

## FREE SCORE COUNSELING!!!

ONE STOP - CITY HALL ANNEX - WEDNESDAYS  
[www.scorehouston.org](http://www.scorehouston.org)

The ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER has **FREE** 1-on-1 business counseling for new and first stage businesses at its conveniently located City Hall Annex location, Downtown Houston. **CALL TODAY for an appointment** with our SCORE business advisors who can steer your business on the path to success. You'll learn about business planning, discuss strategies, financing options, and other topics of importance to your business. (See below for directions)

Call 832-393-0954

For details and to make an appointment

### DIRECTIONS & PARKING

**ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER, City Hall Annex, 900 Bagby St., Public Level-**  
Metered parking is available in the City Hall Annex parking lot behind 900 Bagby or street level next to City Hall on McKinney and Walker.

Garage parking available in the Theater District. (Tranquillity Garage Entrance #2 in the 500 block of Rusk, connected by tunnel to City Hall basement).

**WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE with CONVENIENT PARKING**



(GSP-03CVR.DOC; 12-11, FALL 2011)

# GETTING STARTED PACKET

CITY HALL ANNEX, 900 Bagby St. @ McKinney (Public Level)  
PHONE: 832-393-0954 / 311 -- FAX: 832-393-0952  
[WWW.HOUSTONTX.GOV/ONESTOP](http://WWW.HOUSTONTX.GOV/ONESTOP)

-- HIRE HOUSTON FIRST --

[www.houstontx.gov/onestop/hirehoustonfirst.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/hirehoustonfirst.html)



CITY OF HOUSTON  
MAYOR'S OFFICE  
BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY



TYPE OF BUSINESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
(FALL 2011)

**THERE IS NO "GENERAL BUSINESS LICENSE"  
ISSUED BY THE CITY OF HOUSTON**

The enclosed information will help you legally operate a business in Houston and Harris County. Some permits (especially for GENERAL CONTRACTORS) must be obtained on a job-by-job basis. PRIME AND/OR GENERAL CONTRACTORS ARE NOT PROFESSIONALLY LICENSED IN HOUSTON OR THE STATE OF TEXAS.

For minimum distance requirements, call the Houston Planning Dept. (713-837-7701). Businesses requiring minimum distances from schools, residences, day cares, and churches, include but are not limited to: auto sales and storage, sexually oriented businesses, hazardous materials, and the sale of alcoholic beverages. Do not attempt to obtain city permits, or buy or lease a location unless you can satisfy distance requirements. City ordinances are available from the City Secretary at 832-393-1100 or by clicking: [www.houstontx.gov/codes/index.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/codes/index.html)

Information on professional affiliations, memberships, private certifications, insurance, or bonding NOT included herein.

To find out if your proposed business location is inside Houston, contact [www.hcad.org](http://www.hcad.org) and enter the property address. A Houston zip code is NOT proof the business is inside the City of Houston.

**IMPORTANT!!**

***NEITHER THE CITY OF HOUSTON NOR THE ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR FAILURE TO OBTAIN ALL NECESSARY OPERATING PERMITS, LICENSES, OR YOUR FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH ALL APPLICABLE GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS. HOME BASED BUSINESSES MUST CHECK FOR APPLICABLE DEED RESTRICTIONS. INFORMATION INCLUDED HEREIN IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.***



**10,000 SMALL BUSINESSES INITIATIVE**

<http://sites.hccs.edu/10ksb/>

10,000 Small Businesses at Houston Community College is part of a national, five-year investment to unlock the growth and job creation potential of small businesses in the U.S. through greater access to business education, financial capital and business support services. The initiative is currently active in New Orleans, New York, and Greater Los Angeles and over the next five years, will reach 10,000 small business owners across the country.

**ELIGIBILITY**

To be considered for the program, applicants must be the primary owner or co-owner of a business that generally meets the following criteria:

- Business revenues between \$150,000 and \$4 million in the most recent fiscal year
- At least four employees (including yourself)
- Business has been in operation for at least two years
- The potential and desire to grow and create jobs in the community

The program will be most beneficial for business owners who:

- Own an established business that is poised for growth
- Have a diverse base of customers
- Can demonstrate that they have thought critically about how to grow their companies

Exceptions to the eligibility criteria may be considered in cases where the owner and/or business has substantial opportunities for growth. In addition, applicants must:

- Submit their completed applications.
- Submit required supporting materials, such as financial statements, with their application
- Be prepared, if selected as a finalist, to attend a 20-minute in-person interview at Houston Community College on April 26 or April 27.
- Be prepared to attend the program orientation
- Commit to attending all learning sessions starting in May, 2011
- Commit approximately 6 to 8 hours per week to completing homework in advance of each session and to participating in business advisory, mentoring and related services between classes, all of which are targeted toward working on applicants' businesses

FOR INFORMATION: **CALL HCC:** 713-718-8348  
**EMAIL HCC:** 10KSB@hccs.edu

**- A NOTE ON DEED RESTRICTIONS -**

*Before you begin new home construction or home improvement project, please consult your civic association regarding possible deed restrictions. You may not purchase a building permit without signing a sworn deed restriction affidavit stating that you are aware of and agree to abide by deed restrictions pertaining to your project. If you knowingly or unknowingly sign the deed restriction affidavit under false pretenses, you could be subject to municipal court citations, fines, and the removal of the structure or violating portion thereof.*

[www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/planning/permits.html](http://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/planning/permits.html)



**The Element of Knowledge or Intent**

The DTPA makes many practices illegal without requiring proof that the defendant intended to do something wrong or illegal. Unless the section involved requires otherwise, the consumer is not required to prove that the defendant "intentionally" or "knowingly" violated the DTPA. This makes it easier to prove a violation of the DTPA, and provides a strong incentive for sellers of goods and providers of services to refrain from engaging in the prohibited acts and practices.

Nevertheless, the DTPA provides that if a defendant acts "intentionally," the judge or jury may award the consumer "additional damages" in an amount not exceeding three times the actual damages suffered by the consumer.

**What Is Included Within the "Laundry List" of Acts and Practices Made Illegal by the DTPA?**

The DTPA contains a "laundry list" of specific practices that are prohibited. This laundry list is found in section 17.46(b) of the Texas Business and Commerce Code. It contains 25 acts that violate the DTPA and for which consumers may sue, if the consumers relied on the act to their detriment. These twenty-five acts are described in the pamphlet and web pages referred to at the conclusion of this document.

**What Remedies Are Available Under the DTPA?**

The remedies of the DTPA are not exclusive. Instead, they are in addition to remedies provided in other laws. In fact, violations of certain other laws may also constitute violation of the DTPA. You may not, however, recover under the DTPA and under some other law for the same alleged wrong. In other words, you cannot recover twice for one violation.

Remedies under the DTPA may not usually be waived, and an attempt to make a consumer waive DTPA remedies is expressly made void and unenforceable unless specific requirements are met. This provision is particularly important when consumers buy goods "As Is." Often, consumers may still be able to recover under the DTPA even if the consumer buys the goods "As Is." If you have such a situation, you should seek the advice of an attorney.

**For Further Assistance:**

If you do not know an attorney to handle your case, ask a friend or an associate for a recommendation. Also, you may locate one through your local Lawyer Referral Service listed in your telephone directory, or through the State Bar Lawyer Referral Service by calling (toll free) 1-800-252-9690.

This information is not intended to be a substitute for the legal advice of a licensed attorney. If you have any questions regarding a particular issue or topic we suggest you seek legal counsel.

# TEXAS DECEPTIVE TRADE PRACTICES ACT

HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER  
Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity  
<http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/>  
Ph. 832-393-0954

## DTPA TEXT AVAILABLE HERE:

[t02.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/docs/BC/content/html/bc.002.00.000017.00.htm](http://t02.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/docs/BC/content/html/bc.002.00.000017.00.htm)

## What Is The "Deceptive Trade Practices Act"

The Texas Deceptive Trade Practices-Consumer Protection Act ("DTPA") was enacted on May 21, 1973. The full text can be found starting at section 17.41 of the Texas Business and Commerce Code. The primary purpose of the DTPA is to protect consumers against false, misleading, and deceptive business and insurance practices, unconscionable actions, and breaches of warranty. It does so by prohibiting certain acts and practices that tend to deceive and mislead consumers.

The DTPA provides for both public enforcement and private remedies. Public enforcement is done by the Texas Attorney General, who can seek a court order prohibiting further deceptive practices. A private citizen may seek redress for damages caused by certain specific acts and practices listed in the DTPA. Because the DTPA is very broad and is constantly being interpreted by the courts, it is impossible to explain its complete meaning and impact in this short handbook. If you believe that you are the victim of a deceptive trade practice, please consult an attorney.

## Which Transactions Does the DTPA Apply To?

Most consumer transactions are covered by the DTPA. Although the DTPA does not cover every deceptive or unconscionable act or practice, it is quite broad. The DTPA provides that "false, misleading, or deceptive acts or practices in the conduct of any trade or commerce are hereby declared unlawful."

The DTPA prohibits certain acts or practices "in the conduct of any trade or commerce." This is a very broad provision. "Trade and commerce" means "the advertising, offering for sale, lease, or distribution of any good or service, or any property, tangible or intangible, real, personal, or mixed, any other article, commodity, or thing of value wherever situated, and shall include any trade or commerce directly or indirectly affecting the people of this state." The term "goods" includes tangible things or real property purchased or leased for use. The word "service" includes work, labor, or services purchased or leased for use, including services furnished in connection with the sale or repair of goods. The DTPA does not apply to the rendering of a professional service, the essence of which is the providing of advice, judgment, opinion or similar professional skill.

The term "unconscionable" appears frequently in the DTPA, and in this handbook. The DTPA defines an "unconscionable action" as one that "takes advantage of the lack of knowledge, ability, experience, or capacity of a person to a grossly unfair degree."

## Who Is Entitled To Protection Under the DTPA?

Other than the Texas Attorney General, only consumers are allowed to file under the DTPA. The phrase "consumer" means an individual, partnership, corporation, or governmental entity who seeks or acquires by purchase or lease any goods or services. It does not cover a business consumer that has assets of \$25 million or more or that is owned or controlled by a corporation or entity with assets of \$25 million or more.

# MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER  
Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity  
<http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/>  
Ph. 832-393-0954

## 1) DBA - ASSUMED NAME (Harris Co. Clerk) 713-755-6436

[www.cclerk.hctx.net](http://www.cclerk.hctx.net) \*\*\* ONLINE DATABASE SEARCH ONLY!! \*\*\*

FILING: ASSUMED NAME OR "DBA" (\$15+ CASH).

201 Caroline St., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor (call for other locations). An Assumed Name, or DBA, is required to be filed in every county in which you have a regular business presence. A DBA DOES NOT RESERVE A NAME AND OTHERS MAY EVENTUALLY USE THE SAME NAME. It is valid for ten (10) years and must be filed in in person. General partnership agreements are also filed here. **FORT BEND Co. (281-341-8685), MONTGOMERY Co. (936-539-7885), BRAZORIA Co. (281-756-1355), GALVESTON Co. (409-766-2200), WALLER Co. (979-826-7711).**

## 2) STATE SALES TAX PERMIT (Texas State Comptroller) 1-800-252-5555

APPLY ONLINE

[www.window.state.tx.us/taxpermit/](http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxpermit/)

FILING: TEXAS SALES TAX PERMIT (NO FEE).

1919 North Loop West @ Ella (2 Houston offices). Texas levies a 6.25% tax on sales of tangible personal property, some types of labor and services. A SALES TAX PERMIT and BOND is required of businesses selling, renting, leasing or providing taxable items or services. The FRANCHISE TAX is collected from corporations. Taxes on amusement machines, motor fuels, minerals, vehicle tires & batteries, and motor vehicles are collected. Inquire about the Resale Certificate for resellers, and the Exemption Certificate. **OPERATING w/o A SALES TAX PERMIT IS A CRIME PUNISHABLE BY A FINE OF UP TO \$500 FOR EACH DAY A BUSINESS OPERATES WITHOUT A PERMIT.**

## 3) FEDERAL TAX ID NUMBER (IRS) 1-800-829-4933

APPLY ONLINE

[www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

FILING: EMPLOYER ID #, FEDERAL TAX ID #

1919 Smith St. (1st Floor). File an "SS-4", or Employer ID Number (EIN) Application Form if you pay wages to one or more employees. Sole proprietors with no employees can also use their SSN. Corporations, partnerships, or non-profits must have EIN's (ask for Publication 583 and 1635). **IRS registers NON-PROFIT 501(c)(3) organizations (Ask for forms 1023,1024,8718).** Call 1-800-772-1213 for SOCIAL SECURITY and MEDICARE information. Non-resident aliens must have a valid visa and SSN to transact business in the US. Workshop information can be obtained at 281-721-7021. Taxpayer Advocate (problem resolution) is at 713-209-3660.

## PROPERTY TAX RENDITION (HCAD) 713-957-7800

[www.hcad.org](http://www.hcad.org) (Harris County Appraisal District)

FILING: RENDITION OF BUSINESS PERSONAL PROPERTY (After Jan. 1 of each year)

13013 NW Freeway (290). Owners of business personal property **as of January 1** of each year **MUST** file a **RENDITION** (a listing of business personal property assets) no later than April 15th. Assets include inventory, raw materials, improvements, machinery and equipment, furniture, fixtures, computer equipment, and vehicles used for business purposes. Property must be located in the taxing jurisdiction for more than a temporary period. Also issues GOING OUT OF BUSINESS license. Personal property that is used to produce business income **MUST** be rendered unless the total value of the property is \$500 or less. **FORT BEND CAD (281-344-8623), MONTGOMERY CAD (936-441-2186), BRAZORIA CAD (979-849-7792), GALVESTON CAD (866-277-4725), WALLER CAD (866-277-4725)**

(GSP-06.DOC; Rev.8-11)

suits the requirements of the business and its owner(s). Once the legal structure of the business has been determined, the next step is to complete the necessary registration requirements.

