

Starting a Business Checklist

Disclaimer: This checklist is provided to help you start your business. Due to the various policy and legislative changes that occur frequently, some of these steps may not apply to your business. Additionally, there may be other steps that are required by your business that are not covered here. As always, legal counsel is strongly advised.

- Choose a business.
- Research the business idea.
- Consult your tax professional regarding tax aspects of various business entities.
- Consult an attorney regarding federal and state laws governing creation, ownership, and operation of the entity.
- Write a business plan and marketing plan.
- Choose a business name.
- See if the business name is available for use as a domain name.
- Register the domain name even if you aren't ready to use it yet.
- Choose a location for the business.
- Check zoning laws.
- File partnership, corporate or limited liability company papers.
- Contact the Internal Revenue Service to apply for your federal identification number and for filing your federal tax schedules.
- Apply for state employee identification number if you will have employees.
- Find out about worker's compensation if you will have employees.
- Apply for sales tax number if needed.
- File state tax forms.
- Check to get any required business licenses or permits.
- Register or reserve federal trademark/service mark.
- Register copyrights.
- Apply for patent if you will be marketing an invention.
- Order any required notices (advertisements you have to place) or your intent to do business in the community.
- Have business phone or extra residential phone lines installed.
- Check into business insurance needs.
- Get adequate business insurance or a business rider to a homeowner's policy.

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- Get tax information such as record keeping requirements, information on withholding taxes if you will have employees, information on hiring independent contractors, facts about estimating taxes, etc.
- Open a bank account for the business.
- Fund the entity.
- Hold all necessary organizational meetings to elect officers and directors.
- Have business cards and stationery printed.
- Purchase equipment or supplies.
- Order inventory, signage and fixtures.
- Get an email address.
- Find a web hosting company.
- Get your website set up.
- Have sales literature prepared.
- Call for information about Yellow Pages advertising.
- Place advertising in newspapers or other media if yours is the type of business that will benefit from paid advertising.
- Call everyone you know and let them know you are in business.