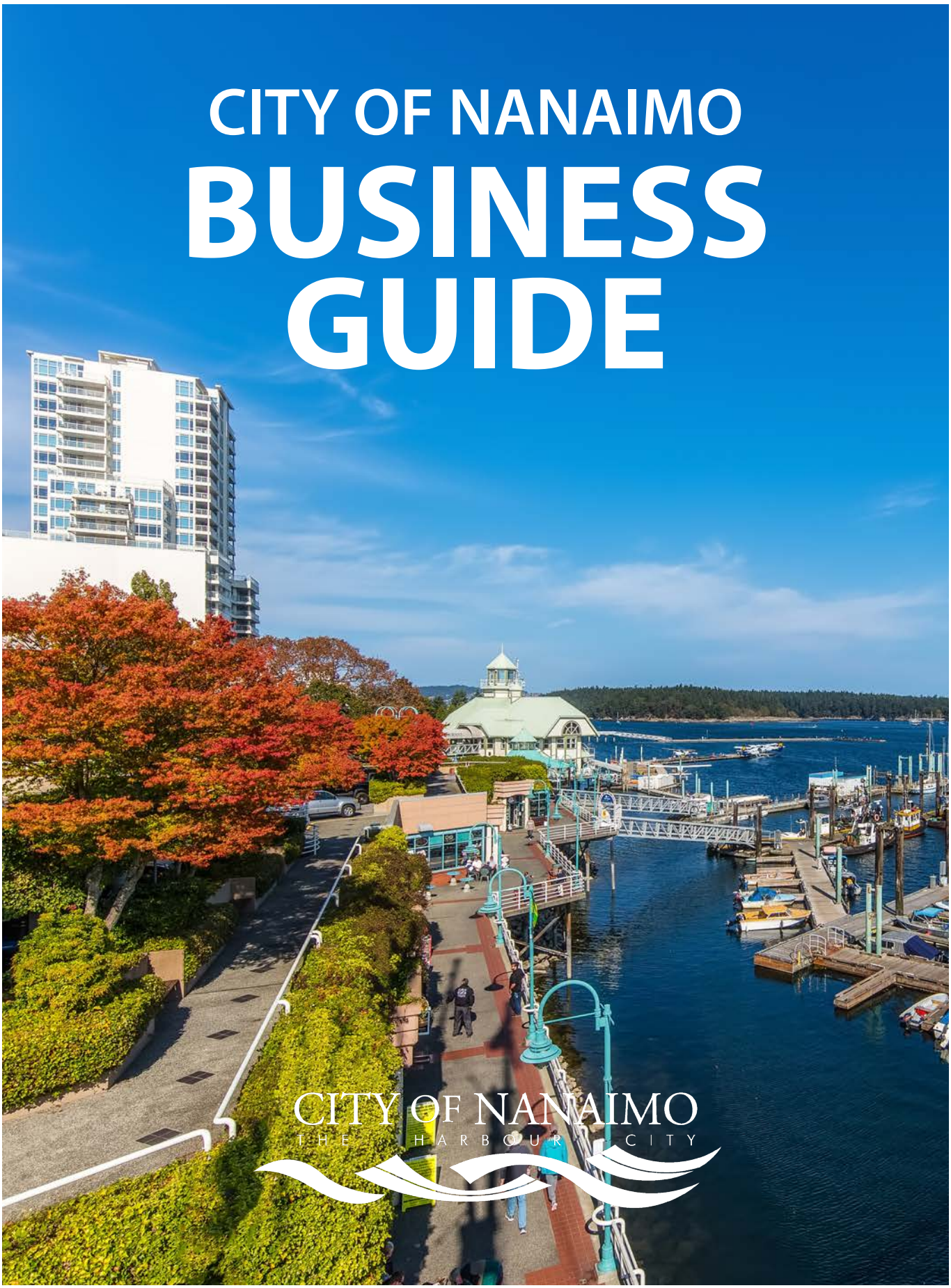
CITY OF NANAIMO
BUSINESS GUIDE



BUSINESS RESOURCES

The City of Nanaimo is home to a vibrant and diverse business base of over 7,000 businesses. A metropolitan city, Nanaimo serves as the economic hub of Central Vancouver Island. In this guide, you will find some resources to help you reach your business goals.

