

SJBA PROJECT CONNECTIONS

From kitchen ideas to a buildable plan.

The SJBA South Jersey Kitchen Remodel Planning Workbook

Scope. Budget. Contractors. Trades. Timelines. Decisions.

A kitchen remodel is a sequence of dependent decisions.

Cabinets cannot be ordered until the layout is final. Rough plumbing and electrical work depend on the cabinet and appliance plan. Inspections may need to happen before walls close. This workbook follows that order.



SIX STAGES

01 Define the scope — pp. 3–6

02 Compare proposals — p. 7

03 Confirm permits and trade requirements — pp. 8–10

04 Prepare the household and job site — pp. 11–12

05 Coordinate installation — pp. 13–14

06 Complete project closeout — p. 15

Working through the workbook

1. Complete the scope pages before asking for proposals.
2. Give every contractor the same scope so proposals can be compared.
3. Keep the budget, selections and change log current during the job.
4. Use pages 16–17 to plan your next conversation.

Your contractor may coordinate the trades

Many remodeling contractors schedule and supervise subcontractors such as electricians and plumbers. Confirm who is responsible for each trade before hiring anyone separately, so work is not duplicated or left uncovered.

Project scope builder

Check the description closest to your project. This label helps you communicate with contractors. It does not determine whether permits are required; the actual work does.

☐ **Cosmetic refresh**

Painting, surface updates, hardware or other limited changes.

☐ **Full kitchen remodel**

Cabinetry, appliances, flooring, electrical, plumbing or layout-related work.

☐ **Structural or major layout changes**

Changes that may require qualified architectural or structural engineering advice.

ELEMENT	REPLACE	UPDATE / REFINISH	KEEP	NOTES
Cabinets	☐	☐	☐	
Countertops	☐	☐	☐	
Flooring	☐	☐	☐	
Lighting	☐	☐	☐	
Plumbing fixtures	☐	☐	☐	
Appliances	☐	☐	☐	
Electrical work	☐	☐	☐	
Ventilation	☐	☐	☐	
Walls and openings	☐	☐	☐	
Painting	☐	☐	☐	
Disposal	☐	☐	☐	
Other	☐	☐	☐	

Goals, constraints and must-keep features

What I want the new kitchen to do better

Constraints

Budget boundary, timeline, household needs, structural limits, association rules.

Must-keep features

Deal-breakers

How I will use the kitchen

- [ ] Daily cooking for the household
- [ ] Working or homework at the counter
- [ ] More storage
- [ ] Improved ventilation
- [ ] Entertaining
- [ ] Accessibility or aging-in-place needs
- [ ] Better lighting
- [ ] Other:

Permits depend on the work, not the label

Under the New Jersey Uniform Construction Code, whether a permit is needed depends on the specific work. Some minor work and ordinary maintenance is treated differently, but your municipality's construction office makes the determination. Ask your contractor who will apply for any permits. NJ DCA permit resources

Budget and estimate planner

Use your own quotes. Keep each column current: **Estimated** while planning, **Quoted** from written proposals, **Approved changes** from signed change orders, and **Actual** as you pay.

CATEGORY	ESTIMATED	QUOTED	APPROVED CHANGES	ACTUAL
Design and planning	$	$	$	$
Demolition	$	$	$	$
Disposal	$	$	$	$
Cabinetry	$	$	$	$
Countertops	$	$	$	$
Appliances	$	$	$	$
Electrical	$	$	$	$
Plumbing	$	$	$	$
HVAC or ventilation	$	$	$	$
Flooring	$	$	$	$
Painting	$	$	$	$
Permits	$	$	$	$
Other costs	$	$	$	$
Owner-controlled contingency Set and held by you	$	$	$	$

TOTALS				
Total	$	$	$	$

This workbook intentionally lists no typical costs or percentages. Prices vary by scope, materials, property conditions and timing.