**REGISTERING A BUSINESS NAME IN TEXAS - State Requirements**

All businesses operating as corporations in Texas must file articles of incorporation with the Office of the Secretary of State of Texas. If the corporation will transact business under names other than that stated in the articles of incorporation, the corporation needs to file an assumed name certificate with the Secretary of State, and with the county clerk in which the principal office and registered office of the corporation is located. The Secretary of State will perform a name search to verify that no other corporation in Texas is using the exact name selected. (This check is for corporate names only and does not include DBA filings.) To find out if a corporation is already using the name chosen, call the Secretary of State at 512-463-5555. Office personnel can do an immediate computer search to see if the name has been reserved.

Corporations, limited partnerships, and limited liability companies organized in other states or countries may transact business in Texas by obtaining a Certificate of Authority through the Secretary of State. The Corporation Section (Secretary of State) can provide forms for the certificate of authority. An out-of-state business may consider the option of creating a Texas corporation, limited partnership, or limited liability company for transaction of business in Texas.

Other forms of business entities required to file with the Secretary of State includes limited partnerships, registered limited liability partnerships, limited liability companies, professional corporation, professional associations and non-profit corporations. The Secretary of State provides a summary of the requirements for creation of these entities but does not provide forms for organizational documents except for registration of a limited liability partnership.

The Secretary of State publishes the *Filing Guide*, which offers guidelines for business organization document filing requirements. The Guide also includes administrative rules and sample forms promulgated by the Secretary of State. The current cost of the guide is \$25 and may be purchased directly from the Secretary of State.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Office of the Secretary of State  
Corporations Section  
P.O. Box 13697  
Austin, Texas 78711-3697

**OR CALL:**

<b>General Information / Name Searches</b>	<b>512-463-5555 (Call before 9 a.m. or after 4 p.m.)</b>
<b>TDD</b>	<b>800/735-2989</b>
<b>FAX</b>	<b>512/463-5709</b>
<b>Copies and Certificates</b>	<b>512-463-5578</b>
<b>Trademarks</b>	<b>512-463-5576</b>
<b>Blank Filing Forms</b>	<b>512-463-5586</b>
<b>Corporate Legal Staff</b>	<b>512-463-5586</b>
<b>"Direct Access" for Business Regulation</b>	<b>512-475-2755 (Charge for On-line Service)</b>
<b>FORMS ONLINE:</b>	<b><a href="http://www.sos.state.tx.us/corp/forms_option.shtml">www.sos.state.tx.us/corp/forms_option.shtml</a></b>

(GSP-07D.DOC, 8-11)

<b>SOUTH / SE</b>	<b>HARRIS COUNTY CLERK</b>		<b>TEXAS STATE COMPTROLLER</b>	<b>IRS</b> <a href="http://www.irs.gov">www.irs.gov</a>
	101 S. Richey, Suite D (Pasadena) 713-247-6230	8876 L45 South 281-721-7021 (recording)		
	701 West Baker Rd. (Baytown) 281-422-0253			
	10851 Scarsdale (South Beltway 8) 281-464-0115			
<b>NORTH</b>	16603 Buccaneer (Clear Lake) 281-486-7250			
	7300 N. Shepherd 713-697-5193	1919 N. Loop West #311 713-426-8200		12941 L45 North 281-721-7021 (recording)
	16715 Clay Road (Bear Creek) 281-859-0685			
	6831 Cypresswood (Champions) 281-379-1057			
<b>DOWNTOWN &amp; SOUTH</b>	7900 Will Clayton Pkwy. (Humble) 281-540-1173			
	201 Caroline, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor 713-755-6436	2616 South Loop West, # 300 713-314-5700 (Audit Office Only)		1919 Smith St. (@ Pierce Elevated) 281-721-7021 (recording)
<b>SW</b>	6000 Chimney Rock (@ Gulfton) 713-660-7902	7011 Harwin, #186 (@ Savoy) 713-783-1665		8701 S. Gessner 281-721-7021 (recording)

# LEGAL BUSINESS STRUCTURES IN TEXAS

HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER  
Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity  
<http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/>  
Ph. 832-393-0954

The Filing Fee for Articles of Incorporation is \$300. The Secretary of State (SOS) registers Corporate Names, Limited Partnerships, Limited Liability Companies, Certificate of Authority, Non-Profit Agencies, Statewide D.B.A's (name) and others. The legal structures for business available in Texas are as follows. **Please note that the following information DOES NOT constitute legal advice.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION: [www.sos.state.tx.us/corp](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/corp)

## SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP

A sole proprietorship exists when a single individual operates a business owning all assets, is personally liable for all debts and business ownership is non-transferable. Under a sole proprietorship, the life of the proprietorship is limited to the life of the individual proprietor. The sole proprietorship makes no legal distinction between personal and business debts, and it does not require a separate income tax return.

## GENERAL PARTNERSHIP

A general partnership exists when two or more individuals or businesses join to operate a business. Under the general partnership, a separate business entity exists, but creditors can still look to the partner's personal assets for satisfaction. General partners often share equally in assets and liabilities. The general partnership requires an annual partnership income tax return (separate from the partners' personal returns).

## CORPORATION

A corporation is created when one or more individuals, partnerships or owners join together to form a separate entity for the purpose of operating a business in Texas. A corporation has its own legal identity, separate from its owners. The corporation safeguards the business owners' personal assets. Taxation of the corporation varies depending on the type of corporation formed- C Corporation or S Corporation. A C Corporation is often times taxed at a rate higher than an individual. The owners are not taxed personally for profits; however, the owners do pay personal taxes on any salaries and/or dividends and the corporation is also taxed on the dividends. Owners of an S Corporation may personally deduct losses the same as a partnership. The S Corporation also offers alternative methods for distributing the business income to the owners, and there is no added cost to the incorporation process.

## LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY, LLC

A limited liability company is an unincorporated business entity which shares some of the aspects of S corporations and limited partnerships, and yet has more flexibility than some more traditional business entities. The limited liability company provides its owners with limited liability and pass-through tax advantages without the restrictions imposed on S corporations and limited partnerships.

## LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

A limited partnership is a partnership formed by two or more persons or entities, and having one or more general partners and one or more limited partners. General partners share equality in debts and assets while limited partners have limited debt obligations.

## REGISTERED LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP

A general partnership registered with the Secretary of State is a "registered limited liability partnership". A partner's liability in a registered limited partnership differs from that in an ordinary partnership. In a registered limited liability partnership, a partner is not individually liable, under some circumstances, for debts and obligations of the partnership arising from errors, omissions, negligence, incompetence, or malfeasance committed in the course of the partnership business by others in the partnership.

A professional tax consultant, accountant and/or attorney should be consulted before determining which legal structure best

# CITY / COUNTY REQUIREMENTS

HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER  
Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity  
<http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/>  
Ph. 832-393-0954

CONTACT THE AGENCIES CHECKED BELOW FOR DETAILED PERMIT, LICENSE & REGULATORY INFORMATION. BUSINESSES LOCATED OUTSIDE OF HOUSTON OR HARRIS CO. MUST CONTACT THEIR CITY HALL AND/OR COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE FOR REQUIREMENTS. AGENCIES CHECKED BELOW ARE BASED ON YOUR INFORMATION. THE OPENING OF THE NEW HOUSTON PERMITTING CENTER HAS RESULTED IN NUMEROUS ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER CHANGES FOR CITY OF HOUSTON AGENCIES. AS OF PRESS TIME, NEW CONTACT INFORMATION IS LISTED BELOW. SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

## COH HOUSTON PERMITTING CENTER (HPC)

1002 WASHINGTON AVE., HOUSTON, TX. 77002

**MAIN: 832-394-9000 or 832-393-0954**

[www.houstonpermittingcenter.org](http://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org)

(\* Denotes agency has moved to HPC or is in the process of moving)

- CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY (C.O.): 832-394-8847 (PWE) \*\***  
[www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement.html](http://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement.html)
- BUILDING/STRUCTURE PERMIT (also Demolition Permits): 832-394-8840 (PWE) \*\***  
[www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement.html](http://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement.html)  
Houston uses the 2002 International Building Code with local amendments (available by calling 713-535-7737). Elevators and escalators are regulated by the Texas Dept. of Licensing & Regulation. Permit Offices: **Dacoma**, 3825 Dacoma St. (713-686-6224) and **Kingwood** 3915 Rustic Woods Dr. (281-361-9586). **HARRIS COUNTY PERMITS OFFICE requires a "Certificate of Compliance" with the Harris Co. Fire Code. (713-956-3000) [www.eng.hctx.net/permits](http://www.eng.hctx.net/permits) for details and regulations.**
- FOOD DEALERS, HANDLERS PERMITS: 832-393-5100 (NEW) (Health Dept.)**  
[www.houstontx.gov/health/Food/index.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/health/Food/index.html)  
8000 North Stadium Dr. (north of Astrodome). Food service businesses including caterers, restaurants, mobile food units, roadside, farmers markets, day care centers, manufacturing, packaging etc., require permits and periodic inspection. Conducts weekly Food Manager's Certification Classes (FEES). For WIC Program information, call 832-393-5427, for Grease Trap inspections call 832-393-5740. **In HARRIS COUNTY call 713-274-6300 (NEW); In FORT BEND CO. call 281-342-7469.**
- COMMERCIAL PERMITTING & ENFORCEMENT: 832-394-8801 (ARA) \*\***  
[www.houstontx.gov/ara/regaffairs/commercial.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/ara/regaffairs/commercial.html)  
Permits are issued yearly for Second-Hand Merchandise; Roadside Vendors (*Non-food Roadside Vendors are NOT ALLOWED on public rights-of-way in unincorporated Harris Co*); Chantable Solicitation; Antique Dealers; Alcoholic Beverages; Amusement & Game Machines (Non-Food); Flea Markets; Dance Halls; Scrap Dealers; Mini Warehouses; Loudspeaker Operation & Others. For Hotel Occupancy Tax, call 713-837-9888 (Finance Dept), and 713-368-2000 for the Harris County Tax Assessor. For Out-Of-Business permits, call the HCAD at 713-957-5627.
- TRANSPORTATION DIV: 832-394-8803 (ARA) \*\***  
[www.houstontx.gov/ara/regaffairs/transportation.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/ara/regaffairs/transportation.html)  
Regulates Jitneys, Taxis, Limos & School Buses, Sightseeing/Charter Services, Valet Parking Services, Chauffeured Limousine Services, Private School Vehicles. **In HARRIS COUNTY call 967-5870 for Wrecker Permits.**
- SIGN PERMITS: 832-394-8890 (PWE) \*\***  
[www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement/sign-administration-and-permits.html](http://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement/sign-administration-and-permits.html)

- **HOUSTON FIRE MARSHALL: 832-394-8899 (HFD) \*\***  
[www.houstontx.gov/fire/business/permits.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/fire/business/permits.html)  
 2931 W. 12<sup>th</sup> St. The HFD issues permits for storage, handling, and manufacture of flammable liquids and combustibles; Public Assembly; Maximum Occupancy; Tents; and Open burning. In HARRIS COUNTY the County Fire Marshall (281-436-8000) enforces the State Insurance Code. Harris Co. Pollution Control (713-920-2831) and the TCEQ (713-767-3500) must be notified in the event of a toxic waste spill.
- **SUBDIVISION & DEVELOPMENT PLATS: 713-535-7777 (Planning)**  
[www.houstontx.gov/planning/index.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/index.html)  
 611 Walker St., 6th floor. PD checks for the proper subdivision of land and adequate street or right-of-way, building lines and for compliance with the City's development ordinance. Commercial projects are checked for compliance with off-street parking and tree and shrub requirements. Locations of hotels, cell towers, and hazardous chemical storage are regulated by city ordinance. **Subdivision plats** (713-837-7880) are required for developing or redeveloping most land within the Houston city limits and Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). **Development Plats** (DP) are site plans that are required during the building permit process.
- **BUREAU OF AIR QUALITY CONTROL: 832-393-5969 (NEW!) (Health Dept.)**  
[www.houstontx.gov/health/index.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/health/index.html)  
 7411 Park Place Blvd., Suite 200. The Bureau has jurisdictions within the city limits. Enforces and conducts inspections of all facilities for compliance with federal and state air pollution rules and regulations. The Bureau is also responsible for City of Houston ordinances requiring registration and payment of annual permit fees. These fees are valid for one year and are non-transferable. See also TCEQ (P.6) & EPA requirements (P.9).
- **HOUSTON POLICE DEPT. (HPD) PERMITS: 832-394-4800 (HPD) \*\***  
[www.houstontx.gov/police/phone.htm](http://www.houstontx.gov/police/phone.htm)  
 Auto Dealers - Repair - Parts Sales - Wreckers; Auto Storage (713-308-2568); Pawn Shops (713-731-5964); Shooting Galleries/Ranges (281-230-2480); SOB's (713-308-8680- Must apply in person); Convenience Store Security Ordinance- (713-308-1860). Some offices still at 1200 Travis.
- **CITY OF HOUSTON SMOKING ORDINANCE: 832-393-5750 (Health Dept)**  
[www.houstontx.gov/health/Environmental/smokingpage.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/health/Environmental/smokingpage.html) (and) [www.dshs.state.tx.us/tobacco/laws.shtml](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/tobacco/laws.shtml)  
 Enforces the No-Smoking Ordinance within Houston city limits as well as the Cigarette Vending Machine Ord.
- **WASTEWATER CAPACITY RESERVATION / IMPACT FEES: 832-395-4400 (PWE) \*\***  
[www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/utilities/wwops.html](http://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/utilities/wwops.html)  
 In HARRIS or other counties, contact the applicable municipal utility district for water and wastewater availability and rates.
- **CITY SECRETARY: 832-393-1100 (COH Codes and Ordinances)**  
[www.houstontx.gov/codes/index.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/codes/index.html)

## CORPORATIONS, LIMITED PARTNERSHIPS & NON-PROFITS

- **SECRETARY OF STATE: 512-463-5555 or 512-463-5586** APPLY ONLINE  
[www.sos.state.tx.us/corp/index.shtml](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/corp/index.shtml)  
 Corporations Sect. Filing fee: At least \$300.00. Registers Corporate Names, Limited Partnerships, LLC's, S Corps, Certificate of Authority, NON-PROFIT agencies, state-wide DBA's, and others. **NOTARIES** call 512-463-5705. Other businesses regulated include: Athlete Agents & Auto Clubs, and Business Opportunities (512-475-1769); Health Spas, Membership Resorts & Camping, Credit Services, Wrestling Promoters, and Debt Collection (512-463-6906); **Telemarketing** (800-648-9642 for Non-Profits; 512-475-0775 for Others). For **Trademarks** call 512-463-5576.

