

Procedural Guidelines for Alcohol Licenses

To avoid problems, the process for granting licenses to alcohol retailers (e.g., stores, bars, taverns, restaurants) should be transparent with clear criteria and guidelines for approval.

Establish guidelines that reflect community values and long-term goals. Use guidelines for every new applicant, regardless of whether the location itself was previously licensed.

All applicants must fill out the Wisconsin Form AT-106, Original Alcohol Beverage License Application, available at <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/DORForms/at-106f.pdf>. Use the most recent version, which provides more room for description of premises.

Your guidelines should require applicants to provide additional information, based on your community's needs. Useful information includes:

- Ownership, including corporate ownership
- Type of business and what alcohol beverages will be sold or served
- Description of the business
- Description of anticipated customer base
- Written plans, including business, marketing, and security
- Floor plans and maps
- Menus
- Proof of property rights to the physical premises (ownership, mortgage, or lease)
- Proof of adequate funding or capitalization

Procedural guidelines should also provide for:

- Criteria that must be met for license to be granted
- Advance notice to community of new applicants and changes to existing licenses
- Information on how the public may view applications and changes to applications
- Information on when and how public comments may be made and heard

Municipalities may also want to:

- Require a health or alcohol license impact statement
- Require a consideration of the alcohol outlet density of the immediate area
- Use municipal zoning ordinances to regulate outdoor operations such as patios
- Attach conditions to licenses as needed to improve public health and safety and reduce nuisance

Avoid granting licenses to applicants or businesses that:

- Will not contribute to the social or economic goals of the community
- Do not have the background, experience, or financial resources to operate safely

For more information, see www.mcw.edu/wisapp.