



BOROUGH OF AVALON
ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PA



**DOING BUSINESS IN THE
BOROUGH OF AVALON:
A COLLECTION OF RESOURCES**



JUNE 2025

What's Inside?

Welcome Letter	3
Contacts	4
The Borough of Avalon	4
Local Service Providers	4
Business Contacts	5
Avalon Business Startup Checklist	6
Property, Permits, and Ordinances.....	8
Zoning and Land Use	8
Permits	8
Inspections	8
Registering Your Business in Pennsylvania	9
Trainings and Educational Resources	10
Networking Resources	11
Thinking About Networking as a Web	12
Funding Resources	13

Welcome Letter

Welcome to the Borough of Avalon! We are committed to fostering a vibrant business community and have prepared this packet to help you navigate local regulations, access resources, and build a thriving business.

Avalon is a charming, walkable community with the potential for a bustling main street lined with small businesses. Our community values local businesses, and we believe your presence will strengthen the neighborhood's unique charm and economy. By investing in Avalon, you're not just opening a business – you're becoming a part of our community.

Whether you are opening your doors for the first time or expanding a current business, the Borough of Avalon wants to support you. We are committed to fostering economic growth and ensuring that local businesses have the resources they need to thrive.

This packet is designed to guide you through the steps and requirements for operating a business. Because we want everything to go smoothly for you, this packet explores important information about property regulations, permits, and local ordinances.

Starting and running a business is difficult, and there will always be hiccups and obstacles. But, we want to provide you with resources so that you can be best equipped to overcome any challenge that you may face. This packet contains resources on trainings, networking opportunities, and funding sources.

We encourage you to review each section and keep this packet for future reference. Please reach out to Avalon Borough's Administrative office with any questions. From navigating permits to connecting you with support services, we are here to help you and your business.

Thank you for choosing Avalon as the home for your business. We look forward to working with you and watching your business grow!

Contacts

The Borough of Avalon

Administrative Department

Main Office 412-761-5820
Website boroughofavalon.org

Department of Public Works

Main Office 412-761-5959

Avalon Public Library

Library Phone 412-761-2288

Avalon Police Department

Emergencies Call 911
Non-emergency 412-761-0353

Avalon Volunteer Fire Company

Emergencies Call 911
Non-emergency 412-766-2244

Local Service Providers

Duquesne Light Company (Electric)

Customer Service for Businesses 412-393-7300
Emergency 888-393-7000
Website duquesnelight.com

Columbia Gas

Customer Service 1-888-460-4332
Emergency 1-888-460-4332
Website columbiagaspa.com

West View Water Authority

Customer Service 412-931-3500
Emergency 412-931-3292
Administration Office 412-931-3292
Website westviewwater.org

Waste Management

Customer Service 1-800-866-4460
Website wm.com

Business Contacts

Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce*

Contact Phone 412-281-1890
Website greaterpittsburghchamberofcommerce.com

Allegheny Conference on Community Development*

Contact Phone 412-281-1890
Website alleghenyconference.org

Pennsylvania Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh*

Contact Phone 412-281-1890
Website pelgp.org

Pittsburgh Region*

Community Development Office 412-392-4783
Website pittsburghregion.org

***AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS**

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

Main Office 412-391-5590
Website spcregion.org

Avalon Business Startup Checklist

Use this checklist to navigate the key steps for opening a business in the Borough of Avalon.

Step 1: Develop your Business Idea

- ☐ Define your product or service
- ☐ Draft a basic business plan – many funders require this (see Trainings and Educational Resources section)
- ☐ Identify your target market and competitors
- ☐ Identify required licenses or certifications
- ☐ Explore planning support (See Trainings and Educational Resources section)

Step 2: Select a Location

- ☐ Confirm your intended location is compliant with zoning regulations (see Zoning and Land Use section)
- ☐ Review the Avalon Zoning Map at www.boroughofavalon.org
- ☐ Begin property purchase or lease process

Step 3: Register your Business

- ☐ Register your business with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- ☐ Obtain an EIN (employer identification number) from the IRS, if needed
- ☐ Use the PA Business One-Stop Shop for structure, name, and tax setup (see Registering your Business in PA section)
- ☐ Consult an accountant or tax advisor
- ☐ Open a business bank account

Step 4: Inspections & Obtain Required Permits

- ☐ Apply for building, zoning, and signage permits if needed (see Property, Permits and Ordinances section)
- ☐ Schedule a Commercial Occupancy and Fire Safety Inspections before opening (see Property, Permits and Ordinances section)
- ☐ Get insurance – explore coverage (e.g. liability, property, or professional)
- ☐ Create a safety plan and/or employee handbook

