

LA County **SmallBiz**

# PERMIT EXPRESS

LA County SmallBiz Permit Express is designed to support qualifying small businesses by providing expedited services for permits, entitlements, licenses, and inspections in Unincorporated LA County. This program aims to simplify and streamline the application process, making it easier and faster to obtain the necessary approvals needed to get their project off the ground.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. WHAT IS THE LA COUNTY SMALL BUSINESS EXPRESS PROGRAM?

The LA County SmallBiz Permit Express Program is an initiative by the Los Angeles County Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) in partnership with other County departments aimed at streamlining and simplifying the permitting process for small, community-serving projects. The program is designed to expedite critical community benefits for local residents by providing a single point of entry and assistance for eligible small businesses seeking permits.

### 2. WHAT IS EPIC-LA?

EPIC LA is Los Angeles County's Electronic Permitting & Inspections system, a comprehensive digital platform used by various County departments to manage and streamline the permitting and development process. The system provides a centralized location for submitting and tracking applications for permits, plan reviews, inspections, and other related services. EPIC LA aims to improve efficiency, transparency, and communication between the County and applicants, including businesses and residents, by offering online services and real-time status updates. This system supports the County's goal of providing better service delivery and facilitating economic development by making it easier to navigate regulatory requirements.

### 3. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF LA COUNTY SMALLBIZ PERMIT EXPRESS?

**Streamlined Process:** The program aims to reduce permit processing time by streamlining permitting processes and expediting reviews.

**Equity Focus:** SmallBiz Permit Express prioritizes projects that contribute to climate resilience, wealth building, environmental quality improvement, social and community benefits, and employee ownership, fostering a more inclusive and sustainable economic ecosystem.

**Free Services:** No fees will be charged for services and technical assistance offered through this program, ensuring accessibility to all small businesses.

**Enhanced Review Time:** Partnering departments in EPIC LA are committed to providing written responses 25% faster than the standard review time.

**Prioritized Inspections:** Inspections related to permits issued through SmallBiz Permit Express will be prioritized, ensuring swift project progress.

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## 4. ARE THERE ANY FEES ASSOCIATED WITH PARTICIPATING SMALLBIZ PERMIT EXPRESS?

No fees will be charged for the concierge and assistance services provided through the SmallBiz Permit Express Program. The program aims to save businesses both time and money by providing accessible support to eligible small businesses in Los Angeles County.

## 5. HOW DOES THE LA COUNTY SMALLBIZ PERMIT EXPRESS APPLICATION PROCESS WORK?

**A. Determine Eligibility:** Before applying, all interested businesses are recommended to see if they have project in applicable areas and qualify to benefit from the program by taking a self assessment and preparing required documents. DEO's Concierge Services is available to assist.

↳ Self-assessment and preparation guide is [available here](#).

**B. Apply:** Small businesses initiate the process by submitting an application to participate in the SmallBiz Permit Express program by submitting an application on EPIC-LA which they can find on the DEO website or by visiting [epicla.lacounty.gov](http://epicla.lacounty.gov).

↳ Create an account.

↳ Log in and click "Apply."

↳ Type and Search for "LA County SmallBiz Permit Express" form and select that option to begin applying.

↳ Complete the form and submit. Use the Link on the final page to schedule a virtual/in-person consultation with a Permit Liaison.

**C. Initial Assessment:** Once businesses submit their applications, they can schedule and interview with a dedicated Permit Concierge from the Office of Small Business (OSB) for an initial assessment of their business's permitting needs.

**D. Permitting Guidance:** Once approved into the program, eligible businesses will meet with a dedicated SmallBiz Permit Express Team, made up of representatives from all relevant County Departments, to discuss their project in depth and receive guidance. This step will ensure permit applications are submitted appropriately and any questions or uncertainties are addressed prior to submission.

**E. Streamlined Review and Approval:** After submitting a permit application, businesses will benefit from expedited review, inspections, and approval of their permit applications. Businesses will be supported throughout the application process by their appointed Permit Concierge, who will also keep businesses updated on the status of their application.

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## 5. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I SUBMIT A PERMIT APPLICATION?

**Ongoing Support and Monitoring:** Throughout the permitting process, businesses will receive ongoing support and monitoring from their dedicated DEO Permit Concierge. Advisors will keep businesses informed about the status of their permit applications, providing regular updates on progress, milestones, and any emerging issues.

