

WELCOME TO SOMERVILLE



Business Welcome Kit

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development



Business Check List

Recommended steps to successfully operate your business

I AM PLANNING ON OPENING A BUSINESS

- Visited the Economic Development Division at the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development to find out about financing, counseling and business location that are available for my business

I JUST IDENTIFIED A SPACE FOR MY BUSINESS

- Visited the Inspectional Services Division to make sure that my plans comply with the state building code and zoning ordinance and that the use I intend to give to the space is allowed
- Arranged an Inspector visit from Inspectional Services to make sure that my space is “up to code”
- Visited the Planning Department, in case I got a Letter of Denial from the Inspectional Services Division

I WANT TO RENOVATE / ADAPT THE SPACE FOR MY BUSINESS

- Visited the Inspectional Services Division with my Architect/Contractor to make sure my plans comply with applicable state building code and zoning ordinance
- Went to Inspectional Services for a building permit
- Visited the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development to find out about business development programs

MY BUSINESS PROVIDES FOOD SERVICES

- Called the Health Inspectors at the Inspectional Services Division to ensure that my plans comply with the State Sanitation Code
- Called the Licensing Commission to apply for a Common Victualer's License
- Called the Licensing Commission if I want to apply for a Liquor License or a Beer & Wine License

BEFORE I OPEN MY BUSINESS

- Visited the City's Clerk to file for a Business Certificate, if:
 - I haven't incorporated my business at the State and/or
 - I am operating under my business name, not my own name
- Confirmed with the Inspectional Services Division that I complied with all zoning requirements and was granted permits and variances from the Planning and Zoning Boards in case I needed them (Special Permit, Special Permit with Site Review, and Zoning Variances)
- Contacted local business groups (Somerville Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Organizations, Somerville Local First, etc.)

Who To Contact And What For?

Dial 311 from any land line/cell phone or 617-666-3311 outside Somerville

Constituent Services 311

City Hall - 93 Highland Avenue

- One Call to City Hall
- Information and Referral
- City Wide Work Order Request
- Business Recycling
- Disposal, Recycling, Hazardous Waste
- Business Parking Permits or ParkCards
- Snow Emergency Parking Procedures
- Any other non-emergency service or information request

City Clerk

City Hall - 93 Highland Avenue - (617) 625-6600 ext. 4100

- Business Certificates
- Advertising, Sign or Awning Licenses
- Auction, Raffle & Bazaar Licenses
- Billiard Table/Pool Table/Bowling Alley/ Video Game Licenses
- Physician/Optometrlist/Osteopath/ Chiropractor Registration
- Extended Retail Hours Licenses
- Garage/Auto Repair/ Used Car Dealer Licenses
- Peddler/Vendor/Dealer Licenses
- Outdoor Parking or Seating Licenses
- Taxicab Related Licenses
- Closing out Sale Permits
- Open Air/Transient Vendor Licenses

Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development

Planning Department

City Hall - 93 Highland Avenue - (617) 625-6600 ext. 2500

- Zoning & Special Permits
- Planning Board
- Zoning Board
- Zoning Variances

Economic Development

City Hall - 93 Highland Avenue - (617) 625-6600 ext. 2500

- Business Development (Information Counseling, Planning, Financing, Site location...)
- Business Development Programs (Seminars, Façade renovations, Best Retail Practices)

Inspectional Services

1 Franey Road 1st floor- (617) 625-6600 ext. 5600

- Building, Demolition, Disposal Permits
- Plumbing, Wiring, Gas Permits
- Health Inspectors (Ex 4330), Rodent Control & Sanitary Code Compliance

Fire Prevention Bureau

255 Somerville Avenue - (617) 623- 1700, ext. 8400

- Smoke Detectors Inspection
- Fire Prevention

Licensing Commission

City Hall - 93 Highland Avenue – (617) 625-6600 ext. 4107

- Liquor Licenses
- Beer and Wine Licenses
- Innholder Licenses
- Entertainment and Dance Licenses
- Common Victualer Licenses

Or visit our website at www.somervillema.gov

Somerville Squares

Davis Square

Home to bookstores and boutiques, cafes and restaurants, theatre, cinema and music clubs, Davis Square is a true urban destination. The Square features prime office space and houses high-tech corporations, national nonprofit organizations, financial services and insurance companies, and small businesses of all kinds. Davis Square is also home to health care providers including large medical practices and a variety of alternative health care practitioners. Davis Square is a stop on the Red Line subway, is served by several MBTA bus lines and threaded by the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway.

