

CITY OF BERKELEY

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



STARTING A BUSINESS IN BERKELEY

RESOURCE GUIDE

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Revised 03/08

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Economic Development has prepared this resource guide in cooperation with other City departments, the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce and District Business Associations as a means of clarifying the start-up process for businesses in Berkeley. The City of Berkeley Office of Economic Development (OED) works to promote a healthy Berkeley economy. The OED priorities include:

- Attracting new business and development to Berkeley
- Working with individual businesses to keep them in Berkeley and help them expand
- Developing job opportunities for residents in local firms
- Revitalizing Berkeley's various commercial districts
- Assisting small, alternative, and environmental businesses
- Developing and operating Civic Arts programs and projects
- Providing loans and grants for small businesses and artists
- Promoting environmentally sensitive design and construction (green building)

The OED has a number of programs related to these goals. We are able to help businesses meet their needs for workers, space, financing, City permit processing, technical assistance and other information.

This resource guide provides vital information for obtaining the proper authority to begin a business through the **Permit and Licensing** requirements and provides resources for State, County and Federal permit and licensing requirements. Also included is contact information for the Berkeley's Chamber of Commerce and Business Associations, which provide essential information and resources to assist in sustaining a successful business in the City of Berkeley.

The information contained in this document is accurate to the best of our knowledge. Please check with the agencies or websites provided for updated information. Please direct any questions about this material, or requests for additional copies of this resource guide to:

Office of Economic Development
2180 Milvia Street, 5th Floor
Berkeley, California 94704
Tel: (510) 981-7530, TDD: (510) 981-6903
Fax: (510) 981-7099
www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/oed

An Environment for Innovative Business

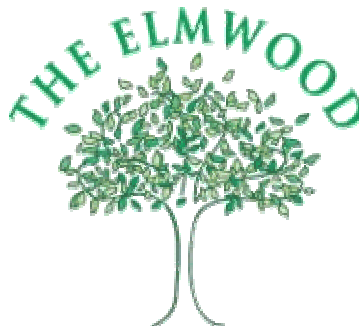
Berkeley Chamber of Commerce

The Berkeley Chamber of Commerce serves as an advocacy organization for Berkeley business at the local and state levels. Working with City government, the Chamber sponsors programs and events, which benefit the business community. Members are provided with concrete services such as business referrals, small business seminars, an annual business showcase, and numerous other services. For information on membership, contact:

Berkeley Chamber of Commerce
1834 University Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94703
Tel: (510) 549-7000
Fax: (510) 549-1789
www.info@berkeleychamber.com

District Business Associations

In addition to the Chamber of Commerce, Berkeley has many District Business Associations that serve businesses in particular geographic areas. They help solve public safety and planning issues effecting individual business districts, organize public events or joint advertising for their districts. Many are well-established organizations that have existed for years; others are informal groups that meet for problem solving sessions. The following list provides contact information for business associations that are known to be active at present:



District Business Associations

Adeline/Alcatraz Merchants Association
c/o Sam Dyke, Peoples' Bazaar
3258 Adeline Street
Berkeley, CA 94703
Tel: (510) 655-8008 Fax: (510) 654-7852

Adeline/Ashby Merchants Association
c/o Shirley Mitts, Jack's Antiques
3021 Adeline Street
Berkeley, CA 94703
Tel: (510) 845-6221

Domingo Avenue Merchants Association
David Morris
2912 Domingo Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94705
Tel: (510) 548-3122

Downtown Berkeley Association
c/o Deborah Badhia
2230 Shattuck Ave., Ste. C
Berkeley, CA 94704
Tel: (510) 549-2230 Fax: (510) 549-2267
info@downtownberkeley.org
www.downtownberkeley.org

Dwight Way Terrace Business Association
c/o Eunice Brewer
Martial Arts America
2438 Sacramento Street
Berkeley, CA 94702
Tel: (510) 540-5425 Fax: (510) 540-8052

Elmwood Merchants Association
c/o 14 Karats 2910 Jon Moriarty
2910 College Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94705
Tel: (510) 644-1640
EMA@shopelmwood.com
<http://www.shopelmwood.com>

