

# BUSINESS RESOURCE GUIDE

## CITY OF ALGONA, IOWA

Welcome! We are glad you have chosen to locate your business in Algona or are considering Algona as a potential location for your business venture! This brief guide was developed by city staff and is a general summary of information you should be aware of to start and operate a business in Algona. This guide also includes information on local business development and financing resources which may be available for your project.

### **City Contacts**

Algona City Hall is located at 112 W Call Street and can be reached by phone at (515)295-2411 or by fax at (515)295-4897. The city's website is [www.ci.algona.ia.us](http://www.ci.algona.ia.us). Contact city personnel for questions regarding the following.

#### Zoning, Resources, Incentives and Available Sites & Buildings

Jacob Tjaden, City Administrator

P: (515)295-2411

[jtjaden@ci.algona.ia.us](mailto:jtjaden@ci.algona.ia.us)

#### Zoning, Building Permits and Inspections

Devere Adams, Building Official

P: (515)295-2411

[radams@ci.algona.ia.us](mailto:radams@ci.algona.ia.us)

#### City Business Permits

Deb Bell, City Clerk

P: (515)295-2411

[dbell@ci.algona.ia.us](mailto:dbell@ci.algona.ia.us)

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## BUSINESS PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

### Writing a Business Plan

An important first step in developing a business is writing a Business Plan. This is essential if you plan to seek financial assistance such as loans or grants or to attract investment dollars. The key pieces of a Business Plan include details on what products or services you intend to sell and how you will make and reinvest money in your business.

The Small Business Administration ([www.SBA.gov](http://www.SBA.gov)) has a number of resources to help you develop your business concept available on their website at: [www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/write-your-business-plan](http://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/write-your-business-plan). Contact the Iowa SBA Office at (515)284-4422.

### Iowa Lakes Community College and Tietz Entrepreneurial Center

[Iowa Lakes Community College](http://www.iowalakes.edu) serves the region's labor market and offers a variety of education and job training programs, including industrial technology, information technology, business, and healthcare.

The [Tietz Entrepreneurial Center](http://www.iowalakes.edu/tietz) opened at the Algona Iowa Lakes Community College campus in 2018. The Center provides aspiring entrepreneurs and business owners with information and resources essential for business success as well as technical assistance in business development and planning. The Center offers a variety of classes and workshops on a broad range of critical business topics to support the development and growth of businesses. Classes held include lunch and learns or evening sessions to best accommodate busy schedules. Specialized training sessions can be designed to suit customized needs.

Contact: Shelly Brown  
[sbrown@iowalakes.edu](mailto:sbrown@iowalakes.edu)  
P: (515) 295-8531 ext. 8531  
[www.iowalakes.edu](http://www.iowalakes.edu)

Location: 2111 US-169  
Algona, IA 50511



### Small Business Development Center

Under SBA, the Small Business Development Center ([SBDC](http://www.sba.gov)) has local offices across the country. Our region's office is based in Spencer, Iowa. SBDC provides confidential, complimentary business consulting services including business plan development, market research, marketing strategies and cash flow projections.

Contact: Michael Wampler  
[mwampler@iowalakes.edu](mailto:mwampler@iowalakes.edu)  
P: (712) 262-4213  
[www.iowasbdc.org](http://www.iowasbdc.org)

Location: Iowa Lakes Community College  
1900 Grand Ave. Suite B-1  
Spencer, IA 51301



## Iowa Business Concierge

IASourceLink's [Business Concierge](#) can answer questions and provide free market research information with personalized data. Contact by phone at 866-537-6052 or online at [www.iasourcelink.com](http://www.iasourcelink.com).

## BUSINESS LICENSING & PERMITS

### Legal Structure and Registration

One of the first decision to make when starting a business is choosing the legal structure. The most common forms are sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, and limited liability corporations. Choosing a business structure depends on several factors, but some considerations are how the business will be taxed, record keeping needs, and liability. You should visit with an accountant or lawyer for advice on choosing your legal structure. Information on considerations for business structures in Iowa is available at:

[www.iasourcelink.com/regulatory/basics-of-business-entities](http://www.iasourcelink.com/regulatory/basics-of-business-entities)

Corporations, limited liability companies limited partnerships, nonprofits, trademarks or service marks are required to register with the office of the Iowa Secretary of State.

