



CALIFORNIA
Governor's Office of Business
and Economic Development

STATE OF CALIFORNIA • OFFICE OF GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM

Office of Permit Assistance (OPA) Annual Report

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OVERVIEW: OFFICE OF PERMIT ASSISTANCE (OPA):

The Office of Permit Assistance (OPA) is housed within the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) to provide support to the business community by:

- Providing permitting and regulatory compliance assistance to businesses;
- Assisting businesses in accessing information and resources related to permitting and regulatory compliance;
- Providing mediation and third-party facilitation to resolve conflicts between applicants and permitting and regulatory entities, and;
- Working with federal, state, regional, and local permitting, and regulatory entities to exchange best practices and implement improvements to modernize permitting processes.

The following are highlights of OPA achievements during the reporting period of October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020:

- Resolution of a total of 1,656 permitting inquiries.

Permit Assistance Type	Count
Complex Permit Mediation Projects	33
Complex Permit Identification Projects	44
Phone Calls – General Permit Inquiries	200
GO-Biz Help Desk Inquiries	1,379
Total	1,656

- Review and comment of 4 Standard Regulatory Impact Assessments (SRIA)
- Design, Data Validation and Development of CalGOLD 2.0
- Implementation of new Quick Start Guides to cover additional industries. OPA staff developed three additional quick start guides to provide information on what permits to obtain to start the following industries:
 1. Recycling and Recovery Licensing
 2. Aquaculture
 3. Alcoholic Beverage Licenses

PERMITTING ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

The following sections detail significant activities of the OPA for the reporting period of October 1, 2019 - September 30, 2020.

Regulatory Compliance Assistance

The OPA staff assists business owners in identifying permits and other regulatory requirements needed to start a new business or expand an existing one. Staff respond to business inquiries by email or phone and provide a list of regulatory entities and specific permitting requirements. Staff also coordinate pre-application meetings between business owners and the appropriate regulatory agencies to bring more clarity on more complex permitting requirements if this level of intervention is requested or if necessary.

In addition, OPA staff provide responses to requests submitted through the online California Business Portal Service Help Desk (<https://gobiz.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/requests/new>). Requests are typically resolved within 48 hours and require permit specialists to provide tailored permit identification information. Some requests may take significantly longer based on the complexity of the situation.

For this reporting period, OPA answered a total of 1,379 permitting inquiries received through the Help Desk. The chart below is a summary of the inquiries received by region:

California Region	Count
Bay Area	242
Central Coast	24
Central Sierra	6
Central Valley	71
Greater Los Angeles Region	373
Greater Sacramento	81
Inland Empire	99
Northern California	97
Not Identified	224
San Diego & Imperial County Region	162
Grand Total	1379

Permit Identification

During the reporting period, OPA staff received 34 requests that required more complex permit identification services. A complex request requires additional research and engagement with regulatory partners to ascertain permitting requirements and typically takes more than a day to resolve. There were engagements in all California's major industries, and a full breakdown by industry type is provided below:

Industry Type	Count
General Manufacturing	5
Gas Station	2
Information Technology & Software Development	2
Logistics & Transportation	2
Retail	2
Cannabis	1
Clean Tech & Renewable Energy	1
Cleaning Business	1
Dental Service	2
Dog Grooming	1
Financing Industry	1
Food Production	1
Garment Industry	1
Law Firm	1
Online Sales	1
Pharmaceutical & Medical Testing	1
R&D	1
Recycling & Composting	1
Mobile Businesses	1

Other or Not Defined	7
Grant Total	34

OPA staff also helps identify permits and permit processes related to local, state and federal permitting authorities. A breakdown of the permit identification inquiries received by permitting authority is provided below.