Fourth Street Businesses
c/o Denny Abrams
1834 4th Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
Tel: (510) 644-3002

Telegraph Property & Business Management Corp.
c/o Roland Peterson
2509 Haste Street
Berkeley, CA 94704
Tel: (510) 486-2366

University Avenue Association
c/o Maulin Chokshi, President
1042 University Ave.
Berkeley 94710
Tel: 510-486-0317
uaa@hotmail.com

North Shattuck Association
c/o Heather Hensley
1700 Shattuck Ave. Box 318
Berkeley, CA 94709
Tel: (510) 540-6444 Fax: (510) 540-6944
info@northshattuck.org
<http://www.northshattuck.org>

Northside Merchants Association
c/o Sam Nassar, Brewed Awakenings
1807 Euclid
Berkeley, CA 94708
Tel: (510) 540-8865 Fax: (510) 540-8090

Sacramento Street Merchants
c/o Charlotte Fredericksen
2180 Milvia St.
Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 981-7539

Shattuck/Blake Merchants Association.
c/o Suzanne Steinberg
Stone Mountain & Daughter Fabrics
2518 Shattuck Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94704
Tel: (510) 845-6106 Fax: (510) 845-6114

Solano Avenue Merchants Association
c/o Allen Cain
1563 Solano Avenue, #101
Berkeley, CA 94707
Tel: (510) 527-5358 Fax: (510) 548-5335
SAA@solanoavenueassn.org
<http://www.solanoave.org>

South Berkeley Neighborhood Development Corporation
1767 Alcatraz Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94703
Tel: (510) 653-1491
info@southberkeley.org
<http://www.southberkeley.org>

West Berkeley Association of Industrial Companies
c/o Orrel Lanter
2424 Fourth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
Tel: (510) 644-4451 x 205

West Berkeley Neighborhood Development Corporation
PO Box 2223
Berkeley, CA 94702
Phone: 510.845.4106
wbndc04@westberkeley.com
<http://www.westberkeley.com>

West Berkeley Business Alliance
c/o Michael Goldin
<http://www.thewbba.org>

I. PERMIT AND LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

The City of Berkeley has various requirements and regulation for operating a business. It is your responsibility to obtain all necessary approvals, permits, and licenses, and to pay all taxes and fees associated with your particular business. The City's regulations are incorporated in the Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC). The BMC is an excellent source of information on business licenses, definitions of terms, business classifications, business license tax rates, and allowable deductions to gross receipts. Copies of the BMC are at all branches of the Berkeley Public Library and on the City of Berkeley web site at: www.ci.berkeley.ca.us,

Permit Service Center & Customer Service Center

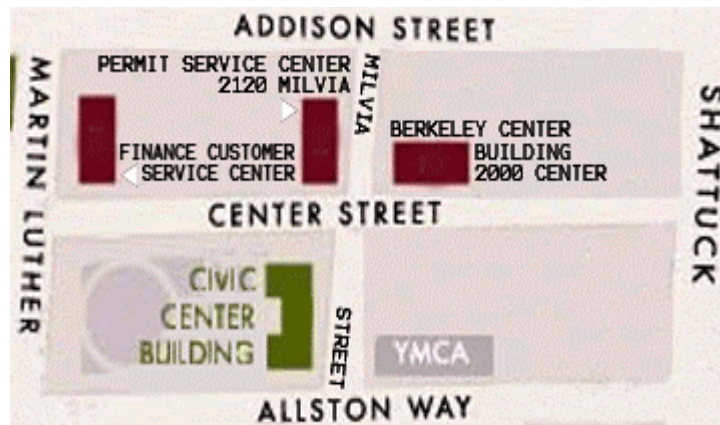
For your convenience the City of Berkeley operates a one-stop Permit Service Center located on Milvia St. between Addison & Center Street. Staff is available for plan checking, permits for Zoning and Use and building permits. Assistance is also available for Fire, Public Works, Building and Toxics. Please visit at the address below or call for further information.