Iowa Secretary of State  
321 E 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
P: 888-767-8683  
E: [sos@sos.iowa.gov](mailto:sos@sos.iowa.gov)  
[www.sos.iowa.gov](http://www.sos.iowa.gov)



Sole proprietorships must register with the county recorder. The Kossuth County Recorder's Office can be contacted at:

Kossuth County Courthouse  
114 W State Street  
Algona, IA 50511  
P: (515)295-5660  
E: [recorder@co.kossuth.ia.us](mailto:recorder@co.kossuth.ia.us)  
[www.co.kossuth.ia.us/recorder.php](http://www.co.kossuth.ia.us/recorder.php)



## Business Licenses & Permits

### City Licenses & Permits

The City of Algona does not have a local licensing or permit requirement for most businesses. However, certain types of businesses do require a city license or permit.

- **Peddlers, Solicitors, and Transient Merchants:** A city license must be obtained prior to operating within the city.
- **Liquor Licenses, Beer Permits, Wine Permits:** Alcoholic beverages licensing in Iowa is a joint license between the State of Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division and local jurisdictions. Applicants should submit a permit request to the [Iowa Alcoholic Beverage Division](#). The Division will forward the permit application to the city to be considered for approval by the City Council. Businesses cannot sell alcoholic beverages without an approved permit. Permits must be renewed annually.
- **Tobacco, Alternative Nicotine and Vapor Permits:** To sell these products, a business must request and submit a permit application to the City of Algona.
- **Fireworks:** Vendors wishing to sell fireworks within city limits must obtain a city [Permit for Consumer Fireworks Sales](#) in addition to the permit from the State Fire Marshal.

If you have questions regarding local permit requirements, contact Algona City Clerk Deb Bell or refer to the [Business Licenses and Regulations](#) section of the Algona Code of Ordinances.

### State Licenses & Permits

The State of Iowa does not have a “general” business license. Rather, the state regulates businesses based on their type. Information on business licensing requirements can be found at [www.iasourcelink.com/regulatory/business-license-home](http://www.iasourcelink.com/regulatory/business-license-home) or by calling the Iowa Business License Information Center at 800-532-1216 or contact via email at [blic@iowaeda.com](mailto:blic@iowaeda.com).

Resources for some of the state’s most common business licenses and permits:

- **State of Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division, [www.abd.iowa.gov](http://www.abd.iowa.gov)**
  - [Alcoholic Beverages Licensing](#)
  - [Tobacco, Alternative Nicotine & Vapor Permit](#)
- **Iowa Department of Inspections & Appeals (Food Establishments), [www.dia.iowa.gov](http://www.dia.iowa.gov)**
  - [Food & Consumer Safety](#)
  - [Restaurant Inspections](#)
- **Iowa Department of Natural Resources, [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)**
  - [Environmental Permits](#)
- **Iowa Department of Public Safety, [www.dps.state.ia.us](http://www.dps.state.ia.us)**
  - [State Fire Marshal](#)

## State Sales & Use Taxes

Anyone selling taxable goods or services in the state must obtain an Iowa Sales Tax Permit for each business location. You can learn about and apply for a sales tax permit online through the Iowa Department of Revenue at [www.tax.iowa.gov/starting-business](http://www.tax.iowa.gov/starting-business)

Upon registering, the State will mail you a letter containing your Business eFile Number (BEN), your permit number, and printed permit. Once obtained, a sales tax permit is effective until it is cancelled by the retailer or revoked by the State.

## Other State Tax Resources

IASourceLink ([www.iasourcelink.com](http://www.iasourcelink.com)) provides information and links for starting a business in Iowa as well as free small business tax webinars are available on their website [HERE](#).

The Iowa Department of Revenue ([www.tax.iowa.gov](http://www.tax.iowa.gov)) has business licensing and tax resources available on their website [HERE](#).

## FINANCING - LOCAL RESOURCES

### Algona Financial Institutions

The following banks have locations in Algona.

