



# Cook County General Business License Website

- 1. What is a General Business License?** A General Business License (GBL) is required for all businesses in the unincorporated area of Cook County that engage in general sales, that provide a service, engage in office operations, or businesses that do not fall under another license category and are not exempt from County Licenses.
- 2. How do I apply?** Applications will only be accepted online. Please visit [www.cookcountygov.com/gbl](http://www.cookcountygov.com/gbl)
- 3. What information is required for the General Business License application?** The following information is required for the GBL application:
  - a) Name, residence address and social security number of every owner or any individual who owns 25 percent or more interest in the business;
  - b) The exact business address and PIN number of the property where the property is located;
  - c) A description of the business activity;
  - d) State of Illinois Business Tax Number (IBT);
  - e) Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN);
  - f) Assumed Business Name Certificate number if operating as a Sole Proprietor.
  - g) Any other document required by the Director of Revenue or a designee in accordance with their procedures. Please see the GBL application for the full list of applicable information required.
- 4. Who is exempt from obtaining a license?** Any person doing business in an unincorporated area of Cook County, where the business location or site is:
  - a) Required to obtain a County business license pursuant to any other County ordinance or regulation, or;
  - b) Exempt by any Federal or State law or County ordinance.Please Note: businesses that are exempt are still required to register on the GBL website and get an exemption certificate.
- 5. What are the penalties for not obtaining a Cook County General Business License?** It is unlawful for any Person doing business in any unincorporated area of Cook County to conduct such business without having first obtained a General Business License unless exempt as indicated in Sec. 54-392 of the Cook County General Business License Ordinance.

Any Person determined to have violated this Ordinance (1) may be denied any County contract, permit, license and or privilege and or (2) shall be subject to a fine of \$1,000.00 for the first offense, and a fine of \$2,000.00 for the second and each subsequent offense and/or be subject to suspension, revocation. A separate and distinct offense shall be regarded as committed each day upon which said Person shall continue any such violation, or permit any such violation to exist after notification thereof.

## Log in and Registration:

- 6. What is the website address to the Cook County Online GBL system?** [www.cookcountygov.com/gbl](http://www.cookcountygov.com/gbl)
- 7. How do I request access to use the Online GBL system?** You need to successfully register to use the Online GBL system. (Please see the Registration section - page 5, in the GBL Application User Manual available at [www.cookcountygov.com/gbl](http://www.cookcountygov.com/gbl) for more details).
- 8. Why cannot I log into the Online GBL system?** You need to successfully register to use the Online GBL system. (Please see the Registration section - page 5, in the GBL Application User Manual available at [www.cookcountygov.com/gbl](http://www.cookcountygov.com/gbl) for more details).
- 9. I have registered, but I cannot remember my password and/or user id.** You may request your forgotten password from the Login page of the Online GBL system. (Please see the Forgot My Password section - pg 10, in the GBL Application User Manual available at [www.cookcountygov.com/gbl](http://www.cookcountygov.com/gbl) for more details).
- 10. How can I change my password and/or contact information?** After you log into the Online GBL system, you may change your password and/or contact information in "My Profile" page. (Please see the My Profile section - pg 13, in the GBL Application User Manual available at [www.cookcountygov.com/gbl](http://www.cookcountygov.com/gbl) for more details).

## GBL License Application:

- 11. I made a mistake on my GBL application, can I correct it?** If you entered incorrect contact information you may change it from the "My Profile" page. (Please see the My Profile section - pg 13, in the GBL Application User Manual available at [www.cookcountygov.com/gbl](http://www.cookcountygov.com/gbl) for more details).

If you made a mistake answering any of the questions on the GBL application, please call the Cook County Department of Revenue's General Business License Unit at (312) 603-6870 and press option 6 to correct your information.

- 12. I submitted my GBL application, how do I find the status of my GBL license?** You may view applications that you have submitted when you log into the online GBL system (Please see the Check Application Status section - pg 34, in the GBL Application User Manual available at [www.cookcountygov.com/gbl](http://www.cookcountygov.com/gbl) for additional details). You may call the Cook County Department of Revenue's General Business License Unit at (312) 603-6870 and press option 6 for more information.

## License Fees and Payments:

- 13. How can I pay for my license fee?** You may pay online with a valid credit card, send a check by mail or pay in person with a check. (Please see the Payment section - pg 30, in the GBL Application User Manual available at [www.cookcountygov.com/gbl](http://www.cookcountygov.com/gbl) for more details).
- 14. Can I apply for my application online and pay online?** Yes, you can apply and pay online.
- 15. Can I apply for my application online and pay in person or by mail?** Yes, you may and must apply online; however, you may pay in person or by mail.

**Please Note: You must bring a printout of the payment coupon provided to you when you apply online.**

- 16. What is the mailing address to send in my payment?** Cook County Department of Revenue  
General Business License Unit

**Telephone:** (312) 603-6870 press option 3.

118 N. Clark Street, Room 1160

**Hours:** M-F: 9AM-4.30PM; Sat-Sun: Closed

Chicago, Illinois 60602

- 17. Can I re-print my payment coupon?** Yes, you may. (Please see the Payment section - pg 30, in the GBL Application User Manual available at [www.cookcountygov.com/gbl](http://www.cookcountygov.com/gbl) for more details).

## Other General Questions:

- 18. Is there an expedited license approval process?** No. Once a complete application has been submitted, license processing will take up to 2 - 4 weeks depending on the level of complexity of the application to be reviewed.
- 19. What if I am applying right before the deadline?** Submitted applications will have to go through the full review process before approval is granted. This will typically take at least 2 - 4 weeks based on the complexity of the application.
- 20. What if I do not have access to the internet?** You may access the internet at the following locations: Your local public library or the Department's downtown address listed in question 16.
- 21. Does my PC need any minimum requirements for me to access the GBL website?** You need to have Microsoft Internet Explorer version 8.0 or higher to access the GBL website.
- 22. Why did the GBL website log me out while I was in the middle of GBL application?** Sometimes due to inactivity the GBL website times out and automatically logs off in order to protect your information. You may log back on again and continue from where you left off.
- 23. What if I have multiple locations, do I need a GBL for each location?** Yes. A GBL is specific to a location. Each location you own will require a separate General Business License.
- 24. Which County Departments/Agencies are responsible for reviewing my GBL application?** The following Cook County agencies will be reviewing each GBL application:
- Department of Revenue
  - Department of Public Health
  - Office of the Sheriff
  - Department of Building and Zoning
  - Department of Environmental Control
  - Office of Child Support