

3 Simple Steps to Obtain a Business License

v.08.27.2020

1. DETERMINE YOUR LEGAL ENTITY

- **If you plan to do business as a Sole Proprietor or General Partnership** in Illinois, under an assumed name (a name other than your own), you will need to obtain an Assumed Name Certificate from the Cook County Clerk's Office. You may register:
 - a. Online by downloading and printing an application @ cookcountyclerk.com > Vital Records > Assumed Business Name Registration > Registering an Assumed Business Name;
 - b. In-person @ Cook County Building, Bureau of Vital Records, Assumed Name Unit, 50 W. Washington St., Lower Concourse Level, Room CL25, in Chicago;
 - c. By mail @ Cook County Clerk, Bureau of Vital Records, Attn: Assumed Name Unit, P.O. Box 642570, Chicago, IL, 60664-2570.Please call 312-603-7790 for more information.

- **If you plan to do business as a legal business entity** in Illinois, regardless if your business is based in Illinois or not, you will need to register with the Illinois Secretary of State:
 - a. Online @ www.cyberdriveillinois.com > Services > Business > Business Services;
 - b. In-person @ 69 W. Washington St., Suite 1240, in Chicago;
 - c. By mail @ 501 S. Second St., Room 350, Springfield, IL, 62756.Please call 312-793-3380 for more information.

Upon registration, you will be provided with a State of Illinois File Number which is a business license application requirement:

- Illinois based businesses may file a new application as a Limited Partnership (LP), Limited Liability Partnership (LLP), Limited Liability Corporation (LLC), Corporation, or Not-for-Profit Corporation (NFP).
- Businesses not based in Illinois are considered "foreign" and must file an application for authority to transact business in Illinois.

2. REGISTER YOUR BUSINESS

- **Obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN)**: An Employer Identification Number (EIN) is also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number, and is used to identify a legal business entity. Businesses are required to obtain an EIN to file and pay any federal tax obligation. You may register for an EIN with the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS):
 - a. Online @ www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&-Self-Employed > File > Businesses and Self-Employed > Small Business and Self-Employed > Employer ID Numbers (EINs);
 - b. In-person @ 230 S. Dearborn St., in Chicago (Facilitated Self Assistance (FSA) with Online Employer Identification Number (EIN) Application);
 - c. By mail @ Internal Revenue Service, Attn: EIN Operation, Cincinnati, OH, 45999.Please call 800-829-4933 for more information.

- **Obtain an Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) Account ID Number** (formerly known as Illinois Business Tax Number (IBT)): You must register with IDOR if you conduct business in Illinois, or with Illinois customers. This includes sole proprietors (individual or husband/wife), and all legal business entities, including exempt organizations, who plan to hire employees, buy or sell products wholesale or retail, or manufacture goods. You may apply for an IDOR Account ID Number:
 - a. Online @ tax.illinois.gov/businesses > How do I Register my Business? > MyTax Illinois;
 - b. In-person @ 100 W. Randolph St., 7th Floor, in Chicago;
 - c. By mail @ Central Registration Division, Illinois Department of Revenue, PO Box 19030, Springfield, IL, 62794-9030.Please call 800-732-8866 for more information.



3 Simple Steps to Obtain a Business License

v.08.27.2020

3. APPLY FOR YOUR BUSINESS LICENSE

- **Applying for a City of Chicago Business License:** Unless the business is exempted by State of Illinois law, every business operating in the City of Chicago requires a City of Chicago business license. A Small Business Center (SBC) Business Consultant (BC) can help you determine the license you need based on your business activity. You may apply:
 - a. Online @ www.chicago.gov/bacp > Licensing/Small Business Center Icon > Apply for a Business License or directly at www.chicagobusinessdirect.org or;
 - b. In-person @ the SBC, 121 N. LaSalle, Room 800, in Chicago. BCs are available for walk-ins, however, appointments are recommended. Please call us at 312-74-GOBIZ (744-6249) or go to www.chicago.gov/bacp > Licensing/Small Business Center Icon > Schedule an Appointment.
- **Complete a Business Information Sheet (BIS):** This pre-application form, *for in-person applicants only*, will provide your BC with the necessary details about your business to begin the application process. The BIS is available at the SBC or may be downloaded @ www.chicago.gov/bacp > Licensing/Small Business Center Icon > Apply for a Business License.
- **All applicants must provide the following:**
 - The business name and ownership information
 - The business location address and square footage
 - A detailed description of the business activity
 - Identification (i.e. valid driver's license, voter registration card, state ID card or another government-issued photo ID)If applicable:
 - State of Illinois File Number
 - Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN)
 - Illinois Department of Revenue Account ID Number

Additional document requirements will vary and depend on the license. For additional information, please go to www.chicago.gov/bacp > Licensing/Small Business Center Icon > Apply for a Business License or call us at 312-74-GOBIZ (744-6249).

- **Zoning:** Depending on the license, a Zoning Review will need to be completed in order to determine if your business activity is permitted in the zoning designation of your business location. Businesses that are zoned accordingly will automatically be approved when applying for a business license. Check your business address location zoning classification ahead of time at www.chicago.gov/zoning.
- **Application Fees:** Application fees vary based on the license.
 - Online applications must be paid online; and in-person applications must be paid in-person.
 - Any outstanding debt to the City, such as parking tickets, or Illinois Sales Tax must be resolved before any license can be issued or renewed.
- **Inspections:** Depending on the license, an inspection by one or various City departments must be conducted prior to license issuance. For specific information, please go to www.chicago.gov/bacp > Licensing/Small Business Center Icon > Apply for a Business License or call us at 312-74-GOBIZ (744-6249).

SMALL BUSINESS CENTER HOURS:

- In-Person: Monday – Friday; 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- 312-74-GOBIZ: Monday – Friday; 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Apply or renew a City of Chicago business license: www.chicagobusinessdirect.org

SMALL BUSINESS CENTER SERVICES:

- Business start-up and expansion information
- Business license applications and changes to renewals
- Public Way Use applications and permitting
- Business license Zoning and Inspections information
- Guidance and assistance to all City business processes
- Access to common business solutions