<b>Citizen's Community Credit Union</b> 403 E Call Street Algona, IA 50511 P: (515) 295-7121 <a href="http://www.citizenscu.com">www.citizenscu.com</a>	<b>Farmer's State Bank</b> 501 E State Street Algona, IA 50511 P: (515) 295-7221 <a href="http://www.fsbiowa.com">www.fsbiowa.com</a>
<b>Iowa State Bank</b> 5 E Call Street Algona, IA 50511 P: (515) 295-3595 <a href="http://www.bankisb.com">www.bankisb.com</a>	<b>Northwest Bank</b> 204 E State Street Algona, IA 50511 P: (515) 295-7271 <a href="http://www.bank-northwest.com">www.bank-northwest.com</a>
<b>Security State Bank</b> 1 E State Street Algona, IA 50511 P: (515) 295-9501 <a href="http://www.bankssb.com">www.bankssb.com</a>	<b>West Iowa Bank</b> 418 E Call Street Algona, IA 50511 P: (515) 295-7600 <a href="http://www.westiowabank.com">www.westiowabank.com</a>

## Financing Resources from the City and Local Economic Development Groups

### Revolving Loan Funds (RLF)

- **Retail RLF, City of Algona:** Provides financing up to \$15,000, with a maximum term of five years. Interest rates vary from 0% to 5% based on need. Copies of a [Retail RLF Brochure](#) and [Retail RLF Application](#) are available at City Hall or can be downloaded from the city's website.
- **Commercial & Industrial RLF, City of Algona:** This RLF provides financial assistance to encourage new business start-ups, expansion of existing businesses, and the relocation of out-of-state businesses to Algona. Funds may be used for the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or installation of commercial or industrial buildings, structures, and other real property; acquisition of equipment and machinery; reuse of vacant or abandoned facilities; modernization of plant equipment or machinery; and product development and marketing.

This fund is closely tied to employment, requiring the creation of five or more permanent full-time jobs with an average wage of at least 60% of Low-to-Moderate Income wage rate (estimated \$13.85/hr. in 2018) or a minimum ratio of one permanent full-time job created or retained for every \$10,000 in assistance. City RLF funds cannot exceed more than 25% of the total project cost. Contact the Community Development Director for more information.

- **Algona Municipal Utilities RLF:** Through the RLF, Algona Municipal Utilities (AMU) seeks to improve the quality of life by contributing to the long-term improvement in the economy, including job creation and retention, diversification of the economy, improving workforce skills, and upgrading infrastructure. The RLF provides financing from \$5,000 to \$175,000. Loan interest rates vary based on prime interest rate. The AMU RLF guidelines and application are available by calling (515)295-3584 or online at: [www.netamu.com/economicdevelopment.php](http://www.netamu.com/economicdevelopment.php).
- **Kossuth County Economic Development Corporation RLF:** The Kossuth County Economic Development Corporation (KCEDC) RLF was established to encourage existing local and new businesses to expand by providing supplemental financing. The RLF supports growth of community industrial parks and entices business and industry to expand in Kossuth County. Generally, the term of the loan will not exceed 10 years and the loaned funds shall provide no more than 35% of the financing for any project up to a maximum of \$50,000. To learn more, visit the KCEDC website at [www.kossuth-edc.com](http://www.kossuth-edc.com) or call their office at (515)295-7979.
- **NIACOG RLF:** The North Iowa Council of Governments (NIACOG) provides low-interest loans located within their region (which includes Kossuth County) with a goal to promote job creation and business retention. Visit [www.niacog.org](http://www.niacog.org) or call (641)423-0491 for more information.

## City Urban Revitalization and Urban Renewal Programs (Property Tax Incentives)

**Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption (Commercial & Industrial):** The city's Urban Revitalization ordinance provides for the exemption of property tax on all or a portion of the value added to a property as a result of qualifying new development or renovations of commercial and industrial properties. Qualifying projects can select one of two exemption schedule options:

1. One hundred percent (100%) exemption from taxation on the actual value added by improvements for a period of three (3) years.

OR

2. A partial exemption from taxation on the actual value added by improvements for a period of ten (10) years. The amount of the partial exemption is equal to a percent of the actual value added by the improvements as follows:

-1 <sup>st</sup> year: 80%	-2 <sup>nd</sup> year: 70%	-3 <sup>rd</sup> year: 60%	-4 <sup>th</sup> year: 50%	-5 <sup>th</sup> year: 40%
-6 <sup>th</sup> year: 40%	-7 <sup>th</sup> year: 30%	-8 <sup>th</sup> year: 30%	-9 <sup>th</sup> year: 20%	-10 <sup>th</sup> year: 20%

An [Urban Revitalization Program Overview](#) fact sheet and [Urban Revitalization Application](#) are available on the city's website. Contact the Community Development Director for additional information.

