

# STARTUP Catawba County



Digital Toolkit

# Working for Business



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[Send me an email](#)



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Congratulations on taking this stride towards transforming your entrepreneurial aspirations into reality! Thank you for choosing to build your business in Catawba County. Our tagline, "Working for business," underscores our commitment to supporting and nurturing businesses right from their inception.

Launching a business is a blend of excitement and apprehension. We understand that there's an entire spectrum of unknowns – the questions you might not even be aware to ask, the labyrinth of legal responsibilities, and the intricacies of navigating government procedures. This Digital Toolkit is a comprehensive guide designed to illuminate your path step-by-step and equip you with the insights essential for your business to thrive.

Whether you're seeking guidance on navigating the start-up process or strategies to fuel your growth in this region, you can count on us to be your go-to resource and advocate. As you gear up for your grand opening, know that we're eagerly anticipating the opportunity to celebrate this milestone with you.

Please visit our [website](#) to learn more about The Chamber of Catawba County or [contact our team](#) to serve you. We've also compiled a list of [entrepreneur resources](#) and [women & minority-owned business resources](#) to assist you.

## How to use this Digital Toolkit

- All underlined text contains a hyperlink which you can simply click or tap, depending on your device, to access more information.
- Look for these icons throughout the guide which highlight important information that can save you time and unnecessary expense.
- You'll notice that this digital guide doubles as a checklist when printed.



**The Chamber**  
OF CATAWBA COUNTY  
*Working for business*

Connect with us!





**NerdWallet named Hickory and Conover the 4th and 6th best places to start a business in North Carolina.**

# North Carolina ranks No. 1 in America's Top States for Business, with the nation's strongest economy

Read the CNBC article [here](#)



**Travel & Leisure Magazine ranks Hickory as the #1 Most Affordable and Beautiful Place to Live in the US.**



# Starting from scratch

- Write and refine your business plan
- Conduct research and market analysis to determine if your business idea is feasible.
- Determine your capital needs and sources of funds.
- Identify your Business Structure and confirm if your Business Name is available.

## **The Small Business Center**

The Small Business Center at Catawba Valley Community College works with new and expanding businesses by providing guidance, resources, and referrals. As a state-funded program, they offer a variety of professional counseling services and training seminars at no cost. To learn more about the SBC or to access their services, please contact: [sbc@cvcc.edu](mailto:sbc@cvcc.edu)

- Register for Business Counseling [here](#).
- Sign up for a webinar [here](#).



828-327-7000  
ext 4117



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Hickory, NC 28602



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Download these Handouts: [Lean Business Plan Template](#), [Marketing Research Tools](#), & [Funding Options](#)

# Growing your business

## **The Small Business and Technology Development Center**

(SBTDC) exists to help businesses develop high-return strategies, including increasing sales, developing new markets, accessing capital and financing, evaluating financial performance, building talent, enhancing leadership capabilities, improving employee performance, and planning for a better future.

- Book a counseling appointment [here](#).
- Join the Taking the Leap Accelerator Program [here](#).



828-827-6111



[asu@sbtcdc.org](mailto:asu@sbtcdc.org)



1990 Main Ave SE  
Hickory, NC 28602



## **The Catawba County Economic Development Corporation**

actively supports existing industries aiming to thrive and scale. They guide existing and growing companies with potential location selection, regulatory guidance, workforce training, and general resource linkage. They are dedicated to fostering business growth and success by leveraging their local and state collaborations.

- Research the local commercial real estate market for your business's next home.
- Book a consultation with EDC staff for general business assistance.
- Understand potential programs available to support business growth.
- Join their industry e-newsletter for helpful resources & events.



828-267-1564



[edc@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:edc@catawbacountync.gov)



1960-B 13th Ave Dr SE  
Hickory, NC 28602



# Location & Zoning



**Before you lease or purchase property, engage a professional contractor, or buy equipment, follow the steps in this toolkit to save yourself time and unnecessary expenses.**

1

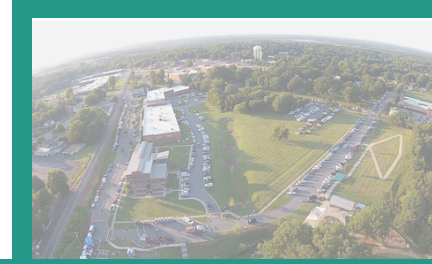
## Determine your desired zoning jurisdiction (city or county) for your business.