Step 5: Set up Utilities

- ☐ Contact electric, gas, water, and waste providers to establish service (see Contact section)
- ☐ Schedule service start dates to align with construction/move-in timeline

Step 6: Explore Funding Opportunities

- ☐ Review local, state, and federal loans and grants
- ☐ Consider organizations like SBA, DCED, and The Progress Fund (see Funding Resources section)
- ☐ Prepare documentation needed for funding applications
- ☐ Track deadlines

Step 7: Build and Expand your Network

- ☐ Join business organizations and attend events
- ☐ Use online and in-person networking platforms

Step 8: Launch and Promote

- ☐ Create a website and social media presence
- ☐ Claim your Google Business Profile
- ☐ Design print materials (business cards, flyers) and signage
- ☐ Attend community events to promote your business

Step 9: Stay Connected

- ☐ Bookmark the Avalon Borough website (boroughofavalon.org) to stay updated
- ☐ Reach out to the Administrative Office with questions or for support
 - Call 412-761-5820 or email info@boroughofavalon.org

Tip: Keep a Business Binder

Keep physical or digital copies of:

- ☐ Permits & inspections
- ☐ Tax & registration documents
- ☐ Utility account information
- ☐ Important contacts
- ☐ Funding applications
- ☐ Marketing plans
- ☐ Any other important documents

Property, Permits, and Ordinances

Operating a business in Avalon requires compliance with local property regulations, permits, and ordinances. Understanding these requirements will help ensure your business is set up for success and you avoid unnecessary delays.

Zoning and Land Use

Check Zoning: Confirm your business location is zoned for your intended use. Avalon is part of the Tri-Borough Joint Ordinance, which defines permitted, conditional, and special exception uses for each district (Mixed Use, Neighborhood Commercial, Highway Commercial).

Zoning Map: The official zoning map is available on the Avalon Borough website at boroughofavalon.org. Review it to confirm your property's district.

Business Tax: The Borough of Avalon does not currently have a business tax.

Permits

Building Permit: Required for new construction, major repairs, alterations, or additions. Submit detailed plans and obtain approval before starting work.

Signage: Any new signage must comply with Avalon's sign ordinance and regulations. All signs require a zoning permit. If the sign has electrical components (like lights) or projections, it will also require a building permit. See Avalon Ordinance No. 1388 for specific sign requirements.

Inspections

Commercial Occupancy Inspection: Needed before occupying a new or renovated space, or when changing the use of an existing building. The Zoning Officer will inspect the premises to ensure compliance.

Fire Safety: An annual commercial fire safety inspection is required. Often, this is done at the same time as the commercial occupancy inspection.

For questions about permits, zoning, and ordinances, contact the Avalon Borough Administrative Office at 412-716-5820 or visit boroughofavalon.org.

Registering Your Business in Pennsylvania

Before you open your doors, you must register your business with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This process ensures you are compliant with all required state-level regulations, including tax registration, business structure designation, and licensing.

Start Here: PA Business One-Stop Shop

The Pennsylvania Business One-Stop Shop is the state's central hub for starting, registering, and operating a business. It offers guided support through:

- Business structure selection (e.g. LLC, sole proprietorship, etc.)
- Name registration and legal requirements
- Tax registration and licensing requirements
- State compliance information

Visit: www.business.pa.gov

Understand your Tax Obligations

Pennsylvania's Department of Revenue publishes a helpful guide: "Starting a Business in Pennsylvania: A Guide to Pennsylvania Taxes"

This guide explains key tax responsibilities for business owners, including:

- Sales and Use Tax
- Sales Tax License
- Exemption Certificate
- Employer Withholding
- Reporting Income
- Keeping Records

Download the Guide:

1. Go to www.pa.gov
2. Navigate to the Search Bar
3. Enter "Rev-588" OR "Starting a Business in Pennsylvania: A Guide to Pennsylvania Taxes"
4. Open the document with the ID "Rev-588"

For more guidance, you may also visit My Pennsylvania Tax Hub (myPATH) at www.mypath.pa.gov

Trainings and Educational Resources

Here, you will find a list of organizations that provide training and educational resources for small business owners.

