

FORM AN LLC IN WISCONSIN

READ OUR FREE GUIDE TO FORMING AN LLC

Skip ahead to:

- [Form an LLC in Wisconsin](#)
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- [Keep Your Company Compliant](#)
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HAVE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FORM AN LLC FOR YOU

Two such reliable services:

- ★★★★★ [ZenBusiness \(https://shareasale.com/r.cfm?b=1229325&u=1005106&m=81890&urlink=start%2Ezenbusiness%2Ecom%2Fwisconsin%2Dllc%2Dtruic%2F&afftrack=htsl%20wisc](https://shareasale.com/r.cfm?b=1229325&u=1005106&m=81890&urlink=start%2Ezenbusiness%2Ecom%2Fwisconsin%2Dllc%2Dtruic%2F&afftrack=htsl%20wisc)
+ State Fees)
- ★★★★☆ [LegalZoom \(/reviews/legalzoom-vs-zenbusiness\)](/reviews/legalzoom-vs-zenbusiness) (\$149 + State Fees)

[Home \(/\)](#) / [Form an LLC \(/form-an-llc\)](#) / Start an LLC in Wisconsin

How to Start an LLC in Wisconsin



Subscribe to our [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZuB4F-oeE1lyzYl6QlfqBw?sub_confirmation=1) (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZuB4F-oeE1lyzYl6QlfqBw?sub_confirmation=1)

START AN LLC IN WISCONSIN WITH THESE FIVE EASY STEPS

[Step 1. Name Your Wisconsin LLC](#)

[Step 2. Choose a Registered Agent](#)

[Step 3. File the Articles of Organization](#)

[Step 4. Create an Operating Agreement](#)

[Step 5. Get an EIN](#)

Starting an LLC in Wisconsin is easy, just follow these simple steps:

STEP 1: NAME YOUR WISCONSIN LLC

Choosing a company name is the first and most important step in starting your LLC. Be sure to choose a name that complies with Wisconsin naming requirements and is easily searchable by potential clients.

1. Follow the naming guidelines:

- Your name **must include** the phrase "limited liability company" or one of its abbreviations (LLC or L.L.C.).
- Your name **cannot include** words that could confuse your LLC with a government agency (FBI, Treasury, State Department, etc.).
- Restricted words (e.g. Bank, Attorney, University) **may require** additional paperwork and a licensed individual, such as a doctor or lawyer, to be part of your LLC.

2. Is the name available in Wisconsin? Make sure the name you want isn't already taken by doing a [name search](https://www.wdfo.org/apps/CorpSearch/NameAvailability.aspx) (<https://www.wdfo.org/apps/CorpSearch/NameAvailability.aspx>) on the State of Wisconsin's website.

3. Is the URL available? We recommend that you check to see if your business name is available as a [web domain](http://www.anrdoezrs.net/click-5628080-10815550?sid=htsl+llc+wisconsin+webdomain) (<http://www.anrdoezrs.net/click-5628080-10815550?sid=htsl+llc+wisconsin+webdomain>). Even if you don't plan to make a business website today, you may want to buy the URL in order to prevent others from acquiring it.

Find a Domain Now


(<http://www.anrdoezrs.net/click-5628080-10815550?sid=htsl+direct+state+llc+wisconsin-llc-page>)

.com ▼

SUBMIT

Powered by GoDaddy.com

FAQ: Naming an LLC

What is an LLC? 

Do I need to get a DBA or Trade Name for my business? 

STEP 2: CHOOSE A REGISTERED AGENT IN WISCONSIN

You are **required** to nominate a Wisconsin Registered Agent for your LLC.

What is a Registered Agent? ([././what-is-a-registered-agent](#)) A registered agent is an individual or business entity responsible for receiving important legal documents on behalf of your business. Think of your registered agent as your business' point of contact with the state.

Who can be a Registered Agent? A registered agent must be a resident of Wisconsin or a corporation, such as a **[registered agent service, \(././registered-agent/should-i-use-a-registered-agent-service\)](#)** authorized to transact business in Wisconsin. You may elect an individual within the company including yourself.