Permit Service Center
2120 Milvia Street, Berkeley, CA 94704
TEL: (510) 981-7500 TDD: (510) 981-7474,
Office Hours: Mon, Tue, Thur, & Fri 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wed 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Email: planning@ci.berkeley.ca.us
www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/planning

The Finance Customer Service Center, where you can get business license and other information, is located between Milvia & MLK Jr. Way at:

Finance Customer Service Center
1947 Center Street, 1st Floor
Berkeley, CA 94707
Tel: (510) 981-7200
Fax: (510) 981-7210
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00 am to 4:30 pm.
Email: BusLic@ci.berkeley.ca.us
<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/finance>

MAP



A. City of Berkeley Business License

You will need a new Business License if you are: starting a new business, the new owner of an existing business, opening an additional location for your current business, or moving your business to a new location. Depending on the kind of business you have, this process may take a few days to several weeks or more. For additional information, please visit :

<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/finance>

- [Business License Information](#) - how to apply for your New Business License, including links to the application form, renewal information, and useful contacts, plus a printable brochure.
- [Essential Business License Requirements](#)
- [Permit Service Center](#) - different approvals are required for a New Business License that must be obtained from the Permit Service Center.

Depending on the kind of business you are going to operate, several approvals and/or permits are required prior to issuing your new business license. These include those from Zoning, as well as possibly Building and Safety, Environmental Health, Toxics, Fire and Police. Please see the Planning Department for important information about addressing assignments and land use regulations. You can contact staff at the Permit Service Center to discuss these requirements. The completed new business license application form, with all other required permits and initial payments, must be submitted within 30 days from the date of commencement of business activity. All contractors doing business in Berkeley must have an active business license before applying for a permit.

B. City Zoning and Use Permits

Zoning

It is critical that potential new businesses including home occupations, check with the Planning Department about the Zoning regulations applicable to a particular location. To speak to a planner, please contact the Planning Department at: (510) 981-7410. Please have exact street address and square footage available. A copy of the floor plan is also required. Some businesses may only require a Zoning Permit and may include a fee. (All zoning fees are separate and in addition to business license fees, but are only paid one time.) For more information please visit:

www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/planning

Use Permit

Businesses, which require a Use Permit, may require a public hearing before the Zoning Adjustments Board, which has the power to approve, condition, or deny an application. New business applicants should be aware that new buildings and additions creating substantial new floor area, will require Use Permits. [www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/planning/landuse/LandUse Permits](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/planning/landuse/LandUse_Permits)

Home Occupations

In residential districts, businesses are not normally allowed except for Home Occupations. Home Occupations are limited operations with little or no impact on surrounding residential neighborhoods (no employees; limited customer visits; no onsite product sales, shipping or storage; no signs). Home Occupations require an over the counter Zoning permit and a Use permit based on the type of business.

Inspections

When a business starts up in an older existing building, an inspection will probably be required to ensure life-safety and compliance with the building codes. The fee charged for this inspection is \$270. (This inspection may be required whether or not the proposed business use differs substantially from the previous use.) Businesses going into new or very recently completed buildings are normally exempted from an inspection. For additional information please contact the Permit Service Center or visit the web site below.

C. Exterior Signage

The erection of new signs (or the transfer of existing ones to a new building) is subject to review under the City's Design Review Ordinance. Signs must also conform to the Berkeley Sign Ordinance (Title 20 of the Municipal Code). Sign applicants should first contact the planner assigned to Design Review at the Zoning Counter, then go to Building Permits at the Permit Service Center, for sign permits or call (510) 981-7400:

D. City Hazardous Material Permits

The Toxics Management Division (TMD) is the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for the City of Berkeley. The TMD is responsible for enforcing regulations related to the use of hazardous materials. Failure to comply with management and reporting requirements can result in expensive civil, or in some cases, criminal penalties. As a CUPA, TMD regulates businesses that handle hazardous materials and hazardous wastes in Berkeley. This involves administering five state program elements, including the issuance of permits and enforcement activities. For information, please contact:

**Toxics Management Division, Planning Department
2118 Milvia Street, Suite 200
Berkeley CA 94704
Tel: (510) 981-7460
TDD: (510) 981-6903
Fax: (510) 981-7470**

<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/toxics/default.htm>

Environmental Health

Approval and inspection may be required for some business licenses. Contact information:

**Environmental Health
1947 Center Street
Berkeley, CA 94704
Tel: (510) 981-5310**

envhealth@ci.berkeley.ca.us
www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/environmentalhealth

E. Merchant Parking Permits

Throughout Berkeley including or adjacent to many of the commercial areas, the City has a Residential Preferential Parking (RPP) program, to assure available parking for residents in the area. RPP usually restricts on-street neighborhood parking to 1 or 2 hours, for those vehicles without a designated permit for that area. In some areas, businesses may purchase an annual Merchant Permit. For additional information, see www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/finance/

F. State Licenses

Many commercial operations, such as automotive repair dealers, building contractors, barbers and others require a state license. There is a penalty if licenses are not applied for in advance. Contact Information:

**California State Department of
Consumer Affairs**
400 R.Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Tele: (800) 952-5210
www.dca.ca.gov/licensee/info

or contact the

California Business Portal
www.calbusiness.ca.gov/

G. Fictitious Business Name Statement

Every business that goes by a name other than its owner(s), or other than its name upon incorporation, must file a fictitious business name statement. Here, they can search a microfiche index to make certain that they are the only user of that fictitious name before they file the statement or you can search using the Online Services at the website below.

Alameda County Clerk
1106 Madison Street
Oakland, CA 94607
Tel: (510) 272-6363
<http://www.acgov.org>

H. Federal Identification Number

All employers and most businesses are required to obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). An application form (#SS-4) can be obtained from the:

U.S. Internal Revenue Service
1301 Clay Street
Oakland, CA 94612
Tel: (800)-829-1040 (510) 637-2487
www.irs.gov

I. State Sales and Use Tax Permit

Under the California Sales and Use Tax Law, every person, partnership or corporation intending to engage in selling tangible personal property must obtain a valid Seller's Permit. Wholesalers, as well as retailers, must secure a permit. For convenience, some employers may use the Board of Equalization Form BT-400 to apply for a seller's permit and to register with the Employment Development Department (EDD) at the same time. If your firm has more than one place of business (located on different premises), you need a separate permit for each location. In some instances a single consolidation permit will cover multiple business outlets. To register as a seller, the proprietor, partner, or office of business may contact:

State Board of Equalization
1515 Clay Street, Ste. 303
Oakland, CA 94612-1432
Tel: (510) 622-4100
Fax (510) 622-4175
www.boe.ca.gov

J. State Employer Registration Forms

Employers are required to register with the California Employment Development Department within 15 days after becoming subject to the California personal income tax withholding provisions, the Unemployment Insurance Code, or both. A new employer package is available at the:

**California Employment Development Department
Employment Tax Office
745 Franklin Street, Room 302
San Francisco, CA 94102
Tel: 1-888-745-3886
www.edd.cahwnet.gov/taxind.htm**

II. UTILITIES

For a list of Service Providers for gas, electric and telephone service in your area, please visit the [California Public Utilities Commission](http://CaliforniaPublicUtilitiesCommission.com). Or www.energy.ca.gov/electricity/utilities.html. Below are the contacts for locally used utility services. When a new business is established, a security deposit may be required. Please contact the offices listed for further information.

A. Water

**East Bay Municipal Utility District
375 11th Street
Oakland, CA 94607
P.O. Box 24055
Oakland, CA 94623-1055
Tel: 1 (866) 403-2683
www.ebmud.com**

B. Gas & Electricity

**Pacific Gas & Electric Co.
1900 Addison St Suite 101
Berkeley, CA 94704
Tel: (800) 468-4743 (Business Services)
www.pge.com**

C. Refuse & Recycling Collection

New businesses can establish refuse and recycling collection by contacting **Refuse Customer Service**, located in the **Customer Service Center at 1947 Center**, Monday – Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. **Call (510) 981-7270** for a Customer Service Representative, or obtain a Refuse Service Customer Intake Form at www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/finance/refuse and fax it to (510) 981-7280.

III. CITY OF BERKELEY BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

Site Referral For Expansion Or Relocation

OED has developed a network of brokers as well as an internal information base that we can draw on to help businesses find spaces to lease or purchase. By using this network, we can help businesses expand or relocate in Berkeley.

