



HOME OCCUPATIONS

City of La Center, Planning Services

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La Center, WA 98629

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What is a Home Occupation?

A home occupation is a home-based business. The La Center Municipal Code defines home occupation as “an occupation carried on within a dwelling primarily by members of the family occupying the dwelling. A home occupation is an economic enterprise that includes the use of a dwelling unit as a business address in a phone directory or as a post office mailing address.” (LCMC 18.270.010)

The use is incidental and secondary to the use of the dwelling for residential purposes and does not change the character thereof or adversely affect the neighboring residences.

In reviewing an application for a Home Occupation, the City Planner uses the standards summarized on the back of this page. The standards ensure that a home occupation is located and conducted in a way that the average neighborhood, under normal circumstances, will generally not be aware of its existence other than for a nameplate identifying the name of the business. The standards are intended to insure compatibility with the residential character of the neighborhood, and to assure that the home occupation is incidental to the residential use.

What is a Business License?

Operation of any business in La Center also requires a Business License. Business Licenses are issued after the City has determined that the business is a safe and appropriate use in the proposed location. The license is issued on a calendar yearly basis, January 1 through December 31.

What about Home Occupations which don't comply with the standards?

In the rare instances where complaints are received about a Home Occupation violating zoning standards, the City will work with the complainant and the business owner to correct the violations. If a Home Occupation expands to the point where an outside employee or a larger facility is needed, the business will need to relocate to an appropriate commercial zoning district.

How can I obtain a Home Occupation Business License?

Step One: Read the attached standards. If you have questions, contact the City Planner.

Step Two: Complete an *Application for Development Review*, available from Public Works and also available on the City's webpage (www.ci.lacenter.wa.us). Type or use a ballpoint pen. Fill out the application completely, using “N/A” when a question is not applicable.

Step Three: Submit the Application with a check for the processing fee (\$85). Allow two weeks for processing and review by City departments. Legal public notice may be required.

Step Four: When your application is approved, you will be issued a Business License. If your application is denied, you will be notified of the reasons for the denial.

Standards for a Home Occupations (§18.270.010 LCMC)

The following generally describes the City's requirements for size, storage, employees and any other special rules. Standards for home occupations ensure that a home occupation is compatible with the

residential character of the neighborhood and that the home occupation is clearly secondary to the primary residential use.

Business License — A city business license (\$50 annually) is also required.

Residency — The home occupation shall be conducted by people who live in the residence. A home occupation is limited to one non-residential employee.

No Nuisance — A home occupation shall not create noise, dust, vibration, smell, smoke, glare, electrical interference, fire hazard, or any other hazard or nuisance to any greater or more frequent extent than that usually experienced in an average residence. A home occupation must be conducted wholly within the dwelling or in a typical residential accessory building. Except for articles produced on the premises, no stock in trade shall be displayed or sold on the premises. No alteration to the exterior of the principal residential building shall be made which changes the character thereof as a dwelling. No outdoor display of goods or outside storage of equipment or materials is permitted.

Traffic — The use may increase vehicular traffic flow and parking by no more than two additional vehicles at a time.

Signs — One sign, no larger than two square feet, may be permitted.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If the property is subject to codes, covenants and restrictions (CC&Rs), the City Planner must provide legal public notice to the surrounding property owners and any appropriate neighborhood association registered with the city. This also requires a formal two-week notice period prior to issuing a decision, and a two-week appeal period after a decision has been rendered. The processing fee for these home occupation permits is \$425.

But I Still Have Questions!

Please contact the Public Works Department located at 305 NW Pacific Highway, La Center, WA 98629
T/ 360.263.7665 F/ 360.263.7666