TIP

Recommended: [ZenBusiness \(https://shareasale.com/r.cfm?](https://shareasale.com/r.cfm?b=1229325&u=1005106&m=81890&urlink=start%2Ezenbusiness%2Ecom%2Fwisconsin%2Dllic%2Dtrueic%2F&afftrack=htsl%20)

[b=1229325&u=1005106&m=81890&urlink=start%2Ezenbusiness%2Ecom%2Fwisconsin%2Dllic%2Dtrueic%2F&afftrack=htsl%20](https://shareasale.com/r.cfm?b=1229325&u=1005106&m=81890&urlink=start%2Ezenbusiness%2Ecom%2Fwisconsin%2Dllic%2Dtrueic%2F&afftrack=htsl%20) provides the first year of registered agent service free with LLC formation (\$39 + State Fees)

FAQ: Nominating a Registered Agent

Can I be my own Registered Agent? 

Is a Registered Agent service worth it? 

STEP 3: FILE THE WISCONSIN ARTICLES OF ORGANIZATION

To register your LLC, you will need to file the Articles of Organization with the state of Wisconsin. This can be done online or by mail.

When filing, you will need to state whether your LLC will be member-managed or manager-managed. We recommend **[learning more \(././members-vs-managers-managed-llc\)](#)** about these two options before you file.

FILE THE ARTICLES OF ORGANIZATION

OPTION 1: File Online with the State of Wisconsin

FILE ONLINE ([HTTPS://WWW.WDFI.ORG/APPS/CORPPFORMATION/DIRECTIONS.ASPX?TYPE=12](https://www.wdfi.org/apps/corppformation/directions.aspx?type=12))

- OR -

OPTION 2: File by Mail

DOWNLOAD FORM
([HTTPS://WWW.WDFI.ORG/_RESOURCES/INDEXED/SITE/CORPORATIONS/DFI-CORP-502.PDF](https://www.wdfi.org/_resources/indexed/site/corporations/dfi-corp-502.pdf))

State Filing Cost: \$130 Online, \$170 By Mail, Payable to The Department of Financial Institutions (Nonrefundable)

Mail to:

State of WI-Dept. of Financial Institutions
Box 93348
Milwaukee, WI 53293

If you're expanding your existing LLC to the State of Wisconsin, you will need to form a **Foreign LLC**.

FAQ: Filing LLC Documents

What is the processing time to form my Wisconsin LLC? ▼

What's the difference between a domestic LLC and foreign LLC? ▼

STEP 4: CREATE AN OPERATING AGREEMENT

An operating agreement is not required in Wisconsin, but it's a good practice to have one.

What is an operating agreement? An operating agreement is a legal document outlining the ownership and operating procedures of an LLC.

Why are operating agreements important? A comprehensive operating agreement ensures that all business owners are on the same page and reduces the risk of future conflict.

For more information on operating agreements, read our **[Wisconsin LLC operating agreement \(/wisconsin-llc/wisconsin-llc-operating-agreement\)](#)** guide.



Recommended: Download a template or create a **[Free Operating Agreement \(/././free-operating-agreement-template\)](#)** using our tool.

FAQ: Creating an Operating Agreement

Do I need to file my operating agreement with the state? ▼

STEP 5: GET AN EIN

What is an EIN? ([../..what-is-an-ein](#)) The Employer Identification Number (EIN), or Federal Tax Identification Number, is used to identify a business entity. It is essentially a social security number for the company.

Why do I need an EIN? An EIN is required for the following:

- To open a business bank account for the company
- For Federal and State tax purposes
- To hire employees for the company

Where do I get an EIN? An EIN is obtained from the IRS (free of charge) by the business owner after forming the company. This can be done online or by mail.

NOTE

FOR INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS: you **do not need an SSN** to obtain an EIN. [Learn more here \(\[../..what-is-an-ein/how-to-get-an-ein-as-a-foreign-person\]\(#\)\)](#).

GET AN EIN

Option 1: Request an EIN from the IRS

[APPLY ONLINE \(HTTPS://SA.WWW4.IRS.GOV/MODIEIN/INDIVIDUAL/INDEX.JSP\)](https://sa.www4.irs.gov/modiein/individual/index.jsp)

- OR -

Option 2: Apply for an EIN by Mail or Fax

[DOWNLOAD FORM \(HTTP://WWW.IRS.GOV/PUB/IRS-PDF/FSS4.PDF\)](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fss4.pdf)

Mail to:

Internal Revenue Service
Attn: EIN Operation
Cincinnati, OH 45999

Fax: (855) 641-6935

Fee: Free

FAQ: Getting an EIN

How do I get an EIN if I don't have a social security number? ▼

What tax structure should I choose for my LLC? ▼

Considering Using an LLC Formation Service?

We reviewed and ranked the top 5 LLC formation services.
Find out which is best for you.

