



11/28/23 Paul Bowen

Business Licensing & Incorporation in Washington State

Agenda

- Incorporation Key Steps
- Licensing Key Steps
- Common Mistakes
- Assistance Resources
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Questions and Comments

Note: Topics related to Labor and Industries and workers compensation insurance will not be covered. For information on these topics, contact:

Phone: (800) 987-0145

Email: smallbusiness@lni.wa.gov

Incorporation Key Steps

- Step 1: Determine the type of structure/entity you need
- Step 2: Develop an operating agreement
- Step 3: Research and choose a name:
<http://www.sos.wa.gov/corps/search.aspx>
- Step 4: Appoint a registered agent
- Step 5: File articles of incorporation:
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/>
- Step 6: Wait 6-10 business days for your certificate of formation which will include your UBI

Licensing Key Steps

You've received your UBI from the Secretary of State or are registering a sole proprietorship. Your next steps include:

- Step 1: Apply for your FEIN – potential exceptions: single member LLC's and sole proprietorships with no employees:

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>

- Step 2: Determine the necessary license(s) and endorsements:

<https://dor.wa.gov/open-business>

- Step 3: Research your preferred trade name(s):

<http://www.uspto.gov/main/profiles/acadres.htm>

<https://secure.dor.wa.gov/gteunauth/?Link=Lookup>

- Step 4: Apply for your license(s) and endorsement(s):

<https://dor.wa.gov/>

Common Mistakes

- Neglecting industry specific endorsements
- Improper selection: Service or retail
- Improper selection: Industry/business model
- Choosing the wrong trade/DBA name
- Choosing the wrong company/corporation name
- Not electing to defer the initial annual report
- Choosing the wrong entity/structure type
- Listing insufficient communication channels
- Failing to seek advice

Assistance Resources

- SBDC: No-cost business advising services
Phone: (833) 492-7232
Website: <https://wsbdc.org/>
Email: Washington@wsbdc.org
- Department of Revenue: Business licensing service
Phone: (360) 705-6615
Email: kimberlyj@dor.wa.gov
- Department of Revenue: Tax account registration, state business excise taxes, reseller permit assistance
Phone: (360) 705-6603
Email: tomw@dor.wa.gov
- Secretary of State corporations & charities assistance
Phone: (360) 725-0377 corps@sos.wa.gov

Frequently Asked Questions

- Do I need a business license if I don't generate much revenue?
- Do I need more than one city license/endorsement?
- How much does licensing/incorporation cost?
- Do I have to renew a business license?
- Does registering a trade name protect it?
- When are the tax reporting/filing dates?

<https://dor.wa.gov/file-pay-taxes/filing-frequencies-due-dates/filing-due-dates/2023-excise-tax-return-due-dates>

<https://dor.wa.gov/file-pay-taxes/filing-frequencies-due-dates>

Questions & Comments

The background is a solid dark blue. In the lower-left quadrant, there are several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in a lighter shade of blue. These shapes include a large L-shaped block, a long horizontal bar extending from its right side, and a long diagonal bar extending from the bottom-left towards the right. The shapes are layered, with some appearing in front of others, creating a sense of depth and movement.

Paul Bowen
Certified Business Advisor
Washington SBDC
29 E. Sumach St.
Walla Walla, WA 99362
Email: paul.bowen@wsbdc.org
Website: www.wsbdc.org



The Washington SBDC network, hosted by Washington State University, is an accredited member of America's SBDC. Funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, institutions of higher education, economic development organizations and other public and private funding partners.

Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance. Email or phone the Washington SBDC.