How to apply for a Commercial Use and Occupancy Permit (CU&O)

Updated 8/11/26

A Commercial Use and Occupancy Permit must be approved before a Business License can be issued, however, you can submit your Business License application online in advance of receiving approval of the CU&O: **Apply for a Business License Online**

Note: For commercial uses in a residence, please apply for a **Minor Home Occupation (MHO)** in the Permit Portal, rather than a CU&O.

Note: If your business was the subject of a Special Use Permit application, you do not need to apply for a CU&O or follow this process. Staff will generate this document on your behalf. See guides on previous page for **Land Use and BAR.**

See the accompanying process flowchart | Ver la guía en español

Contents

- Apply
- Inspections
- Issuance
- Example Floor Plan

Apply

Follow the instructions below to apply for a **Commercial Use and Occupancy Permit ("PLN…")**.

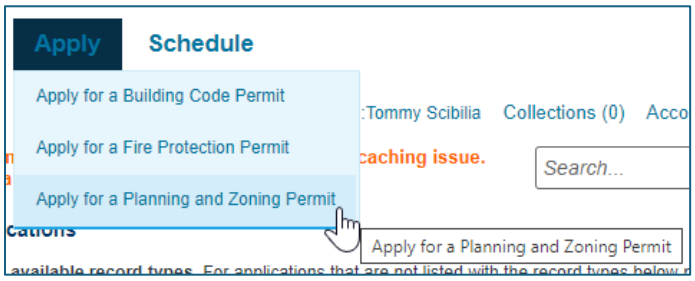
1) If you do not already have a free account in our Permit Portal, create one by clicking the Register Now link on the portal home screen.

2) Log into the Permit Portal.

Note: Be sure to "Allow Pop-ups" on this website for it to function properly.

Return to beginning

3) Hover over “Apply” and select “Apply for a Planning and Zoning Permit”.

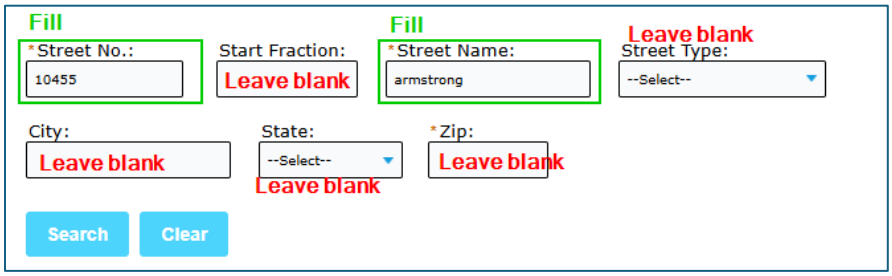


4) Read and accept the terms of the disclaimer.

5) Under “Commercial & Residential Uses” select “Commercial Use & Occupancy”.

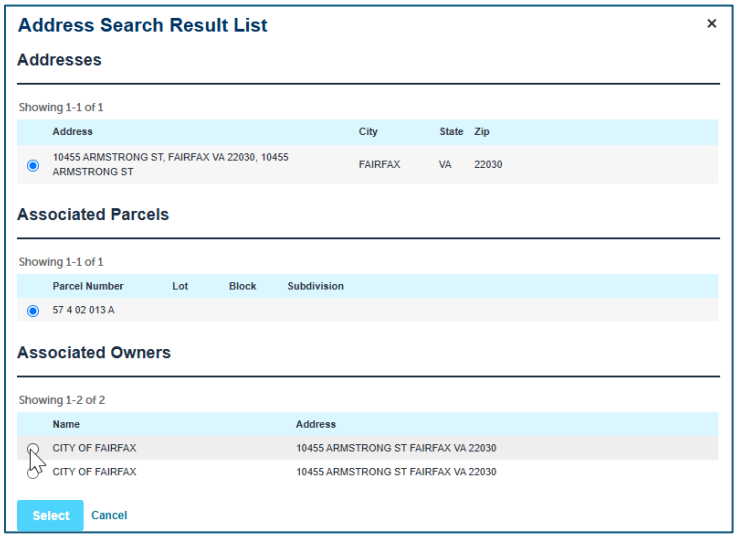


6) Click “Continue Application” at the bottom of the screen to start filling out the application. To enter an address, enter the street number and the street name, and click “Search”. Leave the additional fields blank.

