

# **Starting a Business in Wasco County**

## **Business Development Guide**



Photo by Nathan Morris

**Presented by the  
Wasco County Economic Development Commission  
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## Navigating this Guide



This handout was prepared to help you move through the permitting processes to locate and grow your business in the unincorporated areas of Wasco County. Whether you are looking to locate in an existing building, or start from scratch this guide can help you through the process! Please see below for an overview of the process and other business resources available.

### Steps to Site a Business

**Step 1:** Planning: Allowed Uses and Pre-Application Process

**Step 2:** Public Health: sanitation permits.

**Step 3:** Fire Marshal: Fire, Life, or Safety Upgrades

**Step 4:** Building Permits

**Step 5:** DEQ: Hazardous Materials.  
*pg 2 and 3*

### Business Resources

**How to Start a Business** Starting or growing your business, *(pg 1)*

**Business Development:** Business Counseling, Tax Incentives, Other Local Resources *(pg 4)*

**Business Support:** Networking opportunities, collective marketing, and industry organizations. *(pg 5)*

**Financing:** Accessing capital, loans, and other tools. *(pg 6)*

**Utilities Guide:** Who to contact to connect to everything from power to the internet. *(pg 7)*

### Questions? Need Assistance?

Contact the Wasco County EDC at 541-296-2266

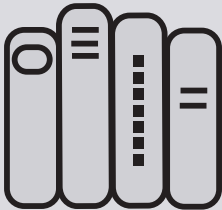
Find this guide online at: [www.mcedd.org/about/our-area/wasco-county/](http://www.mcedd.org/about/our-area/wasco-county/)

# How do you start a Business?

*Some of these steps can happen at the same time, but we encourage you to take the time to develop clear plans and structures for your business from the beginning to set you up for success!*

## STEP 1

### Before you start your business...

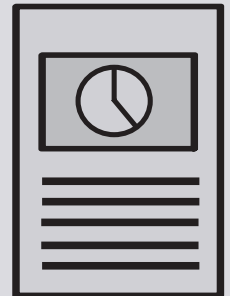


Do you have **KNOWLEDGE** pertaining to the business you plan to enter?  
Do you have **EXPERIENCE** managing people and finance?

## STEP 2

### Write a Business Plan

It is vitally important to develop your business plan. This will help clarify your **BUSINESS OBJECTIVES**, market, and competition as well as begin development of strategies to move toward your goals! Your business plan should also include elements on **FINANCING AND MARKET STRATEGIES**.



## STEP 3

### Legal & Licensing

Set your **BUSINESS STRUCTURE**. Your decision will impact not only your legal structure but also your taxes.

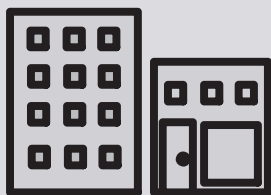
Check **LICENSING REQUIREMENTS**. While there are no local licenses required, there are potentially state licenses, permits, or certifications needed.



## STEP 4

### Seek Financing

The plan for this step should be part of your business planning, and can happen at several intervals during the life of your business. Check out banks, state and local financing, potential investors, or even the community public offering models!



## STEP 5

### Locate your Business

Follow the steps in this **BUSINESS SITING GUIDE** to find or build the right space to house your business and comply with the local planning and building requirements.

## Need assistance?

*Contact the Small Business Development Center for one-on-one business counseling, support developing a business plan, training, and much more!* More details can be found at: <https://bizcenter.org/centers/columbia-gorge-sbdc/>.

For additional resource providers review the Business Development and Financing resources sections in this guide.



## Siting a Business

**Once you've found potential properties in unincorporated Wasco County, these are agencies to contact for the various steps of the permitting process.**

**Step 1: Planning Permits.** Contact the Wasco County Planning Department to determine if the use is permitted in that zone, learn which regulations apply to your business, and initiate the building and development process. For example, running a business out of your home may require a permit, different zones have differing approval requirements for commercial uses, and city regulations may differ from the County. This office is also your stop for any National Scenic Area inquiries, marijuana regulations, and agricultural development provisions.

**If using a contractor to remodel or build your space, don't forget to check the Oregon Construction Contractor's Board to ensure they are licensed and bonded. Searches can be conducted at [oregon.gov/ccb](http://oregon.gov/ccb)**

Wasco County Planning Department's website (noted below) has a lot of great information to get you started as well. It has FAQs, the County GIS Map where you can look up your zoning and more, and many handouts that answer basic development questions.