## ALSO IN PACKET:

- See Page 5- "LOCAL AND STATE REGULATIONS"
- See Page 9- "FEDERAL REGULATIONS"
- See Page 11-12 "EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES"
- See Page 15-16 "DEED RESTRICTIONS AND HOME-BASED BUSINESSES"

(GSP-06A.DOC, 9-11)

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, RESEARCH AND COUNSELING

CPA REFERRAL SERVICE	713-622-7733
CONSUMER CREDIT COUNSELING SERVICE	713-923-2227
GREATER HOUSTON CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU (Inc. Houston Film Commission)	713-227-3100
HOUSTON ADVANCED RESEARCH CENTER	281-367-1348
SOCIETY OF THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY, INC. (Plastics Recycling Codes)	202-721-7700
SPACE ALLIANCE TECHNOLOGY OUTREACH PROGRAM	281-486-5535
TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT c/o Texas A & M	979-845-2907
TEXAS COMMISSION ON ALCOHOLISM & DRUG ABUSE HOTLINE	800-832-9623
TEXAS FILM COMMISSION (Office of the Governor)	512-463-9200
GS1 US PARTNER CONNECTIONS (UPC, UIC, EDI Code Assignment)	800-543-8137

## COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND FACILITIES

"BLACK'S GUIDE (Office-Industrial Real Estate)	713-439-0271
PORT OF HOUSTON AUTHORITY	713-670-2400
HOUSTON ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS	713-629-1900

## EMPLOYEE, CAREER RELATED SERVICES

HOUSTON WORKS	713-654-1919
SER-JOBS FOR PROGRESS	713-773-6000

## PATENT, TRADEMARK, AND COPYRIGHT ASSISTANCE

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF COMPOSERS, AUTHORS & PUBLISHERS	800-505-4052
INVENTORS ASSOCIATION HOUSTON	713-686-7676
RICE UNIVERSITY PATENT LIBRARY	713-348-2587
TEXAS MUSIC OFFICE (Governor's Office-Music Related Clearinghouse)	512-463-6666

## PUBLICATIONS

DAILY COURT REVIEW (Newspaper-daily)	713-869-5434
HOUSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL (Newspaper-weekly - <a href="http://www.houstonbizjournal.com">www.houstonbizjournal.com</a> )	713-688-8811
LATIN TRADE (Magazine - Bi-monthly)	800-799-6895
<a href="http://www.manufacturingnews.com">www.manufacturingnews.com</a>	888-752-5200
MCGRAW HILL-CONSTRUCTION-DODGE INFO SYSTEMS	713-529-4895
TEXAS REGISTER	<a href="http://www.sos.state.tx.us/texreg/index.shtml">www.sos.state.tx.us/texreg/index.shtml</a>
CONSUMER INFORMATION CATALOG (Federal)	<a href="http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov">www.pueblo.gsa.gov</a>

## CREDIT REPORTING SERVICES (Call for fees)

EQUIFAX ( <a href="http://www.equifax.com">www.equifax.com</a> )	800-525-6285
TRANSUNION ( <a href="http://www.tuc.com">www.tuc.com</a> )	800-888-4213
EXPERIAN ( <a href="http://www.experian.com">www.experian.com</a> )	888-397-3742

(GSP-08A.DOC, 7-09)

# TECHNICAL/MANAGEMENT RESOURCES 2

HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER  
 Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity  
<http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/>  
 Ph. 832-393-0954

THE ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER NEITHER ENDORCES NOR RECOMMENDS AGENCIES, ASSOCIATIONS OR PUBLICATIONS APPEARING ON THIS LIST. AGENCIES WITHOUT TDD NUMBERS CAN BE REACHED USING 7-1-1. PLEASE CALL FOR FAX NUMBERS AND WEBSITES.

## DEMOGRAPHIC OR STATISTICAL INFORMATION

BUREAU OF BUSINESS RESEARCH, UNIV OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN	888-752-5200
CITY OF HOUSTON PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPT.	713-883-7701
GREATER HOUSTON PARTNERSHIP, Research Dept.	713-844-3600
HOUSTON CENTRAL LIBRARY, Telephone Research Dept.	832-393-1313
	713-225-3385 TDD
HOUSTON DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT DIST	713-650-3022
REGIONAL INFO & COMMUNICATION EXCHANGE (RICE UNIV)	713-348-2586
UH CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY	713-743-3970
UH SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER LIBRARY	713-752-8400

## NON-PROFIT ASSISTANCE

EXECUTIVE SERVICE CORPS OF HOUSTON	713-780-2208
GRANTSMANSHIP CENTER (Los Angeles)	213-482-4493
NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (Los Angeles)	213-687-9511
TEXAS ACCOUNTANTS & LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS	713-526-4876
TX SOCIETY OF CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS (Houston)	713-622-7733
TEXAS STATE COMPTROLLER STATE GRANTS HOTLINE	512-463-8465
FUNDING INFORMATION CENTER	817-334-0228
UNITED WAY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP)	713-685-2787
<a href="http://www.uwtgc.org">www.uwtgc.org</a> ( Help line 2-1-1)	713-685-2773 TDD
VOLUNTEER CENTER	713-965-0031
TEXAS NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE NETWORK.	<a href="http://www.txnetwork.org">www.txnetwork.org</a>

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

BAY AREA HOUSTON ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP	281-486-5535
GREATER HOUSTON PARTNERSHIP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	281-242-3600
CENTERPOINT ENERGY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIVISION	713-844-3600
PEARLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION	281-652-1627

## LEGAL ASSISTANCE

AMERICAN ARBITRATION ASSOCIATION (Houston Regional Offices)	713-739-1302
DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTERS	713-755-8274
GULF COAST LEGAL FOUNDATION	713-652-0077
HARRIS COUNTY LAW LIBRARY	713-755-5183
HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION LEGAL LINE (Call for hours)	713-759-1133
LAWYERS REFERRAL SERVICE	713-237-9429
LEGAL HOTLINE FOR OLDER TEXANS (AARP)	800-622-2520
TEXAS ATTORNEY GENERAL, Consumer Protection Div.	713-223-5886
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW LIBRARY	713-743-2300
VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROGRAM	713-288-0732

# LOCAL & STATE REGULATIONS

HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER  
 Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity  
<http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/>  
 Ph. 832-393-0954

PLEASE CONTACT AGENCIES CHECKED BELOW FOR REGULATIONS, REQUIREMENTS, FEES, LOCATIONS AND PROCESSING TIMES. (Area codes are 713 unless noted; "800" denotes toll-free calls). YOUR BUSINESS MAY BE REGULATED IN MORE THAN ONE CATEGORY. INFORMATION INCLUDED HEREIN IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

## City of Houston (COH) Call 3-1-1 (or) [www.houstontx.gov](http://www.houstontx.gov)

- WATER/ WASTEWATER CUSTOMER SERVICE (PWE) / (832-395-4400)** 1002 Washington Ave. (HPC)  
Establishing all service in the COH. Taps and meters.
- BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION & CARE (BARC) / (713-229-7300)** Kennel licensing, assistance dogs.
- BURGLAR ALARM ADMINISTRATION(ARA) / (832-394-8802)** 1002 Washington Ave. (HPC).
- DUMPSTER PERMITS(SWD) / (713-837-9159)**, Solid Waste Management Dept. See HFD for Fire Code info.
- NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION CORPS/ (713-525-2525, Complaints)** 2636 South Loop West. Building demolition, weed control, neighborhood nuisances.
- PARKING MGT. DIVISION(ARA) / (832-393-8690)** Newsracks, Magazine racks
- TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION DIV. (PWE) / (713-837-7262)** 611 Walker, 5th Floor. Parade, parking, barricade, street closing, sidewalk cafes, and curb numbering contractor permits.

## COH HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES – HELPFUL NUMBERS (832-393-5169)

[www.houstontx.gov/health/helpfulnum.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/health/helpfulnum.html)

- BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION & CARE / (713229-7300)** Kennel licensing, assistance dogs.
- ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH BUREAU / (832393-5100)** 8000 N. Stadium, 77054. Waste, Pools, Spas, Landfills, Underground Storage Tanks, Gas/Lube Stations, Dry Cleaners, Sewage Treatment, Grease Traps (Food), Lint Traps, Car Wash and Detail, SPECIAL WASTE SERVICES (Power Washing, Waste Transport Vehicles: 832-393-5688).
- BUREAU OF POLLUTION CONTROL AND PREVENTION / (832393-5730)** 7411 Park Place. Indoor air pollution sources, Radiation, Infectious & Medical Waste Inspections, Funeral Homes, Laser Shows, Microwaves, Lead-based paint.
- EMS Bureau / (832-393-5611).** Regulates public & private ambulance and EMS providers.

## Harris County (HC) Agencies [www.co.harris.tx.us/hc\\_phone\\_dir/deptlist.asp](http://www.co.harris.tx.us/hc_phone_dir/deptlist.asp)

- HARRIS COUNTY BAIL BOND BOARD / (713-755-8040)** 49 San Jacinto. Bail bond agencies.
- HARRIS COUNTY SHERIFF / (713-221-6000)** Pawn Shops, Firearm sales. Sexually Oriented Business Permit (SOBP) (713-693-3617), Wrecker permits (713-672-8853, see also Texas DOT & the City of Houston).
- HARRIS COUNTY TAX ASSESSOR / (713-368-2300)** 1001 Preston. Amusement Machines (713-368-2151), Motor vehicle registration and title service licensing (713-368-2000) Disabled parking permits.
- ALARM DETAIL/ (713-755-4600)** Harris County Sheriff's Office.
- VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION / (281-999-3191)**
- PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE DEPT. (Engineering and Architecture) / (713-956-3000)**  
Residential and lease space build-out permits, floodplain permits, junkyards, auto salvage-wrecking, driveway/culvert, ETJ

## State of Texas Agencies 1-800-888-0511

www.texasonline.com -or- www.texasonline.com/portal/to/en/gov/9 (All State-issued licenses)

### ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCIES

- TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – TCEQ** (713-767-3500) *The TCEQ regulates many manufacturers, auto dealers, engine repair shops, auto body shops, dry cleaners, landfills, hazardous waste storage & transportation, tire disposal/recycling, oil recycling, waste processing or disposal facilities, printers, waste hauling, a/c service, printing shops, furniture mfg. and repair, metal fabrication and finishing, refineries, auto inspection, gasoline stations, septic tank systems, bakeries and others. TCEQ also enforces storm water discharge from construction sites under the TPDES Construction Permit. Businesses might also be regulated by the COH. .*
- GENERAL LAND OFFICE** (512-475-1575) *Oil Spill Prevention & Response Plan. Coastal facilities that handle oil must have a prevention and clean-up plan approved by GLO.*
- RAILROAD COMMISSION** (713-869-5001). *Oil and Gas Division (Mining activities, and Natural Gas Dealers and handlers). Pipeline Safety Division regulates wells and audits gas utilities (713-869-5769).*

### TRANSPORTATION & MOTOR VEHICLES

- AVIATION, Department of** (512-416-4500). *Air fields, airports, state facilities.*
- MOTOR VEHICLE BOARD** (713-802-4300). *Registration & title information. Motor vehicle dealers license (incl. motorcycles, trailers, etc.) (512-416-4800).*
- PUBLIC SAFETY, Department of** (512-465-2000). *After-market auto glass tinting (512-424-2000), Hazardous waste transport (512-873-3100). Vehicle Inspection Stations (281-272-1150). ATV and motorcycle instructor permit (512-465-2021).*
- PUBLIC SAFETY, Department of (License Issuance Bureau)** (713-633-9872) *8825 West Tidwell and other Houston locations. Issues all private, commercial, and motorcycle driver's licenses. Call for hours and locations.*
- TRANSPORTATION, Department of** (713-869-4571). *TXDOT controls access to state highways, oversize and overweight loads (portable building transport, escort vehicles, manufactured housing, oversized equipment), right-of-way leasing for billboards. Aviation and state facilities (512-476-9262). The Motor Carrier Division (800-299-1700 option 3) registers trucking: Vehicles over 26,000 pounds (cargo or passengers), 16+ passenger buses, Hazardous waste transporters, movers. For oversized load permits within the City of Houston, call 713-754-0830.*

#### Does the worker provide his services on a continuous basis?

The more long-term, continuous, and exclusive the relationship is, the more likely it is to be employment. Independent contractors, on the other hand, generally perform their work one job at a time and are paid on the same basis.

#### Is the worker required to provide services under the employer's name? Does she represent herself to the public as being an employee of the employer? On whose behalf are the services performed?

If the general public would perceive the person to be a representative of the employer because of business cards, uniforms, or other advertising, this would be more indicative of an employee than an independent contractor. An employee performs services on behalf of the employer for customers of the employer. An independent contractor performs services on her own behalf for her own customers.

#### Does the employer retain the right to dictate how the work should be done? Is the worker required to work a certain schedule, to notify the employer if he will not come to work, or to get the employer's approval for any helpers who are hired?

When an employer contracts for outside services, it is normally interested only in the end result, not in the details of how the contractor performs the work. The employer should have no interest in how the independent contractor allocates either his time or that of his helpers. By the same token, the employer would have no interest in the contractor's right to hire his own helpers, beyond the right to contractually specify that anyone providing services on a project must be properly licensed under whatever laws apply to the work.

