

FACT SHEET

Restaurant Beverage Program

Background

On March 31, 2022, the [Restaurant Beverage Program \(RBP\) \(Ordinance No. 187,402\)](#) went into effect, creating two administrative clearance processes for qualifying sit-down restaurants requesting to serve alcohol. The intent of the RBP is to offer long-term, financial relief to support local economic growth through a streamlined approval process. To achieve this goal, the ordinance eliminates the need for a Conditional Use Permit for the sale and serving of on-site alcoholic beverages (“CUB”) - reducing the processing time for City issued approvals at a significantly lower cost to the business owner.

Both administrative processes, including the classic and more restrictive option, are reserved for restaurants located within specific geographies, meaning that City Council has determined this neighborhood to be a suitable area to qualify under the RBP’s streamlined review process. Under the classic option, restaurateurs agree to comply with a set of over 50 standards in exchange for the program’s many benefits, similar to the standards that would be pursued under the normal CUB process. Alternatively, the more restrictive version of the program incorporates additional criteria, as outlined by the specific Alcohol Sensitive Use Zone, created by City Council to provide added protections for communities that are burdened with public health and safety issues associated with the sale of alcoholic beverages.

In crafting the RBP, the City Council and Department worked collaboratively with industry and neighborhood stakeholders to establish:

- **Clear eligibility criteria** to filter out restaurants with varying operations that may benefit from more review during the CUB process. For example, restaurants are required to have limited hours of operation, a full menu with continuous food service, and no age limitations for patrons—disqualifying operations, such as night clubs, from even being eligible under the program

- **Strict operating standards** to encourage neighborly practices including, limited hours of operation, outdoor seating limitations, and instituting other noise and security requirements
- **Robust enforcement requirements** to provide community protections, such as mandatory inspections and enforcement, to ensure that after three violations are issued within two years a restaurant would be disqualified from the program for a period of five years.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can I check if my restaurant qualifies for the Program?

You can confirm that your restaurant is in an RBP Eligible Area on ZIMAS at <http://zimas.lacity.org> by searching for specific addresses or parcels. A parcel's eligibility is indicated under "Planning and Zoning" information where it notes "RBP: Restaurant Beverage Program Eligibility Area." Parcels located in the general program will be identified as "General (RBPA)" and parcels in the Alcohol Sensitive Use Zone are identified as "Alcohol Sensitive Use Zone (RBPB)".

Do bars, nightclubs or liquor stores qualify for the Program?

No. The RBP is only for restaurants that have an operational kitchen, full menu, and continuous food service during all hours of operation. All food must be served to seated patrons, and all alcohol service must be conducted by employees. Restaurants are ineligible if they charge for admission, require minimum drink purchases, restrict access based on age, or engage in other practices, outlined in the ordinance, that are common to bars or nightclubs. Hours of operation are limited to 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

What is the difference between the two versions of the RBP?

The two versions of the RBP are very similar, except that the Alcohol Sensitive Use Zone requires outreach, limits alcohol sales to 45 percent of total sales, and includes a one-year provisional period which can result in the removal of a restaurant's RBP approval if it receives five or more valid complaints during this initial period. In addition, in designating an Alcohol Sensitive Use Zone, the City Council may also limit restaurants there to the sale of beer and wine during their provisional period. Both programs include a set of requirements restaurants must meet to be eligible as well as operating standards they must adhere to.

How do I apply?

Applicants may apply online using the Department's [Online Application Portal](#). Search for Restaurant Beverage Program under Alcoholic Beverage and/or Entertainment. Prior to submitting, applicants should have the following documents readily available: 1) RBP Application Form; 2) Floor plan and site plan; 3) Certificate of Occupancy; 4) Copy of Restaurant Menu; 5) Copy of "No Loitering" sign; 6) other supporting documents, (such as the Revocable Permit for seating in the public right-of-way). These documents will assist the Department in confirming whether the restaurant is eligible to participate under the RBP.

How much does it cost to apply?

The total cost of an RBP application is \$5,910.15. This includes the application fee as well as fees for monitoring and for conducting two inspections within the first five years of approval.