You might also consider setting up a pre-application meeting with the Planning Department to discuss your project. There is a small fee for this meeting and other agencies are invited giving you a broad perspective while conducting your due diligence.

**Contact: Wasco County Planning Department**

2705 East 2nd Street

The Dalles OR 97058

541-506-2560

[www.co.wasco.or.us/departments/planning/index.php](http://www.co.wasco.or.us/departments/planning/index.php)

**Step 2: Sanitation Permit.** Contact the North Central Public Health District to determine if a sanitation permit is required. A permit is likely required if your business will be generating byproducts or waste above what is typical of a residence

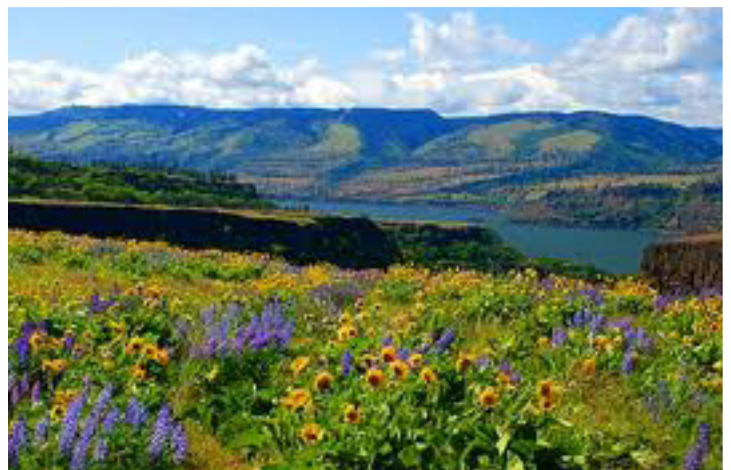
**Contact: North Central Public Health District**

419 East 7th Street

The Dalles OR 97058

541-506-2603

[www.ncphd.org](http://www.ncphd.org)



## Siting a Business

**Step 3: Fire, life, or safety upgrades.** Contact your local fire district to determine if any fire, life or safety upgrades on the building are required. The Wasco County Planning Department can direct you to the appropriate agency to contact.

**Step 4: Building Permit.** Contact Building Code Services in Wasco County to determine if permits are required. Generally, a permit is required to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system.

**Contact: Oregon Building Codes**

2705 East 2nd Street

The Dalles OR 97058

541-506-2560

Hours of Operation: 8am to noon & 1pm to 4pm

Or try the online permitting: <https://aca-oregon.accela.com/oregon/>

**Step 5: Hazardous Materials.** Contact the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality if you are remodeling an existing building and suspect there might be hazardous materials. The proper removal of hazardous materials is essential. Potential hazardous materials include asbestos, underground fuel tanks, hazardous waste, water quality, used woodstoves, or dust problems.

**Contact: Department of Environmental Quality**

400 E. Scenic Drive

541-298-7255, ext. 0



## Business Development

*This handout provides an overview of the business services available to you as you start, grow, or relocate your business in Wasco County.*

### Small Business Development Center at Columbia Gorge Community College

The SBDC's goal is to provide business and technical assistance to new and existing business owners and managers in the Mid-Columbia area. Services include:

- Free one-on-one business counseling
- Seminars and workshops
- Small Business Management (SBM) Program
- Commercial kitchen
- Customized training for business & industry
- Collaboration with Oregon State University Extension office in The Dalles, Oregon, to bring value-added services and training to farmers.

**Contact:** [bizcenter.org/centers/columbia-gorge-sbdc/](http://bizcenter.org/centers/columbia-gorge-sbdc/)  
541-506-6120



### The Wasco County Joint Enterprise Zone

The Enterprise Zone is a tax abatement opportunity for businesses growing or relocating in Wasco County. The enterprise zone exempts certain businesses from local property taxes on new investments. In unincorporated parts of Wasco County, the Enterprise Zone is managed by the Wasco County Economic Development Commission. To find out if development in the unincorporated areas of Wasco County is eligible for this tax abatement program, contact EDC staff. Note: This must be done prior to starting to construct or altering a building in order to qualify for the incentives.

**Contact:** [www.co.wasco.or.us/businesses/](http://www.co.wasco.or.us/businesses/); 541-296-2266



The Port of The Dalles is an Oregon special district that works to create jobs and recruit, retain and expand local businesses. The Port's main tool to enhance the local economy is development of industrial lands.