Allowances, payments and contingency

An **allowance** is a placeholder amount in a proposal for items you have not yet selected, such as tile or fixtures. If your selection costs more, the difference is usually added. Track each one.

Allowance tracker

#	ITEM	ALLOWANCE IN PROPOSAL	MY SELECTION COST	DIFFERENCE
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

Payment milestones

#	MILESTONE	AMOUNT	CONDITION FOR PAYMENT	PAID DATE
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

Owner-controlled contingency

Decide in advance how much you will hold back for unexpected conditions, and who must approve spending it. Write it here:

Before signing

- [ ] Payment schedule tied to completed work
- [ ] Allowances listed with amounts
- [ ] Change-order process in writing
- [ ] Final payment conditions defined

Contractor proposal comparison

FIELD	CONTRACTOR A	CONTRACTOR B	CONTRACTOR C
Company			
Scope included			
Scope excluded			
Allowances			
Materials responsibility			
Trade coordination			
Permit responsibility			
Payment milestones			
Proposed timeline			
Change-order procedure			
Warranty terms			
Questions outstanding			

The lowest quote is not necessarily the most complete scope. Compare what each proposal includes, excludes and leaves to allowances before comparing totals.

New Jersey permits and professional verification

Research each item for your own project. Record what you found, where, and the date. Requirements depend on the actual work and the property.

TOPIC	WHERE TO RESEARCH	WHAT I FOUND	DATE
Municipal construction permits Which work needs a permit, and who applies	Your municipal construction office; NJ DCA permit forms		
Technical subcodes Such as building, electrical, plumbing, fire protection	Construction office; permit application		
Contractor business registration Home improvement contractor registration and exemptions	NJ Division of Consumer Affairs		
Trade licensing For example, electrical and plumbing work	NJ license verification lookup; ask for license numbers		
Inspections Which inspections, and who schedules them	Construction office; your contract		
Lead-safe requirements Housing built before 1978	EPA Renovation, Repair and Painting program		

Questions for your contractor

- [ ] Who will apply for permits, and when?
- [ ] Which inspections do you expect, and who will attend?
- [ ] What is your registration number, and who holds trade licenses?
- [ ] If the home was built before 1978, are you lead-safe certified for this work?
- [ ] How will the work area be protected and cleaned?

Verify, then record

CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION NUMBER

TRADE LICENSE NUMBERS

PERMIT NUMBER(S)

LEAD-SAFE CERTIFICATION, IF APPLICABLE

Professional review needed. Permit, registration, licensing and lead-safe applicability should be confirmed with the municipal construction office and the relevant state or federal agency before work begins.

Professional coordination planner



Your primary contractor may coordinate subcontractors. Confirm who is responsible for each role before contacting anyone separately, so you do not hire overlapping trades.

Remodeling contractor

When: From scope definition through closeout.

Generally helps with: Overall scope, scheduling, subcontractor coordination, and often permits.

Architect or structural engineer

When: When walls, openings, structure or layout changes may require professional design.

Generally helps with: Plans, structural evaluation and documents a permit may require.

Electrician

When: Rough-in before walls close, and finish work after cabinets and counters.

Generally helps with: Circuits, lighting, outlets and appliance connections.

Plumbing or HVAC professional

When: Rough-in for fixtures and ventilation, then final connections.

Generally helps with: Water and drain lines, fixture connections, gas lines and venting where applicable.

Dumpster rental provider

When: Before demolition, unless the contractor handles disposal.

Generally helps with: Container size, placement, permits for street placement if needed, and pickup.

Painting professional

When: After drywall and trim, before or after final installation.

Generally helps with: Surface preparation, painting and finishing.

Before contacting a trade directly

- [ ] Is this trade already included in my contractor's proposal?
- [ ] Has my contractor agreed to coordinate with a trade I hire?
- [ ] Is responsibility for permits and inspections clear?