(GSP-07C.DOC, 5-09)

### GENERAL PERMITS AND LICENSES

- ADULT DAY CARE, NURSING, and PERSONAL CARE FACILITIES** (713-767-2000 / Inspections, 512-438-2633). *The Dept. of Aging and Disability Services regulates Adult Personal Care, Day Homes, and Adult Foster Care Homes, some Halfway Houses and Group Homes, Long-term care facilities, and Assisted Living Centers.*
- AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT** (713-921-8200 or 1-800-835-5832). *Nursery and Floral Products (incl. Short-term sales) (512-463-4583), Weights and Measures, Farmers Markets, Antifreeze Mfg. Permit. Texas Egg Law for egg handling (512-463-7583) and Texas-grown vegetables (512-463-7604). Licenses Fish Farms/Aquaculture (512-463-7583).*
- ANIMAL HEALTH COMMISSION** (512-719-0700). *Regulates exotic livestock and fowl.*
- ATTORNEY GENERAL** (512-463-2100) *Complaints, Raffles, Deceptive Trade. Consumer Protection Div. (713-223-5886).*
- BANKING DEPARTMENT** (713-932-6146). *Automatic Teller Machines (ATM's), Pre-paid Funeral Service accounts, Perpetual Care Cemeteries, Currency Exchanges, Check Cashing. Trust Company Loans/Investments (512-475-1300).*
- CONSUMER CREDIT COMMISSION** (1-800-538-1579). *Regulates consumer installment loans, interest rates, credit card & store card issuance & pawn shops, property tax lenders, motor vehicle finance license, debt mgt. Services.*
- FEED & FERTILIZER CONTROL SERVICE** (979-845-1121). *Regulates feed, pet food and fertilizer manufacturers.*
- DEPT. OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES** (713-767-3000). *Licenses for Food and Drug Mfg. (Incl. Bottled Water and water dispensing), Seafood Safety (281-559-3187). For Milk and Dairy Product handling call 713-767-3240.*

# CONTRACT LABOR

HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER  
Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity  
<http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/>  
Ph. 832-393-0954

## SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR DEFINING CONTRACT LABOR

TEXT FROM: [www.twc.state.tx.us/news/efte/specific\\_criteria.html](http://www.twc.state.tx.us/news/efte/specific_criteria.html)

Employers often confront these issues over short-term or as needed workers performing services for them. Any employer using what it considers to be "contract labor" should ask itself some questions up front:

**Is the service provided by the individuals in question essential to, and an integral part of, the service the employer provides to the public?**

The less able an employer is to offer its primary service without the help of the people whose status is at issue, the more likely it is that they will be considered employees. Consider this: if certain services are so essential to a business that it will stand or fall based upon how well those services are performed, the business will naturally want to exercise enough direction and control over the services to ensure they are good. That amount of control can make a company an employer of such workers.

**What opportunity for profit or risk of loss is there for the worker? What kind of investment, other than his or her time, does the worker have in the enterprise?**

An employee is paid for her time. She would not be expected to provide her own workplace, materials, tools, and supplies, or otherwise to invest her own money in the business. An employee who makes a costly mistake can be fired, but cannot legally be forced to work without pay. An independent contractor, on the other hand, is an independent businessperson with expenses of his or her own. He will be expected to provide or purchase everything he needs to do the job. If he fails to satisfy the customer, he would be required to redo the work for no additional compensation, or else face the risk of non-payment by the customer. These things create the opportunity for profit or loss.

**What is the compensation arrangement? Is the compensation negotiated, or is it imposed by the employer?**

A true independent contractor's main concern is her own bottom line, not that of the employer. Since she is responsible for her own overhead, including the hiring of any helpers she may need, there is always an element of negotiation in any bona fide contract for services. Usually, but not always, an independent contractor is paid by the job. It is up to him to figure out how much he needs to finish the job at a profit. If he miscalculates, the loss is his.

**Does the individual provide his services to the public at large? Does he advertise his services in newspapers, the Yellow Pages, or specialized journals?**

If a person holds herself out to the public as self-employed and available for work for any customer with whom she can negotiate an acceptable price, she is likely to be held an independent contractor. The more the worker advertises, the more it is apparent that she is in business for herself, since an independent business stands or falls based upon its business development efforts.

**Is there a non-competition agreement?**

Generally, non-competition agreements and independent contractors do not go hand-in-hand. Such a provision in a contract is strongly indicative of an employment relationship, chiefly because it proves that the services in question are directly related to the primary service provided by the employer. If those services were not related, there would be no "competition" and thus nothing against which to guard. The power to keep a person from pursuing his or her own business interests and to force a person to sign such an agreement is typical of the power wielded by employers over employees.

- **PARKS & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT** (1-800-792-1112 TF). *Fur, Seafood Dealers- retail & wholesale, Hunting & Fishing Licenses (ask about new license program "Texas Outdoor Connection"). Also issues Fishing Guide permit. Boat Registration, call 1-800-262-8755.*
- **PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION** (512-936-7120 Office of Consumer Affairs). *Regulates Automatic Dial Announcing Devices (ADAD's), Long Distance Services, Telephone and Electrical Companies.*
- **RESIDENTIAL & DAY CARE LICENSING** (713-940-5200 or 1-800-862-5252). *Dept. Of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) regulates Child Care, Foster Care, Adoption Agencies, drop-in care facilities, and group/family day care homes.*
- **SAVINGS AND LOAN DEPT.** (512-475-1350). *Regulates mortgage brokers and loan officers, banks.*
- **TEXAS MUSIC OFFICE** (Office of the Governor) (512-463-6666) *A clearinghouse for Texas music industry information. Provides referrals to Texas music businesses, talent and events to attract new business to Texas.*

## PROFESSIONAL LICENSES

- **APPRAISER LICENSING & CERTIFICATION BOARD** (512-465-3950). *All real estate appraisers.*
- **ARCHITECTURAL EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-305-9000). *Interior Designers, Landscape Architects.*
- **BAR OF TEXAS, STATE** (1-800-204-2222). *Legal offices, law firms, paralegal (info only).*
- **BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS, TEXAS** (512-463-1621). *Attorneys, Legal consultants, Bar Exam applications.*
- **BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYORS** (512-452-9427). *All surveyors and related activities.*
- **COURT REPORTERS CERTIFICATION BOARD** (512-463-1630).
- **DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED, COMMISSION FOR THE** (512-451-8494 or 1-800-332-3873). *Sign Language Interpreter certification.*
- **ENGINEERS REGISTRATION BOARD** (512-440-7723). *All types of engineers.*
- **FUNERAL SERVICE COMMISSION** (512-936-2474). *Regulates Morticians, Funeral Directors & Homes, Embalmers.*
- **GEOSCIENTISTS, BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL (New)** [www.tbpg.state.tx.us](http://www.tbpg.state.tx.us) *Regulates all geoscientists- professional certification required as of September 2003.*
- **HOUSING & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS, DEPT. OF** (800-500-7074). *Regulates manufacturers, retailers, installers, brokers, salvagers / rebuilders, and salespersons of mfg. housing in Texas (1-800-500-7074). Outside Texas: 512-475-2200.*
- **INSURANCE, DEPARTMENT OF** (800-252-3439 TF; 512-322-3503). *Insurance agencies, sales, continuing care facilities. Also regulates Amusement Rides & BUNGEE, Adjusters & Title Insurers (512-322-4361), Bail bondsmen (512-322-3503).*
- **LANDSCAPE IRRIGATORS, Texas Engineering Extension Service** (800-824-7303). *Lawn Sprinkler System Installers.*
- **LAND SURVEYING BOARD** (512-452-9427). *Land and property surveyors.*
- **LICENSING & REGULATION, Department of** (713-924-6300; 1-800-803-9202). *TDLR regulates: Auctioneers, AC & Refrigeration Contractors and technicians, Duct Cleaning, Boiler Operation & Inspection, Combative Sports, Court Interpreters, Career Counseling, Electricians, Appliance Installers, Personnel Employment Services (Permanent), Staff Leasing, Service Contract Providers, Industrialized Housing & Buildings and Property Tax Consultants. TDLR also regulates Elevators, Escalators, and their inspection (800-252-8026), and Barbers and Cosmetologists. Also Tow Trucks and Tow Truck Companies and Vehicle Storage Facilities.*
- **PLUMBING EXAMINERS BOARD** (800-845-6584). *All plumbers. See COH also.*
- **POLYGRAPH EXAMINERS BOARD** (866-448-8610)
- **PRIVATE SECURITY BUREAU (TXDPS)** (512-424-7710). *Security System Consultants and sales, Installers, Dog Trainers, Alarm systems monitors, Security officers, Locksmiths.*
- **PROCESS SERVERS** (Supreme Court of Texas) (512-463-2713). *Texas Secretary of State Citations Unit: 512-463-5560.*
- **PUBLIC ACCOUNTANCY BOARD** (512-305-7800). *Certified Public Accountants.*
- **REAL ESTATE COMMISSION** (800-250-8732). *Agents / Brokers / Offices.*
- **STATE FIRE MARSHALL** (Texas Dept of Insurance) (512-305-7900, 1-800-578-4677). *Regulates businesses servicing, installing, monitoring, and maintaining fire detection and fire alarm devices and systems, including fire extinguishers and indoor sprinklers. Regulates foster and group home safety outside the COH. Also regulates FIREWORKS.*
- **STATE SECURITIES BOARD** (713-781-1094 or 512-305-8300). *Securities dealers & brokers, financial consultant or investment adviser permit. \$275 initial fee.*
- **STRUCTURAL PEST CONTROL BOARD** (512-305-8250)
- **VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-305-7555).

## GENERAL REGULATORY AGENCIES

- **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION (TABC)** (713-426-7900, 800-622-5991). *Alcohol retailers, Wholesalers, Restaurants, Breweries, Late Hours permits, Producers etc. Physicians or Lab Alcohol Permit (512-458-2500).*
- **CONCEALED HANDGUN PERMIT, Dept. of Public Safety** (800-224-5744). *Personal concealed carry and instruction.*
- **EDUCATION AGENCY (Driver Training & Education Div.)** (512-936-6777) *Regulates and licenses driver education schools, driving safety schools, and related instructors.*
- **LOTTERY COMMISSION** (800-37-LOTTO). *Application for Lottery Retailer License, Charitable Bingo operation.*
- **RACING COMMISSION** (512-833-6699). *Parimutuel racing and related professions, activities.*
- **STATE TREASURER** (800-862-2260). *Sale of tobacco products now licensed by the State Comptroller (800-862-2260). Ask about new posting rules for tobacco retailers and vending machines effective 1-1-98.*
- **STATE BOARD FOR EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION** (888-863-5880). *For Texas public and private school teachers.*
- **TEXAS DEPT. OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE PAROLE DIVISION** 713-675-4426 *Offender rehabilitation, Halfway houses.*
- **TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION** (800-325-8506). *Lobbyists.*
- **TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION (Career School Licensing)** (512-936-3100). *Proprietary Business Schools & Veterans Education. All private and technical schools issuing a certificate for completion of course work must meet TEA requirements. CHILD LABOR, call 512-463-8812.*

## HEALTH-RELATED LICENSES/SERVICES

- **CHIROPRACTIC EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-305-6700)
- **COMMISSION ON ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE c/o TDSHS** (866-378-8440). *Alcohol & substance abuse treatment and licensing, Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselors.*
- **DENTAL EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-463-6400). *Dentists, Dental Hygienists & Commercial Dental Labs.*
- **DIETICIANS EXAMINERS BOARD c/o TDSHS** (512-834-6601).
- **HEALTH DEPARTMENT (DSHS)** (713-767-3000 or HHS HOTLINE: 877-787-8999). *Product Safety (713-767-3254) Bedding & Sleep Products, Playground Equipment, Hazardous Substances (Glue, Paint, etc.); Paramedics; Athletic Trainers (512-834-6615); Massage Therapists (512-834-6616); Home Health Care (512-458-7240); Hospital Licensing (512-834-6645); Marriage & Family Therapists (512-834-6657); Midwives (512-458-7700); Nursing, Personal & Residential Care Homes (713-767-2200); Physical Therapists (512-305-6900); Professional Counselors (512-834-6658); Respiratory Care Practitioner (512-834-6632); Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiology (512-834-6627); Social Workers (1-800-232-3162); Tattoo Studios (512-458-7236); Medical Physicists (512-834-6655); Medical Radiologic Technologists (512-834-6617); Perfusionists (512-834-6602). General Sanitation Div. (512-834-6635 ) Youth Camps, Pesticide Applicator, Swimming Pools, Migrant and Field Labor Sanitation.*
- **HEARING AID FITTING AND DISPENSING BOARD c/o TDSHS** (512-834-6784)
- **MEDICAL EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-305-7030). *Physicians, Acupuncture. Consumer complaints call 800-248-4062.*
- **NURSE EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-305-7400). *Medication aids (800-452-3934), Vocational nurses (512-305-8100).*
- **OPTOMETRY BOARD** (512-305-8500). *Optometrists, Opticians (512-834-6661 TDSHS) and contact lens dispensing, sales & service (512-834-4515 TDSHS). Vision screeners call 512-458-7420.*
- **PHARMACY BOARD** (512-305-8000). *Pharmacists, plus home health medication aide (512-834-6618).*
- **PODIATRY EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-305-7000). *Regulates professional podiatrists.*
- **PSYCHOLOGISTS EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-305-7700).
- **RADIATION CONTROL BUREAU c/o TDSHS** (713-767-3252; 512-834-6688). *Tanning Salons, X-ray machines. Licenses to possess or use radioactive materials are issued by the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Authority (512-451-5292).*
- **REHABILITATION COMMISSION, Houston Regional Office** (713-735-3470 V & TDD or 1-866-281-1804). *The VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM serves people with a wide variety of disabilities and provides retraining activities, job placement and counseling. See TDSHS for Halfway Houses for the mentally impaired (713-995-1112).*

(GSP-06B-NEW.DOC, 9-11)

University and flexible Learning Management System.

