

Updated December 2023



# San Dimas Business Guide

START & GROW YOUR BUSINESS IN SAN DIMAS, CALIFORNIA

[www.sandimasca.gov](http://www.sandimasca.gov) | [www.sandimaschamber.com](http://www.sandimaschamber.com)

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# Introduction



Thank you for choosing the City of San Dimas to open or continue to grow your business - we are excited that you have chosen to be a part of the community!

San Dimas is a charming community, nestled along the foothills of the San Gabriel Valley and about 28 miles from downtown Los Angeles. Our community is known for its beautiful parks, small-town feel, unique small businesses and top-quality schools. The city has a population of about 34,900 residents and over the years has transformed into a balanced city with industrial, commercial and residential living.

With the Gold Line rail extension coming, the San Dimas Station is projected to open by 2025. Our City is also embarking on the creation of its first Downtown Specific Plan. The new Specific Plan will help establish a planning and zoning framework to encouraging innovative, transit-oriented development in the greater downtown area while preserving the character of the historic commercial district.

This guide provides steps for doing business in the City, and additional resources to help your business thrive in San Dimas.

# Message from the City

Dear Entrepreneurs and Business Owners,

Welcome to San Dimas! We're delighted that you're considering or have opened your business in our city. Our new "Business Guide" is crafted to be your trusted companion on this exciting entrepreneurial journey.

## Why Choose San Dimas?

San Dimas is more than a city; it's a thriving community, rich in history and culture, and poised for a bright future. Here's why San Dimas stands out:

- **Resilient and Growing Economy:** Our local economy has not only withstood recent economic challenges but has also flourished. This growth stems from our continuous efforts to enhance the quality of life, invest in public infrastructure, and create opportunities for businesses and residents alike.
- **Family-Centric Lifestyle:** Framed by the stunning San Gabriel Mountains, boasting top-notch schools, and enriched with a tight-knit community spirit, San Dimas offers an unparalleled living experience for both families and business owners.
- **Supportive Business Environment:** Understanding the hurdles faced by entrepreneurs, we're committed to creating a nurturing environment for your business. From streamlining processes to offering support services, we're here to help your business thrive.

## Your Comprehensive Business Guide

This guide is more than just a handbook; it's your roadmap to successfully launching and growing your business in San Dimas. It covers everything from drafting a

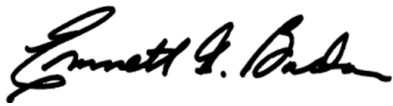


business plan to navigating permits and understanding local tax structures. We're excited to not only welcome you into our community but also to be a part of your success story in San Dimas.

Thank you for choosing San Dimas - a city where business and community thrive together.

Emmett Badar  
Mayor

Chris Constantin  
City Manager





# Welcome to San Dimas

From the San Dimas Chamber of Commerce



The Mission of the San Dimas Chamber of Commerce is to foster and promote the growth of the business and professional community while enhancing the quality of life in San Dimas.

**Everything We Do Is Based on These Core Values**

**As The San Dimas Resource Center, We Are Committed to The Following:**

**Creating A Strong Local Economy**

**Providing Networking Opportunities**

**Promoting The Community**

**Representing The Interests of Business with Government**

**Providing Marketing Opportunities and Business Tools for Success**

# Message from the Chamber President

## Welcome to the San Dimas Business Community!

I am proud to serve as President and CEO of the San Dimas Chamber of Commerce and to contribute to the leadership of an organization dedicated to assisting local businesses and fostering growth. The San Dimas Chamber of Commerce is more than just a business network; it is a community of like-minded individuals and organizations dedicated to the success of each member and the business community.

Since the early 1900s, the San Dimas Chamber of Commerce has been a driving influence in the local economy. The Chamber, as a non-profit organization, is dedicated to helping our membership and connecting them to the consumer community. We assist our members by facilitating connections that promote business development and financial success.

We understand how crucial it is to be connected within our community, and integrating our diverse membership is critical to our continued success. Our events, which include ribbon cuttings, business after hours, education sessions, business lunches, signature events, and more, are one method to create relationships. Hundreds of business and industry professionals, as well as government officials, attend these events to provide a forum for you to build and expand your business.

