

Cutting Through the Bureaucratic Red Tape

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May 22, 2012**



Overview

- How the Office of Small Business Advocate can assist your small business.
- Cutting through the Red Tape - Helpful Hints on Dealing with State Government.
- Legislative update from the 107th General Assembly.



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How The Office Of Small Business Advocate Can Assist Your Small Business

Office of Small Business Advocate

History of the Office

- The General Assembly created the Office in 2010 with the passage of Senate Bill 3484.
- The Office of Small Business Advocate is housed within the Comptroller of the Treasury, one of three Constitutional Offices.
- The Office of Small Business Advocate serves as a point of contact to State Government for citizens who are starting or who already own a business.

Office of Small Business Advocate

Role of the Advocate

- Answer questions and provide information for citizens who are starting or who already own a small business in Tennessee.
- Work to resolve issues concerning small businesses and state departments and agencies, serve as an informal mediator.
- Assist those businesses with **50 or fewer** employees and maintain confidentiality when appropriate.
- Receive comments from small business owners regarding regulatory or enforcement actions and refer those comments to the affected department or agency.
- Report annually to the General Assembly.



Office of Small Business Advocate Inquiry Procedure

- Contact in each department and agency with regulatory authority over businesses
- Formal v. informal process
- Uniqueness of inquires



Office of Small Business Advocate Frequent Inquires

- Application Status
- Enforcement
- Financial Assistance
- “How To” Questions
- Licensure
- Regulatory Compliance



Office of Small Business Advocate Results for Small Business Owners

Entrepreneur wants information on regulatory requirements to start a food truck business.

Small business owner has concerns over a department's enforcement action including monetary penalties and interest.

Small business owner seeking professional licensure.



Cutting through the Red Tape
– Helpful Hints on Dealing with
State Government

Communication is Key

- Between different levels of government – local, state, and federal
- Between state agencies
- Between a small business owner and state government

Understanding the Structure

- Executive branch of state government has over 40,000 employees
- 34 state agencies with regulatory authority over business
- Hierarchical nature of an agency

3 Tips for Dealing with State Government

1. Documentation is important.

2. Patience is a virtue.

3. Call the Office of Small Business Advocate !

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Legislative update from the 107th General Assembly

House Bill 2612

“Small Business Incentive Act”

- ❖ Requires the state to create a user-friendly website which will provide access to essential regulatory information to start a business.
- ❖ Website will be organized by business type; i.e. spa, restaurant, etc.
- ❖ Website will include forms, documents, permits, or applications required for a type of business to operate in Tennessee.
- ❖ Additionally, the site will include notice of potential and pending rule making hearings for boards and commissions with regulatory authority over an industry.

Senate Bill 3658

“Unemployment Insurance Accountability Act of 2012”

- ❁ Broadens the definition of employee misconduct to include certain instances where applicants will not qualify for benefits if they were terminated for cause.
- ❁ Effective September 1, 2012, a separating employer may preemptively supply information to the state if the employer expects a separation issue to arise with regard to an employee.
- ❁ Other key changes: Recipients proof of job search, electronic communication to communicate employee separation and challenges to benefit claims.

Senate Bill 3644

- ☉ Allows for electronic communication and notices for certain licenses, certifications, and registrations regarding:
 1. Renewals
 2. Fee increases
 3. Changes to state law, rules, policies, or guidelines
 4. Board or Commission meetings

- ☉ Effective January 1, 2013

Other news from the 2012 session

- ❁ Repeal of the state gift tax.
- ❁ Repeal of the state inheritance tax over the next 4 years.
- ❁ Passage of a \$31.1 billion dollar budget that reduces expenses, reduces the size of government, provides essential services, and is balanced.

In Closing

- State government is on the right track.
- We need to continue to hear from you, the small business owner.
- Bottom-line: Small business owners should not have to spend their time figuring out the who, what, where, when, and why of state government.

Contact Information

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