Union Square

Union Square is the rising star of Somerville's squares, with an eclectic mix of ethnic restaurants and groceries, unique retailers, music venues, nonprofits and offices. This business community, along with regular cultural events and a weekly Farmers Market, has built the Square's reputation beyond Somerville's boundaries. On nearby Prospect Hill, the first American flag was raised on January 1, 1776, and the hill features one of the most spectacular, panoramic views of the Boston area. Union Square offers excellent values in commercial real estate that include traditional, small scale retail spaces as well as opportunities for larger scale projects. MBTA buses serve the square, with direct service from Cambridge's Central Square and Harvard Square, Charlestown's Sullivan Square, and Somerville's Davis Square. An extension of the Green Line transit line to Union Square is projected for the year 2014. Union Square is slated for strategic rezoning and redevelopment of a number of key parcels in conjunction with this transit expansion.

Teele Square

Within walking distance from Davis Square, Teele Square features several excellent restaurants and shops. More residential than Davis, Teele's proximity to Tufts University makes the neighborhood a popular spot for off-campus living.

Magoun Square

Located at Somerville's border with Medford, Magoun Square's traditional commercial storefronts are home to a vibrant mix of businesses from clothing to hardware, and from artisan workshops to restaurants. Magoun Square's concentrated commercial district is surrounded by a dense residential neighborhood.

Ball Square

Ball Square's business mix gives visitors a true Somerville neighborhood feel. Lines of hungry students wait for brunch or sip coffee at its cafés, diners, and pubs, while locally owned retail stores and service businesses meet local needs.

Assembly Square

On the Mystic River waterfront, Assembly Square was formerly the home of the Ford Auto Plant. Located 2 miles from downtown Boston and Kendall Square in Cambridge, Assembly Square's 145-acres are today being transformed into a model of Smart Growth, transit-oriented development with a mixture of residential, commercial and retail uses and a distinct walkable character. An IKEA store is planned for the area, and a new Orange Line transit stop is scheduled for completion by 2015.

East Somerville

East Somerville's diversity is matched only by its eclectic architecture. Served by the Sullivan Square MBTA Orange Line station and several bus routes, East Somerville includes the larger commercial properties of the Inner Belt such as the Holiday Inn, Biogen IDEC, and Grossman Marketing Group, as well as some "taquerias" and smaller retail businesses off the eastern end of Broadway.

Please call the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (SPCD) at 617 625 6600, x2500, to find out about commercial and industrial space available for lease or sale.

Somerville Facts

The City

Mayor:	Joseph A. Curtatone 93 Highland Ave – (617) 625-6600 ext 2100 – mayor@ somervillema.gov
Incorporated as a city:	1872
Location:	Middlesex County, two miles north of Boston
Surface:	Slightly over 4 square miles
Board of Aldermen:	AT LARGE: Bruce M. Desmond 220A Summer Street - (617) 666-1757- BRUCEMDESMOND@YAHOO.COM AT LARGE: Dennis M. Sullivan, 8 Florence Street - (617) 628-1857- ALDERMANSULLIVAN@AOL.COM AT LARGE: William A. White, Jr. 16 Browning Road - (617) 625-9110 - WILLIAM.A.WHITE@VERIZON.NET AT LARGE: John M. Connolly 17 Winslow Avenue - (617) 625-0781 - jmconnolly@wccinsurance.com WARD 1: William M. Roche 17 MacArthur Street - (617) 623-6661 - ALDERMANROCHE@COMCAST.NET WARD 2: Maryann M. Heuston 115 Beacon Street - (617) 492-5331 - MHEUSTON@HOTMAIL.COM WARD 3: Thomas F. Taylor 32 Vinal Avenue - (617) 776-1618 - TFTALD32@AOL.COM WARD 4: Walter F. Pero 392 Medford Street - (617) 628-0137 - WPERO@COMCAST.NET WARD 5: Sean T. O'Donovan 30 Warwick Street - (617) 776-6456 - SEAN@ODONOVANLAW.COM WARD 6: Rebekah L. Gewirtz 36 College Ave. #53 - (617) 718-0792 - REBEKAH@RCN.COM WARD 7: Robert C. Trane 70 Hooker Avenue - (617) 623-5767 - ROBERTTRANE@AOL.COM

