012](tel:6016361012)
 - **City of Vicksburg Community Development Department for Privilege License, Zoning Questions, Historic Preservation Permits, and Building Permits**
 - <https://www.vicksburg.org>
 - Phone: (601) 634-4526
 - **Small Business Development Center at Hinds Community College**
 - <https://eagleridge.hindscc.edu/small-business-development-center>
 - Phone: (601) 857-3581
 - **Vicksburg Foundation for Historic Preservation**
 - www.preservevicksburg.org
 - Phone: (601) 636-5010
 - **Vicksburg Main Street**
 - www.mainstreet.vicksburg.org
 - Phone: (601) 634-4527
 - **Mississippi Development Authority**

Additional Resources:

- Free small business data and trends can be found here: www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business

Zoning Laws

[Click Here for Zoning Laws](#)





RESOURCES AND SUPPORT



Vicksburg - Warren
County Chamber of
Commerce



City of Vicksburg
Community Development
Department for Privilege
License, Zoning Questions,
Historic Preservation
Permits, and Building
Permits



Small Business
Development Center
at Hinds Community
College



Vicksburg
Foundation
for Historic
Preservation



RESOURCES AND SUPPORT



Vicksburg Main Street



Small business
Data and Trends