



Start here.



## 5 reasons to do business in Erie County

### Affordability for you and your team

- 13% less expensive cost of doing businesses
- 6.75% effective sales tax rate
- .26% CAT-only state business tax
- \$132,400 median home value
- \$51,033 median Income

### Central location for customer access

- 50% U.S. population within a day's drive
- 11 million visitors per year

### Central location for a large labor pool

- 3,156,677 population in 45-mile radius
- 95.1% employment rate
- 54% of workforce has a bachelor's degree or higher

### High quality of life

- 6 amusement and water parks
- 90 miles of lake waterfront
- 6,299 acres of state parks, forests, nature preserves and wildlife areas
- 90 marinas

### Evidence of success

- 60% gross regional product growth over last 30 years
- Projected job growth for 2020 - 2026 is 7%
- Over 600 million in business capital investment in the last 5 years

Let us be among the first to welcome you and your business to the City of Huron. As you continue to move through the process of getting your business up and running, please know that we are here to assist you in the challenges that come with opening a business. Entrepreneurship and small business development are essential to the success of our economy in the City of Huron. Starting and running a business can be challenging and requires a variety of skills.

Our partners at ECEDC can assist in connecting you with experts and advice that help you navigate these

initial challenges. Our goal for a vibrant, inclusive, and thriving economy is only possible with individuals like you.

We thank you for your commitment to the City of Huron and look forward to watching your business succeed!

# Start here.

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## Who we are.

This Business Expansion and Startup Guide is brought to you by the Regional Incubator for Sustainability & Entrepreneurship (RISE), the Erie County Economic Development Corporation (ECEDC) and our community partners. RISE aids entrepreneurs and small business owners across industries. It can provide one-on-one advising with business experts to develop a plan for achieving business goals. ECEDC focuses on economic development as a whole and encompasses RISE. ECEDC can assist in accessing potential resources, research, and critical connections that facilitate the economic development necessary for a thriving economy. This guide is a by-product of the challenges, questions, and hurdles new and existing businesses face as they look to accomplish their goals.

### How this guide works

This guide is designed to provide a checklist for new and existing business who are looking at building or relocating to the City of Huron. By answering a few initial questions and then based on answers working through each bullet point, business owners can feel confident that they have met all the requirements to operate in good standing.

### Choose where to start

Are you a new business, start up, or entrepreneur that's trying to get your business incorporated and quickly up and running? Flip to **page 10** to start and learn how RISE can help get you going in the right direction.

Existing business? We can help you there too. Head to the **next page** to make sure you have crossed off everything on list and then head to **page 12** to see how ECEDC can help you grow and expand your business.

# Start here.

These icons alert you to tasks with extended time requirements:



Are you finding broken links?

That means there's information newer than this document out there! See page 12 for the homepage link to all the agency and organization websites cited in this document.



## Ready to grow or establish a facility in the City of Huron?

One of the first steps a new or existing business owner should take once they've decided they want to open a business in the City of Huron is to schedule a meeting with the local economic development office and City planning and building departments. This initial introduction can assist the process of becoming operational by foreseeing any challenges or hurdles businesses may face due to the nature of their business.

### Will you be moving into an existing facility or constructing new/expanding a location?

If existing, you'll want to work through the following checklist:

#### ZONING

Before signing your lease check:

- Check the [Zoning Map](#) to ensure your business type and use is appropriate based on the zoning of your location.
- Owner should have an occupancy permit. Change of use will result in the need for a new occupancy permit.
- Notify the Fire Department of your new business and operation
- Before design and purchase, review [signage regulation](#).

#### LOCAL LICENSING & PERMITTING



- Is your business a food truck or food stand? You'll need to apply for a [temporary store permit](#).
- Opening a restaurant? Check out the [Food and Beverage Guide](#) for the process to meet local requirements.
- Are you opening an Airbnb or short-term rental? You'll want to check with the city. Airbnb or short-term rentals are limited by the City of Huron.
- Be familiar with the types of building renovations that require permitting. Cosmetic improvements like painting or flooring, typically do not require a building permit. However, structural renovations (ex. changing a window size, electrical upgrades) do require a building permit. Follow directions in section B.

Have you selected a location that suits your business objectives?

Yes,

continue reading here to ensure you've met the regulatory requirements to operate there.

No,

economic development offices can assist you in your search.

Visit [Page 13](#) for contact information and services.

#### STATE LICENSING

Check state requirements at the official website of the State of Ohio: [Licenses & Permits | Ohio.gov | Official Website of the State of Ohio](#)

Liquor permits are handled at the state level. Specific attorneys are often hired to assist in the application process.