### **RICE ALLIANCE FOR TECHNOLOGY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP 713-348-3443** **www.alliance.rice.edu/**

The Rice Alliance provides a collaborative network and forum for support, education, and exchange of ideas. It provides entrepreneurs access to the human and financial capital needed for success. Over the past 6 years, the Rice Alliance has conducted over 84 programs attended by over 17,000 individuals. Over 15,000 individuals subscribe to the Rice Alliance Digest newsletter

### **RICE UNIVERSITY- Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Management 713-527-6060** **business.rice.edu**

Rice U. offers continuing education programs in Management, Accounting & Finance, Marketing & Strategy, Customer Satisfaction, Global Competition, and others. Some courses award CEU's. Call for fees and availability. Rice U.=s FONDREN LIBRARY ([www.rice.edu/fondren/info/faq.html](http://www.rice.edu/fondren/info/faq.html)) provides comprehensive research information (713-348-5698).

### **SER JOBS FOR PROGRESS, INC. 713-773-6000** **www.serhouston.org**

SER was founded in 1965 through the combined efforts of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the G.I. Forum, and the Department of the Navy. It began as a volunteer job bank for Hispanics Veterans and is now a nationwide network of 42 affiliates operating in over 200 offices. SER focuses on delivering **workforce and social services** to the Gulf Coast Region's diverse communities. SER's **online job bank** is available for employers to find the best candidate and for job seekers to find the best career opportunity.

### **SERVICES COOPERATIVE ASSOC. 713-932-7495**

**www.servicesca.org**  
9600 Long Point Rd., #150. SCA provides education, networking and support for emerging businesses. Also sponsors a for-profit business incubator (Entrepreneurial Development Center). Ask about the WOMENS' BUSINESS CENTER, an INCUBATOR for first stage, women-owned companies.

### **SILVER FOX ADVISORS, INC. 713-467-5900** **www.silverfox.org**

Silver Fox executives represent diverse business disciplines and provide practical, proven, and in-depth strategies for a wide range of business situations. Each member's purpose is to improve a client's sales, productivity, processes, and profitability. Each advisor sets individual fees which are considered reasonable when compared to other alternatives such as credit courses in numerous business related fields. Provides instruction at several off-site locations (West Houston and North Houston). Call 713-743-1060 for courses.

### **UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON CLEAR LAKE Center for Advanced Management Programs 281.283.3121** **prtl.uhcl.edu/portal/page/portal/CMP**

2700 Bay Area Blvd. CAMP's mission is to provide various services to business and government organizations. Programs are designed to refine and broaden skills, to offer consulting, and to meet diverse professional and educational needs. Call for an extensive listing of upcoming events, educational programs, and counseling services.

### **WOMEN'S BUSINESS ENTERPRISE ALLIANCE 713-681-9232** **www.wbea-texas.org**

1900 North Loop West, Suite 270. The Women's Business Enterprise Alliance is committed to increasing business opportunities for woman-owned businesses and corporate members through education, programs, and professional networking. WBE Certification is a nationally recognized and accepted designation for businesses that are at least 51% owned, managed and controlled by a woman or women. WBE status can be used as a marketing tool to source contracts with both national and regional "corporate members" which include corporations, non-profit organizations and government agencies.

### **WORKLIFE INSTITUTE 713-266-2456** **www.worklifeinstitute.com**

1900 St. James Place, #880, Houston, TX 77056. The Worklife Institute is a center for resources providing worklife support for individuals and companies seeking to address with integrity the challenges of today's business environment. The Institute services include corporate consultation, training and program development in leadership, conflict resolution, professional ethics and related interests; employee assistance and career transition counseling, referral to legal and other community resources, and attorneys skilled in job-related needs. Provides services for VETERANS.

(GSP-08.DOC; Rev. 8-11)

**AMERICAN PRODUCTIVITY & QUALITY CENTER 713-681-4020**

[www.apqc.org](http://www.apqc.org)  
1233 N. Post Oak Lane. The non-profit APQC offers instruction in Benchmarking and Total Quality Management (TQM), in addition to presenting seminars for **EXISTING** companies, training programs, and advisory services. The APQC also has an extensive library available for Center members and public memberships.

**BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU OF METROPOLITAN HOUSTON 713-868-9500**

[houston.bbb.org](http://houston.bbb.org)  
1333 West Loop South, Suite 1200, Houston, Texas 77027. The BBB is a non-profit corporation which provides numerous support and technical services for its business members, as well as the public. The BBB publishes a membership directory, has a series of "How-To" brochures, and seminars and workshops for members and non-members.

**BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY CENTER 713-845-2400**

[www.hbdinc.org](http://www.hbdinc.org)  
5330 Griggs Road. Through the Business Technology Center (BTC), a 140,000 square foot complex, the HBDINC provides a variety of support services designed to enhance small business ventures including, small business incubator services, management and technical assistance, and below market rate loans. These programs within the Business Technology Center, along with specialized literacy, occupational and apprenticeship training programs that are also available, represent a comprehensive effort to provide small and emerging businesses with the support required for growth.

**EXECUTIVE SERVICE CORPS OF HOUSTON 713-780-2208**

[www.eschouston.org](http://www.eschouston.org)  
The Executive Service Corps of Houston (ESCH) provides high quality management consulting services, at no cost, to nonprofit charitable organizations, including governmental and educational entities, using the talents, experience and energy of volunteer professionals, both active and retired. The ESCH conducts workshops and seminars to provide basic or introductory information on specific topics that are in high demand to small groups of clients such as Nonprofit Start-up and Grantwriting; Board Development; Conducting Effective Meetings; and Planning.

**EXPORT ASSISTANCE CENTER - US INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION 713-718-3062**

[export.gov/index.asp](http://export.gov/index.asp)  
500 Dallas, Suite 1160. The ITA assists in exporting, including licensing, financing, statistics, market research and analysis, and education for existing businesses. Ask for pamphlet, "Export Programs: A Business Directory of U.S. Government Services". For information on Federal export resources, call the Trade Information Center (TIC) toll-free at 800-872-8723 or 800-USA-TRADE. The TIC also has telephone numbers for country desk officers who answer questions on a taxes, trade policies, and regulations.

**HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP 713-718-6491**

[www.hccbizconnect.org](http://www.hccbizconnect.org)  
The mission of the Center for Entrepreneurship is to provide education and training for entrepreneurs and small business owners. HCC's mission fosters economic growth through business and community development. HCC offers entrepreneurship classes for those who seek to develop a business idea into a new business of their own and for those who want to expand their existing business. For locations, hours and special programs see the above website.

**HOUSTON MINORITY SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL 713-271-7805**

[affiliate.nmsdc.org/hmsdc](http://affiliate.nmsdc.org/hmsdc)  
7322 SW Freeway, #1510. The non-profit HMSDC enhances business opportunities and eliminates common barriers M/W/DBE's face in the marketplace. Offers educational and networking opportunities, as well as financing information for HMSDC members.

**LONE STAR COLLEGE 832-813-6500**

[www.lonestar.edu/index.htm](http://www.lonestar.edu/index.htm)  
The Lone Star College-CyFair Corporate Training Department offers a variety of customized training programs to continually enhance the skills necessary to build and retain your 21st century workforce. Here are just a few of the training possibilities: *Strategic Planning, Effective Supervision, Program Design and Evaluation, Effective Meeting Planning and Facilitation, Managing your Boss, Effective Communication, Team Building, Conflict Resolution, Time Management, Stress Management, Customer Service 101, Telephone Skills*

**OSHA TRAINING 888-318-3497**

[www.oshacampus.com](http://www.oshacampus.com)  
OSHAcampus.com is the premier online safety training portal for construction, general industry and OSHA Outreach Training. The comprehensive catalog of self-paced, online safety training and certification courses are created for safety managers, safety trainers, construction employees, employees that deal with environmental hazards, and general workforce employees. Courses are available in "pay-per-view" online modules or can be custom packaged for organizations in a hosted Virtual

# FEDERAL REGULATIONS

**HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER**  
Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity  
<http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/>  
Ph. 832-393-0954

**CONTACT THE FEDERAL AGENCIES CHECKED BELOW FOR REGULATIONS, ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, FEES, LOCATIONS AND PROCESSING TIMES. PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRE DOCUMENT AND CONTACT THE AGENCIES BOTH CHECKED AND UNCHECKED AS NECESSARY. INFORMATION INCLUDED HEREIN IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.**

## US GOVERNMENT INFORMATION: [business.gov](http://business.gov)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: [www.lib.lsu.edu/gov/index.html](http://www.lib.lsu.edu/gov/index.html)

## FOR IMPORT / EXPORT LICENSES:

- U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION: 281-985-6700**  
[www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov)  
2350 N. Sam Houston Pkwy. E  
IMPORT regulations on all goods brought into the U.S. Depending on the goods imported, other local, state and federal agencies may also apply, such as the US Dept. of Agriculture, the Fish and Wildlife Service, or the EPA. Customs Brokers are also licensed by the Texas State Comptroller (800-531-5441 x50381). All mail originating in foreign countries and U.S. overseas territories is subject to Customs examination upon entering the US.
- EXPORT ASSISTANCE CENTER, US Dept. of Commerce: 713-209-3104**  
[www.export.gov](http://www.export.gov) -- [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov)  
1919 Smith Street; Suite 1026; Houston, TX 77002  
Regulates all EXPORTING activities. The ITA provides industry and country analysis for businesses, and counseling through its Commercial Service. The ITA has a business library available to exporters in its Houston office. The Trade Information Center (TIC) can answer questions and assist new exporters via their 1-800-USA-TRADE.

## FOR THE FEDERAL OPERATOR call 800-333-4636 (800-FED-INFO)

- AGRICULTURE DEPT. (USDA): 202-720-2791 (DC Main #).** Animal & Plant Inspection & Quarantine (956-504-4150 Brownsville). Inspects foreign plants, plant products & byproducts for Import & Export. Food Safety Inspection Service, Import Meat Inspection (214-767-9116); Grain Inspection (281-338-2787); Fruit & Vegetable Div./Processed products (210-804-1478). FOOD STAMP SALES call 703-305-2286, TX. LONE STAR CARD (877-765-3458)
- ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO TAX and TRADE BUREAU**, National Revenue Center: 1-877-TTB-FAQS (1-877-882-3277) Please call this number for general questions regarding permits, applications, claims, filing excise tax returns, and other tax collection activities. Go to [WWW.TTB.GOV](http://WWW.TTB.GOV) for information on federal alcohol, tobacco, and firearms permits.
- BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS and EXPLOSIVES**, Houston District Office: 281-372-2900  
TF also has the duty of regulating the firearms and explosives industries. Ensures that all firearms and explosives are stored, handled and sold in a safe manner according to law. Issues FFL (Federal Firearms License).
- COAST GUARD MARINE INSPECTION OFFICE (DOT): 713-671-5180.** Tank, freight, vessel inspections.
- COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION: 202-418-5080.** Commodities brokers and trading activities.
- CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION: 713-209-3447.** The CPSC administers a wide range of product safety standards. Call 800-638-2772 for Toll Free recorded information.
- COPYRIGHT OFFICE / Library of Congress: 202-707-3000.** Public Information Office. Forms & Applications Hotline (202-707-9100). **WEBSITE:** [www.copyright.gov/help/faq](http://www.copyright.gov/help/faq)

- **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA):** 281-983-2100. Regulates all pollution sources. See also the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (Airborne pollutants, hazardous waste transportation, storage and disposal). "Right-to-Know" Disclosure Info (800-535-0202). EPA SMALL BUSINESS REGULATORY HOTLINE (800-368-5888).
- **FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (DOT):** 281-230-5300. Aircraft and facilities operations.
- **FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC):** 1-888-225-5322. Regulates radio & television, telephone (including 800, 888, and 900 numbers), telegraph, satellite communication, two-way radio, cable television, and computer manufacturing. The Mobile Services Div. regulates cellular telephone networks. No FCC Houston office.
- **FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ADMINISTRATION (DOT)** Issues USDOT Number for interstate trucking. Data Analysis & Information Systems, MC-RIS, 400 7th Street, SW, Washington, D. C. 20590, or fax it to 1-703-280-4003, or 2) call 1-800-832-5660 to request an MCS-150 to be mailed to you.  
**Website / FAQ:** [www.63.72.112.205/news.htm#adds](http://www.63.72.112.205/news.htm#adds)
- **FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION (FTC):** 877-382-4357 (Regional Office/Dallas: 214-979-0213). The FTC regulates Mail Order (see Texas State Comptroller for Sales Tax collection requirements), Used Car Sales (Odometer setbacks), Care Labeling, Consumer Leasing, Door-to-door sales, Appliance Labeling, Rental Cars, Debt Collection and Advertising.
- **FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE INSPECTION OFFICE:** 713-672-4420. Regulates Import/Export of all fish & wildlife.
- **FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (FDA):** NO HOUSTON OFFICE. (214-253-4952) Regulates food and drug manufacturing, labeling and sales. Also regulates the manufacture and use of medical devices, and radiation-emitting electronic products. Regulates pet food, animal drugs, feed, additives, and veterinary medical devices.  
Also: 1-888-INFO-FDA (1-888-463-6332)
- **HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD):** 713-313-2274. Regulates mobile home manufacturing.
- **US CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES (USCIS):** 281-847-7900. SEE "Employer Responsibilities". For VISA's call 281-847-7900.
- **JUSTICE DEPT. ANTITRUST DIVISION:** 202-514-2401. Antitrust laws apply to every phase of business, and prohibit practices such as price fixing, restraint of trade, and mergers that reduce competition.
- **MARITIME COMMISSION, FEDERAL:** 202-523-5707 (Houston office is closed). Regulates all ocean-based freight forwarding.
- **NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION (DOT):** 1-800-424-9393. Regulates motor vehicle and parts mfg. including replacement parts for motor vehicles. Auto Safety Hotline (800-424-9393 TF).
- **OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (OSHA):** 281-591-2438 or 281-286-0583
- **OFFICE OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TRANSPORTATION (DOT):** 202-366-0656. Also regulates pipeline safety from its Houston office (713-718-3950).
- **OFFICE OF LABOR MANAGEMENT STANDARDS:** 713-209-3135. Administers Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, as well as labor union activities.
- **PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE:** 703-308-4357 (1-800-786-9199). General information on registering patents. Patent searches can be performed at the Rice University Patent Library (713-348-5483).
- **POSTAL SERVICE BUSINESS CENTER, U.S.:** 713-226-3350, 401 Franklin St. Call for Bulk Mail rates and regulations, Business Reply Mail, Bar Coding and Zip+4 Coding. FREE "POSTAL ANSWER LINE" at 1-800-725-2161.
- **SECURITIES & EXCHANGE COMMISSION:** 817-978-3821 (Fort Worth) (1-800-732-0330). Regulates investment advisors, securities dealers & brokers.
- **STATE DEPARTMENT, U.S.:** National Passport Information System: 1-888-362-8668.
- **TREASURY DEPT. (IRS):** 1-800-829-1040. Businesses having large currency transactions must follow specific record keeping and reporting procedures. This includes businesses such as: Check cashers, Travel agencies, Liquor stores, Food stores, Convenience stores, Currency exchanges, Money order issuers, Banks, Misc. retail, and Pawn shops.

