Here are some topics to know upfront -

Get the right licenses

You will need a food service license from the RI Department of Health (RIDOH) to serve food. To get a ***general*** idea of what to expect when opening a new restaurant in Rhode Island, look at the licensing information required by the RI Department of Health, Center for Food Protection at http://www.health.ri.gov/food/for/newfoodestablishments/.

The specific license(s) you may need depends upon your business, the menu and the location.

Here are <u>some</u> types of RIDOH food service licenses for consideration:

- **New Construction or Renovations** - **Retail Food Establishment** – you would need to complete this applicable for new construction or if the cost of renovations will exceed 50 percent (50%) of the value of the establishment.
  Application: http://health.ri.gov/applications/FoodEstablishmentNewConstruction.pdf

- **Retail Food Service Restaurants with Seating** - Eat-in restaurants are licensed by the number of seats they have. Licensing fees are based upon the number of seats.
  Application: https://health.ri.gov/applications/FoodServiceBusinessRetail.pdf

- **Food Service Vending -** Food sold in a vending machine requires a vending machine license.
  Application: http://health.ri.gov/applications/FoodServiceVending.pdf

- **Food Caterer/Commissary** - Caterers or anyone who prepares food in one place and serves it in another needs a caterer/commissary license.
  Application: https://health.ri.gov/applications/FoodServiceBusinessRetail.pdf

Some other types of RIDOH food service business licenses for consideration:

- If you wish to sell food at a temporary event such as a farmer's market or a special event, you will need to have a Retail Food Peddler license from RIDOH prior to selling at the event.
  Application: http://health.ri.gov/applications/FoodRetailPeddler.pdf

- Mobile Food Establishments – foods or beverages that are delivered or prepared from mobile vehicles such as mobile food trucks/carts/trailers, etc. also need to be licensed.
  Application: http://health.ri.gov/applications/FoodMobileService.pdf

  If you are thinking about opening a food truck business or other type of mobile food establishment, you will also need to consider special permitting from local municipalities and state registration requirements. Visit the Mobile Food Establishment website to see what you

will need. Mobile Food Establishments will also need to be registered with the RI Department of Business Regulations (DBR). (http://www.dbr.ri.gov/divisions/commlicensing/FoodTrucks.php)

Decide on Business Structure (Business Formation):

There are several ways to structure a business. A business structure is the legal framework for how your business will operate. The different structures will impact many legal aspects of the business, including how you pay yourself and how you pay taxes. There are many factors to consider when selecting a business structure and its best to discuss your options with a business advisor or legal counsel. They can help you decide which structure is right for you.

Learn about the types of business structure - The business structure you choose influences everything from day-to-day operations, to taxes, to how much of your personal assets are at risk. You should choose a business structure that gives you the right balance of legal protections and benefits. You can get information about common business structures from the RI Department of State, Secretary of State's (SOS) website at http://sos.ri.gov/divisions/Business-Portal/Start-Or-Qualify-A-Business (Click on "Starting a Business in Rhode Island"). Or click on the link to view the Types of Business Structure Chart - https://www.sos.ri.gov/divisions/business-services/business-basics/your-structure.

Determine and Plan Financing Needs

How much money will it take to start your small business? Calculate the startup costs for your small business so you can request funding, attract investors, and estimate when you'll turn a profit.

With your concept in place, set a budget and create a financial plan. Estimate startup costs, including rent, furniture and equipment, staffing, insurance, food and liquor. Pad the budget by about 20 percent to cover unexpected costs. Have enough money to cover costs for the first six months of operation, when business will be slow. Budget for insurance to protect your startup investment, including property insurance and liability insurance in case a customer is injured on the property. Workers' compensation insurance will be required for your employees. Restaurants are notorious for a high failure rate, often due to inadequate capital. Budget carefully, and your startup won't fall victim to a lack of funds.

Consider Utilizing Advisors and External Resources

Consider hiring professional expertise such as an attorney or advisor, or someone with experience with restaurants in the town or city you wish to locate your business. You may also need to hire an engineer, surveyor, or architect.

Get free business counseling:
Get advice from SBA partner organizations like:

- SCORE mentors (https://ri.score.org/content/find-mentor-194)
- Small Business Development Centers (https://web.uri.edu/risbdc/)
- Center for Women & Enterprise (https://www.cweonline.org/)

Other Resources

SCORE
Main Office - Providence (SBA)
380 Westminster Street, Suite 511
Providence, RI, 02903
Phone: (401) 226-0077
Visit link below for Local Office
Website: https://ri.score.org/?_ga=2.9585589.1085967098.1523644147-1268957104.1519841518
Review the **Pre-Start Resource** section at SCORE for workshops/classes (https://ri.score.org/startup-resources)

Center for Women & Enterprise (CWE)
Rhode Island office
132 George M. Cohan Blvd.
Providence, RI
Phone: (401) 277-0800
Website: https://www.cweonline.org/About-CWE/CWE-Rhode-Island

Rhode Island Small Business Development Center (RISBDC)
Located at the University of Rhode Island (URI) Kingston Campus, SBDC provides local small business owners and entrepreneurs with the services, expertise and resources they need to thrive, including no-cost, one-on-one business counseling to start, grow and maintain their businesses.
University of Rhode Island (URI) Kingston Campus
Carlotti Administration Building
75 Lower College Road
Kingston, RI 02881
Phone: (401) 874-7232

Sign up for a wide range of public workshops, and for one-on-one counseling here:
Website: www.risbdc.org

SBA Local District Office
380 Westminster Street, Room 511
Providence, RI 02903
Phone: (401) 528-4561
SBA website: https://www.sba.gov

RI Commerce Corporation
315 Iron Horse Way, Suite 101
Providence, RI 02908
Website: https://commerceri.com/

Consider Joining the Rhode Island Hospitality Association
Rhode Island Hospitality Association (RIHA) is the voice of the lodging, restaurant and tourism industry in the state. RIHA hosts an impressive list of events, meetings, seminars, training & education classes, and website communications targeting the hospitality industry. Check them out! https://www.rihospitality.org/

Consider Joining your Local Chamber of Commerce

RI Department of Health, Center for Food Protection
RI Department of Health
Center for Food Protection
3 Capitol Hill, Room 203 (seconded floor)
Providence, RI 02908-5097
Phone: (401) 222-2749
Website: https://health.ri.gov/licenses/detail.php?id=256