



Catawba County Planning and Parks  
100-A Southwest Blvd.  
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## HOW TO START A COTTAGE BUSINESS

. (See UDO Sec. 44-665)

The Catawba County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) allows certain businesses, called cottage businesses, as a special use permit. Cottage businesses operated by the homeowner may be operated inside your home, in a building located on the same property, or on property adjacent to your home.

Examples of cottages businesses are as follows:

- (1) All uses allowed as a home occupation or back yard business;
- (2) Commercial machinery repair and maintenance;
- (3) Contractors—specialty trades, such as:
  - Drywall contractors;
  - Electrical contractors; masonry contractors; Painting contractors; plumbing contractors;
  - Residential, commercial and industrial building construction contractors;
  - Roofing contractors;
- (4) Upholstery (full-service).

### Steps to follow to obtain a permit to operate a cottage business:

- (1) Check with a representative of the Catawba County Planning Department to see if the business you are proposing would be considered a cottage business. You may contact the Catawba County Planning Department at 828-465-8380, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email us at [planning@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:planning@catawbacountync.gov).
- (2) If the proposed business is considered a cottage business, you would need to request a special use permit. A [special use application](#) must be filled out and submitted along with a detailed site plan, prepared by a licensed professional, to the Catawba County Planning Department a minimum of 45 days prior to the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Adjustment. There is a filing fee of \$425.00.
- (3) The applicant will need to appear before the Catawba County Board of Adjustment on the last Tuesday of the following month at 7:00 p.m. at the Government Center, Second Floor Meeting Room at 100-A Southwest Blvd, Newton, N.C. This is a public hearing and the Board of Adjustment will hear all parties present and make a decision on the request.

**Some of the standards that will be used in deciding whether to approve a cottage business are:**

1. The business does not change the residential character of the property.
  2. The business does not generate more than 50 vehicle trips per day.
  3. Lot size of 1 acre with property having frontage along a state road or a dedicated 45 foot right of way.
  4. The area devoted for the business use cannot occupy more than 75% of the square footage of the principal dwelling structure associated with the business.
  5. Business may have 2 employees that do not live in the home.
  6. Property will need to have a paved parking area, landscaping and a row of evergreens trees around the property to screen the business from the adjacent neighbors.
  7. Sign is allowed up to 4 square feet in area and 4 feet in height.
  8. Cottage businesses are not permitted in approved subdivisions of more than 3 lots.
- (4) Once your special use request for a cottage business has been approved, you will be able to make an [application for a zoning permit](#). You may then obtain a zoning permit from the Planning Department. You may reach the Planning Department by phone at 828-465-8380, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email at [planning@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:planning@catawbacountync.gov).
- (5) Submit an [application for a septic tank permit and well permit](#) to the Catawba County Permit Center. If you have questions you may call the Permit Center at 828-465-8399, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email at [permitcenter@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:permitcenter@catawbacountync.gov).
- (6) Submit an [application for a building permit](#) to the Catawba County Permit Center. If you have questions you may call the Permit Center at 828-465-8399, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email at [permitcenter@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:permitcenter@catawbacountync.gov).

If you have questions concerning a cottage business, where they may be located or obtaining a permit for your property, please call the Catawba County Planning Department at 828-465-8380, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email us at [planning@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:planning@catawbacountync.gov). Please know that we are here to assist you throughout the process.

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*The purpose of this information sheet is to assist you with the process of obtaining permits and approvals associated with the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Before proceeding with any project or spending any funds you are strongly encouraged to contact staff of the Catawba County Planning Department at 828-465-8380, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email us at [planning@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:planning@catawbacountync.gov) to insure awareness of all options that may exist as well as the most effective way of accomplishing a particular project.*