

## How To Start A Business

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1. **Develop a business plan.** This can be formal or informal, but gives you the direction you want your business to follow. Include:
  - Executive Summary
  - Company Description
  - Products and Services
  - Market Need/Research
  - Strategy and Implementation
  - Organization and Management Team
  - Financial Plan.
2. **Fund your business.** Your business plan will help you determine the funds needed to start your business. If you do not have the funds on hand, you will have to seek other means of raising capital such as applying for a small business loan.
3. **Create a business name.** You can verify that your business name is unique by searching the Louisiana Secretary of State website under “Search for Louisiana Business Filings.”
4. **Determine your business location.** Check local zoning compliance laws.
5. **Register with Louisiana Secretary of State.** New business filings must be notarized. Determine the type of business structure that you will use; options include:
  - Sole Proprietorship
  - Partnership
  - Corporation
  - Limited Liability Company (LLC)
  - Limited Liability Partnership
  - Information on these can be found on their website at <https://geauxbiz.sos.la.gov>.
6. **Apply for a federal tax ID number or EIN.** Through the IRS-Louisiana; can be completed online at <http://www.irs-ein-tax-id.com>
7. **Apply for licenses and permits.** This will vary based on the type of product you work with.
  - **Occupational License** – Required in every parish; contact your parish government office for more information. Specific requirements may vary, but in general you will need:
    1. Zoning Compliance Letter
    2. Letters of Incorporation or Limited Liability Corporation
    3. Health Permit or Health Department Clearance Letter
    4. Completed application with filing fees
    - Other licenses and permits may include Fresh Product License, Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer License, Wholesale Seafood Distributor Permit, among others. Contact Louisiana Department of Health, Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, or your local Sea Grant agent for further assistance.