Our ability to collaborate is our greatest asset. The Chamber also partners with key organizations to deliver services to members and the broader business community. These collaborative efforts provide a solid business support framework for both existing and new enterprises in the region.

Our most valuable quality is our capacity to work together. We take great satisfaction in our efforts and will keep pushing the Chamber to become a hub for engagement, leadership, and business representation in the area.

We encourage you to join us in our efforts to make our community stronger and more prosperous. I extend an invitation to businesses and leaders of businesses to engage with us and discover how the Chamber may benefit you and your company.



# Continued...

Join the Chamber to make an investment in your community, business, and self. To learn more about us, stop by an event, peruse our newsletters, volunteer, or get in touch with a member of the Chamber staff. We look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,



**Silvia Melendez, Chief Executive Officer**  
**smelendez@sandimaschamber.com**  
**909-592-3818**



# The Business Plan

While there is always a degree of risk associated with starting your own business, the success of the business will depend on the level of research, planning and execution of the business plan. A business plan is a blueprint or road map of every aspect of your business. Management, sales goals, marketing, budget and financial statements are just some of the necessary components of the plan. The goals should include strategies for implementation and completion. A business plan is meant to be a “living document.” In other words, it should be reviewed and updated often, particularly as local market conditions may change.

For more information on how to write a business plan, you may visit the U.S. Small Business Administration website at [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov). Additionally, be sure to check with our local library as they may offer a variety of books on business plans and how to start a business.

# Naming Your Business

## *Fictitious Business Name Statement*

A fictitious business name statement (D.B.A. or “doing business as”) must be registered with the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk prior to opening the business. A business name must be selected that is not already in use. Contact the Registrar Recorder/County Clerk for more information.

Los Angeles County  
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk  
12400 Imperial Highway, 2nd Floor, Room #1201  
Norwalk, CA 90650  
(800) 815-2666

# The Business Structure

Determine the best structure for your business and file necessary paperwork. The business structure you choose will have legal and tax implications. The U.S. Small Business Administration website ([www.sba.gov/starting-business/choose-your-business-structure](http://www.sba.gov/starting-business/choose-your-business-structure)) has detailed information on the various types of structures. The following are some of the most common business structures:

## *Sole Proprietorship*

A sole proprietorship is the sole owner of a business. He or she is personally liable for all debts and obligations of the business. There is no distinction between the owner as an individual and his or her role as the sole proprietor of the business.

## *General Partnership*

General partners have unlimited liability, so their personal assets may be used to pay partnership debts. Generally, the various partners comprise an agreement that identifies the partners' roles in the company as well as action in the case of bankruptcy or a buy-out situation.

## *Limited Partnership\**

Limited partners have limited liability, which means that their losses cannot exceed their initial investment. Partners in this type of company are legally unable to have an active role in the business. If you choose to establish this type of business, you must apply for a Certificate of Limited Partnership (LP-1) with the Secretary of State's Office.

## *Limited Liability Company\**

A Limited Liability Company (LLC) functions similarly to a partnership and acquires benefits correspondingly to that of corporations. To function as an LLC, you must file an LLC-1 form with the Secretary of State's Office.

## *Corporation\**

The State recognizes a corporation as a legal entity, separate from individual managers, that is legally able to enter into contracts, incurs debt, pay taxes, etc. Additionally, there are several tax advantages to incorporating. To register as a corporation, you must file with the state of California Secretary of State.



\*The following structures--Limited Partnership, Limited Liability Company, and Corporation--require that you register with the Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State operates the Business Program Division to assist businesses with filings for incorporation, limited partnerships, non-profit status, and other business classifications.

California Secretary of State  
Business Entities  
1500 11th Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 657-5448



You think you've found the perfect location for your new business. However, before you sign the lease or purchase the property for your new business, do the following:

### *Verify Zoning*

Before you sign a lease or purchase a property for your new business, it is imperative to verify the zoning with the City's Planning Division. Staff must verify that your potential business location is appropriate for the desired type of business or use.

### *Verify Parking Standards*

The potential location for your new business must meet the minimum parking standards. A parking plan will be required if there is a change of use at the location. For example, if the last business at the site was a retail shop and you want to open a restaurant, the available parking must meet the minimum standards for a restaurant. If the parking standards are not met, the new business may not be allowed. A parking analysis may be conducted at the expense of the new business owner; however, it is not advisable for you to sign a lease without ensuring you will meet the minimum parking standards. Furthermore, even though a parking analysis is conducted, the Planning Division may not approve or endorse the parking analysis.