Trade responsibility matrix

PROFESSIONAL	SCOPE	REQUIRED DECISIONS	DEPENDENCIES	SCHEDULED DATE	STATUS
Remodeling contractor					
Architect / engineer					
Electrician					
Plumbing / HVAC					
Dumpster provider					
Painting					
Countertop fabricator					
Cabinet installer					

Dependencies are the things that must happen first: a final layout before cabinet orders, a cabinet install before counter templating, an inspection before walls close.

Materials and selections tracker

ITEM	BRAND / MODEL	DIMENSIONS	FINISH / COLOR	SUPPLIER	ORDER DATE	EXPECTED DELIVERY	MEASUREMENTS VERIFIED	INSTALLER	STATUS
Cabinets							☐		
Countertops							☐		
Sink							☐		
Faucet							☐		
Range / cooktop							☐		
Refrigerator							☐		
Dishwasher							☐		
Ventilation hood							☐		
Lighting							☐		
Flooring							☐		
Backsplash							☐		
Hardware							☐		
							☐		
							☐		

Confirm measurements against the final plan before ordering. Long-lead items can affect the schedule.

Household preparation checklist



Temporary kitchen

- [ ] Location chosen for a temporary setup
- [ ] Small appliances set aside
- [ ] Dishwashing plan

Food storage

- [ ] Pantry items packed or moved
- [ ] Refrigerator location during work
- [ ] Meal plan for the first weeks

Pets and children

- [ ] Safe areas away from the work zone
- [ ] Plan for noise and open doors
- [ ] Rules shared with the household

Work access

- [ ] Entry and path for workers agreed
- [ ] Work hours confirmed
- [ ] Key, code or access plan

Dust containment

- [ ] Containment method discussed with contractor
- [ ] Vents and returns protection
- [ ] Daily cleanup expectations

Parking and deliveries

- [ ] Parking for crews and trucks
- [ ] Delivery location and storage for materials
- [ ] Neighbors notified if needed

Communication

- [ ] Primary contact on each side
- [ ] Preferred method and response time
- [ ] Regular check-in schedule

Waste removal

- [ ] Dumpster or haul-away responsibility
- [ ] Placement approved if on the street
- [ ] Recycling or donation of usable items

Project timeline and dependencies

Actual sequencing depends on your project and approved scope. Ask your contractor to confirm the order and what each milestone depends on.

MILESTONE	DEPENDS ON	RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATE	ACTUAL DATE	DONE
Design approval					☐
Materials ordering					☐
Permit review					☐
Demolition					☐
Rough trade work					☐
Inspections					☐
Installation					☐
Finishing					☐
Final walkthrough					☐
					☐
					☐

Change-order and decision log

Record every change before the work is done. Get written confirmation of the cost and schedule impact before approving it.

DATE	ISSUE	PROPOSED CHANGE	COST IMPACT	SCHEDULE IMPACT	APPROVED BY	IN WRITING
						☐
						☐
						☐
						☐
						☐
						☐
						☐
						☐
						☐
						☐
						☐
						☐

Final walkthrough and closeout

Walkthrough

- [ ] Every item on the scope completed
- [ ] Product operation tested (appliances, fixtures, lighting, ventilation)
- [ ] Finishes inspected in good light
- [ ] Cabinet doors and drawers adjusted
- [ ] Work area cleaned

Documents to collect

- [ ] Product manuals
- [ ] Warranty documentation (contractor and manufacturer)
- [ ] Inspection records and permit sign-off, if applicable
- [ ] Maintenance instructions for surfaces and finishes
- [ ] Paint colors and product details

Outstanding work (punch list)

#	ITEM	RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATE	DONE
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

Final payment review

- [ ] Punch list complete or agreed in writing
- [ ] Approved change orders reconciled
- [ ] Required sign-offs received
- [ ] Final invoice matches the contract

Follow-up contacts

CONTRACTOR CONTACT FOR WARRANTY ISSUES

OTHER TRADES OR SUPPLIERS

Your SJBA kitchen project team

Not every project needs every role, and SJBA may not currently have a member in every category. Start with your primary contractor, then confirm who else is needed.

