

Basics for Starting a Business

For prospective business owners, knowing where to start is important. The fundamentals of starting a new business in Louisiana are discussed below. Links to vital resources at the federal and state levels are provided within each section.

1. Business Structure and Registration

As a business owner, you will need to determine the structure and form of ownership in order to formally establish your business. It is highly recommended that you seek legal counsel and professional accounting advice when making these decisions.

2. Registering Your Business

[The Louisiana Secretary of State](#) provides the information and forms necessary for most business structures, including partnerships, corporations, and limited liability corporations, to be legally created and registered in Louisiana.

3. Tax and Insurance Requirements

A good first step to determine the company's state, federal, and local tax and insurance requirements is to click through the sections below and contact each group to determine your level of responsibility. If necessary, seek professional advice.

Federal Resources

[The U.S. Internal Revenue Service](#) is the primary source for federal tax information for businesses, including resources to determine if your business needs to apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN), also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number.

[The Social Security Administration](#) provides guidance and information for all businesses about withholding Social Security and Medicare taxes and reporting employees' annual earnings.

[Insure U for Small Businesses](#) is a website created by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners to inform small businesses about the different types of insurance they may want to consider to help protect their business, including business liability and key-person life insurance.

[USA.gov](#) provides online federal government services for all businesses including tax assistance, information on laws and regulations, and additional start-up tools.

State Resources

[The Louisiana Department of Revenue](#) provides state tax identification numbers and important state tax information that all Louisiana businesses need to know.

[The Louisiana Workforce Commission](#) provides information on Worker's Compensation, Unemployment Insurance and labor laws for businesses that plan to hire employees.

[The Louisiana Department of Insurance](#) provides state insurance information and allows you to search for local providers of specific types of insurance that you may be interested in. To evaluate the types of insurance

you may be required to have for your business, or may want to participate in to protect your business, it is recommended that you first visit the “Insure U for Small Businesses” website listed above.

Local Resources

To determine local tax and insurance requirements, contact your local parish and/or city government in which you plan to conduct business operations.

4. License and Permit Requirements

A good first step to determine the company’s state, federal, and local license and permit requirements is to click through the sections below and contact each group to determine your level of responsibility. If necessary, seek professional advice.

Federal Resources

[The U.S. Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#) provides a listing of federal licenses and permits that you may need for your small business.

[USA.gov](#) provides online federal government services for businesses including general assistance on licensing and permitting.

State Resources

[GeauxBiz](#) provides information to determine if your business has special license and permit requirements based on the nature of your business. If you are required to have special permits and licenses, it will also provide local contact information for those resources in your area.

[Louisiana.gov](#) can help you find specific license and permit requirements based on the types of occupations and professionals you employ.

Local Resources

Requirements specific to operation in Natchitoches Parish and the City of Natchitoches can be researched from the organizations listed below:

[Natchitoches Tax Commission](#) – for occupational license and local sales tax payments

If business is to be located **Inside City limits:**

- [zoning approval within City](#)
- [building inspector approval](#)
- [fire department approval](#)
- [City of Natchitoches Historic District Commission](#)

- [Louisiana fire marshal](#)

If business is to be located **Outside City limits:**

- [Zoning approval by Parish government](#)
- [Louisiana fire marshal](#)

If business is involved in food services:

- [LA Office of Public Health](#)
- [LA Fire Marshall](#)

THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce offers classes to help your business grow! Classes offered range from QuickBooks and Fair Labor Law, to marketing and branding, to social media, customer service and entrepreneurship.

Ribbon Cuttings offer a new business a great advantage in exposure. Business and community leaders attend, giving you the opportunity to display your place of business, your products and services, and start developing the relationships that will help your business thrive. Pictures of these events are placed in the local papers and on the Chamber's social media outlets, furthering your exposure.

Additionally, membership in the Chamber of Commerce shows consumers that your business is reliable, trustworthy and local. (Facts and figures from the Shapiro Group—commissioned by ACCE)

- Most consumers (**59 percent**) think that being active in the local chamber of commerce is an effective business strategy overall. It is **29 percent more effective**, however, for communicating to consumers that a company uses good business practices and **26 percent more effective** for communicating that a business is reputable.
- If a company shows that it is highly involved in its local chamber (e.g., sits on the chamber board), consumers are **12 percent more likely** to think that its products stack up better against its competition.
- When a consumer thinks that a company's products stack up better against the competition because the company is highly involved in its local chamber of commerce, *it is because he or she infers that the company is trustworthy, involved in the community and is an industry leader.*
- When consumers know that a restaurant franchise is a member of the chamber of commerce, they are **40 percent more likely** to eat at the franchise in the next few months.
- When consumers know that an insurance company is a member of the chamber of commerce, they are **43 percent more likely** to consider buying insurance from it.

Call the Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce at 318.352.6894 or visit www.NatchitochesChamber.com for more information and to join! Follow us on [Twitter.com/NatchChamber](https://twitter.com/NatchChamber) or [Facebook.com/NatchitochesChamber](https://facebook.com/NatchitochesChamber)