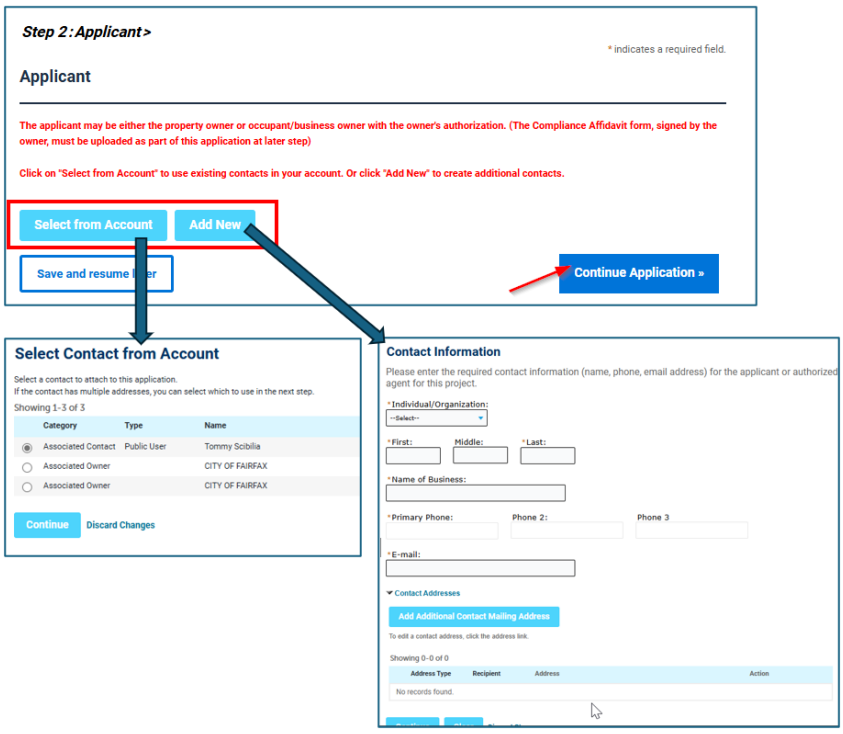


Return to beginning

7) The pop-up window will display the street address and parcel number, which should already be selected. At the bottom of the window, select a property owner, and click “Select” to continue. Click “Continue Application” on the main screen.