Demographics

Population:	77,478 (most densely populated community in New England)
Diversity:	1/3 of Somerville residents are foreign born
Languages:	More than 50 spoken languages in Somerville schools
Median age:	31.1
Education:	High school graduate 80.6%, Bachelor's degree or higher 40.6%
Per capita income:	\$23,628
Median family income:	\$32,455 ¹
Commuters:	11% of Somerville residents carpool, 27% use public transportation, 13% walk to work or work at home

Business Climate

Labor force:	44,217
Unemployment rate:	3.4% ²
Commercial Tax Rate:	\$18.90 ³

Other facts

Recognition:	All America City Award 2009 National recognition as a model of innovation and efficiency for 311 customer service help line and SomerStat, a data-driven style of managing services.
Arts:	Only New York has more artists per capita than the City of Somerville!

1 *Source: Federal Census Bureau estimate, 1990

2 For 2006. Source: Massachusetts Department of Workforce & US Bureau of Labor Statistics

3 For 2006. (Tax rate has dropped 27% since 2000). Source: Somerville Assessor's Office

City's Business Development Programs

Storefront Improvement Program

The City of Somerville offers business and retail property owners financial assistance and design guidance through the Storefront Improvement Program (SIP). This program exists to keep our local business districts vital and to set a design standard for retail shops in Somerville.

Through SIP, participants (owners or tenants) may apply for a straight grant up to \$7,500 or 3:1 matching grant of up to \$35,000, toward storefront renovations costs. The rebate is used toward construction costs may also be used toward the architect's fees.

A new, expedited initiative is the Sign/Lighting/Awning program. This is a smaller program designed for the owner who wishes to change only those components of the exterior. The City may specify design standards to be eligible for this expedited program. The total rebate goes up to \$35,000 toward construction renovation costs, and \$7,500 for the Sign/Lighting/Awning program.

To be eligible for either program, business owners must either be in a HUD-eligible area or have five or fewer employees, including the proprietor, or create new low to moderate income jobs. To determine your business' eligibility, please call:

Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development
617-625-6600 ext. 2500

Small Business Loans Program

The City of Somerville, in partnership with ACCION USA, offers business owners access to capital through the Small Business Loans Program. With loans available up to \$50,000 for established businesses, and \$30,000 for start-ups, the City wishes to assist businesses to ensure that Somerville's business community remains healthy and vibrant. To be eligible for the Program, businesses must have five or fewer employees (including the proprietor). To determine the eligibility of your business, or for more information about the program, please contact:

Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development
617-625-6600 ext. 2500

Retail Best Practices Program

The City of Somerville has partnered with "Graber Marketing", to provide retailers and restaurateurs with the best practices on retail, marketing, and management. The Retail Best Practices Program provides visual merchandising, store management and marketing recommendations as well as layout and design instruction to retailers, encouraging business improvements through proven strategies and techniques.

The program is designed to engage, inform and reward retailers for their commitment to store and business improvement through their participation in the three steps of the program:

1. a FREE Workshop on updating your property and your marketing to improve your business
2. 1-on-1 meetings for qualified stores and restaurants, written Report and Follow up sessions
3. Access to \$2,000 in grants to make store improvement

For more information about the Program, please contact:

Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development
617-625-6600 ext. 2500

Brownfield Programs

Brownfield Economic Development Program (BEDP)

Under BEDP, a commercial or industrial business or developer who is interested in purchasing a Brownfield site (either known, or suspected to be contaminated) would be eligible to receive two types of assistance:

- Site Testing Services: a full round of environmental site testing services from a qualified environmental consultant, and a cost estimate for any remediation determined to be necessary. This site testing occurs prior to executing any purchase and sale agreement for purchase of a Brownfield site.
- Cost Overrun Coverage: Based on the cost estimate for site remediation, the participant may elect to enter into an environmental remediation cost overrun agreement with the City of Somerville.

Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (BCRLF)

Properties referred to as "brownfield" sites are parcels of land that have confirmed or suspected contamination. Brownfields often experience difficulties during real estate transactions due to prospective buyers' fears of unknown or unquantified cleanup costs. The BCRLF is a program created through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), under which the City of Somerville can lend money to help finance brownfields cleanup. The City of Somerville offers:

- Flexible loan amounts
- Flexible interest rates
- Flexible loan terms and conditions

The BCRLF can be utilized by itself or in combination with Somerville's BEDP. For more information about these programs, please contact:

Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development
617-625-6600 ext. 2500

City's Trends Reports

Get more understanding of what Somerville is

All the following trends reports are available at City's website on:

<http://www.somervillema.gov/Section.cfm?org=OSPCD&page=1509>

ECONOMIC TRENDS

- Residential Employment and occupations
- Industry Employment
- Industry Wages
- Industry Establishments
- Business Locations
- Non-Market Economy

POPULATION TRENDS

- Population History
- Population and Density
- Youth and Families
- Senior Population
- Race and Ethnicity
- Income and Poverty
- Education

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE TRENDS

- Sewers, water, telecommunications, utilities, tunnels and bridges, roadways and reconstruction projects, and green infrastructure.
- Vehicular traffic and accidents, commute to work, buses, rail service, Para transit, registered vehicles, car availability and car sharing, bicyclists and pedestrians, accidents, truck routes, water transportation, and parking.

HOUSING TRENDS

- Housing stock
- Housing Tenure and Occupancy
- Housing Prices
- Housing Pressures
- Public Support for Housing

Local Business Associations

SOMERVILLE LOCAL FIRST

Somerville Local First, formed in March 2008, is a network of locally owned and independent businesses to build a robust Somerville economy and a vibrant community.

PO Box 402
Somerville, MA 02143
Phone: 617-669-9861
E-mail: somervillelocalfirst@gmail.com
<http://www.somervillelocalfirst.org/>

GO GREEN SOMERVILLE

GoGreen Somerville is a coalition of businesses and non-profit organizations that leverage relationships, knowledge, and resources to green the Somerville businesses community.

Email: vanessarule@gmail.com
<http://www.gogreensomerville.org/>

UNION SQUARE MAIN STREETS

Local economic development organization committed to increasing the vibrancy of this Somerville neighborhood by enhancing the Union Square business district and surrounding neighborhoods through active community collaboration.

66-70 Union Square
Suite 103
Somerville, MA 02143
Phone: 617-955-0080
E-mail: USMS@unionsquaremain.org
<http://www.unionsquaremain.org/>

EAST SOMERVILLE MAIN STREETS

Volunteer-driven organization dedicated to developing community initiatives and events that reflect and promote the true character of East Somerville as a vibrant place to live, visit, and do business.

East Somerville Main Streets

114 Broadway – Suite 112

Somerville, MA 02145

Phone: 617-623-3869

E-mail: info@eastsomervillemainstreets.org

<http://www.eastsomervillemainstreets.org/>

DARBI - DAVIS SQUARE AREA RESIDENTS-BUSINESS INITIATIVE

Local non profit organization to promote Davis Square as an attractive place to live, visit, shop and conduct business.

E-mail: info@yourdavissquare.com

<http://www.yourdavissquare.com/>

SOMERVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Somerville Chamber of Commerce is the pre-eminent voice of its local business community and the leading network of employers, business owners, and managers.

2 Alpine Street

Somerville, MA 02144

Phone: 617-776-4100

www.somervillechamber.org

Financing Resources

ACCION USA

56 Roland Street, Suite 300
Boston, MA 02129
Phone: 617-625-7080
www.accionusa.org

ACCION USA is a private, nonprofit organization that provides micro loans and other financial services to low- and moderate-income entrepreneurs who are unable to access bank credit for their small businesses.

COMMONWEALTH CORPORATION

529 Main Street, Suite 110
Boston, MA 02129
Phone: 617-727-8158
www.commcorp.org

The Economic Stabilization Trust (a program within the Commonwealth Corporation) lends working capital to small and medium sized value-added businesses in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION (MCDFC)

155 Federal Street, Suite 202
Boston, MA 02110
Phone: 617-523-6262
www.mcdfc.com

MCDFC provides financing to small businesses in Massachusetts to which private capital is not readily available with the purpose of creating or preserving jobs and promoting economic development.

MASSDEVELOPMENT

160 Federal Street
Boston, MA 02110
Phone: 617-451-2477
www.massdevelopment.com

MassDevelopment works with businesses and local officials to address blighted areas, help create jobs, and address overarching issues that impact economic development.

Business Information and Counseling

CENTER FOR WOMEN AND ENTERPRISE (CWE)

24 School Street, Suite 700
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: 617-536-0700
www.cweboston.org

CWE offers education, training, technical assistance, women's business enterprise certification and access to both debt and equity capital to entrepreneurs at every stage of business development.