- New Liquor Permit [Process](#)
- Check [How to Apply](#) for more information
- [Forms Required](#)

#### UTILITIES

Transfer utilities:

- Water: Erie County Department of Environmental Services - (419) 627-7666
- Columbia Gas: (419) 625-8875
- Ohio Edison: (419) 271-1313
- Telecommunication Providers: [Buckeye Broadband](#) or other telecommunications providers
- Understand [parking availability and regulations](#) near your business to notify your customers



**In Huron, the Planning Commission and Design Review Board meet on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 5:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building Council Chambers.**

Site plan applications are due the month before the meeting they will be presented (e.g. 4th Wednesday of May deadline for June meeting agenda item).

We can help you work out any anticipated Planning Commission questions, staff comments, code requirements, other details so board

### If constructing a new building for your business or doing a large renovation of existing building:

#### ZONING

- Check the [Zoning map](#) to ensure your zoning is appropriate for your business functions.
- **Change the size of your lot.** Connect with the cities planning and zoning department and fill out application before submitting to the county. The application can be found [here](#).
- If you are interested in a site but it is not zoned appropriately, you can apply for a re-zoning through this [application](#).
- **Understand traffic patterns.** Ensure you are familiar with the rules around traffic patterns and access ways as you design your new build. Check it out [here](#).



- **Check availability of needed utilities.**  
Columbia Gas: (419) 625-8875  
Ohio Edison: (419) 271-1313  
Erie County Department of Environmental Services: (419) 627-7666

#### SITE PLAN APPROVAL

- Contact a design professional to begin designing the site.
- Work through the various steps associated with building a new structure and submit an application: [Business, Commercial, Industrial Improvements, Additions, and New Construction](#). This document includes information on setbacks, ingress/egress, parking, stormwater/grading, lighting, and utilities location. The Fee Schedule can be found [here](#), too.



#### BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Request these various permits and plan approvals:

- [Zoning Site Plan Permit](#)
- [Electrical Permit Application](#)
- **Building Plan Approval/Mechanical Plan Approval:** Contact John Zimmerman at (419) 433-2755.
- **Plumbing Permit:** Erie County General Health District (419) 626-5623 x 209.
- **Determine what type of signage your business will need to make the desired impact.** Once determined fill out the commercial [sign permit application](#). If you are thinking of having an electric sign, you'll need to review the various permits required such as the unique zoning, electrical permit and height specifications. This information can be found [here](#).

#### UTILITIES & OPERATIONS



- [Water Connection Permit](#)
- [Sewer Connection Permit](#)
- **Stormwater Management Permit:**  
OHM Advisors - Jason Popiel,  
[jason.popiel@ohm-advisors.com](mailto:jason.popiel@ohm-advisors.com)  
Erie Conservation District for SWPPP Review - Valerie Sasak,  
[vsasak@eriecounty.oh.gov](mailto:vsasak@eriecounty.oh.gov)
- **Flood Plain Permit:** Erik Engle,  
[erik.engle@huronohio.us](mailto:erik.engle@huronohio.us)
- **Set up the remaining utilities for the business including:**  
Water: Erie County Department of Environmental Services - (419) 627-7666  
[Colombia Gas](#)  
[Ohio Edison/First Energy](#)  
Telecom provider:  
[Buckeye Broadband](#)  
[OmniFiber](#)  
[Frontier](#)

#### Congratulations on your new business location.

Final reminders: don't forget to update your insurance, mailing address, and all online listings which are very important to your search engine optimization. Celebrate and announce your growth with your customers. Partners at the City of Huron and Erie County Economic Development Corporation would be glad to welcome you and share the news.

## Special considerations for starting a new business.

### Are you a new business, start up, or entrepreneur that's trying to get your business incorporated and quickly up and running?

Take advantage of the local Regional Incubator for Sustainability & Entrepreneurship (RISE). RISE works with entrepreneurs in every phase of the business development process. Whether you are starting with just an idea in need of a plan, fresh start-ups in need of a boost, or a business looking to develop and execute a new growth strategy. We can give you access to expert advice and resources to help you start, develop, or accelerate your business. Our advisors are seasoned professionals in business and know what questions to ask to help you explore the many aspects of starting and running a business, including the list below! Work your way through this RISE recommended checklist for a solid legal and strategic foundation for a new business:

#### Checklist

- **Create a business plan.** A business plan should be feasible and cover a description of your products and services, potential competitors, marketing and sales ideas, and key partners, staff, or resources.
- **Work on financial planning** and projections that detail a worst, medium, and best-case scenario for the profitability of your business. You should have 1-3 years' worth of projections showing revenue and expenses quarterly or monthly.
- **Form your LLC.** Register with the state. Most small businesses will fall into this category when launching: [LLC \(Limited Liability Company\)](#). Other business entities can be researched [here](#).
- **Research and obtain necessary licenses** in accordance with the state [here](#).
- **Visit the IRS website** ([Internal Revenue Service website](#)) to establish your Employer Identification Number (EIN). You will need an EIN to create a separate checking account for your business.
- **Contact your bank to establish a checking account** for your business. Separating personal and business finances is key for tax purposes. Some banks in the area include [VacationLand Federal Credit Union](#), [Civista Bank](#), [First National Bank of Bellevue](#), [Firelands Federal Credit Union](#), PNC, and US Bank.
- **Obtain a Vendor's License**, which authorizes you to collect sales tax. You can either apply online at the [Ohio Business Gateway website](#) or in-person at your local county auditor's office: [Erie County Auditor's Office](#).



- **Investigate Business insurance.** Contact and get a quote from multiple providers to find the best fit for your business. Some agencies in the area: [Bodey Insurance Agency](#), [Lindsley Insurance Agency](#), [Steinemann Hafner Insurance](#), [Willis Insurance Agency](#).
- **Get online!** Make sure people can find your business by growing an online presence. You want to be visible when people google you. Ways to gain an online presence include claiming a [My Business](#)

[Google Listing](#); connecting to others on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter; and creating a website. [Squarespace](#), [GoDaddy](#) or [Wix](#) are popular places to purchase a URL and set up a website.

- **Some other helpful tools** for your business include bookkeeping programs like [QuickBooks](#), customer relationship management software like [Salesforce](#), or email marketing platforms like [Constant Contact](#) or [Mailchimp](#).

#### Get more assistance

Our RISE team can provide templates and one-on-one assistance working your way through this checklist. RISE events and workshops are another great way to sharpen your skills and build a local small business network. Check out current events on [Facebook](#) or contact [rise@eriecountyedc.org](mailto:rise@eriecountyedc.org) today.

## Business assistance programs & support organizations.





### Economic Development Programs

Companies making a significant investment in the City of Huron may be eligible for assistance through the following program:

- Enterprise Zone Tax Abatement Guidelines and Application**  
 Certain new construction or renovation projects may be eligible for multi-year real estate tax abatement on the increased real estate tax liability of their project. This abatement provides real estate tax relief for a period of years and provide operations savings during the term of the abatement. All projects awarded real estate tax abatement under this program are required to meet or exceed a negotiated level of capital investment, new job creation and new payroll.
- Government Support**  
 Local development has been carefully guided by Huron’s administration. A zoning program has been implemented, and groups such as the Chamber of Commerce have supported the reservation of industrial tracts. In addition, the creation of the Huron Joint Port Authority has helped to ensure that the local harbor facilities can be developed to their maximum potential. The Port Authority continues working to create additional uses of the harbor in an effort to stimulate waterborne commerce in the community. They have recently completed a Port Master Plan that will serve as both a guideline and a marketing tool for future port development.



### Business Support Organizations

Organization	Description	Contact
	<p>A private non-profit organization serving our community through comprehensive economic development programs. We’re here to help individuals and businesses start, stay, and grow in Erie County.</p> <p>Businesses that are experiencing challenges or opportunities can utilize ECEDC to gain access to several types of resources.</p>	<p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:director@eriecountyedc.org">director@eriecountyedc.org</a></p> <p><b>Facebook:</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/OhioECEDC">@OhioECEDC</a></p> <p><b>Twitter:</b> <a href="https://twitter.com/OhioECEDC">@OhioECEDC</a> / <a href="#">Twitter</a></p> <p><b>LinkedIn:</b> <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/erie-county-economic-development-corporation">@OhioECEDC</a></p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://eriecountyedc.org">eriecountyedc.org</a></p>
	<p>RISE provides one on one advising, networking, and technical assistance for small businesses.</p> <p>Businesses can utilize RISE for early operational support and to provide critical connections to answer those early questions in the business development process.</p>	<p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:rise@eriecountyedc.org">rise@eriecountyedc.org</a></p> <p><b>Instagram:</b> <a href="https://www.instagram.com/rise_entrepreneurs">@rise_entrepreneurs</a></p> <p><b>Facebook:</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/RISEingEntrepreneurs">@RISEingEntrepreneurs</a></p>
	<p>The official destination marketing organization for Erie and Ottawa Counties in Ohio, together known as Shores &amp; Islands Ohio.</p> <p>Businesses can utilize Shores and Islands for assistance in marketing and networking</p>	<p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:Info@shoresandislands.com">Info@shoresandislands.com</a></p> <p><b>Facebook:</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/shoresandislands">@shoresandislands</a></p> <p><b>Twitter:</b> <a href="https://twitter.com/ShoresIslandsOH">@ShoresIslandsOH</a> / <a href="#">Twitter</a></p> <p><b>LinkedIn:</b> <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/shoresandislands">@shoresandislands</a></p>
	<p>Our goal is to represent the entire business community as effectively as possible so that not only businesses thrive, but the region as a whole thrives, and we may continue to experience improvements in our overall quality of life.</p> <p>Businesses can utilize ECCOC for business-to-business networking and advocacy.</p>	<p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:info@eriecountycommerce.com">info@eriecountycommerce.com</a></p> <p><b>Facebook:</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/eriecountycommerce">@eriecountycommerce</a></p> <p><b>LinkedIn:</b> <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/erie-county-chamber-of-commerce">@erie-county-chamber-of-commerce</a></p>