[COMPARE SERVICES \(/REVIEWS/LLC-FORMATION-TOP-FIVE\)](#)

Protect Your Business & Personal Assets

BUSINESS BANKING FOR PERSONAL ASSET PROTECTION

Using dedicated business banking and credit accounts is essential for **personal asset protection**.

When your personal and business accounts are mixed, your personal assets (your home, car, and other valuables) are at risk in the event your LLC is sued. In business law, this is referred to as **piercing your corporate veil (/maintain-llc-corporate-veil)**.

You can protect your business with these two steps:

1. Opening a business bank account:

- Separates your personal assets from your company's assets, which is necessary for personal asset protection.
- Makes accounting and tax filing easier.



Recommended: Get \$200 when you open a business checking account with Chase. [Learn more.](#)
([https://oc.brcclx.com/t/?lid=26651846&cr=22216&tid=\[htsl|llc|banking\]&last_updated=1507557821](https://oc.brcclx.com/t/?lid=26651846&cr=22216&tid=[htsl|llc|banking]&last_updated=1507557821))

2. Getting a business credit card:

- Helps you separate personal and business expenses.
- Builds your company's credit history, which can be useful to raise capital later on.



Recommended: [Learn about the best small business credit cards here. \(../credit-cards\)](#)

GET INSURANCE

Business insurance helps you manage risks and focus on growing your business. The most common types of business insurance are:

- **General Liability Insurance (/general-liability-insurance):** A broad insurance policy that protects your business from lawsuits. Most small businesses get general liability insurance.
- **Professional Liability Insurance (.../professional-liability-insurance):** A business insurance for professional service providers (consultants, accountants, etc.) that covers against claims of malpractice and other business errors.
- **Workers' Compensation Insurance (/what-is-workers-compensation):** A type of insurance that provides coverage for employees' job-related illnesses, injuries, or deaths. In Wisconsin, businesses with three or more employees, excluding business owners, are required by law to have workers compensation insurance. **Get a free quote with ADP.** (<https://explore.adp.com/ins-wc-truic>)



How much will the right insurance cost you? [Click here to find out. \(http://www.jdoqocy.com/click-5628080-13478527\)](http://www.jdoqocy.com/click-5628080-13478527)

PROPERLY SIGN LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Improperly signing a document as yourself and not as a representative of the business can leave you open to personal liability. When signing legal documents on behalf of your company, you could follow this formula to avoid problems:

1. Formal name of your business
2. Your signature
3. Your name
4. Your position in the business as its authorized representative

See the image below for an example.



This ensures that you are signing on behalf of your LLC and not as yourself.





Learn more on how to protect your business & personal assets by reading our article - [How to Maintain your LLC Corporate Veil. \(/maintain-llc-corporate-veil\)](#)

Keep Your Company Compliant

WISCONSIN BUSINESS PERMITS & LICENSES

Do I need business licenses and permits?

To operate your LLC you must comply with federal, state, and local government regulations. For example, restaurants likely need health permits, building permits, signage permits, etc.

The details of business licenses and permits vary from state to state. Make sure you read carefully. Don't be surprised if there are short classes required as well.

Fees for business licenses and permits will vary depending on what sort of license you are seeking to obtain.

Find out how to obtain necessary licenses and permits for your business or have a [professional service](#) (<https://shareasale.com/r.cfm?b=617326&u=1005106&m=53954&urlink=www%2Eincfile%2Ecom%2Fbusiness%2Dlicense%2Dresearch%2Dpackage%2F&affi>) do it for you:

- **Federal:** Use the [U.S. Small Business Administration \(SBA\) guide](#) (<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/apply-licenses-and-permits>).
- **State:** Learn more about licenses, permits, and registration from Wisconsin's [Department of Safety and Professional Services](#) (<http://dsps.wi.gov/Licenses-Permits/Credentialing>).
- **Local:** Contact your local county clerk and ask about local licenses and permits.



Recommended: If you are a first-time entrepreneur, consider having a professional service research your business' licensing requirements. Our friends at Startup Savant have reviewed and ranked the [top five license research services](#) (<https://startupsavant.com/best-business-license-services/>).

WISCONSIN LLC TAX REQUIREMENTS

Depending on the nature of your business, you may be required to register for one or more forms of state tax.

Sales Tax

If you are selling a physical product, you'll typically need to register for a [sellers permit \(/../taxes/wisconsin-sales-tax#sellers\)](#) through the Wisconsin Department of Revenue website.

This certificate allows a business to collect sales tax on taxable sales.

