



START A BUSINESS GUIDE

Fayette County, Georgia

140 Stonewall Avenue West, Suite 202, Fayetteville, GA 30214
770-305-5421

Starting a business requires planning. You must complete a series of steps to properly establish it. This guide is a list of general steps to consider when starting a business. Please note, this is not a complete or exhaustive list of steps that may be required for your business type. You are expected to conduct your own research to determine which items are applicable and if any additional steps are required for your business.

The information provided in this guide does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all information content, and materials available in this guide are for general informational purposes only. Information in this guide may not constitute the most up-to-date legal or other information. This guide contains links to other third-party websites. Such links are only for the convenience of the reader or user; Fayette County and its employees do not recommend or endorse the contents of the third-party sites.

IMPORTANT NOTE FROM PLANNING AND ZONING:

Each property in Fayette County has a designated zoning district. The zoning district determines what type of residential or commercial use is allowed on site. If you are considering physical location for your business in **unincorporated** Fayette County, please check with **Fayette County Planning and Zoning** to verify your business is allowed at the location.

Get Professional Advice (optional)

- Get Business Counseling
 - [Local partners of the U.S. Small Business Administration](http://www.sba.gov/local-assistance) - www.sba.gov/local-assistance
 - [Fayette County Chamber of Commerce](http://www.fayettechamber.org) - www.fayettechamber.org
- Find a Mentor - [SCORE](http://www.score.org) - www.score.org
- Resources for Georgia Small Businesses - [Georgia Department of Economic Development](http://www.georgia.org/small-business) - www.georgia.org/small-business

Create a Business Plan (optional)

- [Write a Business Plan](http://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business) - www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business
U.S. Small Business Administration
Your business plan is the foundation of your business. It's a roadmap for how to structure, run, and grow your new business.

Decide Your Business Name, NAICS Code, and Structure

- **Choose a Business Name**
 - Learn about the Georgia Secretary of State's name availability standards. These may help you choose an appropriate, available business name. [Name Availability Standards](http://www.georgia.gov/reserve-business-name) - www.georgia.gov/reserve-business-name
 - You can use the Secretary of State's online business search to determine if your desired name is taken. [Name Search](https://ecorp.sos.ga.gov/businesssearch) - https://ecorp.sos.ga.gov/businesssearch
 - (OPTIONAL) If you are not ready to register your business, you can reserve your business name with the Georgia Secretary of State for 30 days.

- **Find Your North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code** – [NAICS Look Up](#) – www.naics.com/search/
An NAICS Code (North American Industry Classification System) is used by government agencies to identify your line of business and activities. You can either search by keyword or browse by industry to determine the NAICS code that matches your business.
- **Decide Your Business Structure** – [Georgia.gov](http://www.georgia.gov) – www.georgia.gov/starting-business-guide
This resource covers 4 common business structures in Georgia: Sole Proprietorship, Limited Liability Company (LLC), Limited Liability Partnership (LLP), and Corporation.

☐ Register Your Business

- Sole Proprietorship – [Fayette County Clerk of Courts](http://www.fayetteclerk.com) – www.fayetteclerk.com
 - Location: One Center Drive, Fayetteville, GA 30214
 - Phone: 770-716-4290
- Limited Liability Company – [Georgia Secretary of State](http://www.georgia.gov/register-llc) – www.georgia.gov/register-llc
- Limited Liability Partnership – [Georgia Secretary of State](http://www.georgia.gov/register-limited-partnership) – www.georgia.gov/register-limited-partnership
- Corporations – [Georgia Secretary of State](http://www.georgia.gov/register-corporation) – www.georgia.gov/register-corporation

☐ Obtain Your Federal EIN

- How to Apply for An EIN – [Internal Revenue Services \(IRS\)](http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online) – www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online

An Employer Identification Number (EIN) is also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number and is used to identify a business entity. You need it to pay federal taxes and hire employees. You may need it to open a bank account, state tax accounts, and apply for business licenses, and permits. This is a free service offered by the Internal Revenue Service and you can get your EIN immediately.

☐ Open a Business Checking Account (optional)

- A business checking account may help separate your personal and business assets, simplify filing business taxes, and make it easier to manage business-related finances.

☐ Register for State and Local Taxes (may apply)

- **Register with the Georgia Department of Revenue** – [Learn More](#) – www.gtc.dor.ga.gov/_/
- **Register with the Department of Labor** – [Learn More](#) – www.dol.state.ga.us/Access/Service/LogonDOL1
Many businesses in Georgia are liable for payment of unemployment insurance taxes, even if they don't yet have employees.

- **Register for Fayette County Occupational Tax Certificate** – [Fayette County Application](http://www.fayettecountyga.gov/finance/occupational-tax) – www.fayettecountyga.gov/finance/occupational-tax

All businesses located in **unincorporated** Fayette County must obtain an Occupational Tax Certificate before business commences. The Occupational Tax Certificate creates your Fayette County tax account.

- Department: Planning and Zoning
- Location: 140 Stonewall Ave W Suite 202, Fayetteville, GA 30214
- Phone: 770-305-5421

☐ Insure Your Business

- Business Insurance Resources | Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner
- Business Guide to Insurance (PDF) | Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner

Apply for Permits and Licensing

- Some businesses may need to acquire specialized permits or licenses at various levels of government before operating. Below is a list of common agencies for licensing. This is not a complete list. It may not include agencies associated with your business type. Conduct research on your industry to discover what is required on a federal, state, and local level.
 - [State of Georgia Licensing Division](http://www.sos.ga.gov/licensing-division-georgia-secretary-states-office) – Provides administrative support to the licensing boards for 42 industries
www.sos.ga.gov/licensing-division-georgia-secretary-states-office
 - [Department of Agriculture](http://www.agr.georgia.gov/licensing) – www.agr.georgia.gov/licensing
Food, Animal, Plants, Pesticides, and more.
 - [Department of Community Health](http://www.dch.georgia.gov/divisionsoffices/hfrd/hfrd-forms-applications/licensure-forms-applications) – www.dch.georgia.gov/divisionsoffices/hfrd/hfrd-forms-applications/licensure-forms-applications
Healthcare Facilities, Private Home Care, Assisted Living, Home Health Agency and more.
 - Georgia Department of Environmental Health – www.dph.georgia.gov/environmental-health
 - [Fayette County Planning and Zoning](http://www.fayettecountyga.gov/finance/occupational-tax) – www.fayettecountyga.gov/finance/occupational-tax
Zoning Verifications, Occupational Tax Certificates, Conditional Use Permits, and more.
 - [Fayette County Building Safety](http://www.fayettecountyga.gov/building_permits/) – www.fayettecountyga.gov/building_permits/
Commercial Building Remolding and Additions Permits, HVAC, Plumbing, and more.
 - [Fire and Emergency Services](http://fayettecountyga.gov/fire_ems/) – fayettecountyga.gov/fire_ems/
Fire Safety Requirements