

Checklist for Starting a New Business in Little Rock

There are many steps involved in setting up a new business in Little Rock; we have listed several of the most common below. This list does not include every step required for every business, and it also includes some optional steps. If you have questions or need help, please contact an attorney.

Step 1: Register your business with the state of Arkansas.

- a. File your Articles of Incorporation or Organization with the **Arkansas Secretary of State Business and Commercial Services Division**.
 - i. You may do this on their website: <https://www.ark.org/sos/ofs/docs/index.php>
 - ii. Alternatively, you may file in person or by mail.
 1. Address: Victory Building, 1401 W. Capitol Ave, Suite 250, Little Rock, AR 72201
 2. Phone: 501-682-3409.
- b. If you are not incorporating your business, you must obtain a DBA (Doing Business As) Certificate with the **Pulaski County Clerk**.
 - i. You must apply for this in person at their office in the Pulaski County Courthouse.
 1. Address: 401 W. Markham St., Suite 100, Little Rock, AR 72201
 2. Phone: 501-340-8375.
 - ii. To search the online DBA database to be sure your chosen business name is not already in use, go to their website <http://www.pulaskiclerk.com/> and click on "DBA". The "DBA Search" page will open where you can search for your business name.

Step 2: Apply for Zoning approval from the city:

- a. Call **City of Little Rock Zoning Department** (501-371-4844) to determine if your location is zoned for your type of business.
- b. If operating from a commercial location, you must be certain that location is zoned for your type of business before signing a lease or purchasing.
- c. If your business will be located in your home, you must first obtain a business license and a home occupation accessory use permit.

Step 3: Obtain a business license to operate in the city of Little Rock.

- a. You may do this on the **City of Little Rock's** website: <http://littlerock.org/citydepartments/finance/businesslicenses.aspx>
- b. Or you may submit the information in person or by mail to the **Zoning Division, Planning and Development Department**.
 - i. Address: 723 West Markham Street, Little Rock, AR 72201
 - ii. Phone: 501-371-4568
- c. Once the Zoning Division has received and approved your application, it is forwarded to the Treasury Management Division.

- i. The Treasury Management Division will review your application and set up an account for the business.
- ii. Any fees will be determined by the information included on the application.
- iii. If any other information is needed, Treasury Management personnel will contact you.

Step 4: Apply for a sign permit if you wish to display a sign outside your place of business.

- a. Call the **City of Little Rock Zoning Department** (501-371-4844) to ascertain whether or not the zone you are in has special regulations for signage.
- b. If you must get special permission for your sign, follow the steps outlined in our "Steps to Obtaining a Sign Permit in Little Rock" checklist.

Step 5: Assess your business with Pulaski County.

- a. Every year you must assess any personal property used in the course of business by May 31 (the deadline to assess without penalty).
- b. You may do this on the **Pulaski County Assessor's Business Personal Property Office** website: <http://www.pulaskicountyassessor.net>
- c. Alternatively, you may assess by phone: 501-340-6181.

Step 6: Apply for state sales tax permit (if necessary).

- a. All retail-based and some service-based businesses must charge sales tax.
- b. The **Arkansas Department of Finance & Administration's Sales Tax Section** handles permit applications and can give you more information.
- c. You may access detailed information and forms on their website: <http://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/Pages/siteSearch.aspx?q=sales%20tax%20permit>
 - i. Be sure to open and study the pdf document "Starting A New Business – Arkansas" at the top of the list on that page. This is a comprehensive educational brochure for Arkansas taxpayers provided by the Department of Finance and Administration.
- d. Phone: 501-682-7104.

Step 7: Register for state income tax withholding.

- a. You may access information and forms on the **Arkansas Department of Finance & Administration's Office of Income Tax Administration** website: <http://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/offices/incomeTax/withholding/Pages/default.aspx>
- b. Phone: 501-682-7290.

Step 8: Obtain a federal Employer Identification Number (EIN).

- a. You may do this on the **United States Internal Revenue Service** website: <https://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed>
- b. More information from the IRS for small businesses may be accessed on their Small Business Resource website: <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small>
- c. Phone: 800-829-4933.

Step 9: Register for state unemployment insurance.

- a. Call the **Arkansas Department of Workforce Services Employer Account Services** (501-682-3798).
- b. Visit the website: <http://dws.arkansas.gov/UI/Contact.htm>

- c. You must register if your business employs one or more workers for at least ten days each year.
- d. More information may be obtained on their website:
<http://www.arkansas.gov/esd/Employers/>

Step 10: Obtain Worker’s Compensation insurance.

- a. Most businesses are required to obtain Worker’s Compensation insurance.
- b. To talk to consultants (who are attorneys) about specific questions, you may call the **Arkansas Worker’s Compensation Commission** at 501-682-3930.
- c. More information may be obtained on their website: <http://www.awcc.state.ar.us/>

Step 11: Verify employment eligibility of each employee.

American employers must complete and retain U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Form I-9 Employment Eligibility Verifications for every individual they hire (citizen and noncitizen).

- a. These forms must be available for inspection by authorized U.S. Government officials from the **Department of Homeland Security, Department of Labor, or Department of Justice.**
- b. There are sections that must be filled out and signed by employers and by employees.
- c. Newly hired employees must complete and sign their section of the form by the first day they begin work.
- d. More information about Form I-9 (and printable blank forms) may be accessed on the USCIS website: <http://www.uscis.gov/i-9>
 - I. Phone: 888-464-4218.
- e. Information about one way to verify a person’s employment eligibility – by enrolling in the USCIS E-Verify program – may be accessed on the USCIS E-Verify website: <http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify>
 - I. Phone: 800-741-5023.

Step 12: Register your trademark with the USPTO.

- a. For the basic information, go to <http://www.uspto.gov/trademarks-getting-started/trademark-basics>
- b. To search the **United States Patent & Trademark Office** database, access more information about the trademark application process, and even submit an online application, you may visit USCIS’s website: <http://www.uspto.gov>
- c. There is a lot of highly detailed information that must be included with all USPTO trademark applications, especially those for graphic marks, so it is highly recommended that you speak with an attorney prior to submitting your application.
- d. Beacon Legal Group has much experience with this form of intellectual property, so feel free to contact us for legal assistance or for a referral.
- e. You may search the database of trademarks registered only in the state of Arkansas here: www.sos.arkansas.gov/corps/trademk/index.php

Step 13: Determine if there are other permits you are required to obtain.

There are other permits that you may be required to obtain. To determine if your particular occupation requires a professional license or permit:

- a. Visit the Arkansas State website to view their listing of available online license registration and renewal services for professions in Arkansas:

<http://www.arkansas.gov/services/list/category/business-professional-licensing>

- b. You may call the Arkansas State operator (501-682-3000).
 - I. Describe what type of business you wish to start.
 - II. You will be given the phone number of the state agency for your type of business.

Step 14: Finally, Arkansas's state government website contains many helpful resources for employers; it may be accessed here: <http://www.arkansas.gov/services/list/category/employer-resources>