Sales tax, also called "Sales and Use Tax," is a tax levied by states, counties, and municipalities on business transactions involving the exchange of certain taxable goods or services.

Read our [sales tax guide \(/../taxes/wisconsin-sales-tax\)](#) to find out more.

Employer Taxes

If you have employees in Wisconsin, you will need to register for [Unemployment Insurance Tax \(https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/ui201/\)](#) through the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. You will also need to sign up for [Employee Withholding Tax \(https://www.revenue.wi.gov/DOR%20Publications/pb166.pdf\)](#) through the Wisconsin Department of Revenue.



Register for Wisconsin State Taxes

[Sales Tax \(/taxes/wisconsin-sales-tax\)](#) | [Unemployment Insurance Tax \(https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/ui201/\)](#) | [Withholding Tax \(https://www.revenue.wi.gov/DOR%20Publications/pb166.pdf\)](#)

FEDERAL LLC TAX REQUIREMENTS

Most LLCs will need to report their income to the IRS each year using:

- [Form 1065 Partnership Return \(https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-1065-us-return-of-partnership-income\)](#) (most multi-member LLCs use this form)
- [Form 1040 Schedule C \(https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/schedule-c-form-1040-profit-or-loss-from-business\)](#) (most single-member LLCs use this form)



Read our [LLC Tax Guide \(/llc-taxes#federal-income\)](#) to learn more about federal income taxes for LLCs.

FILE YOUR LLC ANNUAL REPORT

Wisconsin requires LLCs to file an annual report with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions.

FILE YOUR ANNUAL REPORT

File Online with the State of Wisconsin

FILE ONLINE ([HTTPS://WWW.WDFI.ORG/APPS/CORPAR/](https://www.wdfi.org/apps/corpar/))

Fee: \$25 (Nonrefundable)

Due Date: Due by the end of the quarter in which an LLC was formed.

Late Filings: Wisconsin dissolves LLCs within one year for failure to file an annual report.

Avoid Automatic Dissolution

LLCs may face fines and even automatic dissolution when they miss one or more state filings. When this happens, LLC owners risk loss of limited liability protection. A quality registered agent service can help prevent this outcome by notifying you of upcoming filing deadlines and by submitting reports on your behalf.



Recommended: [ZenBusiness \(https://shareasale.com/r.cfm?b=1229325&u=1005106&m=81890&urlink=start%2Ezenbusiness%2Ecom%2Fwisconsin%2Dllc%2Dra%2Dtruic%2F&afftrack=](https://shareasale.com/r.cfm?b=1229325&u=1005106&m=81890&urlink=start%2Ezenbusiness%2Ecom%2Fwisconsin%2Dllc%2Dra%2Dtruic%2F&afftrack=)
a reliable registered agent service and excellent customer support.

Get Help Starting a Business in Wisconsin

We understand that creating an LLC and getting your business up and running comes with many challenges. To help you succeed, we compiled the best local resources in every major metro area in Wisconsin. You can get free assistance in the following areas:

[Eau Claire \(/local-resources/wisconsin-eau-claire\)](#) | [Green Bay \(/local-resources/wisconsin-green-bay\)](#) | [La Crosse \(/local-resources/wisconsin-la-crosse\)](#) | [Madison \(/local-resources/wisconsin-madison\)](#) | [Milwaukee \(/local-resources/wisconsin-milwaukee\)](#)

Make Running Your Business Easier

After starting a business, two of the most important things you can do are get professional accounting and hire the right employees. Streamlining these processes can save you time and money as your business grows.

HIRING EMPLOYEES

If you plan to hire employees, stay compliant with the law by following these steps:

- Verify that new employees are [able to work in the US \(/hiring-compliance#confirm-eligibility\)](#)
- [Report employees \(https://wi-newhire.com/default\)](#) as "new hires" to the State
- Provide [workers' compensation \(/what-is-workers-compensation\)](#) insurance for employees
- [Withhold employee taxes \(.../llc-taxes/employee-taxes-for-small-businesses\)](#)
- Print compliance posters and place them in visible areas of your work space

Find more information at the [Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development under "Employer Online Services."](#) (<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uitax/>)



Recommended: Check out our [Hiring for your Small Business Guide \(.../hiring\)](#) for resources like sample job descriptions, payroll service reviews, and more.

FAQ: Hiring Employees

What is the minimum wage in Wisconsin? ▼

How often do I need to pay employees? ▼

ACCOUNTING FOR YOUR LLC

It's critical to get your books in order-- even if you haven't officially opened for business. A well managed accounting system will help you:

- Track your business finances, including bills, expenses, and income.
- Simplify your annual tax filings.

