

New Business Owner

**Roadmap to  
Register and  
License your  
Business in  
Washington**





# Get Prepared!

Be successful by following these steps before you license and register your business...

## HAVE YOU WRITTEN A BUSINESS PLAN?

For help, go to the **Plan chapter of Washington's Small Business Guide:**  
[www.BizGuide.wa.gov](http://www.BizGuide.wa.gov)

## DO YOU KNOW STATE AND LOCAL LICENSING AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS?

For help, go to:

[www.bls.dor.wa.gov/blg/](http://www.bls.dor.wa.gov/blg/)

Answer the questions on this page to get customized information. Hang on to this information and use it when you license and register your business.

## HAVE YOU CHECKED FOR ANY ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR STARTING YOUR BUSINESS?

For help, read the **Start chapter of Washington's Small Business Guide:**  
[www.BizGuide.wa.gov](http://www.BizGuide.wa.gov)

## HAVE YOU DECIDED WHAT TYPE OF BUSINESS STRUCTURE YOU WILL HAVE? (for example: sole proprietor, limited liability company, etc.)

For help, consult a trusted advisor. You can learn more about business structures in the **Start chapter of Washington's Small Business Guide:**

[www.BizGuide.wa.gov](http://www.BizGuide.wa.gov)



## WILL YOUR BUSINESS BE A CORPORATION OR LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY (LLC)?



Go to Step 3 →



**Register your business with the Secretary of State** as a legal structure, such as:

- *Limited Liability Company (LLC)*
- *Profit Corporation*
- *Nonprofit Corporation*
- *Limited Partnership*

For help, contact the **Corporations Division** at:

[www.sos.wa.gov/corps](http://www.sos.wa.gov/corps)

email: [corps@sos.wa.gov](mailto:corps@sos.wa.gov)

phone: (360) 725-0377

### **Things to consider...**

- By-laws if you are a corporation
- Operating Agreement if you are an LLC
- Governing person information such as officers for corporations and members/managers for LLCs

If you want to be an S-corp, complete the steps for a profit corporation or LLC with the Secretary of State, then contact IRS for S-corp tax designation. For details, see **Start chapter of Washington's Small Business Guide at:**

[www.BizGuide.wa.gov](http://www.BizGuide.wa.gov)

### **Once you register...**

Secretary of State will issue a Unified Business Identifier (UBI) # and send you formation documents. Use the same name and UBI # when dealing with all agencies.

How long does it take to process?

- 2 business days if done online
- 14 business days if done by paper



## PREPARE AND BEGIN TO FILE A BUSINESS LICENSE APPLICATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

We recommend you read through all steps in this roadmap before completing the business license application.

### Be prepared to answer these questions...

- What is your physical address?
- How much do you expect to make the first year?
- Will you have employees? – Will any be under age 18?
- If you won't have employees, would you like to sign up for optional Workers' Compensation coverage?
- Would you like to exempt your corporate officers from Unemployment Insurance coverage? (If yes, see information at: [www.esd.wa.gov/uitax/corporateofficers/exempt-officers-defined.php](http://www.esd.wa.gov/uitax/corporateofficers/exempt-officers-defined.php))
- What percentage of ownership do your owners and governing people hold?
- Will your business sell, manufacture, or redistribute alcohol? If yes, go to: [www.liq.wa.gov/licensing/apply-liquor-license](http://www.liq.wa.gov/licensing/apply-liquor-license)

### How long does it take to get a liquor license?

- Up to 90 days

See **Start chapter of Washington's Business Guide** for details at [www.BizGuide.wa.gov](http://www.BizGuide.wa.gov)

You must file your *Business License Application* with the Department of Revenue to be recognized as a Washington business.

**Apply or find instructions online at:** [www.bls.dor.wa.gov/file.aspx](http://www.bls.dor.wa.gov/file.aspx)

### What happens once you file your Business License Application...

Department of Revenue will:

- Assign your business a UBI (unified business identifier) number if it hasn't already been issued
- Send you a business license with UBI
- Create a taxpayer account and sends you more information on your tax reporting responsibilities

How long does it take to process?

- 2 business days if done online
- 14 business days if done in person or mailed



## WILL YOU HAVE EMPLOYEES?

Be careful here! Many “independent contractors” are actually considered employees by the state. See the **Start chapter of Washington’s Small Business Guide** at: [www.BizGuide.wa.gov](http://www.BizGuide.wa.gov)



Go to Step 5 →



*Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) will:*

- Automatically set up your Workers’ Compensation Account
- Provide you with more information within 14 business days

*Employment Security (ESD) will:*

- Automatically set up your Unemployment Insurance Account
- Provide you with more information within 14 business days

*Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will:*

- Assign a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN). Go to: <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=97860,00.html>
- Federal information is in the Start chapter of Washington’s Small Business Guide: [www.BizGuide.wa.gov](http://www.BizGuide.wa.gov)

**1. Report your new employees, rehired employees, or other requirements to Department of Social and Health Services at:**

[www.dshs.wa.gov/newhire](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/newhire)

**2. Create a required safety plan**

Go to: [www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Basics/](http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Basics/)

**3. If you will have employees who are minors, review L&I’s rules and complete the required forms**

Go to: [www.lni.wa.gov/WorkplaceRights/TeenWorkers/default.asp](http://www.lni.wa.gov/WorkplaceRights/TeenWorkers/default.asp)



## WILL YOUR BUSINESS RESELL PRODUCTS?



Go to Step 6 →



### **Apply for a Reseller Permit...**

(if you do not automatically receive one by mail)

[www.dor.wa.gov/resellerpermit](http://www.dor.wa.gov/resellerpermit)

Department of Revenue will send you a Reseller Permit

How long does it take to process?

- 10 business days



## ARE YOU A CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTOR?



Go to Step 7 →



### **Before you register as a contractor...**

- Read about requirements:  
[www.contractors.lni.wa.gov](http://www.contractors.lni.wa.gov)
- Have your UBI ready; see previous steps if you need a UBI.

### **Register as a contractor with Department of Labor & Industries**

For help, go to your local office:

[www.lni.wa.gov/main/contactinfo/officelocations](http://www.lni.wa.gov/main/contactinfo/officelocations)

or call 800-647-0982

### **What happens after you register:**

Labor & Industries:

- Registers you as a construction contractor
- Posts your registration on L&I's website for public viewing
- Contacts your business with more information

How long does it take to process?

- Immediate if done at an L&I office
- 5 business days if done by mail



## WILL YOUR BUSINESS DEAL WITH FOOD?



Go to Step 8



**Contact your local health department for requirements**

Go to: [www.mrsc.org/byndmrsc/counties.aspx](http://www.mrsc.org/byndmrsc/counties.aspx)



## CHECK TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE MET ALL FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, AND CITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ACTIVITIES YOUR BUSINESS WILL CONDUCT

It is your responsibility to ensure you meet all government requirements.

**For general help understanding government requirements go to:**

[www.BizGuide.wa.gov](http://www.BizGuide.wa.gov)

*Note: You may receive updated business licenses as different licenses or endorsements are approved.*

**For help with city and county requirements, go to:**

[www.access.wa.gov/business/citylicenses.aspx](http://www.access.wa.gov/business/citylicenses.aspx) and

[www.mrsc.org/byndmrsc/counties.aspx](http://www.mrsc.org/byndmrsc/counties.aspx)



Once you  
have met the  
requirements...



