How to Open a Bar: Costs & Licenses

AdvisedSpaces

Print this checklist and check off each step as you complete it.

STEPS (9)

- [ ] **Step 1: Choose a bar model that can win at one address**
  Your concept must match the night demand in your trade area and your risk tolerance — not your personal taste in cocktails.
- [ ] **Step 2: Build a capital plan and secure funding**
  Bar startup costs vary by a factor of 2 to 4x depending on whether you are taking over a second-generation space or building from a raw shell.
- [ ] **Step 3: Secure a liquor license — the gate you must pass first**
  A bar is one of the few small businesses where the government decides if you are allowed to operate before you even discuss how. Everything orbits around the liquor license.
- [ ] **Step 4: Find a location where data beats instinct**
  Bars peak in the evening and at night, which means your daytime traffic counts are largely irrelevant. You must scout locations during your intended operating hours.
- [ ] **Step 5: Negotiate the lease like your business depends on it**
  Your lease must protect you from licensing delays, build-out surprises, and the possibility that approvals do not come through at all.
- [ ] **Step 6: Form your entity and build the liability shield**
  A bar carries more personal liability exposure than almost any other small business. Your customers consume a product that impairs judgment, then leave your premises.
- [ ] **Step 7: Handle permits, build-out, and equipment**
  Licensing and inspections rarely move at your pace. Build a critical-path schedule that assumes re-inspections and at least one plan revision.
- [ ] **Step 8: Hire, train, and install financial controls**
  Bars do not leak money — they hemorrhage it through over-pours, comps, theft, sloppy inventory, and chaotic scheduling. Install controls from day one.
- [ ] **Step 9: Pre-sell opening month and launch**
  Your first 30 days determine momentum. Fill the room before you open.

NOTES

Read the full guide

https://advisedspaces.com/open/bar

Scan the QR code or visit the link for the complete guide.