

DRAFT LANGUAGE – Recommendation to the City Commission

The Economic Development Advisory Board would like to recommend the implementation of improved communication and online tools to assist small business owners and entrepreneurs in navigating the steps to open a new business or location within our City. These recommendations may not all be doable immediately so we tried to list them in the order of our recommendations for implementation.

Background: Small businesses are the backbone of our local economy, and it is crucial that we provide them with the necessary resources and support to thrive. Currently, many entrepreneurs face challenges in understanding the regulatory requirements, permits, and processes involved in starting a business in Fort Lauderdale. Enhancing our communication and online tools can significantly streamline these processes and foster a more business-friendly environment.

Recommendations:

1. **Centralized Online Portal:** Develop a centralized online portal or information website that consolidates all information related to starting a business in Fort Lauderdale. This portal should include step-by-step guides, downloadable forms, and links to relevant departments and resources. It should be user-friendly and accessible on both desktop and mobile devices.
2. **Interactive Checklists and Tutorials:** Create interactive checklists and video tutorials that guide entrepreneurs through the various stages of business setup, from obtaining permits to complying with zoning regulations. These tools can help demystify the process and ensure that business owners are well-informed.
3. **Social Media Marketing:** Leverage social media platforms to disseminate information and updates about the business setup process. Regular posts, live Q&A sessions, and success stories of local entrepreneurs can engage the community and provide valuable insights. Social media can also be used to promote upcoming webinars, workshops, and other resources available to business owners.
4. **Regular Webinars and Workshops:** Continue to organize regular webinars and workshops in collaboration with local business organizations and chambers of commerce. These sessions can cover topics such as business planning, financing options, and regulatory compliance, providing valuable insights and networking opportunities for entrepreneurs.
5. **Feedback Mechanism:** Establish a feedback mechanism that allows business owners to share their experiences and suggestions for improving the city's business processes. This feedback can be used to continuously refine and enhance the resources and support provided.
6. **Virtual Assistance and Chat Support:** Implement a virtual assistant or chat support feature on the city's website to provide real-time assistance to business owners. This service can answer frequently asked questions, provide guidance on specific issues, and direct users to the appropriate resources.

Conclusion: By implementing these recommendations, the City of Fort Lauderdale can create a more supportive and efficient environment for small business owners and entrepreneurs. This will not only encourage economic growth but also strengthen our community by fostering innovation and job creation.

Thank you for considering these recommendations. We are confident that with your support, we can make Fort Lauderdale an even more attractive destination for business development.