

# Getting a Registered Agent

If your business is an LLC, or Corporation, you'll need a registered agent in your state before you file.

A registered agent receives official papers and legal documents on behalf of your company. The registered agent must be in the state where you register.

Many business owners prefer to use a registered agent service rather than take on this role themselves.

## File state documents and fees

In most cases, the total cost to register your business will be less than \$300, but fees vary depending on your state and business structure.

- Business name
- Business location
- Ownership, management structure, or directors
- Registered agent information
- Number and value of shares (if you're a corporation)

The documents you need — and what goes in them — will vary based on your state and [business structure](#).

| Business structure     | Document                  | Description   |
|------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| LLC                    | Articles of organization  | Articles of organization is a simple document that describes the basics of your LLC. It includes business information like the company name, address, member names, and the registered agent.   |
| LLC                    | LLC operating agreement   | An operating agreement describes the structure of your company's financial and functional decisions. It defines how key business decisions are made, as well as each member's duties, powers, and responsibilities. It's widely recommended to create one to protect yourself and your business, even if your state doesn't mandate it. |
| Corporation (any kind) | Articles of incorporation | The articles of incorporation — or a certificate of incorporation — is a comprehensive legal document that lays out the basic outline of your business. It's required by every state when you incorporate. The most   |

| Business structure            | Document              | Description  |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
|                               |                       | common information included is the company name, business purpose, number of shares offered, value of shares, directors, and officers.   |
| <b>Corporation (any kind)</b> | Bylaws or resolutions | Bylaws (called resolutions for nonprofits) are the internal governance documents of a corporation. They define how key business decisions are made, as well as officer and shareholders' duties, powers, and responsibilities. It's widely recommended to create one to protect yourself and your business, even if your state doesn't mandate it. |

In addition, some states also require you to register your DBA — a trade name or a fictitious name — if you use one. Check with your [state government office](#) to determine what's required in your area.

### Register with local agencies

Typically, you don't need to register with county or city governments to form your business.

If your business is an LLC, corporation, partnership, or nonprofit corporation, you might need to file for licenses and permits from the county or city.

Some counties and cities also require you to register your DBA — a trade name or a fictitious name — if you use one.

Local governments determine registration, licensing, and permitting requirements, so visit local government websites to find out what you need to do.

### Stay up to date with registration requirements

Some states require you to provide reports soon after registering depending on your business structure.

You may need to file additional documentation with your state tax board or franchise tax board. These filings are typically referred to as Initial Reports or Tax Board registration, and most often need to be filed within 30-90 days after you register with the state.