

Applying for a Restaurant (with alcohol) License

Pursuant to MA General Law Chapter 138 Section 12 and the Licensing Commission Rules, you must obtain a license from the Licensing Commission to operate a restaurant that serves alcohol.

APPLICATION TIMELINE AND LICENSE TERM:

- Submit a complete application, including answering all questions and uploading all required documents to Citizenserve, at least 6 weeks before an upcoming Licensing Commission meeting.
- Your application will appear on the Licensing Commission agenda following completion of all departmental approvals. Refer to the Commission schedule posted online.
- The license is valid for one year, expiring on December 31st of the year the license is approved, and is subject to renewal. License fees are not pro-rated.
- If you cease operations, you must return your license to the city and contact licensing@somervillema.gov.

APPLICATION CONDITIONS:

- You must apply online on the city's website: <https://www.somervillema.gov/citizenserve>.
- You must also apply online on the ABCC's website: <http://www.mass.gov/abcc>.
- You must have paid all taxes, fees, or fines owed to the city and the state.
- The premises must be reviewed and approved pursuant to the zoning code.
- The premises must be reviewed, inspected, and approved by building, health, and fire inspectors.
- You must appear at a public hearing before the Licensing Commission.
- It is recommended that you discuss your application with the Ward City Councilor who represents the proposed business location.
- Your manager must receive under-age drinking education from the city's Department of Health and Human Services within 30 days after your license is issued.

FEES:

- A \$200 non-refundable application fee must be paid to the city upon submission of the application.
- The cost of publishing the legal notice for your application's public hearing, which is prepared and submitted to the newspaper by staff, must be paid directly to the newspaper upon receipt of the bill.
- A \$200 fee must be paid online to the ABCC, and you must submit a copy of the payment receipt with your application to the city.
- An annual Common Victualer license fee of \$300, which must be paid after the application is approved.
- If your restaurant includes the service of all forms of alcohol:
 - A first-time license fee of \$2,000 must be paid after the application is approved.
 - An annual license fee of \$3,500 must be paid after the application is approved.
- If your restaurant includes the service of wine and/or malt products only:

- A first-time license fee of \$1,500 must be paid after the application is approved.
- An annual license fee of \$2,000 must be paid after the application is approved.
- If your restaurant includes outdoor seating:
 - A first-time outdoor seating application fee of \$200 must be paid after the application is approved.
- If your restaurant offers the following, an annual license fee must be paid as indicated, after the application is approved:

○ Entertainment by Devices License	\$250 annually
○ Entertainment by Performers License	\$250 annually
○ Entertainment by Patrons License	\$250 annually
○ Outdoor Dining Annual Fee (Public and Private)	\$200 annually
○ Outdoor Dining Use of Public Space Fee	\$3/square footage under 150 sq ft. \$6/square footage over 150 sq ft.
○ Opening 10am-11:59am Sundays License	\$100 annually
○ Opening to 2:00am on Fridays and Saturdays	\$1,000 annually; only available to licensees who serve all forms of alcohol, and after one year of licensure
○ Serving cordials and Liqueurs License	\$200 annually; only available to licensees who serve wine and malt beverages
- Fees may be paid electronically online using your Citizenserve account with a credit card (Visa, Mastercard, or Discover only), debit card, or electronic funds, or in-person by bringing a check to the City Clerk's Office in City Hall.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS REQUIRED:

Upload the following documents to Citizenserve for review by the Licensing Commission. Your application is **not complete and will not be processed** until all these documents are uploaded to Citizenserve:

- Completed ABCC application along with required documentation.
 - This includes all documents required by the ABCC, the application and a complete list of accompanying documents can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-an-alcoholic-beverages-retail-license-new-or-transfer>
- A Workers' Compensation (WC) Insurance Affidavit (downloadable when you apply), or other proof of WC Insurance.
- A signed Purchase and Sale agreement, lease, or other documentation of your access to the premises.
- A floor plan drawn to scale that clearly depicts all dining rooms, tables, chairs, cooking facilities, and storage space.
 - Once approved by the Licensing Commission, your floor plan is **final** and **cannot be changed** without submitting an amendment application (<https://s3.amazonaws.com/somervillema-live/s3fs-public/application-to-amend-existing-license.pdf>).

- Making changes to your floor plan after it is approved by the Licensing Commission may result in licenses and permits from other city departments being **denied**, which could **significantly delay** the opening of your business.
- A menu with pricing information.
- Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) form (downloadable when you apply) for the manager and each owner, partner, trustee, or officer.
 - This CORI form is distinct from the form required by the ABCC and **must be filled out by the applicant in City Hall at the City Clerk's Office window.**
 - The applicant must bring a valid, unexpired government-issued ID as proof of identity for this form.
 - There is no fee for this CORI submission.

