

Your Roadmap to Starting a Business in Nashville

Start Here!

* Steps with this symbol are required for most businesses

Check in With a Representative

Before you complete each step in this process, you should ALWAYS consult the relevant Metro Government and State departments.

View a list here:

www.nashville.gov/departments/finance/office-impact/resources/essentials-entrepreneurs/start-your-business

Free - \$20

Choose a Business Name *

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

<https://sos.tn.gov/businesses/services/name-availability-search-make-sure-your-name-is-available-before-filing>

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

Storefront Business?

No

Yes

\$50

Home-Based

If clients or customers will visit your home-based business or your employees will work there, you need a Home Occupation Permit.

www.nashville.gov/departments/codes/construction-and-permits/land-use-and-zoning-information/zoning-examinations/home-occupation-permits

Free

Brick and Mortar

If you already own or plan to purchase 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

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

\$50

Obtain Letter

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

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://incab.tnsos.gov/>

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

\$15 - \$30

Obtain Business License *

A business license is required for all businesses, including home-based operations. 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.nashville.gov/departments/county-clerk/business-services/apply-business-license

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

Do You Want to Work With Metro?

A business must be registered in iSupplier before working with Metro Government.

To register: www.nashville.gov/departments/finance/procurement/how-do-business-metro

Selling Alcohol or Tobacco?

No

Yes

\$100 - \$5k

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

Selling Beer? *

If you plan to sell beer, you must also get a permit from Metro Government.

www.nashville.gov/departments/beer-permits/beer-permit-application

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).

www.nashville.gov/departments/codes/construction-and-permits/commercial-building-permit-process

You've Started Your Business!

Visit our "Essentials for Entrepreneurs" site to find tools and assistance to help you grow and sustain your business!

www.nashville.gov/departments/finance/office-impact/resources/essentials-entrepreneurs



This guide should only be used as a general reference for starting a business in Nashville. You should ALWAYS consult the relevant Metro Government and State departments to ensure you are following the correct steps and applying for the correct permits.