The [right software \(/why-your-business-needs-accounting-software\)](#) makes accounting easy. Look for software that:

- Syncs with your bank automatically.
- Matches transactions to invoices, bills and purchase orders.
- Can be accessed from your phone.



Recommended: QuickBooks has all the accounting features your small business will need.
[Try QuickBooks for free \(http://www.dpbolvw.net/click-5628080-12724848?sid=htsl+llc+wisconsin+accounting\)](http://www.dpbolvw.net/click-5628080-12724848?sid=htsl+llc+wisconsin+accounting)

More Information

WISCONSIN FOREIGN LLCs

Forming a foreign LLC allows your company to operate as one entity in multiple states. If you have an existing LLC and want to do business in Wisconsin, you will need to register as a foreign LLC. This can be done online

REGISTER AS A FOREIGN LLC IN WISCONSIN

File Online with the State of Wisconsin

[FILE ONLINE \(HTTPS://WWW.WDFI.ORG/APPS/GOFR/FORM/INDEX/16\)](https://www.wdfi.org/apps/gofr/form/index/16)

Fee: \$100 (Nonrefundable)

HOW TO OBTAIN A CERTIFICATE OF GOOD STANDING

A Certificate of Good Standing, known in Wisconsin as a Certificate of Status, verifies that your LLC was legally formed and has been properly maintained. Several instances where you might need to get one include:

- Seeking funding from banks or other lenders
- Forming your business as a foreign LLC in another state
- Obtaining or renewing specific business licenses or permits

You can file a Certificate of Status online or by mail through the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institution.

ORDER A CERTIFICATE OF GOOD STANDING

OPTION 1: Order Online with the State of Wisconsin

[ORDER ONLINE \(HTTPS://WWW.WDFI.ORG/APPS/CCS/DIRECTIONS.ASP\)](https://www.wdfi.org/apps/ccs/directions.asp)

- OR -

OPTION 2: Order by Mail

[DOWNLOAD FORM
\(HTTPS://WWW.WDFI.ORG/_RESOURCES/INDEXED/SITE/CORPORATIONS/DFI-CORP-SP48-50.PDF\)](https://www.wdfi.org/_resources/indexed/site/corporations/dfi-corp-sp48-50.pdf)

Fee: \$10 Payable to The Department of Financial Institutions (Nonrefundable)

Mail to:

Box 93348
Milwaukee, WI 53293

If sent by Express or Priority U.S. mail, please visit the [Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions \(http://www.wdfi.org/contact_us/\)](http://www.wdfi.org/contact_us/) for the current physical address.

DISSOLVE YOUR WISCONSIN LLC

If at any point in the future you no longer wish to conduct business with your LLC, it is important to officially dissolve it. Failure to do so in a timely fashion can result in tax liabilities and penalties, or even legal trouble. To dissolve your LLC, there are two broad steps:

- Close your business tax accounts
- File the Articles of Dissolution

When you are ready to dissolve your LLC, follow the steps in our [Wisconsin LLC Dissolution Guide \(/wisconsin-llc-dissolution\)](/wisconsin-llc-dissolution).

Featured Articles



[Guide to Starting a Business in Wisconsin](/start-a-business-in-wisconsin)

[\(/start-a-business-in-wisconsin\)](/start-a-business-in-wisconsin)



[Top Five LLC Formation Services Compared](/reviews/llc-formation-top-five)

[\(/reviews/llc-formation-top-five\)](/reviews/llc-formation-top-five)



[Wisconsin Registered Agent](/wisconsin-llc/wisconsin-registered-agent)

[\(/wisconsin-llc/wisconsin-registered-agent\)](/wisconsin-llc/wisconsin-registered-agent)

State of Wisconsin Quick Links

[State of Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions Corporations \(https://www.wdfi.org/corporations/\)](https://www.wdfi.org/corporations/)

[SBA's Small Business Resource for Wisconsin](http://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/resourceguide_3158.pdf)

[\(http://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/resourceguide_3158.pdf\)](http://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/resourceguide_3158.pdf)

[Wisconsin LLC Statutes \(https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/183\)](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/183)



(/)

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<https://www.facebook.com/Truic/>

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- [Business Plan \(/business-center/business-plan\)](/business-center/business-plan)
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- [Free Legal Forms \(/legal-forms\)](/legal-forms)

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- [LLC Services \(/reviews/llc-formation-top-five\)](/reviews/llc-formation-top-five)

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