



Memorandum

TO: City of Hartford
FROM: Hillary Taylor, Senior Planner, NCI
Ethan Senti, Assistant Planner
SUBJECT: **Proposed Home Occupation and Short Term Rental Regulations**
DATE: August 4, 2025

The current zoning ordinance does include language on Home Occupations, but it is limited in scope and requires updating to fit the changing types of work residents may perform from their homes.

This memo provides an overview of the proposed regulations along with the full draft ordinance text. It is intended to solicit feedback from the Planning Commission on whether the proposed language is appropriate for the City of Hartford and how it might be further adapted to meet the City's needs, if necessary.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE OVERVIEW

Definition

In the current ordinance, a Home Occupation is defined as follows:

(A) HOME OCCUPATION shall be an occupation or profession carried on within a residential structure by a member of the immediate family residing on the premises. There shall be no employees other than members of the immediate family.

McKenna proposed the following:

HOME OCCUPATION. An activity carried out for compensation by a resident and conducted as a secondary, incidental and accessory use of the resident's principal dwelling premises.

Class I Home Occupation: A Home Occupation that complies with the restrictions and regulations under Section 5.11.A.

Class II Home Occupation. A Home Occupation which does not meet the restrictions and regulations for a Class I Home Occupation and which is permitted with special use approval under the restrictions and regulations in [Section 5.11.B](#).

Class I and II Use Distinction

This definition and accompanying regulation make a distinction between two classes of home occupations based on the scale and nature of activity permitted.

Class I home occupations are limited to low-intensity, primarily service-oriented or professional uses that are entirely contained within the principal dwelling and involve no outside employees, storage, or customer traffic beyond what is typical for a residence. These uses are permitted by right as accessory to a dwelling in residential zoning districts, provided they remain unobtrusive and do not generate external impacts.

Class I Home Occupations could be modestly expanded to include short-term rentals, as both service-oriented uses and short-term rentals are permitted in all residential zoning districts. If the Planning Commission prefers



greater oversight due to potential noise concerns, short-term rentals could alternatively be classified as a Class II Home Occupation, requiring a public hearing and formal review.

Class II home occupations accommodate slightly more intensive home-based businesses, such as small-scale retail or wholesale activity, and may involve use of an accessory structure, storage of goods and materials, and employment of one additional person. Because of their potentially greater impact on surrounding properties, these uses require special use approval.

Both classes share common restrictions designed to maintain neighborhood character, such as limits on signage, prohibition of nuisances, and maximum floor area thresholds.

Location

Class I: Allowed in all residential zoning districts and B-1 zoning district *as an accessory use* in a dwelling unit which is the principal dwelling place of the occupant operating the home occupation.

Class II: Allowed only in residential zoning districts *as an accessory use with special use approval* on the lot on which the principal dwelling unit of the occupant operating the home occupation is located.

Permitting Requirements

Given their limited impact on surrounding properties, we recommend permitting Class I Home Occupations through an administrative review process. Class II Home Occupations, which may have a greater effect on neighboring uses, should require approval by the Planning Commission.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE TEXT

The proposed ordinance described above is included in full below.

HOME OCCUPATIONS

Home Occupations, Class I.

Allowed in all residential zoning districts and B-1 zoning district as an accessory use in a dwelling unit which is the principal dwelling place of the occupant operating the home occupation.

Class I home occupations are to be primarily limited service and professional activities including without limitation: dressmaking/tailoring, music, art and dance instruction (limited to no more than six (6) students at a time), author, artist, musician, clerk, computer internet marketing, bookkeeper, income tax preparation, photography instruction and studio, beauty salon, and short-term rentals.

Activity is allowed to be conducted within the dwelling only.

No mechanical equipment is installed except such as would be normally used for purely domestic or household purposes.

The home occupation shall involve no employees.

There is no external evidence of the home occupation except for a small sign, not larger than nine (9) square feet in area.

Maximum floor area – that not over twenty-five (25%) percent of the total actual floor area of any story is used for home occupation or professional purposes.

Only merchandise produced as a result of the home occupation or sold as a normal product used in conjunction with the service activity may be sold.



No home occupation activity can constitute a nuisance to adjoining properties by reason of noise, smoke, odor, electrical disturbance, night lighting, or increased and unreasonable traffic.

Home Occupations, Class II.

Allowed only in residential zoning districts as an accessory use with special use approval on the lot on which the principal dwelling unit of the occupant operating the home occupation is located.

Class II home occupations are to be limited to small-scale retail sales of goods and small-scale wholesale activities or sales of goods. An accessory structure may be used for such sales, and for storage of goods, materials and equipment related to the home occupation. Parking of one (1) commercial vehicle (semi-trailers are prohibited) used in conjunction with the home occupation is allowed on the lot in an approved parking area.

Maximum space allowed – no more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the total actual floor area of the dwelling unit in which the home occupation is operated may be used for such purpose; provided that, if the dwelling unit contains more than one story, the home occupation shall be limited to one story and the size limitation shall apply to the total floor area of that story. Additionally, one hundred percent (100%) of floor space of an approved accessory building located on the same lot or parcel as the dwelling unit may be used for the home occupation.

No outdoor storage or activity is permitted.

No more than one (1) additional employee shall be permitted.

Hours of operation are limited to 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. every day of the week.

No external evidence of the home occupation except for a small sign, not larger than nine (9) square feet in area.

No home occupation activity may constitute a nuisance to adjoining properties by reason of noise, smoke, odor, electrical disturbance, night lighting, or increased and unreasonable traffic.

Permit Required.

A permit shall be required for all Home Occupations.

Class I Home Occupations. Class I Home Occupations shall be permitted subject to administrative review and approval by the Zoning Administrator.

Class II Home Occupations. Class II Home Occupations shall require review and approval by the Planning Commission in accordance with the procedures for special land uses set forth in this Ordinance.