Once your application has been scheduled to appear on the Licensing Commission agenda:

- A Certification of Posting of Public Notice.
- Affidavit of Notice of Mailing to Abutters:
 - We will notify you when it is time to request your abutters list from the Assessor's Office, which you will do by sending an email to assessing@somervillema.gov.
 - Within 3 days of the publication of the legal notice of a public hearing by the Licensing Commission, you must send that notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, to all immediate abutters and all churches, hospitals, and schools within 500 feet (300 feet if applying for outdoor dining).
 - The publication occurs on the second Wednesday before the Licensing Commission meeting, and abutter notices **must** be mailed by the immediately following Saturday to comply with state and local notice requirements. If you do not mail your abutter notices by that Saturday, your application will **not** appear on that month's Licensing Commission meeting agenda.
 - To complete your application, you must submit this affidavit, or other evidence that these were mailed, including photos or scans of the abutters list you received from Assessing and the stamped certified mail receipts (proving your notices were sent on time), to licensing@somervillema.gov.

HOW TO APPLY:

Before you begin:

- Make sure you have entered all your information properly before you click "SUBMIT."
- If you start your application and are not ready to submit it, you can always click "SAVE FOR LATER," and come back to it later. Note that once you "SUBMIT" your application, you cannot re-open it to edit it.

When you are ready:

- Go to <http://www.somervillema.gov/citizenserve>.
- Click the [citi~~ze~~nserv](#)e logo.
- Click "MY ACCOUNT."
- Log in, or, if this is your first online application, click "REGISTER NOW" to create an account.
- Scroll down and click "APPLY FOR A LICENSE."
- At Application Type, select "LICENSING COMMISSION LICENSE."
- At Sub Type, select "RESTAURANT (WITH ALCOHOL)."

- At Business Name, enter your business name.
- At Address or Parcel #, enter the Somerville address of the business you want to open, and click “FIND ADDRESS.” If Citizenserve does not identify your address, select “USE THIS ADDRESS.”
- Answer the remaining questions.
- Upload the required documents.
- Review the terms and conditions. Do not proceed until you are ready to accept all terms and conditions.

When you finish:

- Before you click “SUBMIT,” note that once you submit the form, you cannot re-open it to edit it. If you are not ready to submit the form, click “SAVE FOR LATER,” so you can come back to finish it. If you click “SAVE FOR LATER,” your application will be in your cart the next time you log in.
- When you are ready, click “SUBMIT” and pay the required application fee.
- To make changes to your application after you submit it, contact the Licensing Commission at licensing@somervillema.gov.

NEXT STEPS AFTER LICENSING COMMISSION APPROVAL:

- Once your application is approved by the Licensing Commission, staff upload the ABCC application you previously provided directly to the ABCC.
- The ABCC conducts a thorough review of your application and may reach out to you directly with questions or requests for additional documents. For this reason, **it is essential that the email address and phone number you provide are correct (no typos) and regularly monitored**. Failure to respond to communications from an ABCC investigator could significantly delay the approval of your application.
- Once the ABCC has reviewed and approved your license, you must:
 - Submit proof of WC and Liquor Liability insurance;
 - Coordinate 304 Certificate inspections with ISD Building and Fire Prevention;
 - Receive final approval from ISD Health; and
 - Pay the associated fees.
- The Licensing Commission **cannot** issue your alcohol service license until all of these requirements are met.
- Finally, within 30 days of the issuance of your license, you must also complete the under-age drinking education from the city’s Department of Health and Human Services.

HOW TO RENEW:

- Your license expires annually on December 31st and must be renewed to remain active.
- Go to <http://www.somervillema.gov/citizenserve>.
- Click the [citi~~z~~enserve](#) logo.
- Click “MY ACCOUNT” and log in.
- Do NOT click “View my requests” as you have in the past.
 - Clicking “View my requests” will not successfully submit your renewal.
- Instead, under the banner, click the button for “Renew a license” with an image of a page with a green border.

- This will take you to a page where will see one row for your 304 Certificate of Inspection (with the prefix “CIA”) and another row for your alcohol license renewal (with the prefix “AL”).
- Click your CIA license and fill out the requested information.
 - NOTE: The fields for “Inspection Point of Contact” are mandatory and must be filled out—this is who our inspectors will contact to schedule your inspection.
- Select your payment method and follow the instructions as prompted. *All payments are non-refundable.*
 - You will receive an email from Citizenserve stating that your CIA license (304 certificate of inspection) was submitted.
- Next, go back to “My Account” and once again click “Renew a license.” This time you will be directed immediately to your renewal for your alcohol license (AL series).
 - You must upload: (1) proof of current Workers’ Compensation insurance; (2) proof of current Liquor Liability insurance; and (3) your annual ABCC Renewal Form.
 - **NOTE: You cannot submit your alcohol license renewal without these documents.** *If you do not have these documents available, you are not ready to submit your renewal!*
- Once you have uploaded all the required documentation to Citizenserve, select your payment method and follow the instructions as prompted. *All payments are non-refundable.*
- You will receive an email from Citizenserve stating that the renewal for alcohol license was submitted.
- You will soon be contacted to schedule your 304 inspection.
- When your renewal is complete, you will receive an email containing your license for the upcoming calendar year.

QUESTIONS?

- Contact the Licensing Commission at licensing@somervillema.gov.