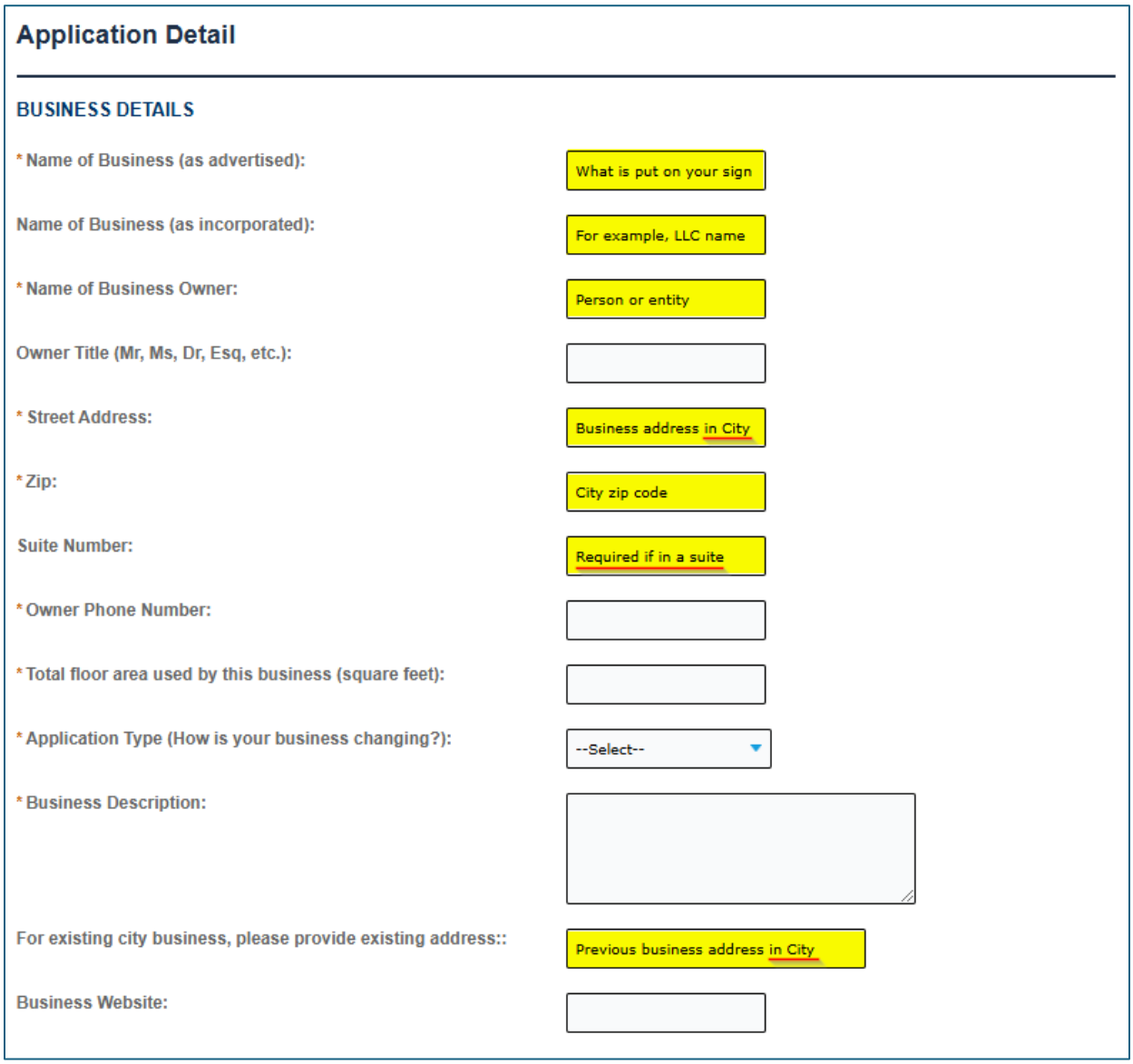


8) On the next screen you will be prompted to assign an applicant. You can either select a contact already associated with your account or assign the role of applicant to another person. To select from your account, click “Select from Account”, select the contact you want to use from the pop-up window, follow prompts to complete contact information, and click “Continue”. If you want to add a new contact as applicant, click “New”, add required contact information, and click “Continue”. Click “Continue Application” to proceed.



Return to beginning

9) The next step is where you will enter application details. Please see notes below to assist in filling out this section. Complete the rest of the sections and click “Continue Application” to proceed.



