Start here: every client

Use this page plus the section for your business type. Check items as you gather them.

This is a comprehensive preparation guide, not a universal filing form. Required information depends on your state, entity, activity and requested services. Some items are planning or follow-up items, not required on the initial filing. Mark non-applicable items N/A on a printed copy.

Business basics

- [ ] Preferred legal business name and two alternate names; name-search or reservation confirmation, if already obtained.
- [ ] State of formation; every state, county and city where you plan to operate.
- [ ] Principal business street address and separate mailing address, if different.
- [ ] Primary contact name, phone number, email and preferred contact method.
- [ ] Description of products, services and primary business activity; industry or NAICS code, if known.
- [ ] Target start date and requested filing effective date; note any deadline or expedited-service request.

People and filing arrangements

- [ ] Names, roles, mailing addresses and contact details for owners, organizers or incorporators.
- [ ] For an LLC, corporation or nonprofit: registered agent name, in-state physical address and agreement to serve; additional consent forms if required.
- [ ] Existing formation filings, amendments, name reservations, EIN letter or DBA certificates, if applicable.
- [ ] Any regulated profession, special license, foreign-country owner or existing entity involved in the business.
- [ ] Authorized signer and approval to prepare or submit paperwork; agreed service scope and filing-fee budget.

Gather information first. Do not enter SSNs, ITINs, identity documents, bank details or card numbers in your public website inquiry form or ordinary email. We will explain the appropriate delivery method when needed.

LLC formation

Complete page 1, then gather these LLC-specific details.

Ownership and management

- [ ] Whether the LLC will have one member or multiple members.
- [ ] Full legal name and address of every member; for an entity member, its legal name, formation state and authorized representative.
- [ ] Ownership percentage for each member, totaling 100%; proposed cash, property or service contributions.
- [ ] Whether members or appointed managers will manage the LLC; manager names, addresses and roles.
- [ ] Organizer name, address and authorized signature; members or managers to list on state filings where required.
- [ ] Who may sign contracts, access business accounts and approve significant decisions.

Formation details and internal records

- [ ] Legal name with an allowed LLC designation; principal office, mailing address and registered agent details.
- [ ] Business purpose; duration if not perpetual; requested effective date and any special state filing provisions.
- [ ] Operating agreement information: voting, profit/loss allocation, distributions and member responsibilities.
- [ ] Plans for adding or removing members, ownership transfers, buyouts and dissolution; existing agreements, if any.
- [ ] Whether the business is a professional LLC or another special entity, if permitted and applicable.
- [ ] Any prior business being converted or acquired; relevant filings and agreements for review.

Follow-up planning

- [ ] Whether you need EIN application support, a DBA, licenses, state tax accounts or registration in other states.
- [ ] Questions about federal tax classification or an S corporation election for separate tax review.
- [ ] Person responsible for ongoing records, state reports, registered agent updates and renewal reminders.

An operating agreement is an internal governance document and is not necessarily filed with the state. State LLC formation does not automatically make an S corporation tax election.

Corporation formation

For a for-profit corporation. Complete page 1 before this section.

People and corporate structure

- [ ] Incorporator name, address and authorized signature.
- [ ] Initial director names and addresses; number of directors and roles, as applicable.
- [ ] Officer names, titles and contact details (for example, president, secretary and treasurer).
- [ ] Shareholder legal names, addresses and ownership plan; entity shareholder details, if applicable.
- [ ] Any professional, benefit or other special corporation status requiring additional review.

Stock and formation information

- [ ] Proposed number of authorized shares, stock classes and rights; par value if applicable.
- [ ] Planned initial shares issued to each shareholder, purchase price or contribution, and ownership totals.
- [ ] Corporate legal name with an allowed designation; principal and mailing addresses; registered agent details.
- [ ] Business purpose, requested effective date, duration and any special articles provisions.
- [ ] Existing name reservation, prior business filings or agreements connected to the new corporation.

Internal documents and follow-up

- [ ] Information for bylaws, initial board actions, officer appointments and organizational meeting records.
- [ ] Stock ledger and share issuance records; shareholder or buy-sell agreement needs.
- [ ] Authorized banking signers and planned fiscal year-end for review.
- [ ] If considering S corporation taxation: shareholder eligibility, ownership details, desired election date and consents for separate review.
- [ ] EIN, state tax, payroll, licenses, DBA and out-of-state registration needs; reporting contact.

Corporation formation and an S corporation tax election are separate processes. Share provisions and shareholder agreements may require legal review; identify decisions needing review before submission.

Nonprofit formation

For a nonprofit corporation. Formation and tax-exempt recognition are separate steps.

Mission and activities

- [ ] Proposed legal name, state, principal office, mailing address and registered agent details.
- [ ] Clear mission statement, intended beneficiaries and geographic area served.
- [ ] Detailed description of planned programs, services and activities, including who runs them and how they are funded.
- [ ] Whether seeking federal tax-exempt status; proposed category (such as 501(c)(3)) for review.
- [ ] Any fundraising, grants, membership dues, program charges, sales or other revenue sources.

Leadership and governance

- [ ] Incorporator names, addresses and authorized signatures.
- [ ] Initial director names, addresses and roles; officer names and titles.
- [ ] Whether the organization will have voting members; membership and board selection procedures.
- [ ] Family or business relationships among directors, officers, founders and major contributors.
- [ ] Proposed compensation, paid services or transactions involving insiders or related businesses.
- [ ] Information for bylaws, conflict-of-interest policy, board approvals and meeting records.