Level of Government	Count
Local Permits	2
State Permits	14
Local & State Permits	15
Multiple Levels of Government (including Federal Permits)	3
Grand Total	34

A few case studies of engagement on permit identification services are highlighted below:

<p>October 2019</p>	<p>Realty Advisor Company (Los Angeles County)</p> <p>Background: On October 9, 2019 MGO-Realty representatives reached out to OPA for permitting and regulatory information for their confidential client in setting up a cannabis microbusiness, retail outlet, and distribution center.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company was struggling to ascertain what forms and permits would be required.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA staff walked the company through the GO-Biz Quick Start Guide for Cannabis. OPA staff also connected the company with permitting specialists at the Bureau of Cannabis Control, California Department of Food and Agriculture, California Department of Public Health and other applicable state and local regulatory agencies to provide the business with the appropriate forms and information.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 2 weeks</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureau of Cannabis Control • California Department of Food and Agriculture • California Department of Public Health
<p>January 2020</p>	<p>Foreign Based Forest cleaning company (Paradise, Butte County)</p> <p>Background: On January 13th, 2020 a contractor for a construction company from New Zealand contacted OPA for permit and other regulatory assistance to clean up fire and other disaster impacted areas for rebuilding.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: Company did not know who to contact nor which permits they would need.</p>

	<p>Achieved Result: OPA Staff connected the company with the US Forest Services, California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection, California Office of Emergency Services, and the California Department of Parks & Recreation.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 1 week</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Forest Services • California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection • California Office of Emergency Services • California Department of Parks & Recreation
<p>May 2020</p>	<p>Fire Trucks Dealership (Statewide)</p> <p>Background: On May 28th, 2020, the fire truck dealership contacted OPA. They were interested in taking fire truck orders and having the trucks shipped to California from an out-of-state manufacturer.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company was unable to find information on permitting requirements to operate their business.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA reached out to the Department of Motor Vehicles and scheduled a meeting between the company and DMV. The company’s permitting needs were addressed and they moved forward with filing application under the direction of a DMV representative.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 6 days.</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
<p>August 2020</p>	<p>Restaurant Group (Solano County)</p> <p>Background: On August 21st, 2020, HSG Restaurant Group contacted OPA after discovering that their corporation information was fraudulently changed by an ex-manager making her the shareholder and owner of the corporation.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: Potential loss of business and legal problems.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA scheduled a meeting with the company owner and the Secretary of State (SOS) to address the issue. SOS asked for an affidavit from the company and updated the information to reflect the rightful owner.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 2 days</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Secretary of State’s Office (SOS)

Mediation Services

OPA offers neutral mediation services for business entities and regulating government agencies. Case resolution can last anywhere from a few weeks to several months, depending on the complexity of the dispute. Mediation services are not unique to any specific industry or issue type.

During the reporting period, OPA staff received 43 requests that required complex permit mediation services. There were engagements in all California’s major industries, a full breakdown has been provided below:

Industry Type	Count
Cannabis	4
Consulting Services	4
Other	4
Retail	4
Information Technology & Software Development	3
Pharmaceutical & Medical Testing	3
Clean Tech & Renewable Energy	2
Recycling & Composting	2
Alcoholic Beverage Industry	1
Auto Repair	1
Construction Related	1
Food Production	1
Gas Station	1
General Manufacturing	1
Gym	1
Hair Salon	1
Logistics & Transportation	1
Travel/Tourism	1
Mobile Businesses	1
Unknown*	6
Grant Total	43

**Not all businesses provide GO-Biz with specifics on their industry but share information about the general permitting challenges they face and assistance they need.*

Complex permit mediation projects took between one and 60 days to resolve.

OPA helped identify permits and permit processes related to local, state, and federal permitting authorities. A breakdown of the permit identification inquiries received by permitting authority has been provided below.