- Use the Zoning District Lookup tool [here](#).
- Learn more about your property by using the Parcel Search [here](#).



**QUICK TIPS**

*Although they sound similar, Catawba County and the Town of Catawba are different entities.*



2

## Call the Planning and Zoning Department for your desired zoning jurisdiction.

- |                                   |                     |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| • <b><u>Catawba County</u></b>    | <u>828-465-8380</u> |
| • <b><u>City of Claremont</u></b> | <u>828-466-7255</u> |
| • <b><u>City of Conover</u></b>   | <u>828-464-1191</u> |
| • <b><u>City of Hickory</u></b>   | <u>828-323-7422</u> |
| • <b><u>City of Newton</u></b>    | <u>828-695-4305</u> |
| • <b><u>Town of Brookford</u></b> | <u>828-322-4903</u> |
| • <b><u>Town of Catawba</u></b>   | <u>828-241-2215</u> |
| • <b><u>Town of Long View</u></b> | <u>828-322-3921</u> |
| • <b><u>Town of Maiden</u></b>    | <u>828-428-5034</u> |



**QUICK TIPS**

*We strongly advise sharing detailed and transparent plans with the planning staff. Their valuable guidance relies on your clear vision, as they'll ask you detailed questions to provide you with the necessary steps to get you to your grand opening as quickly as possible.*



**If you need assistance refining your business plan, contact the Small Business Center.**

3

## Verify your appropriate zoning designation for the type of business you intend to start.

The Planning and Zoning Department representative will assist you in determining areas within your desired jurisdiction that are compatible with the type of business you'd like to start.



If the zoning and land use of the location you desire isn't permitted for your business type, inquire about other available options related to the property or choose another compatible location that meets your needs.

See a list of brokers [here](#) if you need assistance finding a commercial property.



# Before you sign a lease or purchase...

**Before you lease or purchase property, engage a professional contractor, or buy equipment, follow the steps in this toolkit to save yourself time and unnecessary expenses.**



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## Occupying an existing space

Once you've found a property that meets compatible zoning and land use requirements for your business, make sure to do the following, before you sign a lease or purchase property.

- If the previous use differs from your new intended use for the space, you will need to apply for a "change of use" which will require a safety inspection from Catawba County Building Services-Permit Center and the jurisdiction's Fire Marshall.

**This step is critically important and has the potential of saving you time and unnecessary expenses.**

- Create a Safety Permit application online here.**

Once approved, the Safety Inspector assigned to the case will reach out via phone call to setup a first inspection.

[Catawba County Building Services-Permit Center.](#)



828-465-8399



[permitapps@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:permitapps@catawbacountync.gov)



25 Government Drive  
Newton, NC 28658

- Determine if you need to make any alterations to the existing space.**

- Alterations include but aren't limited to plumbing, electrical, mechanical, fire alarm, addition/changes to structure, or sprinkler.
- During your Safety Inspection, the Safety Inspector will advise you if an architect, licensed general contractor, or engineer needs to be involved with your project.
- If you must secure professional services to design plans for your desired alterations to your property, interview them and consult Catawba County Building Services if you need additional assistance. For a list of professional service providers, visit The Chamber's Business Directory [here](#).

*During your interview, ask your professional if they are aware of and familiar with building codes.*



- Determine if you need to involve Catawba County Environmental Health**

- Are you considering property reliant on well and/or septic tank (ie, not connected to public water/sewer utilities?)
- Do you intend to start a food service business, mobile food unit, childcare center, tattoo establishment, nursing home, or public swimming pool?

- If you answered yes to either or both questions, you must call Environmental Health. Don't skip this step for risk of permitting delays.