Organizing documents

- [ ] Proposed articles of incorporation; existing filed articles and amendments if already formed.
- [ ] Purpose and dissolution provisions appropriate to the exemption category, if seeking exemption.
- [ ] Existing governing documents, board consents and formation approval, if available.

A nonprofit does not have shareholders who own its profits. Incorporation or an EIN alone does not establish federal tax-exempt status. Exemption applications and charitable fundraising registrations need separate review.

Nonprofit exemption preparation

Additional information if exemption application support is included in your service scope.

Application details and supporting records

- [ ] Formation date, legal structure, organizing documents and any amendments; adopted bylaws.
- [ ] EIN confirmation after legal formation; responsible-party details through an appropriate secure method.
- [ ] Website address and public descriptions, brochures or materials about planned activities.
- [ ] Detailed activity narrative: what, who, when, where, funding, expenses and how each activity supports the mission.
- [ ] Actual financial statements for completed years, plus budgets or projections requested by the applicable application.
- [ ] Assets, liabilities, startup funding, major donors or grants, and planned public-support sources.
- [ ] Officer/director compensation plans and process for approval; conflict-of-interest disclosures.
- [ ] Contracts, leases, grants, loans and transactions with founders, directors or related parties.
- [ ] Information on political or lobbying activities, foreign activities and grants to individuals or other organizations, if any.
- [ ] Details of any predecessor, successor or existing organization; prior exemption applications or correspondence.
- [ ] Additional program details for schools, churches, hospitals, scholarships or other specialized activities, if applicable.
- [ ] Authorized contact/signature, electronic filing arrangements and applicable application-fee payment plan.

Confirm the application path

- [ ] Review Form 1023-EZ eligibility using its current eligibility worksheet; do not assume every small nonprofit qualifies.
- [ ] If using full Form 1023, gather required schedules and attachments for your organization.
- [ ] For other exemption categories, confirm the applicable application and supporting records separately.

Not every nonprofit must submit the same exemption application. This page is a preparation list; the applicable form instructions determine the final records required. Forming a nonprofit does not guarantee exemption approval.

DBA / assumed business name

A DBA is a name registration, not a separate LLC or corporation.

Name and legal owner

- [ ] Exact proposed DBA name, spelling and alternate names; existing name-search results, if available.
- [ ] Full legal name of the person or entity that will own and use the DBA.
- [ ] Owner structure: sole proprietor, partnership, LLC, corporation or nonprofit.
- [ ] Owner mailing and physical address; business operating address and contact details.
- [ ] For an existing entity: formation state, registration number and formation/good-standing records if required.
- [ ] For a partnership: all partner names and addresses and any required authorizations.
- [ ] Existing EIN confirmation if relevant; do not apply for a new EIN solely because a DBA name is added without reviewing the need.

Local requirements and authorization

- [ ] State, county and city where the name will be used; each required filing jurisdiction.
- [ ] Business activity, start date and any prior use of the name.
- [ ] Authorized signer details and any required notarization or identity verification.
- [ ] Applicable name restrictions and potential conflicts for review.
- [ ] Publication requirement, newspaper and proof-of-publication arrangements, if applicable.
- [ ] Filing fees, registration period, renewal date and renewal contact.
- [ ] Existing DBA certificates, renewals or cancellation records, if changing a registered name.

After registration

- [ ] Approved certificate and copies needed for banks, licenses, payment processors or contracts.
- [ ] Plan to update business records and show the legal owner together with the DBA as appropriate.

DBA requirements vary by jurisdiction. Registration does not create a separate entity or by itself provide liability protection or trademark rights. Confirm whether registration is required, available or optional where you operate.

Final preparation and next steps

Use the checklist to prepare for your free virtual consultation.

EIN details - if application support is requested

- [ ] Entity legal name, mailing/physical addresses, formation date, state and reason for applying.
- [ ] Responsible party legal name and taxpayer ID (SSN/ITIN or permitted identifier), delivered securely only when required.
- [ ] Primary activity, products/services, expected employees and first payroll date, if applicable.
- [ ] Accounting year-end and any prior EIN; authorized applicant or third-party designee arrangements.

Review before filing

- [ ] Confirm name spelling, addresses, ownership or board details, registered agent and effective date.
- [ ] Review the proposed filing, approve the final version, and arrange authorized signatures and payment.
- [ ] Confirm which tasks are included: formation, EIN, exemption application, DBA or other registrations.
- [ ] Identify business licenses, tax accounts, state reports and any current ownership-reporting requirements that apply.
- [ ] Keep approved filings, EIN letters, governing documents, receipts and renewal dates in your business records.

Need help? Complete the website intake form or contact us at info@nextlevelbusinesssolutions.org or 769-208-5679. We will discuss your business type, filing location and the next steps. Do not send sensitive identity or financial records through the public intake form.

This checklist supports document gathering and does not replace state-specific filing instructions or legal/tax review. Government charges and optional services depend on the filing and agreed service scope. Prepared October 2026.

Official references

Business registration and formation overview
https://www.sba.gov/counseling/launch-your-business/

DBA and ongoing business administration
https://www.sba.gov/counseling/manage-your-business/

EIN application instructions
https://www.irs.gov/instructions/iss4

Nonprofit exemption application instructions
https://www.irs.gov/instructions/i1023

Simplified exemption eligibility worksheet
https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i1023ez.pdf