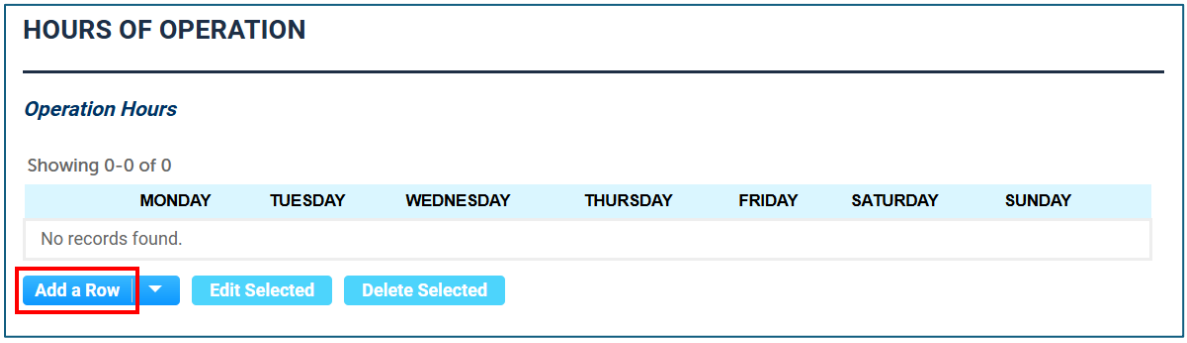
Application Detail

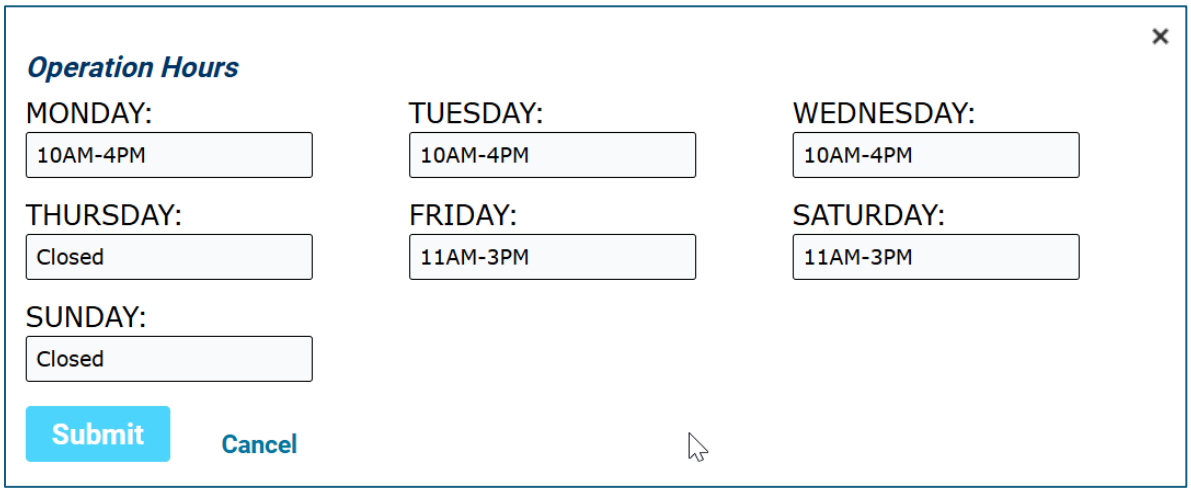
BUSINESS DETAILS

* Name of Business (as advertised):	What is put on your sign
Name of Business (as incorporated):	For example, LLC name
* Name of Business Owner:	Person or entity
Owner Title (Mr, Ms, Dr, Esq, etc.):	
* Street Address:	Business address in City
* Zip:	City zip code
Suite Number:	Required if in a suite
* Owner Phone Number:	
* Total floor area used by this business (square feet):	
* Application Type (How is your business changing?):	--Select--
* Business Description:	
For existing city business, please provide existing address::	Previous business address in City
Business Website:	

Return to beginning

10) On the next screen you will need to enter information on business operations, such as whether you have scheduled appointments, what your hours of operation are, and information on students and company vehicles if applicable. To enter hours of operation, click "Add a Row" and in the pop-up window, enter hours, and click "Submit". When done entering all applicable info on your operations, click "Continue Application" to proceed.

