

\* Steps with this symbol are required for most businesses

Before you complete each step in this process, **you should ALWAYS check in with** a representative from relevant State of TN or Metro Nashville departments. View a list here: [www.nashville.gov/departments/finance/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/resources/essentials-entrepreneurs/start-your-business](http://www.nashville.gov/departments/finance/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/resources/essentials-entrepreneurs/start-your-business)

Start Here!

FREE

### Choose a Business Structure \*

Decide which business structure best fits your needs and future plans. While it is not required, consulting with attorneys and accountants on this step will be helpful.

[www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/choose-business-structure](http://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/choose-business-structure)

### Choose a Business Name \*

Select a name for your business and confirm that it is available. If you are not ready to move on to the next step and register your business, you can reserve your chosen business name with the TN Secretary of State for a fee.

<https://tnbear.tn.gov/Ecommerce/NameAvailability.aspx>

FREE - \$20

Storefront Business?

No

Yes

\$50

### Home-Based

If you will meet clients or customers in your residential home or your employees will work from there, you need a Home Occupation Permit.

[www.nashville.gov/departments/codes/land-use-and-zoning-information/zoning-examinations/home-occupation-permits](http://www.nashville.gov/departments/codes/land-use-and-zoning-information/zoning-examinations/home-occupation-permits)

FREE

### Brick and Mortar

If you have or will purchase a property for your business, check if the property is zoned correctly for your business type.

[www.nashville.gov/departments/codes/construction-and-permits/building-permits-central/move-business](http://www.nashville.gov/departments/codes/construction-and-permits/building-permits-central/move-business)

Zoned Correctly?

No

Yes

\$55

### Obtain Permit

If your business is not zoned correctly, you must apply for a Use and Occupancy permit with the Codes Department.

[zoninghelpdesk@nashville.gov](mailto:zoninghelpdesk@nashville.gov)

\$50

### Obtain Letter

Request a zoning verification letter from the Codes Department to maintain use and occupancy status.

[zoninghelpdesk@nashville.gov](mailto:zoninghelpdesk@nashville.gov)

\$100 - \$300

### Register your Business with Tennessee's Secretary of State \*

Most businesses in Tennessee, excluding those with a Sole Proprietorship business structure, must register with the TN Secretary of State.

<https://tnbear.tn.gov/Ecommerce/RegistrationInstr.aspx>

FREE

### Obtain Federal Employee Identification Number (FEIN) \*

A FEIN is used to identify a business entity and is typically required. Check the IRS' website to see if you need a FEIN.

[www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/employer-id-numbers](http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/employer-id-numbers)

\$15 - \$30

### Obtain Business License \*

A business license is required for all businesses. There are additional licenses you may need depending on your business activity. By receiving a business license, you are automatically enrolled in local business tax and will receive a letter in the mail with a certificate of business tax registration.

[www.tn.gov/revenue/taxes/business-tax/registration-and-licensing.html](http://www.tn.gov/revenue/taxes/business-tax/registration-and-licensing.html)

Hiring Employees?

No

Yes

FREE

### Liability Status Application

If you intend to hire employees, you must file an application to determine the status of your liability for unemployment insurance.

[www.tn.gov/workforce/employers/tax-and-insurance-redirect/unemployment-insurance-tax.html](http://www.tn.gov/workforce/employers/tax-and-insurance-redirect/unemployment-insurance-tax.html)

If you plan to sell beer, you must get a separate permit from the Beer Board. <https://epermits.nashville.gov/publicApp/#/publicApp/new/1?pubAppCode=beer>

Selling Alcohol or Tobacco?

No

Yes

\$100 - \$5,000

### Obtain Additional License(s)

Separate licenses to sell alcohol and tobacco can be obtained from the State of Tennessee's Department of Revenue.

[www.tn.gov/revenue/for-businesses/for-new-businesses/licenses-permits-registration](http://www.tn.gov/revenue/for-businesses/for-new-businesses/licenses-permits-registration)

Price Varies

### Obtain Additional Permits \*

You must submit a Commercial Permit Application along with an electronic copy of your business site plan and parking plan (if applicable). Your submitted application is reviewed by each department, who assess it based on their own unique regulations and requirements. Upon approval, your building permits will be issued, and you can track their status and inspection requirements through the Codes Department's epermits system ([www.epermits.nashville.gov](http://www.epermits.nashville.gov)).

<https://www.nashville.gov/departments/codes/construction-and-permits/commercial-building-permit-process/commercial-use-and-occupancy-permits>

Done!

Visit our "Essentials for Entrepreneurs" site to find services, tools, and assistance to help you grow and sustain your business! [www.nashville.gov/departments/finance/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/resources/essentials-entrepreneurs](http://www.nashville.gov/departments/finance/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/resources/essentials-entrepreneurs)