The number of required parking spaces usually depends on three things:

1. the type of business;
2. the square footage of the business (building area, not land area); and
3. the location of the business.

The San Dimas Planning Division can assist you in verify zoning and parking standards at 909-394-6250

### *Lease Agreement*

Negotiating a favorable lease will be beneficial and help provide long term success



of your business. It is advisable that you review the lease with a real estate attorney before you sign it to ensure you know what you will be responsible for, above and beyond the monthly lease payments. Furthermore, ensure that the lease clearly states whether the tenant or the landlord will have the burden of ensuring that the premise complies with all applicable laws and maintenance. Consider calling our Community Development Department at 909-394-6250 to inquire whether there are any outstanding code violations on the property. You may want to confirm who will be responsible for compliance before signing the lease.

### *Conditional Use Permit (CUP)*

Some uses in certain zones require review and approval of a Conditional Use Permit. The purpose of a Conditional Use Permit is to ensure business use compatibility with the neighborhood. Typically, a CUP is required for business that has the potential to create noise, odors, glare or significant parking impacts. The CUP process is designed to ensure that potentially affected neighbors are both informed of, and provided an opportunity to comment on, the proposed business.

If the Planning Division determines that your business does require a CUP, a planner will be assigned to assist you. Application checklists, including fee amount, are available online and at the Planning Division. A floor plan and a written business description are required. Your application will be heard at a public hearing of the Planning Commission, and notices will be mailed to all surrounding property owners prior to the meeting

### *Temporary Use Permit*

To jumpstart your new business, you may desire a grand opening event with a temporary banner. These require review and approval of a Temporary Use Permit by the Planning Division. Temporary use regulations vary by zone. Generally, temporary special event banners are allowed for a period up to 30 days, and a maximum of four banners per year with a cumulative 60 display days. In addition, new businesses are allowed a banner for up to 90 days prior to opening (e.g., “Coming Soon” or “Opening in October”). The Planning Division will explain the process and regulations.



## *Signage*

San Dimas recognizes and strongly supports the needs of merchants and property owners to identify their businesses through signage and other means of advertisement. Size, placement, number and design of signs significantly influence the general perception of both the community's visual environment and its economic health. The City desires to preserve and enhance the quality of life for residents both in the residential areas and commercial corridors.

San Dimas, with the community theme of "Preserving the Western Spirit" is a unique city in Southern California. In a region where it is difficult to tell when one city ends and another begins, San Dimas' community theme helps to make our city distinctive. Part of the local visual appeal comes from the tasteful, well-designed signs that fully identify local businesses while preserving our community's unique atmosphere and charm. The Sign Ordinance was established to encourage the installation of signs that improve the appearance of buildings and neighborhoods while providing identification and direction. It provides a general design and review criteria for all signs within the City. The Sign Ordinance requires that all signs comply with established standards and related individual sign programs that may have been created for individual developments. All signs must be approved by the landlord or management agency and the City before installation. Please see a list of helpful information regarding the following signs:

Banners and Temporary Signs

For Sale/For Lease signs

Portable Signs

Signs in Historic Downtown Area

Window Signs

# Tenant Improvements & Permits

If you are making improvements to the building either interior or exterior, you must consult with our Planning and Building & Safety Divisions to determine the necessary level of review. If there are major improvements, you may be required to go before the Planning Commission for approval. This step may require several months so it is important that you plan this into your schedule.

The City of San Dimas uses a permit tracking system for business and development applications to provide the best customer service possible and to promote more efficient communication. You, as the applicant, will have a single point of contact throughout the application process.

## *Application Review & Assistance*

As a business and member of our community, you may request an initial consultation to assess project readiness and provide information on how to prepare for formal submittal.

Call Community Development at 909-394-6250 for assistance.

## *Compliance*

Certain business models and plans may require additional permits to conduct business in San Dimas. This can include Temporary Use Permits (TUP), Conditional Use Permits (CUP), Los Angeles County Health Permits, and Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC). Alcohol and other business elements may trigger the need for discretionary hearings before a City Commission. Our team is here to guide businesses in defining and navigating the process.