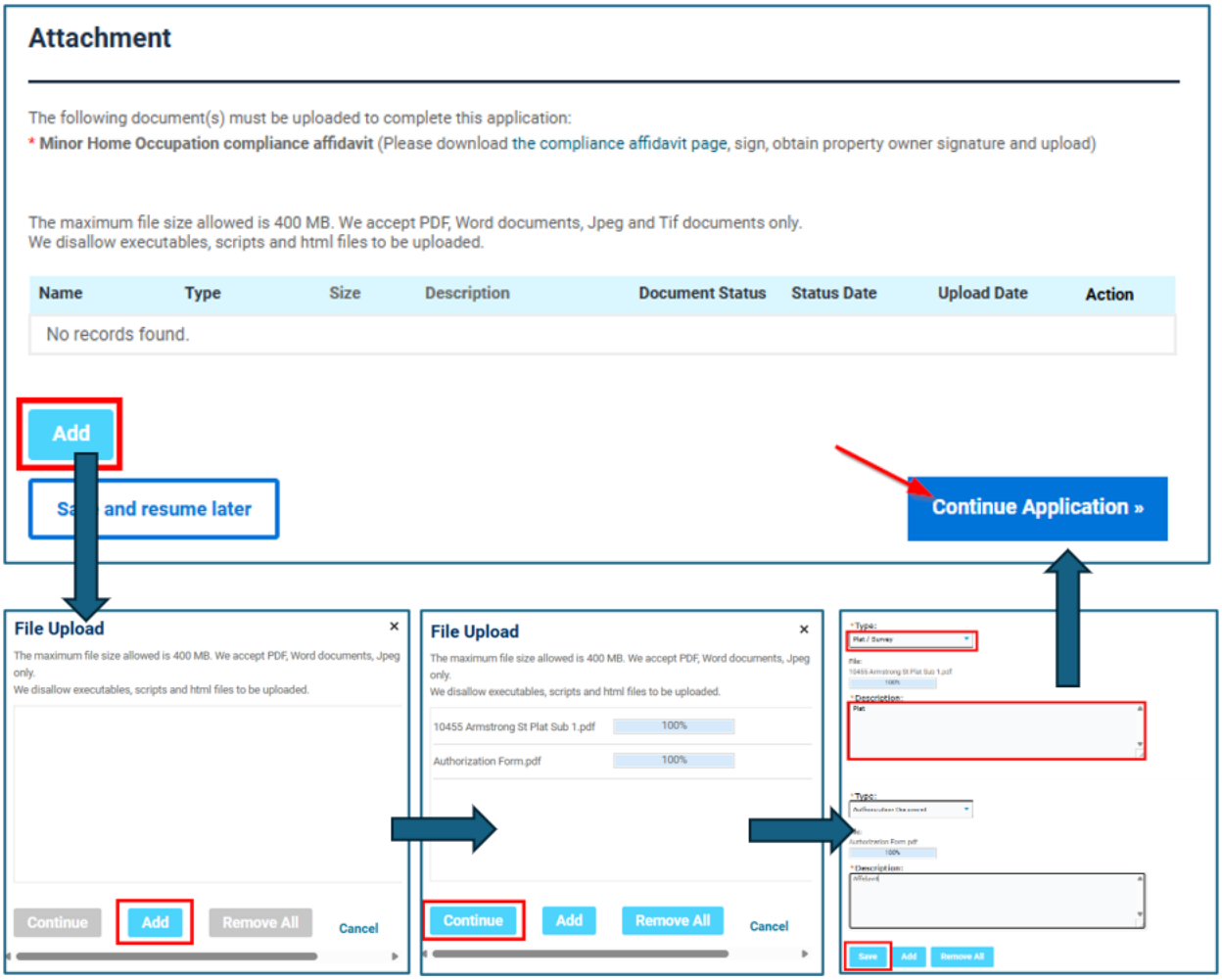




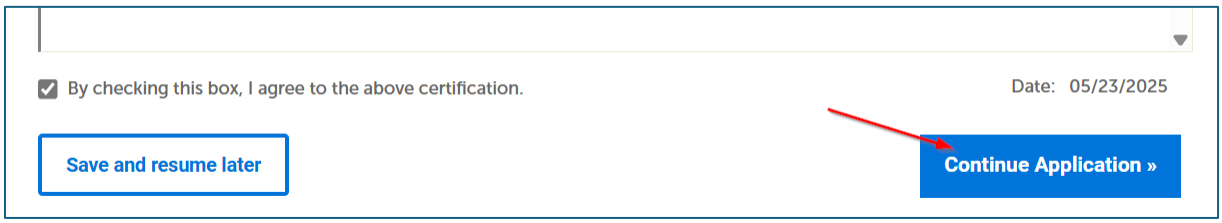
11) The next step is to upload required attachments. You will need to submit the following items with this application type. Note this list is not exhaustive, and more or fewer items may be needed for staff to complete their review:
    - Floor plan of the tenant space or building to be occupied as set up for occupancy and commercial use, indicating the dimensions, function of each room, and furniture layout. See an **example floor plan** at the end of this document.
    - Owner Authorization Form, which must be signed by the applicant and property owner or owner's agent.
    - If this is a change in use, the applicant may be required to provide additional information regarding onsite parking.