Nanaimo Economic Development Office

Located in the heart of downtown, the Nanaimo Economic Development office can connect you to the people and information that you need to establish or expand your business in Nanaimo. If you are exploring a business idea, starting a business, or have an existing business, we can help! For more information, contact economic.development@nanaimo.ca.

In person:
411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, V9S 5J6
(250) 755-4465

Start Your Business

Research the local business climate

Looking for information about Nanaimo's economic drivers, demographics, and infrastructure? Visit the Economic Development section under the Doing Business tab on www.nanaimo.ca. There, you will find a number of resources including a Market Research portal dedicated to helping you access ready-to-use local data & intelligence, the State of the Economy report and Economic dashboard.

Develop a Business Plan

Developing a business plan is essential in ensuring long term success. A business plan assists in assessing business potential, as well as identifying the risks that may be involved.

Business plan templates and various other business start-up resources can be found on www.gov.bc.ca (Provincial) and www.bdc.ca (Federal) websites.

Register your business

The first step in incorporation or formation of a business is the registration of your business name. Apply for your business name online through BC Registry Services at www.gov.bc.ca.

Get your Municipal Business License

Every business operating in Nanaimo, including those located in a private residence, must have a valid City of Nanaimo business license. Business license fees vary depending on the type of business as determined by municipal bylaws.

Apply for your Business License under the Doing Business tab on www.nanaimo.ca.

Business Location

Permitted uses on a piece of property are governed by municipal plans, policies and bylaws. Before you commit to a location or buy or lease a building, check with the Current Planning Department to ensure the zoning of the property is suitable for the business. Sometimes, the use of space cannot be changed without a building permit or re-zoning.

Development Services Department
Ph: 250-755-4429

Building permits

A building permit ensures that the proposed building complies with the BC Building Code and other municipal bylaws. Prior to issuing a business license, the building inspector must approve the proposed premises for occupancy. You may be required to apply for a building permit for the modifications required to accommodate your business.

A building permit is required when you do the following:

- Construct a new building.
- Add to an existing building.
- Change the occupancy of an existing building.
- Make interior renovations that may impact the direction of travel to an exit.
- Enclose your carport or change your garage to living space.
- Finish an existing basement.
- Add or relocate plumbing, fire alarm or fire sprinklers.
- Locate a temporary building.

Contact the Building Inspection Division for information on the specific requirements of your business and the requirements for making a building permit application.

Building Inspection Division
Ph: 250 755-4429
www.nanaimo.ca/property-development

Signage

The signage bylaw regulates the types, sizes and locations of signage based on zoning and location within the City. For more information regarding what signs are permitted, you can contact the City of Nanaimo Current Planning Department at 250-755-4429.

Other Registration and Licensing Requirements

Here are some other requirements that may be required for your business.

GST & PST: If you will be selling more than $10,000 a year in goods, you will have to collect and pay PST. Also, if your annual sales are more than $30,000, you may be required to collect and pay GST. These can be completed through OneStop Business Registry at onestop.gov.bc.ca.

Payroll account: If you will be paying salary or wages to employees, you'll need to register with the Canada Revenue Agency (canada.ca/revenue-agency) for a payroll deductions account.

Employers' Insurance: If you have employees, you'll need to register with WorkSafeBC (worksafebc.com).