**Urban Renewal (e.g. TIF):** One of the most significant powers given to city councils under the state's Urban Renewal Act is the authority to utilize Tax Incremental Financing (TIF). TIF enables the city to capture the increase in property tax dollars generated from new private development to pay for certain public improvements and business incentives. For example, when deemed by the City Council to be in the best interest of the city, TIF revenues may be used to provide for infrastructure improvements (streets, sewer, water) or to provide assistance (in the form of grants) to private businesses for economic development purposes. Algona has been involved in providing economic development incentives and infrastructure improvements since establishing its first Urban Renewal ordinance in 1994.

The city's [TIF Policy](#) and [TIF Application](#) are available on the city's website. Contact the Community Development Director for further information.

## AVAILABLE SITES & BUILDINGS

### City Website/LOIS

Many of the listings of sites and buildings available for lease or purchase in Algona are uploaded to LOIS, a national online location analysis tool designed for communities and economic development organizations to promote available site and building inventory. A link to the Algona area LOIS listings is available on the city's website, [www.ci.algona.ia.us](http://www.ci.algona.ia.us), under the "Economic Development" Department or at this [LINK](#).

### Local Realtors



#### Farm & Home Services

220 E State Street

Algona, IA 50511

P: (515)295-2401

[www.FarmHomeServices.com](http://www.FarmHomeServices.com)



#### EXIT Realty Home/Land Properties

215 E State Street

Algona, IA 50511

P: (515)295-7577

[www.ExitRealty.com](http://www.ExitRealty.com)

## ZONING (LAND USE)

### Zoning

The use of property within Algona is regulated by the by the city's [Zoning Ordinance](#). Algona is divided into several zoning districts such as heavy manufacturing, light manufacturing, central general business, or single- and multi-family residential. Prior to opening a business or signing a lease, you should contact the city's Zoning Administrator to determine if your proposed business-type is permitted at that location.

The city's Official Zoning Map is available at City Hall. An unofficial zoning map can be viewed on the city's website [HERE](#).

## BUILDING PERMITS & STANDARDS

### Building Permits

A Building Permit is required for certain improvements made to a business space. A [City of Algona Building Permit Application](#), including detailed plans and information on the work to be performed, must be submitted to the Public Works Director or City Building Official for review. No work may begin prior to the Building Permit being issued. The City of Algona has adopted the 2018 edition of the International Building Code.

### Types of Projects that Require a Building Permit

Building Permits are required for the following types of improvements:

- New construction
- Interior remodeling
- Electrical work\*
- Electrical services
- Plumbing work
- Heating work
- Structural work
- Foundation work
- Garages/storage buildings larger than 120 sq. ft.
- Decks more than 30" above ground
- Retaining walls higher than 4 ft.
- Egress windows

Construction or work for which a permit is required shall be subject to inspection by the Building Inspector. Please contact the inspector at least 48 hours prior to any needed inspection.

\*Permitting for electrical work is managed through the Iowa Department of Public Safety-State Fire Marshall Division. For more information, contact:

State Fire Marshal's Office, Electrical Examining Board  
215 E. 7th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
[einspinfo@dps.state.ia.us](mailto:einspinfo@dps.state.ia.us)  
P: (515) 725-6147  
F: (515) 725-6151

After the city Building Inspector inspects the building or structure and does not find violations of the provisions of the code or other laws enforced by the department of building safety, the Building Official will issue a Certificate of Occupancy.

*Persons wishing to undertake property improvements should discuss the project and the building requirements with city staff before beginning work or submitting a building permit application.*

## Site Plan Review

A Site Plan Review is a process that ensures that any new developments or expansions of existing developments comply with all appropriate land development regulations and are consistent with the city's Building Codes and Zoning Ordinance.

In Algona, a Site Plan is required for the following types of projects:

- New construction projects with a gross area of 2,500 sq. ft. or greater
- Construction or reconstruction of any parking lot with 8 or more parking spaces

A Site Plan must be approved by the Site Plan Review Committee before a Building Permit may be issued. The city's [Site Plan Ordinance](#) is available on our website. Contact the city's Zoning Administrator for additional information.