Organization	Description	Contact
 <p>U.S. Small Business Administration</p>	<p>U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) continues to help small business owners and entrepreneurs pursue the American dream. SBA is the only cabinet-level federal agency fully dedicated to small business and provides counseling, capital, and contracting expertise as the nation's only go-to resource and voice for small businesses.</p>	<p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:Mhoffma05@terra.edu">Mhoffma05@terra.edu</a></p> <p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:answerdesk@sba.gov">answerdesk@sba.gov</a></p> <p><b>Facebook:</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/SBAgov">@SBAgov</a></p> <p><b>Twitter:</b> <a href="https://twitter.com/SBAgov">@SBAgov</a></p> <p><b>LinkedIn:</b> <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/us-small-business-administration">@us-small-business-administration</a></p>
 <p>CITY OF HURON A GREAT LAKE PLACE</p>	<p>By fostering an innovative and collaborative atmosphere to deliver the highest quality product for the community at large, the City of Huron prides itself on serving residents, businesses, and visitors alike with the most efficient customer service possible through active participation in development initiatives.</p>	<p><b>Facebook:</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/CityofHuronGovernment">@City of Huron - Government</a></p> <p><b>Planning Director:</b> Erik Engle, (419) 433-5000 x1301</p> <p><b>Zoning Inspector/Code Enforcement:</b> Katie Maloney, (419) 433-5000 x1303</p> <p><b>Administrative Assistant:</b> Christine Gibboney, (419) 433-5000 x1303</p>
	<p>Women and minority owned businesses can utilize MBET for peer networking, learning, and marketing.</p>	<p><b>Facebook:</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/MBETSandusky">@MBETSandusky</a></p>

### More About the Erie County Economic Development Corporation (ECEDC):

ECEDC is a private nonprofit that assists companies to Start, Stay & Grow in Erie County. As you work your way through this guide, our team can assist you with the following:

#### SITE SELECTION

ECEDC keeps a database of available sites for businesses to utilize. This includes both vacant land and buildings businesses can move into. Steps to determine what is best for you include:

- Specific Zoning Needs (i.e. Commercial, Industrial, Office, Warehouse, ect.)
- Pricing
- Site Tour
- Infrastructure (Utilities, Parking, Traffic Patterns)
- Renovation Costs

#### CONTRACTOR SELECTION

Through our work within the community, we have put together a [detailed list of various contractors](#) specializing in the different aspects of building new or renovating existing space. Contractors' areas of specialty include:

- Architecture & Advisors
- Finance and Title
- General & Design-Build
- Concrete & Materials
- HVAC & Plumbing
- Finishing Touches

#### CRITICAL CONNECTIONS

Joining a network of experienced business leaders and members of our community can be the difference in success or failure. Tap into a network that offers insight and advice that will help your business succeed. We can connect you with a number of critical connections including:

- Accounting
- Legal
- Networking Organizations & Events

#### BRE ACTIVITIES

Our Business Retention and Expansion program connects new and expanding businesses to common needs, such as:

- Financing
- Ohio Tax Credits, Exemptions, Abatements, and Grants
- Infrastructure
- Brownfield Redevelopment
- Economic Research
- Regulatory Issues
- Industry and Function-Specific Needs
- Workforce Hiring and Retaining





247 Columbus Avenue  
Suite 126  
Sandusky Ohio 44870

In coordination with



Thank you to the Erie  
County Community  
Foundation for their  
support in creating this  
resource guide.