## *Town Core Design Standards*

Downtown San Dimas is a prime example of the traditional American town center, dominated by a short but prominent main street. Surrounding the historic downtown is a “Town Core” area comprised of numerous historic homes, businesses, and churches.

As a follow-up to the 1991 historic survey, the City hired a local architect to prepare design guidelines to help building owner's to preserve and rehabilitate these historic buildings. The Town Core Design Guidelines were adopted by City Council in 1993.

You may review our design standards at [www.sandimasca.gov/designstandards](http://www.sandimasca.gov/designstandards).

## Seller's Permit

A Seller's Permit is required of individuals, as well as corporations, partnerships, and limited liability companies, who are engaged in business in California and intend to sell or lease tangible personal property that would ordinarily be subject to sales tax if sold at retail.

Board of Equalization Sales Tax (Seller's Permit)  
Field Office  
12440 E. Imperial Highway, Suite 200  
Norwalk, CA 90650  
(562) 466-1694





# Business License

A business license is an annual tax required by all businesses doing business within the City of San Dimas. Anyone who operates a business or performs a service within the City of San Dimas is required to apply for and retain a business license, including home occupations and businesses located outside of San Dimas. It must be obtained before any business, profession, trade, or occupation is conducted.

There are six primary steps to opening a business in San Dimas. Once you have 1) determined your business entity, 2) obtained a Tax ID from State, 3) selected a business location and verified with the Planning Division that your use is allowed in that zone, and 4) chosen a name for your business, you can apply for a business license.

You may apply for a business license online, via phone, mail or email.

For immediate assistance, call the San Dimas Business Support Center at 909-850-4362 and a specialist will be available to assist you in the processing of your application over the phone.

Applying online can be quick and easy! You can apply online from the comfort of your home or office at [www.sandimas.hdlgov.com](http://www.sandimas.hdlgov.com)

You may also request an application be sent by mail by calling 909-850-4362 and mail your completed form to:

City of San Dimas Business Support Center  
8839 N. Cedar Ave #212  
Fresno, CA 93720

# Business Taxes

Businesses are liable for taxes and must pay additional taxes if they hire employees. Businesses must obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) through the federal government. The EIN will be used when filing federal income tax and payroll tax. Due to the complexity of tax regulations, it is recommended that you seek advice from a certified public accountant and/or a tax attorney.

## Internal Revenue Service

Toll-free telephone within the United States: (800) 829-4933  
Washington, D.C. Headquarters: (202) 874-1460  
[www.irs.gov/businesses](http://www.irs.gov/businesses)

The State of California also requires that businesses pay several types of taxes and obtain workers' compensation insurance. The California Tax Service Center offers information on required taxes for each type of business structure (Sole Proprietorship, Corporation, LLC, etc.), visit the website at [www.taxes.ca.gov](http://www.taxes.ca.gov). Additional information on state taxes can be obtained at the Franchise Tax Board.

## Franchise Tax Board General information

(800) 852-5711  
Automated telephone service:  
(800) 338-0505





# Business Bank Accounts

Keep your business and personal finances separate. Opening a checking account to be used only for the business will make your life much easier when it comes time to file your business taxes. There are a variety of software and smart phone applications to easily track your business expenses and keep you organized. The City of San Dimas has many financial institutions ready to assist you. For a listing, you may visit the San Dimas Chamber of Commerce website at [www.sandimaschamber.chambermaster.com/list](http://www.sandimaschamber.chambermaster.com/list)

**BONUS!**

## Ribbon Cutting Celebrations

Ribbon cutting ceremonies are used by the community to commemorate the official opening of a brand new or recently renovated building or firm. They are most commonly used for the following purposes: As a highly effective public relations and media tool. To represent a "new beginning" for your organization and a symbolic means of communicating to the community that your company has worked hard on something and wishes to mark the achievement of a milestone or project.