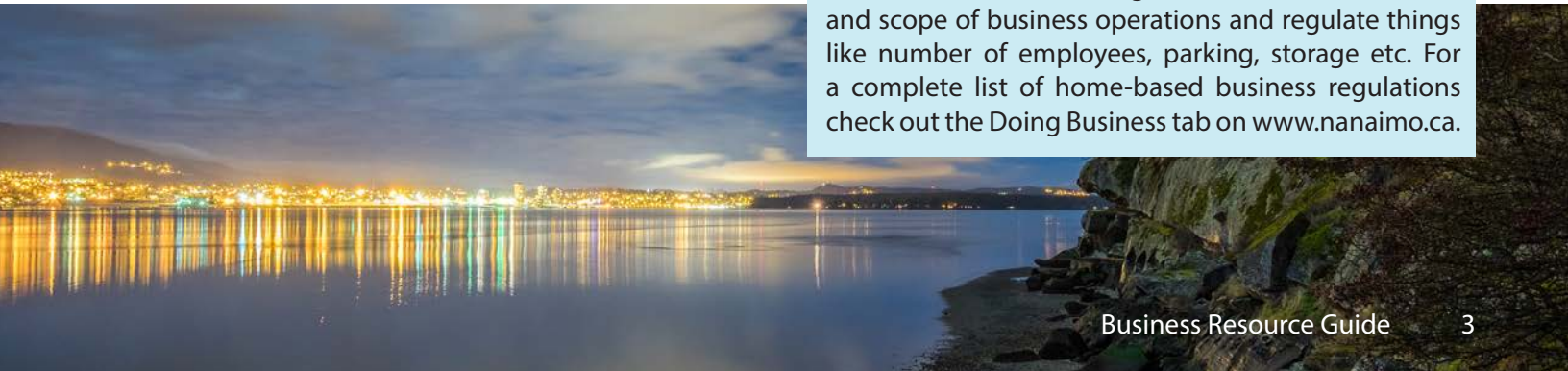
Identify other Licensing Requirements
Start by using BizPal online service (bizpal.ca), a free online service that helps you determine which permits and licences are required from all levels of government (federal, provincial, territorial and municipal). To contact the provincial ministry you can go to gov.bc.ca or phone 1-800-663-7867. For more information about federal licence requirements, visit canada.gc.ca or call 1-800-622-6232.

Home-Based Business

The City of Nanaimo encourages the operation of home-based businesses. In Nanaimo, home-based business is defined as an occupation or profession carried on as a business by a person residing in the same dwelling unit as the business.

Home-based business is often a small start to a larger commercial or industrial undertaking. The idea behind home-based business is to encourage self-employed entrepreneurs to start up a business while keeping overhead low. Once the business is established to a point where a larger area is required, employees need to be hired or other conditions for a home-based business can no longer be met, it then becomes time for that business to relocate to appropriately zoned commercial or industrial premises.

Home-based business regulations restrict the scale and scope of business operations and regulate things like number of employees, parking, storage etc. For a complete list of home-based business regulations check out the Doing Business tab on www.nanaimo.ca.



Financial Resources

Beyond the traditional charter banks and credit unions, here are some options:

- **Community Futures** (www.cfnanaimo.org)**:** Located in Parksville, this non-profit organization provides loans to support new business start-ups, business expansion or to provide stability.
- **Women's Enterprise Centre** (we-bc.ca): A valuable resource for female entrepreneurs, offering small business loans to businesses that can help you start or grow your B.C. business.
- **Government of Canada Small Business Financing** (ised-isde.canada.ca): In order to a pply for a loan under this program, a borrower must present a business proposal directly to a financial institution.
- **Innovate BC** (www.innovatebc.ca)**:** This a one-stop service centre to connect innovators – large and small – with B.C. government funding, tools, resources and support.

Labour and Employment Resources

BC Employment Standards (gov.bc.ca)
This law in B.C. sets the standards for payment, compensation and working conditions. Search Employment Standards at gov.bc.ca to find information about hours of work and overtime, statutory holidays, laying off employees and more.

Canada Federal Labour Standards (www.canada.ca)
Learn about the Canada Labour Code, including important topics such as hours of work, vacation and holidays, leaves, wages and more.

Employment and Social Development Canada (www.canada.ca)
Learn about funding opportunities including grants and contributions, public pensions, disability programs, housing benefits and family benefits.