Remodeling contractor

When: First, once your scope is drafted.

Generally helps with: Proposals, scheduling, trade coordination and often permits.

- [ ] Who will apply for permits?
- [ ] How do you handle change orders?

Architect or structural engineer

When: If structure, walls or layout may change.

Generally helps with: Design documents and structural evaluation.

- [ ] Does my plan need stamped drawings?
- [ ] What will you need to see?

Electrician

When: When your contractor is not covering electrical work.

Generally helps with: Circuits, lighting and appliance power.

- [ ] What does my layout require?
- [ ] How will inspections be handled?

Plumbing or HVAC professional

When: When fixtures, gas or ventilation are changing.

Generally helps with: Water, drain, gas and venting.

- [ ] What changes if the sink moves?
- [ ] How will the hood be vented?

Dumpster rental provider

When: Before demolition, if disposal is not included.

Generally helps with: Container size, placement and pickup.

- [ ] What size fits this project?
- [ ] Is a street-placement permit needed?

Painting professional

When: After drywall and trim work.

Generally helps with: Preparation and finishing.

- [ ] What preparation is included?
- [ ] Which finish suits a kitchen?

Connect With the Professionals Who Can Help.

Scan for current, active SJBA members by category on the live kitchen remodeling page. Some categories may be open.

Open the kitchen project team

YOUR NEXT STEP

My next three actions

My project scope

- [ ] Cosmetic refresh
- [ ] Full kitchen remodel
- [ ] Structural or major layout changes

My budget boundary

THE MOST I WILL SPEND, INCLUDING CONTINGENCY

CONTINGENCY I WILL HOLD

My biggest unanswered question

My first professional conversation

PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY	DATE	WHAT I WILL BRING

My next three decisions

#	DECISION	NEEDED BY	WHO DECIDES	DONE
1				
2				
3				

Build Your South Jersey Kitchen Project Team.

Current SJBA members by category, on the live kitchen remodeling page.

Explore More SJBA Project Connections

SOURCES

Official sources and notes

Use these public sources to research requirements for your own project. SJBA is not affiliated with these agencies.

K1	**NJ DCA: Construction permit forms** www.nj.gov/dca/codes/resources/constructionpermitforms.shtml	State permit forms and resources, including minor-work and ordinary-maintenance information. (pp. 4, 8)
K2	**NJ Consumer Affairs: Home improvement contractor FAQ** www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/HIC/Pages/FAQ.aspx	Contractor business registration requirements and exemptions. (p. 8)
K3	**NJ license and registration verification** newjersey.mylicense.com/verification/	Look up the relevant business or professional record. (p. 8)
K4	**EPA: Renovation, Repair and Painting program** www.epa.gov/lead/lead-renovation-repair-and-painting-program	Lead-safe certification and work practices for covered work in pre-1978 housing. (p. 8)
K5	**NJ Consumer Affairs: Hiring a contractor** www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/ocp/Pages/hic.aspx	Consumer guidance for home improvement projects. (pp. 7–8)
K6	**Example municipal permit page (Cherry Hill)** chnj.gov/297/Permit-Application-Requirements	One township's process, shown as an example only. Use your own municipality's construction office. (p. 8)

Links checked October 14, 2026. A working link does not confirm that a requirement applies to your situation.

About this resource

This workbook is provided for general educational and planning purposes. It is not legal, construction, code, engineering, or other professional advice. Permit, registration, licensing and lead-safe requirements depend on the actual work, the property and the municipality. Confirm with your local construction office and qualified professionals. Photographs are illustrative and do not depict SJBA members or actual projects.

SJBA
South Jersey Business Association

Since 1994, SJBA has been a structured, category-exclusive referral network for South Jersey business owners. One seat per professional category.

southjerseybusinessassociation.org