(GSP-06C.DOC, 8-11)

## TECHNICAL - MANAGEMENT RESOURCES 1

**HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER**  
 Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity  
<http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/>  
 Ph. 832-393-0954

*Appearance on this list does not imply endorsement by the City of Houston or the ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER. Make sure you understand the range (and cost, if applicable) of services provided before agreeing to a consulting relationship.*

### FOR NEW BUSINESSES:

#### IRS VIRTUAL SMALL BUSINESS TAX WORKSHOPS

[www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=200274,00.html](http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=200274,00.html)

The Virtual Small Business Tax Workshop is composed of nine interactive lessons designed to help new small business owners learn their tax rights and responsibilities. IRS also has a free DVD of the workshop.

#### SCORE- COUNSELORS TO AMERICA'S SMALL BUSINESS 713-773-6565

[www.scorehouston.org](http://www.scorehouston.org)

8701 S. Gessner. #1200. A service sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Admin. FREE counseling is provided by retired business owners and managers. SCORE sponsors the workshop, "Basics of Running a Small Business", held at the University of Houston twice monthly. SCORE also operates the SBA's BUSINESS SERVICE CENTER which provides information on SBA loan guarantee programs and the Business Information Center (BIC). The national SCORE office provides a new E-MAIL COUNSELING service off the SCORE web page. SCORE also services the Palm Center Business Information Center (BIC)- call 713-643-8000.

#### TSU ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER 713-313-7785

[devweb.tsu.edu/academics/colleges\\_schools/Jesse\\_H\\_Jones\\_School\\_of\\_Business/](http://devweb.tsu.edu/academics/colleges_schools/Jesse_H_Jones_School_of_Business/)

3100 Cleburne Ave., Allen Bldg. #B-11. TSU sponsors programs on business development topics such as Business planning, technical and management assistance, marketing research, and community development projects.(FEES).

#### U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION 713-773-6500

[www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business](http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business)

On this website SBA has brought together the resources you need to get your business started. Whether you're sitting down to write your business plan, wondering about your legal obligations, or researching your financing options, you'll find the information you need right here.

#### U.H. SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER 713-752-8400

[www.sbdcnetwork.uh.edu](http://www.sbdcnetwork.uh.edu)

2302 Fannin, #200. Join the multiple thousands of small businesses that have prospered and grown with the help of the University of Houston Small Business Development Center (UH SBDC). Since 1984, UH SBDC has provided businesses assistance in the areas of business management, government procurement, international trade and manufacturing. Expertise is available to entrepreneurs in the start-up mode as well as to experienced business owners who want to take their companies to the next level

### AGENCIES PROVIDING SPECIALIZED SERVICES

#### ALLIANCE FOR MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY SERVICES 713-776-4700

[www.allianceontheweb.org/](http://www.allianceontheweb.org/)

6440 Hillcroft, Suite 411, Houston TX 77081.

AMCS's mission is to provide comprehensive services to refugees, immigrants and low-income residents of Harris County in order to enhance the process of their cultural adjustment and economic self-sufficiency. Over the past 25 years, AMCS's programs have included Refugee Employment, Refugee Resettlement, Refugee Case Management, Community Employment and Training, Youth Empowerment Programs, IDA, **Micro-enterprise programs**, Refugee Transportation Program, Immigration Counseling, Interpretation, and Health Education and Advocacy Services.

## CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES / RESOURCES

### UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON PROCUREMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER (UH PTAC) 713-752-8477

[uhptac.sbdcnetwork.net/ptac/Default.asp](http://uhptac.sbdcnetwork.net/ptac/Default.asp)

UH PTAC offers marketing and technical assistance to companies interested in selling their goods and/or services to federal, state and local government agencies. Part of the University of Houston Small Business Development Center (UH SBDC), UH PTAC provides free or low cost government contracting assistance to businesses in 45 counties between and around the major cities of Houston and Austin in the Southeast Texas area.

### GREATER HOUSTON BUSINESS PROCUREMENT FORUM

[www.houstonbiz.org](http://www.houstonbiz.org)

The Greater Houston Business Procurement Forum is a convenient way for small business owners and operators to acquire contracts, information, and assistance from government agencies and large businesses. Businesses network with each other and connect with larger businesses and agencies in the community. The procurement forum is intended for the Houston Business Community and emerging business owners. Monthly guest speaker(s) introduce their business and the type of procurement opportunities available. Breakfast is \$5. Location: Houston Community College, 3100 Main Street @ Elgin, 2nd Floor Auditorium, Houston, TX 77002

### WWW.GSA.GOV

GSA is the premier federal acquisition and procurement force offering equipment, supplies, telecommunications, and integrated information technology solutions to customer agencies.

### WWW.CCR.GOV

As of December 2002, the CCR system has eliminated the requirement to register separately within the Small Business Administration's PRO-Net database. Please note that if you are interested in receiving Small Disadvantaged Business, HUBZone, or 8(a) certifications, you will need to refer separately to SBA to complete that process.

### WWW.FBO.GOV

FedBizOpps.gov is the single government point-of-entry (GPE) for Federal government procurement opportunities over \$25,000. Government buyers are able to publicize their business opportunities by posting information directly to FedBizOpps via the Internet. Through one portal - FedBizOpps (FBO) - commercial vendors seeking Federal markets for their products and services can search, monitor and retrieve opportunities solicited by the entire Federal contracting community.

## INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS & RELATED AGENCIES

Follow the appropriate link to the desired School District, and ask for the Purchasing or Vendor Office:

[www.houston-texas-online.com/htoeducation.html](http://www.houston-texas-online.com/htoeducation.html)

## BONDING RESOURCES

### TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE (List of Certified Companies)

[www.tdi.state.tx.us/commercial/pcbondsurety.html](http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/commercial/pcbondsurety.html)

800-252-3439

### NATIONAL ASSOC. OF SURETY BOND PRODUCERS

[www.nasbp.org/home/](http://www.nasbp.org/home/)

202-686-3700

### SBA SURETY BOND GUARANTEE PROGRAM

[www.sba.gov/about-offices-content/1/2891](http://www.sba.gov/about-offices-content/1/2891)

202-205-6540, 713-773-6500

### OBTAINING A DUNS NUMBER 1-866-705-5711

[www.dandb.com/establish-business-credit/](http://www.dandb.com/establish-business-credit/)

The Federal government requires that all applicants for Federal grants and cooperative agreements with the exception of individuals other than sole proprietors, have a DUNS number. (See policy at: [http://www.omb.gov/grants/grants\\_docs](http://www.omb.gov/grants/grants_docs)). The Federal government will use the DUNS number to better identify related organizations that are receiving funding under grants and cooperative agreements, and to provide consistent name and address data for electronic grant application systems. The Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit identification number provided by Dun & Bradstreet (D&B), and the DUNS number is site-specific.

(GSP-11.DOC, Rev. 9-11)

# EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

### HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER

Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity

<http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/>

Ph. 832-393-0954

**THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES REGULATE BUSINESSES WITH EMPLOYEES. TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAVE EMPLOYEES, OR FOR INFORMATION ON CONTRACT EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYEE LEASING, CALL THE TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION. FOR SPECIFIC LAWS OR STATUTES, CONTACT THE INDIVIDUAL AGENCY.**

### TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION

281-933-3858 (1-800-832-9394)

[www.twc.state.tx.us](http://www.twc.state.tx.us)

12455 Beechnut, Houston. The TWC Tax Office handles Unemployment Insurance Taxes and the State Employment I.D. Number. CALL THE TWC IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT BEING AN EMPLOYER VERSUS A CONTRACTOR. The Payday Law Unit is at 800-832-9243. TWC also administers the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act (TUCA), the Texas Child Labor Law, the Texas Payday Law, and the Texas Minimum Wage Act. UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE HOTLINE: 800-558-8321.

### TEXAS NEW HIRE PROGRAM

1-888-839-4473

[www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/tax/newhire.html](http://www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/tax/newhire.html)

The New Hire information provided by employers is compiled into a statewide database, where it is compared with lists of people applying for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits or with outstanding overpayments. If a UI claimant's name appears on both lists, the TWC investigates and, if the person is either working while claiming unemployment benefits or in default of amounts owed, the agency will take action to stop benefits and recover any overpayments.

### TEXAS DEPT. OF INSURANCE, WORKERS COMPENSATION DIVISION

1-800-252-7031 & 281-260-3035

[www.tdi.state.tx.us/wc/indexwc.html](http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/wc/indexwc.html)

507 N. Sam Houston Parkway East, #600. Texas employers, except for public entities, can choose whether or not to provide workers' compensation insurance coverage for their employees. Workers' compensation provides covered employees with income and medical benefits if they are injured on the job or have a work-related injury or illness. Workers' compensation is regulated by the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (the Division). Participation in the workers' compensation system in Texas is voluntary for most employers.

### EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

713-209-3320 x3372 & 1-800-669-4000 (TDD: 713-209-3439)

[www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)

1919 Smith St., 7th Floor. Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1991, prohibits discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay and fringe benefits, on the basis of race color, religion, sex, or national origin. The AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA), as pertaining to employment, is enforced by the EEOC. The U.S. Justice Dept. enforces the ADA as it relates to public accommodations and communications. Employers must display the "EEOC Poster" conspicuously in the workplace. The EEOC also enforces the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

### US CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

800-375-5283 & 281-847-7900 (TDD: 800-767-1TDD)

[www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)

509 North Belt. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 states that employers should hire only U.S. citizens and aliens authorized to work in the U.S. You must verify employee eligibility for anyone hired after Nov. 6, 1986, and must complete and retain "Form I-9". Call for Handbook M-274. Forms are available by calling 1-800-870-3676.

### **OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH ADMINISTRATION**

**281-286-0583 & 281-591-2438**

[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

17625 El Camino Real, Suite 400. Certain businesses must maintain records on the occupational illnesses and injuries and are subject to OSHA inspections. Most businesses with employees must display the "OSHA Poster".

### **U.S. DEPT. OF LABOR, Wage & Hour Division**

**713-339-5500 (New) & 1-866-4US-WAGE (487-9243)**

[www.wagehour.dol.gov](http://www.wagehour.dol.gov)

9990 Richmond Ave., #202. Inquire as to Minimum Wage Requirements, overtime, and child labor recording under the Fair Labor Standards Act. DOL also has Fair Labor Standards Act and Polygraph Protection Act posters for applicable businesses. **Current wage scales are: Federal Minimum Wage- \$5.85/hour**, Youth Minimum Wage (under age 20 for first 90 consecutive days of employment)- \$4.25/hour. Texas State Minimum Wage- \$3.35/hour (applies to employees not covered by the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act- enforced by the Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Law Dept.). The U.S. DOL also enforces the Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) Act of 1993. The FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to "eligible" employees for certain family and medical reasons.

### **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SECURITY ADMIN.**

**1-866-444-EBSA (3272)**

[www.dol.gov/ebsa](http://www.dol.gov/ebsa)

The Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) protects the integrity of pensions, health plans, and other employee benefits. Agency assists workers in getting the information they need to exercise their benefit rights; Assists plan officials to understand the requirements of the relevant statutes in order to meet their legal responsibilities; Develops policies and regulations that encourage the growth of employment-based benefits; Deters and correct violations of the relevant statutes through strong administrative, civil and criminal enforcement efforts to ensure workers receive promised benefits.

### **U.S. SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**

**1-800-772-1213 (TTY: 1-800-325-0778)**

[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

Each employee must have a Social Security Number to work in the US. Employers must have proof of employees' SSN's to properly report earnings to the Social Security Administration, and to the IRS for income tax purposes.

### **FYI.....**

The **WorkSource** is a comprehensive human resources provider serving the 13-county Houston-Galveston Gulf Coast region. We help employers solve workforce-related business problems and individuals make career transition.

- \* Job listings posted on public boards and on electronic job banks
- \* Referrals to job openings that match skills and experience
- \* Resume assistance through workshops and specialized software
- \* Copiers, fax machines, telephones and computers available for use in job search efforts
- \* Internet access to post resumes, conduct research, and look at job openings
- \* Labor market information, including local employment trends
- \* A resource library for job searching, career choices, education and training

If you are a job seeker and are interested in obtaining employment services, call 1-888-469-JOBS (5627).

(GSP-02.DOC; Rev. 8-11)

# GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING RESOURCES

### **HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER**

Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity

<http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/>

Ph. 832-393-0954

### **NOTE ON SEARCHING FOR CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES:**

*For purchasing and contracting opportunities see the below links and resources. Purchasing offices can be located by searching on the word string "Purchasing Office (name jurisdiction)" and calling or writing for website referrals, phone numbers, and locations. Also, check with newspapers of general circulation for government contracting opportunities and bid announcements in the Legal Notices section of newspapers or websites.*

## **MWDBE/SBE CERTIFICATION and SUPPORT PROGRAMS**

**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY: 832-393-0600 (New!!)**

City of Houston

611 Walker, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor.

[www.houstontx.gov/obo/index.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/obo/index.html)

Certification program for S/MWDBE/PDBE businesses competing for city contracts.