Organization	Services Offered	Highlights	Website
Allegheny Together	-Planning and technical support -Targeted assistance via network partners	Program of Allegheny County Economic Development (ACED)	www.alleghenytogether.com
SCORE Pittsburgh	- Free business mentorship - Online webinars and courses - Startup roadmaps - Business templates	Many resources to navigate business operations	www.score.com
SBDC Duquesne University	- Free consultations - Business blogs - Skill-building workshops (\$)	Personalized support and educational content	www.sbdc.duq.edu
SBDC University of Pittsburgh	- Business courses - Webinars - Resources on financing and business planning	Focus on funding strategies and business plan development	www.entrepreneur.pitt.edu
Main Street America	-Virtual trainings -Digital tools for business growth -Professional development and leadership training -"Knowledge Hub" of resources	National movement supporting downtown & commercial district revitalization	www.mainstreet.org
Redevelopment Resources	-Strategic planning -Data analysis and market studies -Project planning and implementation -Business expansion and recovery assistance	Individualized, practical solutions for business growth and community development	www.redevelopment-resources.com

Networking Resources

Below are some organizations and resources to help you network and build a strong, resilient foundation for your business.

Specific Resources

Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce	www.greaterpittsburghchamberofcommerce.com/
SCORE PGH	www.score.org/pittsburgh
CHIEF	www.chief.com/
National Association for the Self Employed (NASE)	www.nase.org
Business Networking International (BNI)	www.bni.com
Startup Grind	www.startupgrind.com/pittsburgh/
Alignable	www.alignable.com
Women in Business	www.womeninbusiness.club

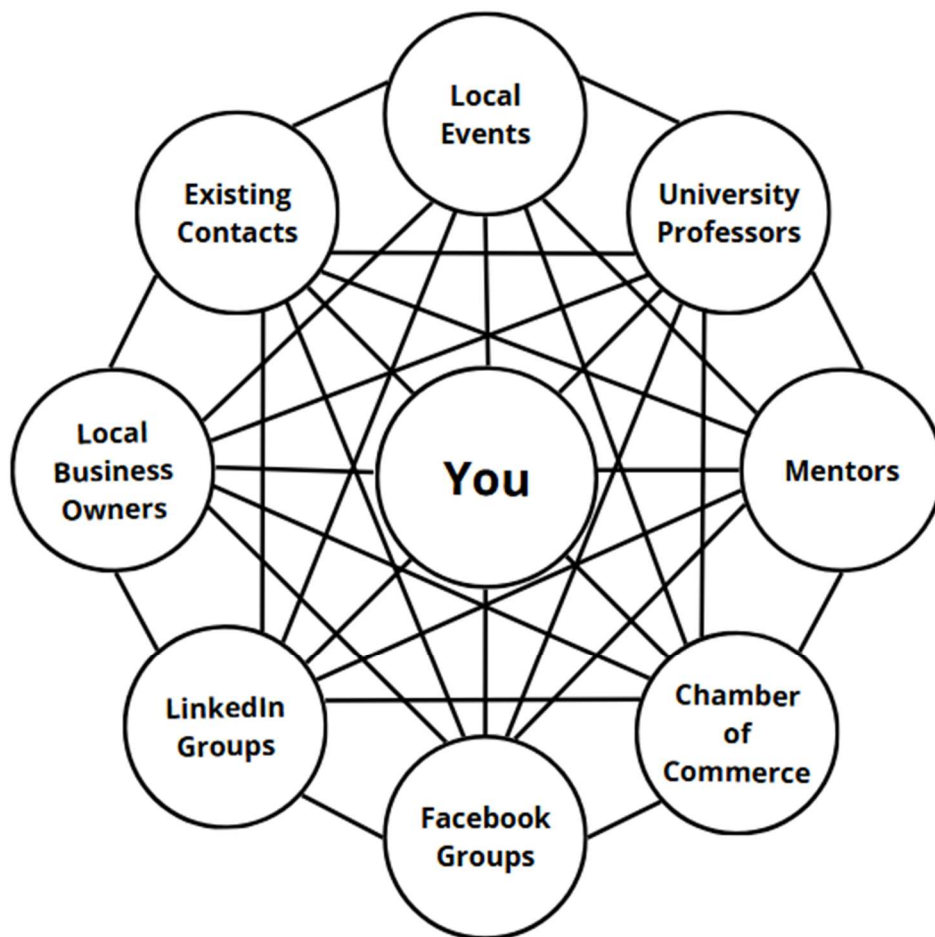
General Resources

Resource	Examples
LinkedIn Groups	-Pittsburgh Young Professionals -Pittsburgh Technology Council -American Marketing Association Pittsburgh Chapter -Network After Work Pittsburgh -Pittsburgh Professional Women
Blogs	-Small Biz Survival -Small Business Bonfire -Small Business Trends -SBDC Duquesne University
Cold Contact	-Send personal LinkedIn messages to local business owners -Reach out to alumni from your university working in your industry -Reach out to Pittsburgh professionals
Volunteer & Community Engagement Opportunities	-Pittsburgh Cares -United Way of Southwestern PA -Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce Events -Nonprofit boards or committees

College/University Professors	-Reach out to local professors (some local schools to consider, not comprehensive) -University of Pittsburgh -Duquesne University -Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) -Carnegie Mellon University -Robert Morris University -Point Park University -Chatham University -Ask professors for industry contacts -Attend guest lectures or panels open to the public
Existing Network	-Consider the network you already have and use it

Thinking About Networking as a Web

Here is a visual to consider when thinking about networking for your business.