Will my approvals be subject to a public hearing?

No. The RBP does not include a public hearing as part of the application and authorization process. You will simply need to demonstrate compliance with the eligibility requirements, as outlined under the program. However, for restaurants located in an RBP Alcohol Sensitive Use Zone area, applicants must conduct outreach through neighborhood councils and/or other community or business organizations. This outreach includes providing a flier or other summary of the restaurant information, including the name, contact information, projected opening date, menu and alcohol to be sold (beer, wine, and/or distilled spirits). Evidence of this outreach must be submitted with application materials.

How long does it take to get approved through the RBP Process?

The processing time for the CUB is about one month from application filing to receiving authorization to sell and serve alcoholic beverages. The normal CUB process takes at least six months from application filing to receiving issuance of the written Letter of Determination. The one month required to receive your planning approvals factors in the time for a planner to confirm eligibility upon receiving their application; payment of the application fees; preparation of the Covenant and Agreement agreeing to comply with the RBP's provisions; and issuance by the Department of the applicant's authorization to participate under the program, upon notifying the California Alcohol and Beverage Control of the City's authorization.

What community protections are in place?

Communities will be protected by operating, security, and monitoring standards that require restaurants to be respectful of their surrounding neighborhoods including, but not limited to, the following standards:

- Specialized alcohol sales training for both employers and employees
- Electronic age verification devices for alcohol sales
- Camera surveillance system installation and adequate interior and exterior lighting
- Posting of official identification indicating that the establishment is subject to the RBP
- Contact information for community concerns to report any complaints within 24 hours
- Prohibition on live entertainment, dancing, pool and billiards tables, karaoke, and adult entertainment
- Prohibition of outdoor TV monitors and outdoor music
- Outdoor dining restrictions to the ground floor only
- Separate outdoor seating from adjacent residentially zoned property by an enclosed building
- Limited hours of operation between the hours of 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.
- An operational kitchen with food service at all times during operating hours.

How will the City enforce the operating conditions on new businesses?

All RBP authorized restaurants are subject to ongoing monitoring and inspections by the City, which includes two City-initiated inspections. Program participants are also subject to complaints-based enforcement actions. If three violations are found within two years, the restaurant is no longer eligible to participate in the RBP for five years. The California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) may be notified of issued citations, which may trigger additional investigation and enforcement by the ABC.

How will neighborhood councils be notified?

The applicable neighborhood council and City Council district office will be notified of every restaurant seeking authorization under the program. The Police Department will also be notified. Participating restaurants must publicly display official identification indicating that the establishment is subject to RBP's standards. For restaurants located within an RBP Alcohol Sensitive Use Zone area, applicants must conduct outreach prior to applying for RBP, which may include presentations to neighborhood councils.

Will this result in a flood of new alcohol establishments?

The program is only available to a narrow range of sit-down restaurants that close by 11:00 p.m. and comply with an array of other limitations and requirements. All other alcohol-serving establishments, such as bars, nightclubs, and liquor stores, will continue to be subject to the City's existing CUB process.

How do I report a business that violates the Program requirements?

If a restaurant is in violation of any standards as outlined in the Restaurant Beverage Program, complaints may be submitted to a [complaint portal](#) that is managed by the Department of Building and Safety. Restaurants will be held accountable by the proactive monitoring and inspection program and by community members reporting suspected violations to the Department of Building and Safety. Restaurants with multiple or repeated violations will lose their ability to participate in the RBP and may be subject to further corrective actions by the ABC and the City, including City Planning's Nuisance Abatement and Revocation process. Restaurants that are no longer eligible for the RBP would be required to obtain a CUB if they intend to continue serving alcoholic beverages.

Who can I contact for more information?

For questions, please contact City Planning's Beverage and Entertainment Streamlined (BEST) Unit: email: planning.ccu@lacity.org | phone: (213) 202-5422.

Resources:

- [Enabling Ordinance 187402](#)
- [RBP Application Form](#) (*copy for reference only, fillable application form available via the Online Application Portal*)
- [Online Application Portal](#)
- [RBP Complaint Portal](#)