This checklist provides the legal requirements for establishing a business. In addition to the items on this list, we always suggest having a business plan, consulting an attorney and/or an accountant regarding the best legal structure for you, and consulting an insurance agent regarding liability coverage. Come to our JumpStart or FastTrac classes to learn more!

- **Confirm your business name is available**
  - PA: Search your business name on [corporations.pa.gov](http://corporations.pa.gov)
  - NJ: Search your business name on [njportal.com/dor/businessnamesearch](http://njportal.com/dor/businessnamesearch)
  - Google: Search your business name on [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

- **Confirm your professional licensure is current and determine if your business requires a restricted professional business structure**

- **Register your business structure with your state**
  - Sole proprietorships (and, in NJ, general partnerships) are exempt but may file a fictitious name.
  - PA: go to [corporations.pa.gov](http://corporations.pa.gov). The filing fee will be $125.
  - NJ: go to [njportal.com](http://njportal.com) and follow prompts based on your legal structure. The filing fee will be $125.

- **(Optional) Register your fictitious name with the state if not registering your business structure with your state**
  - Unnecessary if you are operating under your legal name or the legal business name you registered when you filed your LLC/Corporation/Partnership.
  - You register your fictitious on the same state system you used to confirm your legal name’s availability.

- **Apply for a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)**
  - Often called an EIN, this is sort of like the Social Security Number for your business. You’ll use this same number as your Tax ID.
  - Free to apply at [irs.gov](http://irs.gov) (look out for fake sites; if there’s a fee, it’s not the IRS!)
  - Technically optional for sole proprietors but recommended for all businesses.

- **Maintain corporate documents in a corporate minute book**
  - The governing documents (formation documents, FEIN Letter, either Operating Agreement (if LLC) or Bylaws (if corporation), resolutions, bank statements) are important to keep together in one binder.

- **Open a separate bank account for your business using the FEIN**

- **Register your business with your city or county**
  - Requirements will depend on where you’re located; check our resources page for links to other counties.
  - In Philadelphia, every business owner needs a Business Income and Receipts Tax (BIRT) ID and a Commercial Activity License; additional licenses may apply. Consult [business.phila.gov](http://business.phila.gov) for details.

- **Register for state tax and employer accounts**
  - PA: Go to [pa100.state.pa.us](http://pa100.state.pa.us) to register for a PA business tax account
  - NJ: Go to [njportal.com](http://njportal.com) to register for tax and employer purposes.

- **Check for any special registrations that may apply**
  - Research on your state, county and city websites for any additional steps specific to your industry or business type

- **Check with your local municipality concerning taxes, local licenses and permits, zoning requirements, and any other regulations**