**Project Implementation:** Once permits are obtained, businesses can proceed with project implementation according to approved plans and timelines. DEO will remain available to provide ongoing assistance and support to businesses during the implementation phase as well as to help address any last-minute challenges, ensuring the smooth execution of projects.

## 6. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN SMALLBIZ PERMIT EXPRESS?

Any small business operating in Los Angeles County that meets the program's criteria is eligible to participate. The program particularly focuses on businesses that contribute community benefits such as those that are focused on improvements to the environment, employee-owned, and/or dedicated to supporting wealth building in underserved and disadvantaged communities.

## 7. WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS QUALIFY FOR THE LA COUNTY SMALLBIZ PERMIT EXPRESS PROGRAM?

Projects that create climate-resilient jobs, enhance environmental quality, prioritize communities experiencing concentrated and/or accumulated disadvantage, and promote employee ownership models are eligible for the SmallBiz Permit Express Program. These projects aim to address critical community needs while fostering economic growth and sustainability.

## 8. WHAT IS THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE LA COUNTY SMALLBIZ PERMIT EXPRESS PROGRAM?

A. Business or project must be located in unincorporated LA County or participating cities that use EPIC LA.

B. Business must be defined as a small business according to the following:

Definition of Small Business: A business with \$16M or less in average gross annual revenue receipts in the most recent 3 years with 100 employees or fewer; or manufacturer with 25 or fewer employees as defined by the State of California.

Business is headquartered or the project requiring permit is located in the [COVID-19 Vulnerability and Recovery Index Highest Need, High Need](#), or 1 mile from a highest/high boundary priority area

Business must either be a green business OR providing social or community benefits

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## 9. WHAT DOCUMENTS WILL BE NEEDED TO VERIFY THIS?

Small Business status will be verified through either:

- A. Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Certification from LA Metro OR California Department of General Services (DGS)
- B. Tax Returns or Wage-Withholding Report on State or Federal Tax Returns with evidence of number of employees.

Green, Social, or Community Business Verification

- Green America Certification
- California Green Business Network certification
- Green Business Certification from the Green Business Bureau
- Proof the business is registered as a Benefit Corporation (B Corp)
- Electronic Certification (E-cert) from the California Air Resources Board
- Proof the business is registered as a Certified Social Enterprise with LA County
- Proof the business is registered as a Nonprofit Organization
- Business possesses an employee ownership model

## 10. HOW DO I APPLY TO THE LA COUNTY SMALLBIZ PERMIT EXPRESS PROGRAM?

How to Apply: To apply for a The LA County SmallBiz Permit Express Program process, simply fill out the online application form on EPIC-LA. Our team is here to assist you through every step of the process, from application submission to permit issuance to save you time and money!

Follow these steps to get into the program:

- ↳ Step One - Visit [bit.ly/SmallBizPermitExpress](https://bit.ly/SmallBizPermitExpress) to take self-assessment and prepare required documentation. If needed, please contact DEO's Concierge Program for assistance.
- ↳ Step Two - Visit [epicla.lacounty.gov](https://epicla.lacounty.gov). Register for an account if new to EPIC-LA.
- ↳ Step Three - Log into your account and click on the "Apply" box
- ↳ Step Four - Search for "The LA County SmallBiz Permit Express Program Interest Form" and select that option to begin applying.
- ↳ Step Five - Fill out the entire form and on the last page of the submission use the Microsoft Bookings link to schedule a meeting with a Permit Concierge..


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## 10. HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SMALLBIZ PERMIT EXPRESS AND ITS BENEFITS?


For more information about The LA County SmallBiz Permit Express Program and the Community-Serving Economic Opportunity Program, please call or visit the Office of Small Business with the Department of Economic Opportunity

### Contact LA County's Office of Small Business

 844-432-4900

 [opportunity.lacounty.gov](https://opportunity.lacounty.gov)

 [osb@opportunity.lacounty.gov](mailto:osb@opportunity.lacounty.gov)

 4716 E. Cesar E. Chavez, Bldg. B  
Los Angeles, CA 90022

## 11. WHAT SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE DEO'S OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS?

The Office of Small Business provides 1:1 Business Counseling to help businesses launch, thrive and grow. It connects businesses to free resources, including but not limited to, help navigating County services, attaining licenses and permits, acquiring legal aid, accessing capital, and much more!