Free pre-certification workshops are held each Thursday at 2pm. Also, please see:

**SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GROUP, PWE: 832-395-2516**

[www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/sbdg.html](http://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/sbdg.html)

**STATE OF TEXAS HUB CERTIFICATION: 512-463-6958**

[www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/hub/hub-certification](http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/hub/hub-certification)

**TEXAS VENDOR GUIDE:**

[www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/pub/vendor\\_guide.pdf](http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/pub/vendor_guide.pdf)

**HOUSTON MINORITY SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL: 713-271-7805**

[affiliate.nmsdc.org/hmsdc](http://affiliate.nmsdc.org/hmsdc)

**WOMENS BUSINESS ENTERPRISE ALLIANCE: 713-681-9232**

[www.wbea-texas.org/home](http://www.wbea-texas.org/home)

**CITY OF HOUSTON STRATEGIC PURCHASING DIVISION (SPD) 832-393-8800**

901 Bagby St., City Hall Basement

<https://purchasing.houstontx.gov/>

**CONTRACTING GUIDE:** [www.houstontx.gov/obo/pubs/2011contractingguide.pdf](http://www.houstontx.gov/obo/pubs/2011contractingguide.pdf)

The City of Houston has designated Strategic Purchasing as the main entity within city government that is authorized to issue bid invitations, proposals, authorize price changes, process/ release purchase orders, develop and maintain term contracts. Activities involve the procurement of goods and services amounting to more than \$350 million annually. SPD supports the policy of the City of Houston to stimulate the growth of all Houston area business enterprises by encouraging participation in all phases of its procurement activities.

**CENTRALIZED MASTER BIDDERS LIST – STATE OF TEXAS (CMBL) 512-463-3459**

[www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/cmbll/](http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/cmbll/) AND

The Centralized Master Bidders List (CMBL) is a mailing list for vendors to receive bids based on the products or services which can be sold to the State of Texas. Manufacturers, suppliers and other vendors wishing to furnish products and services to the state apply to be on the CMBL to receive bidding opportunities. Registration on the CMBL is an effective tool for businesses to use to market their products and services to state agencies and institutions of higher education.

and closings as quickly as 45 to 60 days, and can include funds for equipment, inventory and working capital. SBL's minimum loan amount is \$150,000; maximum \$4,000,000.

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH FUNDING INFORMATION CENTER: 1-888-963-7111**

[www.dshs.state.tx.us/fic/default.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/fic/default.shtm)

The FIC lists public and private funding opportunities available to **registered 501(C)(3) NON-PROFIT organizations** and businesses which provide health related services in Texas. Organizations receive updates on funding opportunities and contracts, as well as a calendar of deadlines.

**TEXAS MEZZANINE FUND: 214-943-5900**

[www.tmfund.com/media/Loan\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.tmfund.com/media/Loan_Guidelines.pdf)

351 West Jefferson Boulevard, Suite 670, Dallas, TX 75208 The Texas Mezzanine Fund, Inc. (TMF) is a statewide Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) established to promote economic growth across Texas with a focus on low- or moderate-income and rural communities. TMF has three financing products, including business loans, loans to for-profit and non-profit developers of affordable housing, and loans for the construction of non-profit community facilities. TMF can provide financing to for-profit businesses from \$50,000 to \$500,000 in tandem with a bank or CDFI or "stand-alone" loans of up to \$300,000. The loan proceeds may be used for expansion, term equipment loans, real estate loans or any combination of the foregoing.

**U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA): 713-773-6500 or TDD: 713-773-6559**

[www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

8701 S. Gessner, #1200. CommunityExpress is a pilot SBA loan program that was developed in collaboration with the National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) and its member organizations. Under the pilot, which is available to selected lenders, an SBA Express like program will be offered to pre-designated geographic areas serving mostly Low and Moderate Income areas and New Markets small businesses. The program will also include technical and management assistance, which is designed to help increase the loan applicant's chances of success.

**SBA 7(A) Loans-** All 7(a) loans are provided by lenders who are called participants because they participate with SBA in the 7(a) program. Not all lenders choose to participate, but most banks do. There are also some non-bank lenders who participate with SBA in the 7(a) program, which expands the availability of lenders making loans under SBA guidelines.

7(a) loans are only available on a guaranty basis. This means they are provided by lenders who choose to structure their own loans by SBA's requirements and who apply and receive a guaranty from SBA on a portion of this loan. The SBA does not fully guaranty 7(a) loans. The lender and SBA share the risk that a borrower will not be able to repay the loan in full. The guaranty is a guaranty against payment default. It does not cover imprudent decisions by the lender or misrepresentation by the borrower. Contact the SBA for eligibility criteria and details.

**SBA GRANTS DISCLAIMER** (from the SBA website): "Please note that the U.S. Small Business Administration does not offer grants to start or expand small businesses, though it does offer a wide variety of loan programs. While the SBA does offer some grant programs, these are generally designed to expand and enhance organizations that provide small business management, technical, or financial assistance. These grants generally support non-profit organizations, intermediary lending institutions, and state and local governments."

See: [www.sba.gov/](http://www.sba.gov/)

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## **OTHER FINANCING RESOURCES & TERMS**

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**SBIC:**

[www.sba.gov/about-offices-content/1/2890](http://www.sba.gov/about-offices-content/1/2890)

Small Business Investment Companies (SBIC's) supply equity capital, long term loans and management assistance to qualified small businesses. SBIC's use their own capital and funds borrowed from the SBA to provide financing to small businesses in the form of equity securities and long-term loans. SBIC's are profit-seeking organizations that select businesses to be financed within rules and regulations set by the SBA. Specialized SBIC's (SSBIC's) are a particular type of SBIC that provide assistance solely to small businesses owned by socially or economically disadvantaged persons. To obtain a copy of the SBA's "Directory of SBIC's" call 800/8-ASK-SBA.

(GSP-08F.DOC; 8-11)

# **REQUIRED WORKPLACE POSTERS**

**HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER**

Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity

<http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/>

Ph. 832-393-0954

*Employers Are Required by Law to Display the Following Posters And/or Documents Prominently in Their Place of Business. **Businesses Are Responsible for Displaying All Posters Required by Law.** Call the Agencies Listed below for Posting Procedures and Availability.* The ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER does not refer to companies providing all-in-one posters.

**POSTERS ONLINE: [www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/lablaw/posters.html](http://www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/lablaw/posters.html)**

Various laws require employers to display several posters at the workplace. These posters are available, free of charge, from the following agencies. If your employees are entitled to file for state unemployment benefits and are also covered by the Texas Payday Law, you should request the poster that combines both laws:

**TEXAS UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION ACT and the TEXAS PAYDAY LAW (512-463-2747)**

If you prefer, you can fax your request to (512) 936-3205. When faxing a request for posters, please include your TWC Account Number, your address for mailing posters, and the number of posters you need printed in English and printed in Spanish (Spanish-language posters are not a requirement). You can also order posters by calling (512) 463-2747.

If your business is not liable under the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act, but as a Texas employer you are subject to the Texas Payday Law, you should request the Payday Law Poster at 1-800-832-9243 or (512) 837-9559 or click on the linked title below.

**TEXAS PAYDAY LAW POSTER - ENGLISH / SPANISH**

[www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/lablaw/ll10.pdf](http://www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/lablaw/ll10.pdf)

This poster is in PDF format. To download, click on the linked title; to view and print you will need Acrobat Reader, available free of charge from Adobe Systems Incorporated. To print, click on the printer icon within Acrobat Reader.

**USERRA POSTER**

[www.dol.gov/vets](http://www.dol.gov/vets)

U.S. Department of Labor – The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). This poster is in PDF format. To download, click on the linked title; to view and print you will need Acrobat Reader, available free of charge from Adobe Systems Incorporated. To print, click on the printer icon within Acrobat Reader.

USERRA protects the job rights of individuals who voluntarily or involuntarily leave employment positions to undertake military service. USERRA also prohibits employers from discriminating against past and present members of the uniformed services, and applicants to the uniformed services.

**FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT (FLSA) POSTER (Federal Minimum Wage Poster)**

**EMPLOYEE POLYGRAPH PROTECTION ACT (EPPA) POSTER**

**FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA) POSTER**

**MIGRANT AND SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKER PROTECTION ACT (MSPA) POSTER**

[www.dol.gov/compliance/topics/posters.htm](http://www.dol.gov/compliance/topics/posters.htm)

U.S. Department of Labor - Wage and Hour Division (DOL) requires the above four (4) posters. An employer is required to post these notices only if covered under that particular Act. If you have any questions concerning coverage, you can go to the Summary of Laws, Regulations and Technical Assistance Services, or call the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division

(DOL) toll-free at (866-487-9243). You can contact the nearest Houston DOL district office at (713-339-5500).

#### **JOB SAFETY & HEALTH PROTECTION POSTER**

[www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3165.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3165.pdf)

U.S. Department of Labor/Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)

You can contact an OSHA office in your area by calling one of the following numbers:

Houston North (281-591-2438)

Houston South (281-286-0584)

#### **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY ACT POSTER AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 POSTER**

[www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/posters/pdf/eeopost.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/posters/pdf/eeopost.pdf)

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) (800-669-3362)

#### **THE LAW IN TEXAS (PDF) (Optional) (512-463-2642)**

[www.twc.state.tx.us/crd/eeoposter.pdf](http://www.twc.state.tx.us/crd/eeoposter.pdf)

Issued by: Texas Workforce Commission - Civil Rights Division

#### **TEXAS CHILD LABOR LAWS POSTER (1-800-832-9243)**

[www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/lablaw/lcl70.pdf](http://www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/lablaw/lcl70.pdf)

The purpose of the Texas Child Labor Law is to ensure that a child is not employed in an occupation or manner that is detrimental to the child's safety, health, or well-being. Except as specifically authorized by the statute, it is illegal to employ a child under 14 years of age.

#### **WORKERS' COMPENSATION POSTERS (English and Spanish)**

[www.tdi.state.tx.us/forms/form20.html](http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/forms/form20.html)

Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (512-804-4240)

DO CARRY WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE AND HOW EMPLOYEES CAN REPORT WORKPLACE SAFETY VIOLATIONS (Notice #6). You will need the form number when ordering poster.

DO NOT CARRY WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE AND HOW EMPLOYEES CAN REPORT WORKPLACE SAFETY VIOLATIONS (Notice #5). You will need the form number when ordering poster.

#### **FEDERAL "ELAWS POSTER ADVISOR"**

[www.dol.gov/elaws/posters.htm](http://www.dol.gov/elaws/posters.htm)

1-866-487-9243

This Advisor will help you determine the posters that must be displayed in your workplace. Since the posters required for a specific business establishment depend on such factors as the nature and location of the business, the number of employees, annual dollar volume, and whether the business has Federal contracts or subcontracts, the Advisor will ask you a series of questions. The Advisor will evaluate your responses, and provide a list of posters you must display and an opportunity to print them.

(GSP-02.DOC; Rev 8-11)

- The candidate company should be based in Texas, or should commit to relocating to Texas upon the completion of an investment by HAN members.
- Company should be seeking \$250K to \$3M in equity financing. HAN will also consider debt financing w/ an equity component (i.e. convertible debt or debt with warrants)
- If the venture is raising over \$1M, it must secure a lead investor before applying to HAN.
- HAN members prefer technology based companies. **HAN does not review companies in the following sectors: entertainment, oil/gas exploration, real estate development, bars/restaurants/spas.**
- In order to be seriously considered, a company must have a completed, working prototype and have market validation (pilot, beta users, revenue).

#### **HOUSTON BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: 713-845-2400**

[www.hbdinc.org/](http://www.hbdinc.org/)

5330 Griggs Rd. The Houston Business Development, Inc. a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization was established by the City of Houston for the purpose of making loans to small businesses. HBD's mission is to stimulate economic growth, combat community deterioration, and foster employment opportunities for low to moderate income citizens. HBD makes Micro-Enterprise and Small Business loans to expanding businesses and works closely with banks and commercial lenders to provide affordable "gap financing". Prospective borrowers, as well as aspiring entrepreneurs, can also take advantage of an array of support services including business planning assistance, office space rental, computer labs, workshops, and much more at the corporation's 160,000-square-foot business complex, the Business Technology Center.

#### **HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION: 713-627-3200**

[www.h-gac.com](http://www.h-gac.com)

3555 Timmons Lane, #500. Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 Loans. The Houston-Galveston Area Local Development Corporation participates only with the SBA 504 program. We do not offer any assistance pertaining to other non-SBA programs. This allows us to concentrate on the SBA 504 program and provide the best possible service for our clients.

#### **HOUSTON TECHNOLOGY CENTER: 713-658-1750**

[www.houstontech.org](http://www.houstontech.org)

410 Pierce St., Houston, TX 77002. HTC provides in-depth business guidance, access to capital, introduction to service providers and entrepreneurial education to client companies representing the following key sectors: Energy, Life Sciences, Nanotechnology, NASA-originating technologies and Technology. Since its inception in 1999, HTC has provided feedback to well over 1,000 applicant companies. HTC's acceleration program has helped more than 200 companies raise more than \$400 million in capital and create over 3,000 new jobs. A non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, HTC is supported by more than 300 corporations and organizations, Houston's leading academic institutes, the Greater Houston Partnership, the Texas Medical Center, NASA-Johnson Space Center and the City of Houston.