Permitting Authority	Count
Local Government	11
State Government	30
Local & State Governments	2

Grand Total	43
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A few case studies of OPA engagement on permit mediation assistance are highlighted below:

<p>October 2019</p>	<p>Cannabis Cultivator (Humboldt County)</p> <p>Background: On October 10th, 2019, OPA was contacted by an attorney for a cannabis cultivation business in Humboldt County.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company was unable to obtain a cannabis growers license.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA reached out to licensing unit of the California Department of Food and Agriculture to discuss the path forward. OPA then arranged a meeting between the company’s attorney, grower, and a licensing unit representative from California Department of Food and Agriculture. An amicable conclusion was reached by both parties and the permit was approved shortly after.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 1 week</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)
<p>November 2019</p>	<p>Foreign Based Fertilizer Company (Fresno County)</p> <p>Background: In November 2019, a foreign fertilizer company reached out to OPA. They were interested in opening a fertilizer facility in Fresno County and were looking for assistance in registering their all-natural product in California.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company needed help in understanding who would regulate their product.</p> <p>Achieved Result: To designate their product as organic, there were additional steps that the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) required. OPA determined that the company would need certification from CDFA and California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR). OPA arranged a meeting between the state regulatory agencies, a Fresno County economic development corporation representative, and the company representatives. In the meeting, OPA suggested that CDFA and CDPR assign permitting experts to assist the company and get their permits in a timely manner. CDFA and CDPR aided and the permits were issued in a timely manner.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 40 days</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) • California Department of Pesticide Regulations (CDPR)
<p>December 2019</p>	<p>Restaurant (San Francisco County)</p> <p>Background: On December 19th, 2019, a restaurant in San Francisco contacted OPA</p>

	<p>for assistance to address permit issuance delays.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company’s original opening date was in October, but due to the delays in permitting the opening date was moved to November 20th, 2019, and it was postponed again to December 14th, 2019.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA contacted the City of San Francisco Economic Development team and discovered that local fire inspection and fire permits were still pending. OPA contacted the Fire Marshall and other City officials for assistance. After connecting the company with the Fire Marshall and City Economic Development team, the restaurant was able open on their intended grand opening day.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 2 days</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of San Francisco Health Department • San Francisco Fire Department
<p>January 2020</p>	<p>Car Manufacturer (Statewide)</p> <p>Background: On January 27, 2020, a car manufacturer reached out to OPA seeking assistance for title process delays and perceived inaccuracies in the process. The company was looking to partner with a state agency to simplify the registration process for dealerships.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company contacted OPA to assist with approaching the DMV so that their vehicles could be sold.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA reached out to the registration unit and organized a meeting with the company and DMV representatives to resolve the issue. DMV agreed to implement the suggestions provided by the company and reduced the processing time.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 23 days</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
<p>February 2020</p>	<p>Fresh Food Grocery Chain (Northern California Bay Area Region)</p> <p>Background: In February 2020, OPA was contacted by a fresh food grocery chain that was seeking assistance with their application submitted for a grant from the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) on behalf of one of their stores.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company needed additional certificates of compliance from multiple state regulatory agencies to successfully obtain the grant funds.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA staff was able to connect the company with California Department of Business Oversight (DBO) and Secretary of State (SOS) to assist the company in the issuance of required certificates on time. The company received the grant and was able to provide financial assistance to the grocery store. That allowed the grocery store to hire additional employees.</p>

	<p>Resolution Time: 15 days</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Business Oversight (DBO) • California Secretary of State (SOS)
<p>April 2020</p>	<p>Liquor Store (Sacramento County)</p> <p>Background: On April 1st, 2020, a liquor store owner contacted OPA regarding assistance in paying a fine in lieu of suspension for a violation.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The business was cited for a violation and received a letter from the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) to suspend selling alcoholic beverages for eleven days. The company was willing to pay the fine in lieu of suspension.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA contacted the ABC district office looking for a viable solution and ABC agreed to let the business owner pay fine instead of closing the business for 11 days.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 25 days</p> <p>Involved Agencies: Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC)</p>
<p>May 2020</p>	<p>Recycling Company (Contra Costa County)</p> <p>Background: On May 28th, 2020 OPA was contacted by a recycling company interested in expanding their operations in California.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company requested assistance in obtaining approvals for a re-zoning consideration for an adjacent parcel.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA reached out to the Economic Development partners in the Contra Costa County and organized a meeting with the company and the County Department of Conservation and Development (DCD) to move the project forward.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 80 days</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contra Costa Department of Conservation and Development (DCD) • Contra Costa Planning Department
<p>June 2020</p>	<p>Biotechnology/Pharmaceutical Company (Riverside County)</p> <p>Background: On June 4, 2020, a biotechnology company contacted OPA for assistance in getting approval from Riverside County to establish a facility that could collect plasma from healthy individuals who recovered from COVID-19 and enable development of a potential treatment therapy for COVID-19.</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company selected a site in Riverside City and were ready to sign the lease. They were informed by the City Planning Department that there was an occupancy limit imposed by the Riverside County Airport Land Use</p>