Vancouver Island University (VIU) Internship Programs
Hire a student! Located in Nanaimo, VIU offers top talent in multiple disciplines to meet your workforce requirements. Contact David.woodward@viu.ca

WorkBC Centre (workbccentre-nanaimo.ca)
WorkBC helps people find jobs, explore career options and improve their skills. They offer free job postings to employers, help fill jobs and provide information on wage and training subsidies. Visit the Nanaimo office at 101 – 155 Skinner Street, email info-nanaimo@workbc.ca or log onto workbccentre-nanaimo.ca.

Education and Training Programs

If you're looking to update your skills, or considering a different career entirely, Nanaimo has a variety of post-secondary education options.

Vancouver Island University
Provides training in academic, vocational, and technical fields and programs range from basic literacy to masters degrees in various disciplines. VIU's main campus is located in Nanaimo, for more info www.viu.ca

Discovery Community College
Certificate and Diploma Programs offered in Business, Healthcare, Finance and Community support worker. www.discoverycommunitycollege.com

Sprott-Shaw Community College
Offers programs in the healthcare, education and business professions. www.sprottshaw.com

Academy of Learning Career College
Offers over 40 diploma and certificate programs, including business, accounting, information technology and graphic design. www.academyoflearning.com

Training Programs and Subsidies
Visit the following websites for information about subsidies and training opportunities that may be suitable for you:

- Government of Canada: Canada.ca
  - Support for Apprentices
  - Federal Government Grants and Contributions
  - Service Canada
  - Canada Training Tax Credit
  - Work Sharing Program for Employers
- Province of British Columbia: gov.bc.ca
  - Jobs & Career Training Resources
- Certified International Trade Professional Training: fittfortrade.com
- Skilled Trades Employment Program: www.stepbc.ca
- Trades Training BC: www.tradestrainingbc.ca
- WorkBC: www.workbc.ca

Immigration Resources

Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS)
CVIMS provides a range of free services to immigrants, temporary foreign workers, post-secondary international students and refugees, including job search and language training. www.cvims.org

Entrepreneur Immigration - Provincial Nominee Program (PNP)
If you're an entrepreneur who wants to invest and manage a business in B.C., you may be eligible for the BC PNP Entrepreneur Immigration program. This involves pairing international entrepreneurs with community priorities. www.welcomebc.ca

Federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program
Hiring a foreign worker may help you meet short-term skill and labour needs when permanent residents are not available. Visit canada.ca for further details.

Export Resources

Below is a list of resources for businesses thinking about exporting or exporting into new markets.

- Export Navigator (exportnavigator.ca): The Provincial Export Navigator program offers free guidance to businesses on exporting. Grow your business beyond B.C. with free one-on-one export support.
- Trade & Invest British Columbia (www.britishcolumbia.ca)
- Export Development Canada (www.edc.ca)
- Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (cme-mec.ca)
- Canada Border Services Agency Export Guide (www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca)
- Canadian Trade Commissioner (www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca)
- Canada's Export E-Business Portal (Export.ca)
- Canadian Commercial Corporation (www.ccc.ca)
- Government of Canada - Trade Data Online (Canada.ca)
- Small Business BC Import/Export Advisory Services
- Trade Commissioner Service
- TradeStart

Buy Or Sell A Business

Are you interested in buying an existing business? Or perhaps you're an owner looking to sell or lease your business? Here are a few options to get started.

BritishColumbia.ca Opportunities
Search this B.C. government website for businesses for sale. You'll also find rental listings for office, retail and industrial space. If you're selling your business, submit your listings so OpportunitiesBC can promote your opportunity worldwide.

Venture Connect (ventureconnect.ca)
This organization provides guidance to business owners to plan for their transition and ready their business for sale. They also help new investors purchase businesses that suit their requirements. List or browse businesses for sale on their website.

Local Resources

Nanaimo Economic Development Office
Access personalized business start-up, expansion and relocation assistance.