Funding Resources

Below are some funding resources to help you build and improve your business. The first table contains some resources to help you find funding sources and understand them. The second table lists loans and grants to get you started when looking for funding sources.

Funding Resource	Highlights	Website
Grants.gov	Centralized database for federal grants; covers over 1,000 programs across all sectors and agencies	www.grants.gov
Small Business Administration (SBA)	Official U.S. Small Business Administration portal for loans, grants, and disaster funding	www.sba.gov/funding-programs
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	List of national and local grants, with application tips and new program updates	www.uschamber.com
PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED)	Pennsylvania-specific funding, including revolving loan funds and direct venture investments	www.dced.pa.gov

Funding Program	Funding Type	Description	Website
U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)	Loan	Offers various loan programs, provided through partner lenders. Programs include 7(a), 504, and Microloans. SBA also provides disaster relief loans.	www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans
Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority (PIDA) - via SPC or PA DCED	Loan	Provides low-interest loans and lines of credit to eligible businesses. Financing for land/building acquisition, construction, renovation, machinery/equipment, and working capital.	www.dced.pa.gov/programs/pennsylvania-industrial-development-authority-pida/ or www.spcregion.org

Small Diverse Business Capital Access (SDBCA)	Loan	Provides low-interest loans and lines of credit to small diverse (minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned, LGBTQ+-owned) businesses.	www.cumberlandbusiness.com/small-diverse-business-capital-access-program-sdbca/
The Progress Fund	Loan	Provides small business loans (typically \$20,000 to over \$1 million) for purchasing or starting businesses, covering real estate, equipment, remodeling, working capital, and inventory.	www.progressfund.org
Southwestern Pennsylvania Corporation (SPC) - Commercial Lending Program	Loan	Provides low-interest financing for businesses with fewer than 100 employees. Offer loans for land/building acquisition (up to \$2M, 15 years), machinery/equipment (up to \$400K, 7-10 years), and working capital (up to \$100K, 1-3 years). Requires job creation/retention, matching/private funding, and collateral.	www.spcregion.org
SPC Revolving Loan Funds (RLF)	Loan	Below market, fixed-rate loans for for-profit businesses with fewer than 100 employees in SPC's 9-county region. Loans cover up to 50% of project costs (max \$300K), require 1:1 matching funds, personal guarantees, and job creation/retention.	www.spcregion.org
DEP Small Business Advantage Grant	Grant	Provides grants to help eligible small businesses improve energy efficiency, reduce pollution/waste, or promote sustainable practices, leading to annual savings.	www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/programs-and-services/grants-loans-rebates/small-business-ombudsmans-office/small-business-advantage-grant.html

Progressive Driving Small Business Forward	Grant	Annual national grant program awarding \$1M in total to 20 small businesses (\$50,000 each). Open to U.S.-based businesses in operation for over a year	www.uschamber.com/co/run/business-financing/small-business-grants-and-programs
Faire Small Business Grant	Grant	\$5,000 grants for new U.S.-based retail businesses to help with inventory expenses. Must have opened or plan to open a retail store within the past year.	www.uschamber.com/co/run/business-financing/small-business-grants-and-programs or www.faire.com/small-business-grant
Freed Fellowship Grant	Grant	Monthly \$500 grants for U.S.-based small business owners, plus a chance at an annual \$2,500 grant. Includes feedback and a two-month membership in the Freed Studio	www.freedfellowship.com
Honeycomb x Sengo Spark Grant	Grant	\$3,000 and \$1,000 grants for small business owners, especially those historically excluded from traditional funding. Can be used for rent, hiring, or launching new products.	www.uschamber.com/co/run/business-financing/small-business-grants-and-programs or www.honeycombccredit.com/post/feeling-stuck-the-sengo-spark-grant-is-for-you
Verizon Small Business Digital Ready Grant	Grant	\$10,000 grants to 50 for-profit U.S.-based small businesses to strengthen their digital presence. Must register and complete two eligible courses/events. First time applicants get priority.	https://digitalready.verizonwireless.com/grants