## Signs and Awnings Permit

The city's [Signs and Awnings Ordinance](#) regulates the size, number, location, and height a sign or awning. A Sign Permit is required prior to installing, altering, or moving a new or existing sign or awning. Contact the city's Building Official for questions and to request a permit.

## Right-of-Way Permit

A city [Right-of-Way Permit](#) is required whenever an individual, contractor or utility company needs to perform work in the public road right-of-way. For example, a right-of-way permit is required to perform sidewalk repairs, driveway repairs, construction or repair of an access, sewer line connections, storm drain repairs, and private water line installations.

## Building in a Floodplain

Algona's [Floodplain Regulations Ordinance](#) regulates development of properties located in floodways and floodplains. No structure may be located, extended, converted or structurally altered without obtaining a Flood Plain Development Permit from the city.

Federal Emergency Management Agency ([FEMA](#)) floodplain maps can be viewed on their website at [msc.fema.gov](#). Contact City Hall if you do not know if your property is in a floodplain or if you have questions regarding development in a floodplain or to request a permit.

## SUDAS

The City of Algona has adopted Iowa's *Statewide Urban Design and Specifications Program (SUDAS)* as a mechanism to implement uniform design standards, procedures, and regulations for the preparation of urban public improvement construction plans. All plans, submittals, and work shall follow this program. For questions on SUDAS requirements, contact the Public Works Director or Building Official. Design and specification manuals for the statewide standards are online at [www.iowasudas.org](#).

# UTILITIES

Business should contact the following entities regarding utility services.

## Electricity and Water

Algona Municipal Utilities (AMU) owns and operates electric and water utilities within Algona.

Location: 104 W Call Street  
Algona, IA 50511

Contact: [www.netamu.com/](http://www.netamu.com/)  
P: (515)295-3584



## Natural Gas

Natural gas service is provided by MidAmerican Energy.

Contact: [www.midamericanenergy.com](http://www.midamericanenergy.com)  
P: 800-329-6261

## Internet & Cable TV

Algona Municipal Utilities (AMU) operates a telecommunications utility with fiber-optic service in the downtown business district and the city industrial park with high-speed service extending to homes and businesses.

Location: 104 W Call Street  
Algona, IA 50511

Contact: [www.netamu.com/](http://www.netamu.com/)  
P: (515)295-3584



## LOCAL CONTACTS

### **Algona Area Chamber of Commerce, [www.algona.org](http://www.algona.org)**

- Vicki Mallory, Executive Director – [vmallory@algona.org](mailto:vmallory@algona.org)
- 123 E State Street, Algona, IA
- P: (515)295-7201

### **Algona Municipal Utilities (AMU), [www.netamu.com](http://www.netamu.com)**

- John Bilsten, General Manager
- 104 W Call Street, Algona, IA
- P: (515)295-3584

### **City of Algona, Iowa, [www.ci.algona.ia.us/](http://www.ci.algona.ia.us/)**

- Rick Murphy, Mayor - [lkueck@ci.algona.ia.us](mailto:lkueck@ci.algona.ia.us)
- Jacob Tjaden, City Administrator - [jtjaden@ci.algona.ia.us](mailto:jtjaden@ci.algona.ia.us)
- Devere Adams, Building Official – [dadams@ci.algona.ia.us](mailto:dadams@ci.algona.ia.us)
- 112 W Call Street, Algona, IA
- P: (515)295-2411

### **Iowa Lakes Community College, Algona Campus, [www.iowalakes.edu/algona-campus](http://www.iowalakes.edu/algona-campus)**

- Theresa Waechter, Campus Supervisor - [twaechter@iowalakes.edu](mailto:twaechter@iowalakes.edu)
- Shelly Brown, Tietz Entrepreneurial Center Coordinator - [sbrown@iowalakes.edu](mailto:sbrown@iowalakes.edu)
- 2111 Highway 169 North, Algona, IA
- P: (515)295-8525

### **Kossuth County Economic Development Corporation, [www.kossuth-edc.com/](http://www.kossuth-edc.com/)**

- Maureen Elbert, Executive Director - [kcedc@kossuthia.com](mailto:kcedc@kossuthia.com)
- 106 S Dodge Street, Suite 210, Algona, IA
- P: (515)295-7979

### **Kossuth County, Iowa Government, [www.co.kossuth.ia.us](http://www.co.kossuth.ia.us)**

- 114 W State Street, Algona, IA
- P: (515)295-3584