

**BizLINC Program Operations, Eligibility, and Confidentiality Guidelines**  
**Issued by: BizLINC Management Team**  
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## Overview

BizLINC is the business incubation program established through a formal agreement with the City of Lake Wales Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), designed to foster entrepreneurship, support small business growth, and attract new investment into Lake Wales, particularly the Northwest Community and Lincoln Avenue Corridor. The program seeks to empower businesses by offering access to technical support, shared workspace, and confidential guidance in key operational areas.

Our mission is to support entrepreneurs with the potential to contribute to the city's revitalization efforts and to guide them during the most critical phases of their business lifecycle. This memo is intended to inform the public, address misinformation, and reinforce our operating principles, eligibility standards, and confidentiality responsibilities.

## Program Eligibility Summary

### Eligibility, Business Types, and Application Requirements

At BizLINC, we recognize that entrepreneurship is not one-size-fits-all. That's why our programs are designed to serve a wide range of businesses at different stages of development. While space is limited and selection is not guaranteed, we typically support businesses that meet **some or all** the following characteristics:

### We Serve:

- **Pre-Incubation Businesses** – Entrepreneurs with a concept and early planning, but not yet legally structured
- **Startup/Incubation-Stage Businesses** – Newly formed businesses that need structure, mentorship, and support systems
- **Growth-Stage Businesses** – Existing businesses that have plateaued or are seeking to expand
- **Scale-Ready Enterprises** – Businesses with a proven model that are poised for larger market expansion or replication
- **Relocating Businesses** – Entrepreneurs planning to establish or expand operations in Lake Wales within 24 months
- **In-Market Innovators** – Individuals launching new initiatives under an existing business or entity
- **Locally Based Entrepreneurs** – Business owners who live within a 30-mile radius of Lake Wales

BizLINC provides flexible support depending on your stage, needs, and capacity—but readiness, commitment, and accountability are essential at every level.

### Application Requirements and Individual Responsibility

All prospective participants must complete the official BizLINC Incubator Application, available

at: <https://form.jotform.com/222406358845157>. The application includes basic business information and documentation such as:

- Business structure
- Ownership details
- Location plans (current or projected)
- Primary business needs
- Supporting documentation, including Sunbiz registration and local/county Business Tax Receipts (BTRs)

If you do not currently have these items, that's okay—**our team can provide general guidance on how to obtain them. However, it is fully the applicant's responsibility to gather and submit the necessary information and documentation.** BizLINC does not collect these items on your behalf.

By ensuring that every applicant takes ownership of this process, we help build the habits and accountability essential for long-term business success.

## Technical Support & Offsite Engagement

The businesses we serve, particularly service-based operations, conduct most of their work offsite, and this is by design. The value of BizLINC lies not in the physical office space alone but in the customized, high-touch technical assistance provided, including but not limited to:

**Onsite construction training**

**Building science support (e.g., ASHRAE 62.2 compliance)**

**Contracting and estimating guidance**

**Billing and invoice assistance**

**Logo Design**

**System Development**

**Strategic Planning**

**Marketing & Branding**

**Onsite consultation and field coaching**

**Support for job creation in high-demand sectors**

BizLINC defines technical assistance as any form of structured guidance, consultation, hands-on support, or skill-based intervention offered by BizLINC staff, peer mentors, industry professionals, or third-party specialists. This includes one-on-one coaching, workshops, resource connections, and operational support—delivered in person, virtually, and on-site.

We emphasize a multi-modal approach to business support that includes:

- Peer-to-peer mentoring within the BizLINC Network
- In-person consultations and Zoom-based meetings
- Professional support from industry experts
- Offsite field engagements, including several-week service projects at low-income residential homes, where businesses (especially in construction and repair fields) apply learned skills in real-world environments

These opportunities not only strengthen business capacity but also contribute to workforce development. Our largest audience and impact to date has been among handyman services and skilled trades professionals, who benefit from both structured coaching and experiential learning environments.

We emphasize periodic benchmarking. Each participant works with BizLINC to set goals and review progress on a flexible, needs-based schedule that reflects their actual pace of growth.

Additionally, BizLINC offers free consultation services to any business—whether enrolled in the physical incubator or not—that requests assistance. This is a vital part of our broader mission to create a culture of entrepreneurship and an inclusive economic ecosystem within the Northwest community.

Monthly community sessions (open to the public at no charge) offer guest speakers, professional presentations, and networking opportunities.

### **Strategic Location Focus: Lincoln Avenue**

As part of our mission to revitalize historically disinvested neighborhoods, BizLINC has a strategic focus on attracting new businesses to Lincoln Avenue. We aspire to work closely with the CRA and local property owners to identify vacancies, support tenant fit-out, and align funding and training resources to this corridor.

### **Access & Public Entry Policy**

While BizLINC is committed to transparency and community engagement through scheduled workshops and public events, the facility itself operates as a professional incubator space and, due to the nature of the businesses served, is not always able to accommodate unscheduled walk-in visits. Many of the service-based businesses we support—particularly those in the trades, construction, and mobile services sectors—are actively engaged in fieldwork and are not based at the facility full-time. To maintain a secure and focused environment for client services, technical assistance meetings, and strategic business consultations, we kindly ask that all visits be scheduled in advance through our online contact form at <https://www.thebizlinc.com/contact-4>.

That said, walk-ins are welcome; however, scheduling is strongly encouraged to ensure staff or BizLINC members are available to provide meaningful support. The general public is welcome to schedule a visit, and most of the time, either a BizLINC member or the on-site receptionist—if available—will be happy to provide a guided tour and answer questions about the facility and its programs.

Authorized BizLINC members receive secure 24/7 access via keycode entry to accommodate their individual business needs and schedules.

## Confidential Program Information

BizLINC is a public-private business incubation initiative governed by a formal agreement with the City of Lake Wales Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA). While BizLINC is committed to transparency through impact reporting and collaborative community engagement, we also uphold strict legal and ethical protections regarding individualized business information, technical assistance records, and proprietary strategies.

We recognize that in rare cases, individuals or entities may attempt to misuse Florida’s public records laws—not to promote transparency, but to create confusion, harass program staff, or damage the reputation of BizLINC and its clients. These tactics undermine community development and contradict the intent of open government statutes.

To safeguard the integrity of the program and the entrepreneurs we serve, BizLINC affirms the following:

### Confidentiality Protections Under Florida Law

Under **Florida Statutes § 119.071(1)(f)** and the **Florida Uniform Trade Secrets Act (§ 688.002(4))**, certain business records are expressly exempt from public disclosure, including any documentation that:

“...derives independent economic value...from not being generally known...and is the subject of efforts that are reasonable under the circumstances to maintain its secrecy.”

This includes business models, financial records, customer strategies, pricing systems, market analyses, and coaching notes.

### No Obligation to Disclose Individualized Strategic Materials

BizLINC is not required—and in many cases, not legally permitted—to disclose internal coaching notes, strategic business documents, proprietary financials, or any other sensitive business data without the entrepreneur’s explicit written consent or a court order. Our obligation is limited to **aggregate program data** as defined in our agreement with the City of Lake Wales (e.g., number of participants, jobs created, total estimated revenue)—not individualized records.