828-465-8270

- Verify the previous use of the existing space or building you plan to occupy**

to ensure that the proper building codes are adhered to during the plan and design period. To determine the previous use, contact the jurisdiction's Planning Department (links & phone numbers on previous page)

- Upon completion of plans, you must submit your proposed plans to your zoning jurisdiction, as well as the Catawba County Building Services Department.**
  - Your zoning jurisdiction and/or Catawba County Building Services will approve or request changes to the plans. If the plans are not approved, you must make the appropriate changes and resubmit your plans to all entities.
- When the plans are approved by all entities, you or your contractor must complete a Building Permit Application with your plans and submit it to Catawba County Building Services.**
  - Only then can you proceed to make the approved alterations to your space with the approved inspections required.

*You may be surprised that a number of alterations may trigger a new permit, including but not limited to: expansion, demolition, deck, fence, adding a driveway or parking area, accessory structure, or any signage. If you aren't sure, call your Permitting & Zoning representative.*



**QUICK TIPS**

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## Buying Land to Build Your Business

You may come across specific circumstances or situations that call for buying land and constructing premises rather than occupying existing space.

- Before purchasing property, click here to review a checklist to save you time and unnecessary expenses.**

*If purchasing a property or leasing isn't in your plan, consider our friends at The Hickory Hub, a co-working space. They offer flexible workspaces, shared amenities, networking events, & connections to resources*



**QUICK TIPS**



## Almost there...

**5**

**When the alterations are complete and inspections are approved, you can contact your Planning & Zoning Department to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy.**



Please don't hesitate to reach out to The Chamber of Catawba County. We hope to collaborate with you and our local government partners to address any challenges that may arise along the way. Your success is our shared goal, and we look forward to working together to achieve it.

# Ready to launch?

Engaging in the local business community provides access to resources, fosters partnerships, and builds a positive reputation for your business. These are essential for your business's lasting success and Catawba County's economic well-being. Here are a few ways to get started...



## Additional Considerations

When considering hiring a professional, make sure to do your research and exercise due diligence prior to enlisting their services.

- What type of insurance do you need? Access a list of local agents [here](#).
- Will you hire employees or independent contractors? Access a list of local accountants [here](#) to provide you guidance.
- How do I find employees to hire? Check out The Chamber's [Talent Toolbox](#) and the Catawba County's EDC's [Workforce Brochure](#).
- How do I get set up for Business Personal Property Tax? Find out [here](#).
- How do I obtain a Beer & Wine (Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) Permit) License? Learn [here](#).
- How do I open a Business Checking Account? Contact any one of our [local financial institution partners](#) to assist you.
- I need more funding-are there any local grants or incentives?
  - [City of Newton](#)-Incentives and Grants
  - [City of Hickory](#)-Business Development Programs
  - [Catawba County EDC](#) Incentives
- Educate yourself through the NC Department of Revenue's Resource Library [here](#).



*Whenever possible, consider supporting local businesses. Your patronage not only strengthens the community's economy but also fosters a sense of camaraderie and shared growth. To access The Chamber Business Directory, click [here](#).*

## Engage with the Business Community



The Chamber of Catawba County stands as the largest non-profit business association in our region, dedicated to fueling business growth and economic success in Catawba County, North Carolina. Above all, we're your biggest supporter, advocate, and champion. [Discover how Chamber Partnership](#) can connect you with tailored resources, programs, and events designed to empower your business's growth.

- Learn more about the mission and impact of The Chamber of Catawba County.
- Inquire about getting involved with the local merchants' group or downtown development association and learn about locally sponsored events and festivals.
  - [Downtown Hickory Development Association](#)
  - [Downtown Newton Development Association](#)
  - [Conover Community Partners](#)
  - [Maiden Business Association](#)
- Schedule a meeting with a member of [our team](#).



**Forbes ranks the Greater Hickory Metro region as having the lowest business costs in the nation.**



**#5 Best State to Start a Business in 2024**

Read the Forbes article [here](#).

**US News & World Report-Hickory is among the 6th cheapest cities in which to start a business.**



**Business Facilities Magazine ranks Hickory MSA as #8 in their list of mid-sized manufacturing hubs.**





*The Chamber of Catawba County would like to acknowledge the following local government & entrepreneurial resource partners who contributed to the production of this digital toolkit.*



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