**Contact:** [www.portofthedalles.com](http://www.portofthedalles.com); 541-298-4148

### Wasco County Economic Development Commission

The Wasco County Economic Development Commission acts as the economic development arm of Wasco County, focusing on job creation and increasing capacity throughout the county. The EDC supports communities in business development, provides leadership on countywide issues, and works to support businesses in Wasco County.

**Contact:** [www.co.wasco.or.us/businesses/](http://www.co.wasco.or.us/businesses/); (541)296-2266

## Business Support



**THE DALLES AREA**  
**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
*The Dalles...Simply Sensational.*

The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce is a resource for business and community information. The Chamber also

works to address the need for a trained, skilled local labor force as well as residential and commercial development to support the needs of the local business community and its employers.

**Contact:** [www.thedalleschamber.com](http://www.thedalleschamber.com); (541) 296-2231

### Maupin Area Chamber of Commerce

The Maupin Area Chamber of Commerce is a voluntary association of businesses and individuals in the South Wasco County area dedicated to improving tourism and the business climate and ensuring that our area is a healthy economically viable place to visit, live, work, and raise a family.



**Contact:** [www.maupinoregon.com](http://www.maupinoregon.com); (541) 993-1708



### Dufur Chamber of Commerce

The Dufur Area Chamber of Commerce is an organization dedicated to improving the business climate, supporting tourism, and ensuring a good place to live, work, visit, and raise a family.

**Contact:** [www.dufur.org](http://www.dufur.org)

**Industry Organizations:** There are a variety of industry organizations that support businesses throughout the Gorge. These include:

- Columbia Gorge Technology Alliance
- Gorge Grown Food Network
- Columbia Gorge Fruitgrowers Association
- Columbia Gorge Winegrowers Association
- Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance
- Breweries in the Gorge
- Gorge Cider Society

## Financing

### State of Oregon

Business Oregon has a team of professionals to assist businesses with their financing needs. Business Oregon manages the following financing programs to assist businesses:

- Oregon Business Development Fund
- Oregon Capital Access Program
- Oregon Credit Enhancement Fund
- Business Retention Program
- Oregon Industrial Development Bonds
- Oregon New Market Tax Credit
- Entrepreneurial Development Loan Fund
- Brownfields Redevelopment Fund

**Contact:** [oregon4biz.com](http://oregon4biz.com)



### Mid-Columbia Economic Development District and Oregon Investment Board

To support businesses create and retain jobs, MCEDD provides loans for the financing needs of businesses with favorable rates, terms and requirements. In addition to the funds directly managed by MCEDD, the staff is knowledgeable about most state and federal loan and assistance programs and can help your business to access these funds and package your loan application.

**Contact:** [mcedd.org](http://mcedd.org); 541-296-2266





# Utilities Guide

Below is a list of utilities that serve Wasco County

## Electric:

**Northern Wasco County  
PUD**  
2345 River Road  
The Dalles, OR 97058  
541-296-2226  
[www.nwasco.com](http://www.nwasco.com)

**Wasco Electric Coop**  
105 East 4th Street  
The Dalles, OR 97058  
541-296-2740  
[www.wascoelectric.com](http://www.wascoelectric.com)

**Pacific Power**  
825 NE Multnomah  
Portland, OR 97232  
866-870-3419  
[www.pacificpower.net](http://www.pacificpower.net)

**Natural Gas:** Northwest Natural Gas serves The Dalles area within Wasco County.

**Contact:** NW Natural  
220 NW 2nd Ave  
Portland, OR 97209  
800-422-4012  
[www.nwnatural.com/business](http://www.nwnatural.com/business)



## Water:

**Tygh Valley Water District**  
541-483-0901  
[tyghvalleywaterdistrict@gmail.com](mailto:tyghvalleywaterdistrict@gmail.com)

**Wamic Water & Sanitary District**  
80382 Wamic Market Road  
[wamicwaterandsanitary@gmail.com](mailto:wamicwaterandsanitary@gmail.com)

**Pine Grove Water District**  
PO Box 57  
Maupin OR 97037

**Barlow Water Improvement District**  
11 S Country Rd  
Tygh Valley OR 97063  
541-544-2920  
[bwid@centurytel.net](mailto:bwid@centurytel.net)  
[www.barlowwater.net](http://www.barlowwater.net)

**Tooley Water District**  
[www.tooleywater.org](http://www.tooleywater.org)

**Internet:** There are many internet service providers that serve Wasco County. Please visit [broadband.oregon.gov](http://broadband.oregon.gov) to find the one that fits your business' needs!