	<p>Commission (ALUC) due to the proximity to the airport, that would preclude them to operate within the limits of the code.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA reached out to the Riverside County Project Manager and ALUC representatives to discuss a path forward for the project. OPA set up a meeting with the regulatory agencies and the company representatives, which allowed the company to obtain their permits and start the project. Their Riverside facility, as a result, will be opening in May of 2021.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 1 month</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County of Riverside, Planning Department • County of Riverside, Community Development Department • Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission
<p>July 2020</p>	<p>Hotel Franchise (Statewide)</p> <p>Background: On July 21st 2020, a hotel franchise company reached out to OPA for assistance in getting their franchise paperwork approved from the state Department of Business Oversight (DBO).</p> <p>Permitting Challenge: The company reached out to OPA to request assistance in obtaining their franchise approvals to operate in California.</p> <p>Achieved Result: OPA reached out to (DBO) and organized a meeting with all parties that resulted in DBO and the company working together to issue the permits in a timely manner.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 1 week</p> <p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Department of Business Oversight (DBO)
<p>September 2020</p>	<p>Wholesale and Retail Watch Company (Los Angeles County)</p> <p>Background: On September 21st, 2020, a wholesale and retail watch company contacted OPA staff to assist the company in relocating the business from downtown Los Angeles to the City of Alhambra. The company had identified a retail space in January and applied for the required permits with the City of Alhambra.</p> <p>Permit Challenge: The company contacted OPA to ask for help to get their final building permits approved and issued.</p> <p>Achieved Results: OPA reached out to the City of Alhambra’s Building and Planning Department to inquire about the permit process and status on the application. OPA also reached out to the manager of the City’s Economic Development organization for assistance. Several weeks later, the client was contacted of the approval of plans and was refunded for the fees paid for the Design Review Board. The client is now moving forward to open their business and is hiring two new employees.</p> <p>Resolution Time: 25 days</p>

	<p>Involved Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Alhambra Building and Planning Department • City of Alhambra Economic Development Organization
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CONSOLIDATING & DISSEMINATING INFORMATION

California Online Permit Assistance Tool (CalGOLD)

The OPA is responsible for maintaining the California Online Permit Assistance Tool – CalGOLD (www.calgold.ca.gov). CalGOLD is an easy-to-use tool that allows businesses to search for permit requirements tailored to their business type and location in California. Search results are sorted by local, state, and federal requirements, and, for each regulatory agency listed, contact information including physical address, web address, and telephone number is provided.

CalGOLD also includes a Forms and Fees Finder, developed, and maintained by the relevant department, to help businesses find application forms and associated fees.

Website traffic for CalGOLD during the reporting period:

- Page Views: 411,117
- New Users: 130,574

Please see the top 10 cities that CalGOLD site visitors are located:

California City	Users
Los Angeles	18,522
San Diego	6,926
San Francisco	5,680
Sacramento	4,198
San Jose	2,515
Oakland	1,958
Ontario	1,624
Irvine	1,558
Fresno	1,480
Riverside	1,380

CalGOLD 2.0 New Application & Data Migration Activities

Currently the OPA and the GO-Biz IT Unit has been working on the development of CalGOLD 2.0 to transfer existing data into a new system that will allow GO-Biz staff to better manage the database, make timely updates and additions, allow for external partners to update relevant content and provide a platform for further agency collaboration to improve the overall permitting process in California.

CalGOLD 2.0 will provide updated content through a refreshed user interface for a more streamlined user and staff maintenance experience.