Return to beginning

12) To upload Attachments, click “Add” at the bottom of the screen, click “Add” again in the pop-up window, select the documents for upload, and click “Continue”. Select the document type from the dropdown menu (note that certain document types are required to be selected in order to submit the application), enter a short description, and click “Save”. Click “Continue Application” to move to the next step.



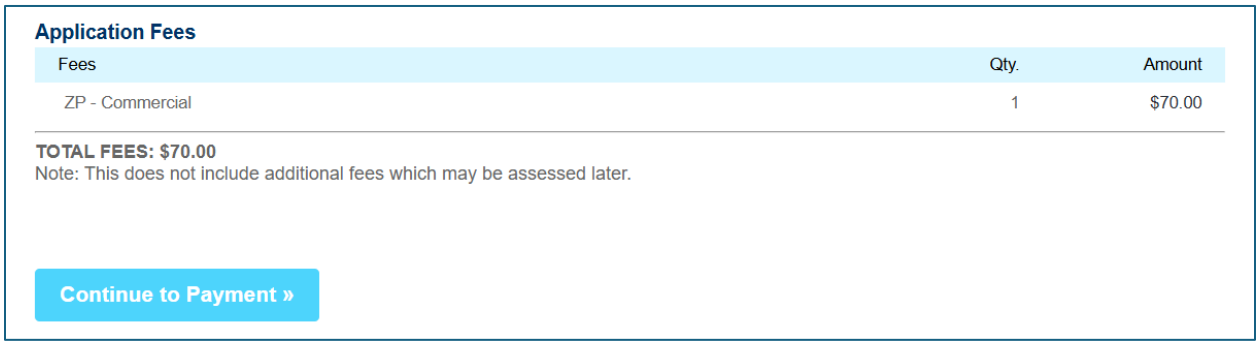
13) Review the summary page, agree to the certification, and click “Continue Application” to proceed.



Return to beginning

14) You will be prompted to pay the review fee, **except** for the types of CU&O application listed below, for which **no fee** is collected:
    - Business Name Change Only (keeping same business owner)
    - Owner Name Change Only (keeping same business name)
    - Update to a previously approved CU&O

15) If a fee is required, click "Proceed to Payment" to pay with either a credit card or bank info.



16) Once payment is complete, if applicable, a permit record number will be provided ("PLN…"). **If you do not see a record number, the application was not submitted and will not be reviewed.**

Note: If the initial submission did not contain enough information for staff to assess what permits are needed, you will receive an email stating that the submission is incomplete, prompting you to resubmit with additional information or attachments.

17) You will get emails from the portal throughout the review process letting you know if there is any action that needs to be taken.

18) CU&Os are currently being reviewed within 2 weeks of application acceptance.

19) If your application is deemed incomplete or if you are required to resubmit the application, please see separate guide: **How to Resubmit Applications**.

End of section

Return to beginning

Inspections

1) Once approved, you will receive an email that the CU&O was forwarded to the Office of Code Administration and the Fire Marshal's Office. The record's status will show as "Review Complete," indicating that the Zoning review is complete and there are no outstanding comments.



2) The Office of Code Administration will notify you if your business needs building permits, as well as **Use** and/or **Fire Prevention Code (FPC) inspections** and will contact you to instruct you how to schedule them as needed. These inspections take place after all associated Building and Trade Permits have been inspected and finaled.
    - **Note:** See webpage on **Inspections** for more information on Use and FPC inspections.
    - **Note:** Use and Fire Prevention Code inspections can and typically are scheduled on the same day as the final (complete) building inspection. See guides on previous page for **Commercial Building Permits**.
    - **Note:** For Use and FPC inspections, you must set up your space with furnishings as it will be operated, but actual operations cannot begin until all required inspections are completed and passed.

End of section

Issuance

Once all inspections have been passed, the CU&O will be forwarded to the Office of the Commissioner of the Revenue, which issues Business Licenses. Once all required documentation is received by the Commissioner of the Revenue and the Business License fee is paid, you will be mailed a copy of your Business License along with your CU&O.