#### **PATRIOT EXPRESS PILOT LOAN INITIATIVE (C/O US SBA): 713-773-6500**

[www.sba.gov/patriotexpress/index.html](http://www.sba.gov/patriotexpress/index.html)

The U.S. Small Business Administration has announced the SBA's Patriot Express Pilot Loan Initiative for veterans and members of the military community wanting to establish or expand small businesses. You've got an idea for a business. Evaluate your dream of starting a business at the above website. It is a comprehensive tool designed to prepare you for self employment by analyzing your responses in key areas and providing a menu of resources.

**Eligible military community members include:** Veterans and Service-disabled veterans; Active-duty service members eligible for the military's Transition Assistance Program; Reservists and National Guard members; Current spouses of any of the above; The widowed spouse of a service member or veteran who died during service or of a service-connected disability, and; The SBA and its resource partners are focusing additional efforts on counseling and training to augment this loan initiative.

#### **RICE ALLIANCE FOR TECHNOLOGY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: 713-348-3443**

[www.alliance.rice.edu](http://www.alliance.rice.edu)

The Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship is Rice University's flagship initiative devoted to the support of technology entrepreneurship. The mission of the Rice Alliance is to support the creation of technology-based companies and the commercialization of new technologies in the Houston community and Southwest. Over the past 6 years, the Rice Alliance has conducted over 90 programs attended by over 22,000 individuals. Over 20,000 individuals subscribe to the Rice Alliance Digest newsletter.

#### **SMALL BUSINESS LOAN SOURCE: 800-457-4307**

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

SBLS is a nationally licensed, Non-Bank Lender; specializing in SBA commercial real estate lending. SBLS is an expert in the SBA industry! They can help you acquire, start-up or expand your business operations. The SBLS offers five day approvals

**SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH PROGRAM- SBIR: (713-773-6527 or 202-205-6450)**

[www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/sbir/index.html](http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/sbir/index.html)

C/O SBA, 409 SW Washington D.C. 20416. The U.S. SBIR Program provides federally-funded grants to businesses involved in high-tech research and development. Grants of \$50,000+ are available as part of a three-phase funding cycle.

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON GRADUATE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK: (713-743-8075)**

[www.sw.uh.edu/main/home.php](http://www.sw.uh.edu/main/home.php)

110 HA Social Work Building; Houston, TX, 77204-4013

The Office of Community Projects provides opportunities for GCSW faculty, staff and the community to collaborate on needs assessments and program evaluations for social service agencies throughout the state of Texas. Information ~~given~~ in needs assessments supports agency strategic planning decisions, such as the HIV Community Needs Assessment, which provided consumer-based support for funding allocation decisions among HIV service providers in the Houston area.

Program evaluation often begins as assistance in preparing grant proposals and continues through program implementation. Documenting program effectiveness increases practice knowledge and funding opportunities.

**ALSO SEE:** [business.gov/guides/finance/financing/grants/index.html](http://business.gov/guides/finance/financing/grants/index.html)

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## LOAN RESOURCES

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**10,000 SMALL BUSINESSES via GOLDMAN SACHS (HCC) 713-718-8348**

[sites.hccs.edu/10ksb/](http://sites.hccs.edu/10ksb/)

10,000 Small Businesses at Houston Community College is part of a national, five-year investment to unlock the growth and job creation potential of small businesses in the U.S. through greater access to business education, financial capital and business support services. The initiative is currently active in New Orleans, New York, and Greater Los Angeles and over the next five years, will reach 10,000 small business owners across the country. See eligibility page at above website.

**ACCION TEXAS (San Antonio-based) 1-888-215-2373**

[www.acciontexas.org](http://www.acciontexas.org)

ACCION Texas provides credit to people with "micro" businesses who do not have access to loans from commercial sources. Loans help stabilize business income and create additional employment. Clients of ACCION Texas typically have lower than average incomes, with a median household income of \$28,800 for a 3-person household. The median asset level of clients' businesses is less than \$5,000. As of December 1996, 76% of ACCION Texas clients were minorities; 64% were Hispanic. Nearly 30% are taxi drivers and 12% are in the food retail industry. Call for details.

**CITY OF HOUSTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (Planning Dept.): 713-837-9857 or 713-837-7701**

The Economic Development and Revitalization Division works to provide communities and businesses with access to tools that help strengthen and sustain the local economy. Incentive programs are available to encourage business and industry to choose Houston when making expansion or relocation decisions. Programs administered include Enterprise Zones, Enhanced Enterprise Communities, Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs), Public Improvement Districts, Historic Tax Exemption, and Municipal Management Districts.

**EX-IM BANK: 281-721-0465 or 800-565-3946**

[www.exim.gov/](http://www.exim.gov/)

1880 S. Dairy Ashford II, #585. Pre-Export Financing To Help U.S. Exporters Maximize Borrowing Potential. Ex-Im Bank—s working capital financing enables U.S. exporters to obtain loans to produce or buy goods or services for export.

**HOUSTON ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT GUARANTEED LENDERS (HAGGL)**

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

The Houston Association of Government Guaranteed Lenders (HAGGL) is an association of the leading lenders affiliated with the SBA and other government guaranteed lending programs. Members include banks, non-bank lenders, and certified development corporations. Preferred lending status and active participation in the SBA programs provide a common bond to allow the group to share information on providing financing solutions and the best quality service for small business owners.

**HOUSTON ANGEL NETWORK**

[houstonangelnetwork.angelgroups.net/](http://houstonangelnetwork.angelgroups.net/)

The Houston Angel Network is a non-profit organization that provides its members a forum in which to efficiently evaluate promising early-stage investment opportunities. Its membership consists of active and SEC-accredited angel investors who share the goal of making informed, collaborative investments in promising early stage Texas-based companies. All companies applying to HAN must meet these criteria:

# DEED RESTRICTIONS FAQ

**HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER**

Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity

<http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/>

Ph. 832-393-0954

**WEBSITE:** [www.houstontx.gov/legal/deed.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/legal/deed.html)

**Deed Restriction Complaint Hotline:** 832-393-6333

**Why is the City's Legal Department involved in the enforcement of deed restrictions? Doesn't the City of Houston have zoning?**

The City of Houston is not zoned. Therefore, it is in the City's interest to help with the enforcement of recorded deed restrictions for the protection of persons who purchase property in restricted subdivisions, for the benefit of all residents, citizens, and taxpayers of the City, and to promote the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the City.

**COH NO-ZONING LETTER:** [/www.houstontx.gov/planning/Forms/devregs/2011NoZoningLetter.pdf](http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/Forms/devregs/2011NoZoningLetter.pdf)

**HARRIS COUNTY ZONING/OCCUPANCY LETTER:** [hcpid.org/permits/docs/zone\\_letter.pdf](http://hcpid.org/permits/docs/zone_letter.pdf)

**Is there one set of recorded deed restrictions for the entire City of Houston?**

No -- deed restrictions adhere to subdivision lines. Example, the recorded deed restrictions for Oak Forest subdivision are valid for only those lots located within the platted area of that particular subdivision. Also note that within the platted subdivision, there could also be the possibility of different sections.

**How do I get a copy of my deed restrictions?**

Most people living in the City of Houston are located in Harris County. Please contact the Harris County Clerk's **Real Property Records Office @ 713-755-6899** and request a copy. They are located at 201 Caroline, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, downtown Houston. You can review deed restrictions in person @ 201 Caroline (older subdivisions) or in the case of newer subdivisions you can review them at any HCC annex. If your property is in another county, contact the clerk's office of the county in which the property is located (example: the Montgomery County Clerk's Office would file deed restrictions for properties in Montgomery County) and request a copy. Fees may be charged for making copies- call in advance. Try and have the property's legal description (lot & block number, subdivision name) when requesting the records.

**Who can lodge a complaint regarding an alleged deed restriction violation?**

Any resident of the City of Houston can lodge a complaint with the Deed Restriction Enforcement Team - an individual, a neighborhood group, or a civic club representative. Please note that we will stay in contact with the complainant and if the matter goes to court, then we will request that the complainant appear as a witness for the City of Houston.

**Does an abandoned vehicle qualify as a deed restriction violation that the Deed Restriction Enforcement Team can help with? How about a property that has an excessive amount of junk or debris on it?**

No -- however, these matters do fall under the City's nuisance ordinances and can be reported to the Planning & Development Department's Neighborhood Protection Team by calling 311. The citizen will be given a tracking number. To check on the status of such complaint, the citizen should call 311 again and relate the tracking number. To speak to Neighborhood Protection directly, a citizen may call 713-218-5500.

**How much does it cost to have the Deed Restriction Enforcement Team pursue a complaint?**

\$0 -- there is no fee charged.

**After lodging a complaint, what further involvement is needed from the person making the complaint?**

The Deed Restriction Enforcement Team relies on the complainant to keep it informed as to the daily activity of the violation. And if necessary, when the City takes the property owner and/or tenant to court, the complainant will be asked to appear as a witness at trial for the City. See our section on what the City needs to prove a deed restriction violation for more detailed information.

**Can an attorney from the Deed Restriction Enforcement Team give advice to a private citizen or civic club regarding interpretation of recorded deed restrictions? Is that same attorney available to directly help residents of a subdivision renew/revise/or extend recorded deed restrictions?**

No -- attorneys from the City's Legal Department may not give advice or offer an opinion (examples: interpret language in a legal document or provide advice on legal procedures) to private citizens or civic clubs. Individuals and organizations must seek out the services of a private attorney.

**Is the amount of time that a violation has existed a factor in determining whether the City of Houston can pursue a property owner for violation of deed restrictions?**

Yes -- if the property in question has been in continuous violation of deed restrictions since prior to August 1965, then the City cannot pursue a lawsuit to enjoin (stop) the violation. However, if the violation started after that date, the City does have statutory (meaning it has been given to the City by the Texas Legislature) authority to pursue a lawsuit to enjoin (stop) the violation.

**What is needed by the Deed Restriction Enforcement Team to prove that a violation of deed restrictions is occurring?**

Photographs, eyewitnesses, logs of activities, and documentary evidence are all examples. See our section on what the City needs to prove a deed restriction violation for more detailed information. We also have a downloadable activity log form that can be used by complainants.

**How does the process work in regards to lodging a complaint?**

Once the Deed Restriction Enforcement Team receives a complaint, through the mail, from a Council Member, or on the Deed Restriction Hotline, it obtains copies of the recorded warranty deed and deed restrictions for the property where the alleged violation is occurring (this is where the City establishes who owns the premises, that the property in question has valid deed restrictions, and that the activity being complained about is in fact prohibited by the deed restrictions). An investigation then establishes whether the activity being complained about is in fact taking place.

The matter then goes before a staff meeting of attorneys from the Deed Restriction Enforcement Team where the recorded deed restrictions, evidence (or lack of), and other essential factors are examined. It is at this point in the process that the decision is made to (A) send the property owner / tenant a Notice Letter informing him/her that he/she is in violation of the recorded deed restrictions, (B) send the original complainant a letter stating that the file will be closed and the corresponding reasons, (C) or that the matter needs further investigation. Before a lawsuit is filed against a property owner / tenant to enjoin (stop) him/her from violating the deed restrictions, the file is again taken to a staff meeting to ensure that there are sufficient witnesses (these can be neighbors affected by the activity, City investigators, or others with first-hand knowledge of the violation), and supporting evidence.

**----- Please note that any assistance from the community (this could be the original complainant, the local civic club or homeowners' association, or any individual living in the affected subdivision) is greatly appreciated and an essential part of the Deed Restriction Enforcement Team's investigation. ----**

**COH DEED RESTRICTIONS FAQ:** [www.houstontx.gov/legal/dr-faq.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/legal/dr-faq.html)

# FINANCING RESOURCES

HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER  
Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity  
<http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/>  
Ph. 832-393-0954

THE ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER DOES NOT ENDORSE THE PROGRAMS LISTED BELOW, AND PROVIDES THIS LIST AS A PUBLIC SERVICE. AGENCIES WITHOUT TDD NUMBERS CAN BE REACHED BY DIALING 7-1-1. PLEASE REPORT INACCURACIES TO OUR OFFICE.

## GRANT RESOURCES

Statement on GOVERNMENT GRANTS from [www.business.gov](http://www.business.gov):

*"The federal government does not provide grants for starting and expanding a business.*

*"Grants from the federal government are only available to non-commercial organizations, such as non-profits and educational institutions in areas such as, medicine, education, scientific research and technology development. The federal government also provides grants to state and local governments to assist them with economic development.*

*"Some business grants are available through state and local programs, non-profit organizations and other groups. For example, some states provide grants for expanding child care centers; creating energy efficient technology; and developing marketing campaigns for tourism. These grants are not necessarily free money, and usually require the recipient to match funds or combine the grant with other forms of financing such as a loan.*

*"If you are not one of these specialized business, both federal and state government agencies provide financial assistance programs that helps small business owners obtain low-interest loans and venture capital financing from commercial lenders."*

**GRANTS.GOV (Contact Center) 1-800-518-4726**

[www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)

Grants.gov is your source to find and apply for federal government grants. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is the managing partner for Grants.gov.

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA- Online Only)**

[www.cfda.gov](http://www.cfda.gov)

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance is a database of Federal programs available to State and local governments (including the District of Columbia); public, quasi-public, and private profit and nonprofit organizations and institutions; and individuals. After you find the program you want, contact the office that administers the program and find out how to apply. Follow the links to the "Business and Commerce" page.

**THE FOUNDATION CENTER (800-424-9836)**

[foundationcenter.org](http://foundationcenter.org)

The Foundation Directory Online searchable databases provide an unsurpassed level of comprehensive and accurate information on U.S. grantmakers. The Grantmaker file can be searched by field of interest, geographic focus, types of support, and many other categories. Grants file can be searched by subject, recipient type, year authorized, types of support, and many other points of entry. Both files permit free-text searching as well.

**TEXAS STATE GRANTS TEAM (512-463-8465)**

[governor.state.tx.us/grants/what/](http://governor.state.tx.us/grants/what/)

The State Grants Team provides technical assistance, grants training and federal liaison services to Texas state agencies, all subdivisions of government, and nonprofit organizations. The Team's legislative mandate also requires management of the Texas Review and Comment System (TRACS) and administration of the Uniform Grants Management Standards.