MASSACHUSETTS SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER (MSBDC) NETWORK STATE OFFICE

227 Isenberg School of Management
University of Massachusetts
121 Presidents Drive
Amherst, MA 01003-9310
Phone: 413-545-6301
www.msbdc.org

A network of Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) throughout the Commonwealth providing free business advisory services, workshops, and business services for pre-venture, start-up and existing firms. Business centers are located throughout Massachusetts. Please visit www.msbdc.org/alphabytown.html to locate the center nearest to you.

MIT ENTERPRISE FORUM

Building E32-328
28 Carleton Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
Phone: 617-253-8240
<http://enterpriseforum.mit.edu/>

The Enterprise Forum produces a series of educational programs about entrepreneurship through a network of 24 worldwide chapters.

SERVICE CORPS OF RETIRED EXECUTIVES (SCORE)

10 Causeway Street
Boston, MA 02222-1093
Phone: 617-565-5591
www.score.org

SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business" is a nonprofit association dedicated to educating entrepreneurs on the formation, growth and success of small business nationwide.

SOMERVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2 Alpine Street
Somerville, MA 02144
Phone: 617-776-4100
www.somervillechamber.org

The Somerville Chamber of Commerce is the pre-eminent voice of its local business community and the leading network of employers, business owners, and managers.

MSBDC business advisors are available. Please call at 617-287-7750 for more information.

STATE OFFICE OF MINORITY & WOMEN BUSINESS ASSISTANCE (SOMWBA)

10 Park Plaza, Suite 3720
Boston, MA 02116
Phone: 617-973-8692
www.somwba.state.ma.us

SOMWBA promotes the development of business enterprises and non-profit organizations owned or operated by minorities and women. One of the services provided by SOMWBA is certification, which is a marketing tool used to enhance a firm's ability to do business in public markets.

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA)

10 Causeway Street, Room 265
Boston, MA 02222
Phone: 617-565-5590
www.sba.gov/localresources/district/ma/index.html

The SBA provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run, and grow their businesses.

MASSACHUSETTS EXPORT CENTER

10 Park Plaza, Suite 4510
Boston, MA 02116
Phone: 617-973-8664
www.mass.gov/export

The Massachusetts Export Center offers a range of targeted, customized services to Massachusetts businesses at any stage in the export process. Whether you are a small business just thinking about exporting or an experienced exporter, the Massachusetts Export Center stands ready to help with services suited to your needs.

Legal Resources

There are a multitude of legal issues to think about when it comes to starting and operating your business. Everything from your business name to its structure to its operation has legal implications. The following legal resources might offer you insight and perspective in one of the most candid areas that entrepreneurs have to deal with: business law. They cover a spectrum of services like type of business entity, financing considerations, leasing, insurance, immigration issues, health care requirements, taxes, employees, among others topics.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE PROJECT (EJP)

c/o The Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights
294 Washington Street, Suite 443
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: 617-482-1145
www.lawyerscom.org

Through the EJP, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights provides business training and advice to individuals who are considering starting a business and to existing businesses, in confronting a variety of concerns, by offering legal workshops and legal counseling.

BOSTON BAR ASSOCIATION

16 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: 617-742-0615
www.bostonbar.org

The Boston Bar Association offers a Lawyer Referral Service.

COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE PROJECT (CEP)

c/o WilmerHale Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School
122 Boylston Street
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
Phone: 617-522-3003
www.law.harvard.edu/academics/clinical/lsc/help/index.htm

CEP's mission is to contribute to the economic vitality of local communities by providing legal services to small businesses, non-profits organizations, and other entities involved in business, real estate, and economic development activities.

MASSACHUSETTS BAR ASSOCIATION (MBA)

20 West Street
Boston, MA 02111
Phone: 617-338-0500
www.massbar.org

Lawyer Referral Service Phone: 617-645-0400
www.massbar.org/for-the-public/need-a-lawyer

MBA is a non-profit organization that serves the legal profession and the public by promoting the administration of justice, legal education, professional excellence, and respect for the law. The MBA also has a Lawyer Referral Service, which is one of the largest referral services of its kind in the nation.

The City of Somerville does not control, monitor, or guarantee the information contained in the referrals to other external parties, and does not endorse any views expressed or products or services offered therein.

Source: MSBDC Boston Regional Office & Minority Business Center