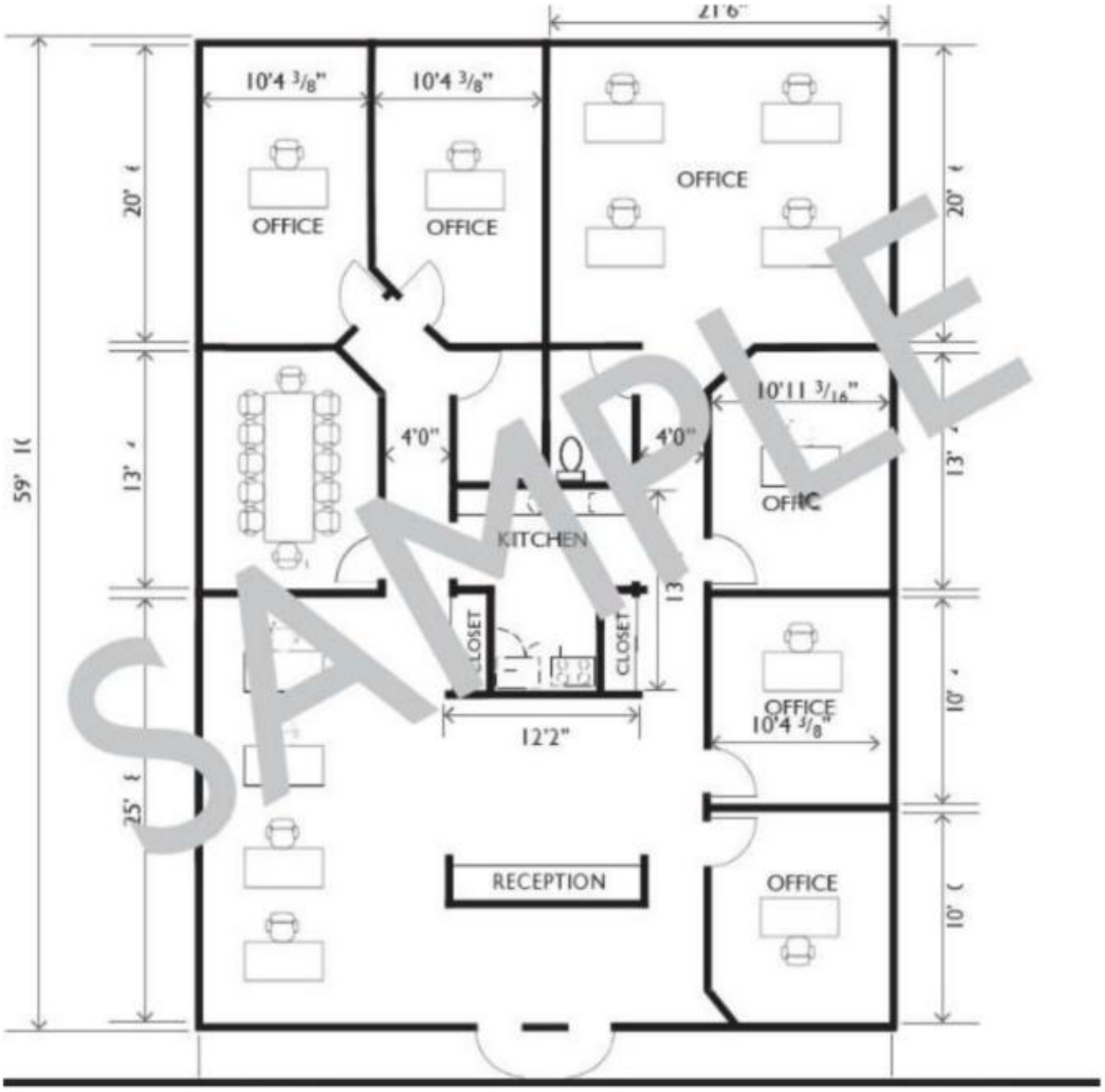
- For questions about applying for a Business License, please contact the Office of the Commissioner of the Revenue by calling 703-385-7884 or emailing Revenue@fairfaxva.gov.

Note: You must have your Business License in hand within 30 days of opening your business.

End of section

Return to beginning

Example Floor Plan



End of document

Return to beginning