**[Thinking About Starting a Business?](http://www.sba.gov/thinking-about-starting%22%20%5Co%20%22Thinking%20About%20Starting%20a%20Business)**

**10 Steps to Starting a Business**

Starting a business involves planning, making key financial decisions and completing a series of legal activities. These 10 easy steps can help you plan, prepare and manage your business

[**Step 1: Write a Business Plan**](http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business/starting-business/how-write-business-plan) **(**Ex. Summary, Company Description, Market Analysis, Organization & Management, Service Line/Product, Marketing and Sales, Funding Request, Financial Projections, Appendix)

**Write a Marketing Plan** (link to pdf: Your Marketing Plan)

Use these tools and resources to create a business plan that will help you map out how you will start and run your business successfully.

[**Step 2: Get Business Assistance and Training**](http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/counseling-training)

Take advantage of free training and counseling services, from preparing a business plan and securing financing, to expanding or relocating a business. Mentoring, coaching, counseling (Not Advice!)..

SBA (link to: <http://www.sba.gov/content/find-business-mentor>

SBDC (link to: <http://www.hrsbdc.org/>)

ODU – Launch Hampton Roads (link to: <http://odu.edu/partnerships/business/gateway/programs/launchhr>)

[**Step 3: Choose a Business Location**](http://www.sba.gov/content/tips-choosing-business-location)

Get advice on how to select a customer-friendly location and comply with zoning laws. <http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business/starting-business/establishing-business/choosing-location-equipment>

City of Chesapeake Economic Development (link to CoStar Commercial Real Estate Search button on our website)

City of Chesapeake Zoning and Permitting (link to: <http://www.cityofchesapeake.net/government/City-Departments/Departments/Department-of-Development-and-Permits.htm>

[**Step 4: Finance Your Business**](http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/loans-grants/small-business-loans/sba-loan-programs)

Know the financing basics: Government backed loans, venture capital or crowdfunding investors.. Family and Friends, to help you get started. (Link to pdf: Financing Resources)

[**Step 5: Determine the Legal Structure of Your Business**](http://www.sba.gov/content/business-structure-and-tax-implications)

Decide which form of ownership is best for you: Sole Proprietorship, Partnership, Limited Liability Company (LLC), corporation, S Corporation, Nonprofit or Cooperative.

Contact an Attorney before Starting a Business (Link to pdf: Reasons to Contact Attorney Before Starting a Business)

IRS (link to: [http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&-Self-Employed/Business-Structures](http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-%26-Self-Employed/Business-Structures)

[**Step 6: Register a Business Name ("Doing Business As")**](http://www.sba.gov/content/register-your-fictitious-or-doing-business-dba-name)

Register your business name with your state government.

Brainstorm until you have several names that fit your business. Check to see if your ideas are available as domain names, then conduct a trademark search at the federal and state levels. If the name you want is already a trademark, determine if your use of the name would cause consumer confusion.

If you are structuring your business as a corporation or LLC, check with your Secretary of State to see if any of your proposed names are not available, then choose your business name.

[**Step 7: Get a Tax Identification Number**](http://www.sba.gov/content/getting-tax-identification-number)

Learn which tax identification number you'll need to obtain from the IRS and your state revenue agency.

[http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&-Self-Employed/Employer-ID-Numbers-EINs](http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-%26-Self-Employed/Employer-ID-Numbers-EINs)

[**Step 8: Register for State and Local Taxes**](http://www.sba.gov/content/learn-about-your-state-and-local-tax-obligations)

Register with your state to obtain a tax identification number, workers' compensation, unemployment and disability insurance.

[http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&-Self-Employed/Business-Taxes](http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-%26-Self-Employed/Business-Taxes)

[**Step 9: Obtain Business Licenses and Permits**](http://www.sba.gov/content/obtaining-business-licenses-permits)

Get a list of federal, state and local licenses and permits required for your business.

Opening a Business in Chesapeake (link to this site: <http://www.cityofchesapeake.net/government/City-Departments/Departments/comm-rev/business-services/tax-and-licensing.htm>

<http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business/starting-business/obtain-business-licenses->

[**Step 10: Understand Employer Responsibilities**](http://www.sba.gov/content/10-steps-hiring-your-first-employee)

Learn the legal steps you need to take to hire employees.

<http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business/starting-business/business-law-regulations>

***Resource:*** US Small Business Administration. Visit: <http://www.sba.gov/content/follow-these-steps-starting-business> for details on each of the 10 steps.