Contact: West Berkeley, Downtown and Citywide Berkeley (510) 981-7530
Telegraph, College and University Avenues (510) 981-7534
South Berkeley (510) 981-7539

Entry And Mid-Level Job Applicants

WORKSOURCE can provide entry and mid-level job applicants to businesses as a free service through our First Source hiring program.
Contact: (510) 981-7550

Construction Job Applicants

WORKSOURCE can provide qualified applicants for construction jobs including minority and women workers.

Contact: (510) 981-7556

Business Loans

Below market-rate loans for businesses located in Berkeley, or planning to locate here, are eligible for below market-rate loans. Assistance with loan packaging is also available through this program.

Contact: Office of Economic Development (510) 981-7530

Green Building

Berkeley promotes building green as the “business as usual “ choice in Berkeley. Berkeley’s Best builder’s Program provides assistance on resource-conserving design strategies, technologies and materials.

Contact: Office of Energy & Sustainable Development, Alice LaPierre..... (510) 981-5435

Sustainable Business

Berkeley targets resources to eco-businesses and provides incentives to encourage businesses to reduce your environmental impact while improving your bottom line

Contact: Office of Energy & Sustainable Development, Jennifer Cogley (510) 981-5438

Energy Conservation Assistance

Provides assistance and information on how businesses can save money with energy saving programs, rebates, and financial incentives.

Contact: Office of Energy and Sustainable Development, Neal De Snoo (510) 981-5434

Permit Process Assistance

Assistance with processing City permits.

Contact: Office of Economic Development (510) 981-7530

Economic Information Database

Economic and demographic data about Berkeley is available to businesses on request.

Contact: Office of Economic Development, Dave Fogarty (510) 981-7534

Berkeley Convention & Visitors Bureau & Film Office

Designated the official destination marketing organization for the City of Berkeley, the Visitor Information Center offers a variety of brochures and literature about what to see and do in Berkeley. They also assist meeting and event planners with facility referrals and local services.

Berkeley Convention & Visitors Bureau

The Berkeley Film Commission is a department within the Convention & Visitors Bureau. It is the official liaison between film production crews, city government, and the community-at-large. It provides assistance and guidance to film-related projects and coordinates all filming permits.

Berkeley Convention & Visitors Bureau and Film Office

2015 Center Street

Berkeley, CA 94704

Tel: (510) 549-7040

Fax: (510) 644-2052

Visitors’ Hotline: (510) 549-8710

www.visitberkeley.com

IV. OTHER ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

Nor-Cal FDC formerly Bay Area Small Business Development Corporation

300 Frank Ogawa Plaza Suite 251
Oakland, CA 94612
Tel: (510) 208-7330 (Admin)
(510) 208-7331 (Loan Production)
<http://www.norcalfdc.org/index.htm>

Since 1978 Nor-Cal FDC has helped hundreds of business owners obtain financing from banks throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. They specialize in helping those companies that do not meet traditional guidelines.

East Bay Small Business Development Center (EBSBDC)

475 14th Street, Suite 150
Oakland, CA 94612
Tel: (510) 208-0410
Fax: (510) 208-0413
<http://www.eastbaysbdc.org/>

The Cal State East Bay Small Business Development Center (SBDC), a new partnership between California State University, East Bay, the Northern California SBDC Regional Network and the U. S. Small Business Administration, offers classes, consulting services and business planning resources for entrepreneurs and small business owners. The Cal State East Bay SBDC is focused on developing and implementing programs and services that support innovation, entrepreneurship, sustainability, growth, and social impact.

Small Business Administration (SBA)

The SBA offers general and technical assistance to new and established businesses. Services include loan programs, business counseling, management training, conferences, referrals and reference libraries.

Small Business Information Center

Tel: (510) 273-6000
Tel: (800) 827-5722
Email: answerdesk@sba.gov
http://www.sba.gov/starting_business/

Sustainable Business Alliance

The Sustainable Business Alliance (SBA) is a membership organization for companies who are committed to greater sustainability in their business policies and practices. SBA offers workshops, technical assistance, networking and partnership opportunities. Contact: Terry O'Keefe at:

Sustainable Business Alliance

P.O. Box 1104
Berkeley, CA 94702
Tel: (510) 931-6560
Email: info@sustainablebiz.org
www.sustainablebiz.org

Women's Initiative for Self-Employment

Provides training on business assessment, marketing, finance and sales, and counseling. Contact one of the Bay Area offices below for more information on enrollment.