- Ph: 250-755-4465,
- email: economicdevelopment@nanaimo.ca, or
- visit in person at 411Dunsmuir Street.

Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation (NPC)
NPC is tasked with implementing the City's Economic Development Strategy. For more information, visit www.investnanaimo.com.

Community Futures Central Island
Offers assistance and a variety of services and tools to help entrepreneurs and small business owners achieve their goals, including business support services, business planning advice, and financing. www.cfnanaimo.org

Nanaimo Chamber
The Nanaimo Chamber is a not-for-profit, member-based association. Members benefit from networking events and industry sector advocacy to all levels of government. nanaimochamber.bc.ca

Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS)
CVIMS provides a range of free services to immigrants, temporary foreign workers, post-secondary international students and refugees, including job search and language training. www.cvims.org

Petroglyph Development Group
Petroglyph Development Group is a wholly-owned corporation of the Snuneymuxw First Nation delegated to manage business and economic development for the Nation. petroglyphdg.com

Tourism Nanaimo
Operates the tourist visitor centre and markets Nanaimo as a tourism destination. They promote festivals and events, accommodations, things to see and do, and outdoor adventures. tourismnanaimo.com

Downtown Nanaimo (DN)
Is a business improvement association that supports the Nanaimo BIA area properties and businesses through programs and projects in the areas of advocacy, public safety, beautification, marketing and events. DN plays an important role in enhancing the area's economic vibrancy. downtownnanaimo.ca

Nanaimo WorkBC Centre
WorkBC helps people find jobs, explore career options and improve their skills. They offer free job postings to employers, help fill jobs and provide information on wage and training subsidies.

- Visit the Nanaimo office at 101 – 155 Skinner Street,
- email info-nanaimo@workbc.ca, or
- log onto workbccentre-nanaimo.ca.

Island Health
Island Health delivers many types of health care services for residents, clients and patients. If you're looking to open a business that serves food or drink, cares for children or the elderly, or is involved with personal care such as tanning, tattooing, or hair, your business license approval will involve permission from Island Health.

- VIHA Access Centre - 2000 N Island Hwy, Nanaimo
- 250-739-5710
- www.islandhealth.ca

Industry Groups

Vancouver Island Economic Association (VIEA)
Not-for-profit organization engaged in regional economic development for the Vancouver Island and Gulf Island region. Activities include an annual Economic summit and promotion of regional initiatives that strengthen economic capacity. viea.ca/vi-economic-summit

The Vancouver Island Construction Association (VICA)
is a not-for-profit organization that serves the construction industry of Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and other coastal areas of British Columbia. As a member-based and industry-led association, it advocates for the construction community at large while offering exclusive benefits to its 400+ member companies and their employees.
www.vicabc.ca

The Vancouver Island Real Estate Board (VIREB)
This is a member-based association of approximately 1000 REALTORS® who live and work in communities from the top of the Malahat to the northern tip of Vancouver Island. www.vireb.com

Canadian Home Builders Association - Vancouver Island
The voice of the residential construction industry for Vancouver Island. chbavi.com

Networking

Nanaimo Chamber
The Nanaimo Chamber is a not-for-profit, member-based association. Members benefit from networking events and industry sector advocacy to all levels of government. nanaimochamber.bc.ca

Young Professionals of Nanaimo (YPN)
YPN is a not-for-profit organization working toward creating a vibrant and connected network of Nanaimo's top young professionals. This organization provides professional development, community involvement, business networking and social networking opportunities. www.ypnanaimo.com

Nanaimo Women's Business Network
Offer networking opportunities, inspire, educate, motivate and empower women to be the best they can be in their business and personal lives.
www.nanaimowbn.com

Disaster Planning

Prepare yourself for major natural emergencies or disasters. In addition to a personal preparedness plan, a business continuity plan is necessary for a quick recovery after a natural disaster. Also, sign yourself and your business up for emergency alerts through Voyent Alert!, the City's emergency alert system.

www.nanaimo.ca/goto/emergencymanagement