



GRUNDY CENTER



CHAMBER-MAIN STREET

# BUSINESS START-UP GUIDE



# Grundy Center, IA

So you want to start a business in Grundy Center ... For an individual or entrepreneur, starting a new business can present a major challenge. You need to locate a space to lease. Or possibly buy a building. You need access to funding and technical assistance. You need to obtain city permits and approvals. The process can seem overwhelming to some. Grundy Center Chamber-Main Street ("GCCMS") has created this guide in an effort to make the process of starting your business as simple as possible by outlining the recommended steps and addressing some FAQs we've encountered:



## 1 HOW DO I CREATE A BUSINESS PLAN?

SBDC Iowa provides no cost, confidential one-on-one counseling to business owners. Our counseling services are personalized and designed to fit the unique needs of every business. We provide training opportunities throughout the state as well as a series of free online business trainings. For more information, go to this link: <http://iowasbdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Iowa-SBDC-Startup-packet.pdf>

## 2 LOCATING YOUR BUSINESS:

Where does it make sense for your business to be? Is it a retail or service business? Does your business rely on high visibility? Or do you need an office setting? For businesses wanting to locate within the downtown or another part of town, GCCMS is here to help. Downtown Grundy Center is home to a variety of property types: storefronts, office space, residential buildings and government service buildings. We maintain a database of space available for lease and buildings for sale in Grundy Center. Our database includes square footage, rental rates/listing prices, available parking and other important building data.

## 3 HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO OPEN?

Registering and setting up a new business can take from 1-3 months, depending on the amount of space improvements that need to be completed. Many common delays are associated with navigating and coordinating state and local codes and processes. To find out if your preferred location is zoned for the type of business you intend to operate, contact the City Clerk at 319-825-6118 or [cityclerk@gcmuni.net](mailto:cityclerk@gcmuni.net). They can find zoning information and help you determine the process and timing of requesting a change or conditional use permit.

# 4

## PERMITS, LICENSES & APPROVALS:

Opening a business may require permits, licenses and other approvals. The particular approvals needed for your business will depend on the nature of your business and the scope of needed improvements to real estate. The Grundy Center City Clerk can aid in sign review, scheduling a building inspection, and guiding you through applications for any external, historic, or specialty work. Some proposals require more than one reading at Council meetings, so plan ahead.

If you intend to operate a restaurant and/or bar, you will also need to address fire code and safety issues. This can be done by contacting Black Hawk County Health Department (Northeast Iowa Inspections) (319) 291-2413.

Additionally, liquor permits are issued by the City Clerk. These are limited, so contact this office as soon as possible at 319-825-6118.



# 5

## WHAT SHOULD I BUDGET?

Startup budget requirements vary greatly, but certain costs are frequently overlooked by new businesses. Identifying and planning for these costs can dramatically improve cash flow in the first year.

**Licenses and fees:** Almost all of the activities on the previous page are associated with some type of fee. Typically, these are small, but together they add up!

- **Space cost:** Unforeseen costs of renovations can add up quickly. Be sure to get your questions answered up front and do your due diligence regarding build-out requirements.
- **Signage and marketing:** Signs, domain names, websites, and business cards all have costs.
- **Business and personal property taxes:** Likely, you have never filed taxes as a business. Engage an accountant early in the process to be sure you register, budget, and file correctly.
- **Outdoor maintenance:** Are you responsible for snow removal? Landscaping? Who is responsible for the parking lot or spaces?



# 6

## RESEARCH FINANCING OPTIONS & ECONOMIC INCENTIVES:

A number of loan programs and other economic incentives are available for prospective businesses in Grundy Center. Please see our funding sources guide. Meet with your lender or financing partners to discuss your first year capital and financing terms.



Below are the most frequently asked questions from businesses that have opened in Grundy Center:

# FAQ's

Q: What is the local market like?

A: Information on demographics, employment and visitor data is available in this booklet as well as on our website, GrundyCenterCMS.org

Q: Are there incentives available?

A: Yes, a variety of loan and competitive grant products are available to new and expanding businesses. GCCMS can help you identify what options are best for your business.

Q: How can I market my business?

A: Local papers and other media are listed in our resources section. Additionally, consider becoming an investor in Grundy Center Chamber-Main Street or sponsoring a local event to increase visibility and get active in your new community!

Q: How much does it cost to rent space?

A: Rent varies greatly depending on your location and the amenities you require for your business. We recommend looking at a few properties to see your options. There are also spaces available for sale, and financing through local lenders or others listed in our resource section can make this an affordable option.



## Grundy Center Chamber Main Street Is...

Grundy Center Chamber-Main Street builds collective capacity – our organizational structure creates a partnership that benefits Chamber members and Main Street investors, from marketing opportunities to a unified and consistent voice in business and community development. We are the community CATALYST, CONVENER and CONNECTOR.

Our job is to open doors, build awareness, and increase exposure for a broad mix of members. We can provide experiences for you to connect and build relationships, we can provide co-op advertising that saves you money, we can open doors to specific businesses you'd like to meet when we are asked to, and if you are struggling, we can connect you to others for mentoring and advice.

*We would love to have you!*



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