Oakland Office

519 17th St., Ste. 110 (at Telegraph)
Oakland, CA 94612
ph: (510) 287-3100
www.womensinitiative.org

San Francisco Office

1398 Valencia St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
ph: (415) 641-3460
fax: (415) 826-1885

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)

Retired business professionals volunteer to provide free counseling to individuals starting small businesses. Counseling and workshops are available at a cost. Visit the site at: www.score.org Bay Area Chapters are listed below:

East Bay SCORE

492 9th Street, Suite 350
Oakland, CA 94607
Tel: (510) 273-6611
FAX: (510) 273-6015
EMAIL: info@eastbayscore.org
[Chapter Home Page](#)

San Francisco SCORE

455 Market Street, 6th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
Tel: (415) 744-6827
FAX: (415) 744-6750
EMAIL: sfscore@sfscore.org
[Chapter Home Page](#)

Silicon Valley SCORE

84 West Santa Clara Street,
Suite 100, Entrepreneur
Center
San Jose, CA 95113
Tel: (408) 288-8479
FAX: (408) 494-0214
EMAIL:
svscore@hotmail.com
[Chapter Home Page](#)

Incorporation and Trademarks

For information on incorporating your business or establishing a Trademark, contact:

State Regulation

The Secretary of State's Office
1500 11th St., 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 657-5448
www.ss.ca.gov

Trade

For Trade information please contact one of the Center for International Trade Development agencies below.

East Bay

James Garrett, Director
544 Water Street
Oakland CA 94607
Phone (510) 251 5930 **Fax** (510) 251 5902
Email jduenas@bawtc.org
Web eastbay.citd.org

Bay Area

Richard Soyombo, Director
40 Chestnut Ave.
S. San Francisco CA 94080
Phone 650-553-9071 **Fax** 650-533-9077
Email soyombo@bayareacitd.com
Web bayarea.citd.org

V. CITY DEPARTMENTS

Animal Care Services.....	(510) 981-6600
Auditor	(510) 981-6750
Budget & Fiscal Management	(510) 981-7000
City Attorney	(510) 981-6950
City Clerk	(510) 981-6900
City Manager	(510) 981-7000
Economic Development	(510) 981-7530
First Source.....	(510) 981-7550
Finance Customer Service Center	(510) 981-7200
Fire, Main Number (non-emergency)	(510) 981-FIRE (3473)
Health & Human Services:	
Environmental Health	(510) 981-5310
Health Promotions.....	(510) 981-5300
Homeless Services.....	(510) 981-5400
Mental Health	(510) 981-5290
Housing.....	(510) 981-5400
Office of Energy & Sustainable Development.....	(510) 981-5438
Human Resources	(510) 981-6800
Information Technology.....	(510) 981-6500
Library, Administrative Offices.....	(510) 981-6195
Berkeley Information Network.....	http://www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org/
Office of Transportation.....	(510) 981-7010
Office of Energy Services.....	(510) 981-5435
Parks, Recreation & Waterfront.....	(510) 981-6700
Planning.....	(510) 981-7400
Permit Center	(510) 981-7500
Police:	
Main Number (non-emergency).....	(510) 981-5900
Communications Center	(510) 981-5934
Community Service	(510) 981-5808
Patrol & Beat Officers	(510) 981-5900
Traffic & Parking Meter Enforcement.....	(510) 981-5980

V. CITY DEPARTMENTS (continued)

Public Works:

Public Works Customer Service	(510) 644-6620
Capital Improvements.....	(510) 981-6330
Transportation\Engineering, (incl. Traffic)	(510) 981-7010
Solid Waste & Recycling	(510) 981-7270

Rent Stabilization Board..... (510) 644-6128

For further information regarding the City of Berkeley check our website.

www.ci.berkeley.ca.us

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