CalGOLD 2.0 implements new technology, design, and information to improve the overall user experience and quality of permit assistance information. The following steps have been achieved in the current reporting period:

- Implemented the current State of California web template.
- Implemented responsive design to allow for CalGOLD 2.0 to be used on desktop computers, laptops, tablets, phones, and other devices.
- Redesigned CalGOLD 2.0 to be hosted in GO-Biz cloud. Cal GOLD v1 was previously hosted in a physical server environment. Cal GOLD v1 has been moved to California Department of Technology Azure cloud environment. Cal GOLD v2 is hosted in the GO-Biz cloud environment.
- Redesigned the new application to improve ability to create and update all permit related information, permit authorities, contacts, and cities.
- Performed initial data migration and clean up from Cal GOLD v1 to Cal GOLD v2.

A current version of the CalGOLD 2.0 production environment can be viewed and accessed through the following link: <https://prod.calgold.ca.gov/>

A main goal for the CalGOLD 2.0 platform is to allow permitting agencies to update their permits content in real-time. This would shift the responsibilities for maintaining data in the tool to local and state permitting authorities.

GO-Biz staff sees the build-out of CalGOLD 2.0 as an opportunity for future collaboration with permitting officials to provide more customer service focused engagements with applicants in the overall permitting process.

Quick Start Guides

Quick Start Guides for common industry types are available for business owners to serve as reference tools for new business launch. These guides are available on the California Business Portal at <http://businessportal.ca.gov/business-assistance/start-a-business/quick-start-guides/>

The Quick Start Guides are intended to be used as a singular guide for commonly asked questions as it relates to specific industries.

For this reporting period, the GO-Biz Business Portal Quick Start Guide webpage received over 13,000 unique visits from users. The site maintains Quick Start Guides on the following industries:

- Automotive Repair
- Barber Shops and Beauty Salons
- Building or Engineering Contractor
- Business Consultants
- Cannabis Operations
- Catering Businesses
- Cottage Food Operation
- Domestic Repair (Handyman)
- Fitness Centers
- Mobile Food Vendors
- Pet or House Sitting
- Photographer
- Physical Therapist
- Restaurants, Bakeries, and Bars
- Retail Stores
- Software/Mobile App Developer
- Tutoring
- Recycling and Recovery
- Aquaculture

- Alcoholic Beverage Licenses

For this reporting period, the OPA developed and uploaded 3 new Quick Start Guides for the following industries:

- Recycling and Recovery Licensing
- Aquaculture
- Alcoholic Beverage Licenses

MAJOR REGULATIONS - STANDARDIZED REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (SRIA)

The OPA team reviewed and commented on a total of 4 SRIAs from State departments in the current reporting period.

The following is a list of the SRIAs reviewed:

November 2019:

1. Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control: Regulations for the Responsible Beverage Service Training Program.

January 2020:

2. California Air Resources Board: Proposed Heavy-Duty Engine and Vehicle Omnibus Regulation and Associated Amendments.

August 2020:

3. California Air Resources Board: Regulations for Small Off-Road Engines (SORE)
4. California Department of Food and Agriculture: Temporary Regulations for Hemp Growers to Be Adopted Permanently.

CALIFORNIA BUSINESS PORTAL REGULATIONS & COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

For this reporting period, due to COVID-19 impacts, instead of hosting interagency meetings with multiple State departments, the OPA met with the following state agencies to go over targeted efforts to streamline permitting processes. A summary of those efforts is provided below:

Correspondence with Specific State Regulatory Agencies:

1. Department of Consumer Affairs / Boards & Bureaus
 - a. Contractors State Licensing Board
 - b. Board of Barbering & Cosmetology
2. Alcoholic Beverages Control Department
3. Department of Business Oversight
4. Department of Toxic Substances Control
5. Secretary of State's Office
6. Department of Fish & Wildlife

7. California Air Resources Board

Plans for Quarterly Meetings Next Report Cycle

OPA's intent for the next reporting cycle will be to partner with these departments to pilot their registration and content update engagements within CalGOLD 2.0.