# Other Resources & Helpful Information

## *CalGOLD*

In 1997, the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) established the California Government Online to Desktops (CalGOLD) Website to assist in providing businesses the information they need to comply with environmental and other regulatory and permitting requirements. CalGOLD offers direct Internet links and contact information to state, local, regional, and federal permitting authorities for more information. [www.calgold.ca.gov](http://www.calgold.ca.gov)

## *California Manufacturing Technology Consulting (CMTC)*

CMTC is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping manufacturers in Southern California by identifying areas of improvement in capability, process and systems to create financial impact. Business consultants are available to help small and mid-size manufacturers at no cost to the business. [www.cmtc.com](http://www.cmtc.com)

## *Central San Gabriel Valley WorkSource Center*

Through a network of partners, the Goodwill Southern California WorkSource Center brings jobs seekers and employers together in one place. Employers receive assistance finding candidates and screening prospective employees, and career seekers receive assistance in job search strategies, resume writing, interview preparation, and career development.

[www.goodwillsocal.org/career-services](http://www.goodwillsocal.org/career-services)

## *Contractors State License Board*

The Contractors State License Board (CSLB) licenses and regulates California's construction industry. Instantly verify whether a contractor has a valid license at [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov).

## *Consumer Affairs*

Certain types of professions such as barbers, doctors and registered nurses, among others, require a state license through the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA). The DCA is also responsible for protecting California consumers while ensuring a competent and fair marketplace. [www.dca.ca.gov](http://www.dca.ca.gov)

### *Department of Industrial Relations*

The Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) promotes improved working conditions and advances opportunities for profitable employment in California.

[www.dir.ca.gov](http://www.dir.ca.gov)

### *Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA)*

Cal/OSHA is a division of the Department of Industrial Relations. The Cal/OSHA Program is responsible for enforcing California laws and regulations pertaining to workplace safety and health and for providing assistance to employers and workers about workplace safety and health issues.

[www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/CalOSHA.htm](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/CalOSHA.htm)

### *Employment Development Department (EDD)*

The California EDD offers a variety of programs for both jobseekers and employers. Many employer services such as payroll taxes, labor market information, state disability insurance and unemployment can be accessed online.

[www.edd.ca.gov/employer\\_services.htm](http://www.edd.ca.gov/employer_services.htm)

### *GO-Biz*

California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) was created by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. to serve as California's single point of contact for economic development and job creation efforts. GO-Biz offers a range of services to business owners including: attraction, retention and expansion services, site selection, permit streamlining, clearing of regulatory hurdles, small business assistance, international trade development, assistance with state government, and much more. [www.business.ca.gov](http://www.business.ca.gov)

### *LAEDC*

Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation is a private, non-profit organization that works to attract, retain and grow business in Los Angeles County. The LAEDC also conducts economic research and analysis as well as public policy.

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

### *San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership*

The SGVEP is committed to the economic development of the San Gabriel Valley by engaging in public policy, marketing the San Gabriel Valley to attract business, fostering the success of business, and connecting people, companies, and organizations in the San Gabriel Valley. [www.sgpartnership.org](http://www.sgpartnership.org)

### *Small Business Development Center at Pasadena City College*

The Pasadena City College Small Business Development Center (PCC SBDC) helps small business owners succeed with low-cost training and no-cost one-on-one advising from experienced entrepreneurs and industry experts. They have assisted area business owners increase their sales, obtain loans, streamline operations, utilize new technologies, expand into new markets, and position themselves for long-term growth. [www.pccsbdc.org](http://www.pccsbdc.org)

### *Small Business Administration*

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) provides business financing, entrepreneurial development through education, technical assistance and trainings, assistance with government contracting and advocacy. [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

### *SCORE*

SCORE is a non-profit association dedicated to helping small businesses get off the ground, grow and achieve their goals through education and mentorship. In addition to the free mentoring, SCORE offers a variety of workshops for a small fee.

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

### *University of La Verne Small Business Center*

The Small Business and Development Center (SBDC) hosted by the University of La Verne can help you start your business. This center is hosted in partnership with the College of Business and Public Management and can help you succeed in your entrepreneurial endeavors, whether you have experience or are looking to start.

For nine years, the SBDC has supported individuals with small, local businesses from La Verne to the Eastern San Gabriel Valley. The center is located in the College of Business and Public Management' Cogley Building within the university's La Verne central campus and provides a wide range of services and resources to students and local community members at no cost.

Advising appointments are required. Visit [www.lavernesbdc.org/contactus](http://www.lavernesbdc.org/contactus) or call 909-448-1567