

## BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO STARTING A BUSINESS



Thank you for your interest in starting a business in the City of Dunwoody. We strive to assist local startups with completing their business licensing with the City as well as offer information relating to the State of Georgia. Here are some helpful steps that you may want to consider when starting a business.

**Decide whether you will start the business in your home or office.** This is one of the most important considerations when starting a business. There are additional rules and regulations for a home business that might impact your business. Regardless if you decide to use a commercial space or your home, be sure to check with Community Development to determine if your business is allowed in that zoning district. You can contact them at (678) 382-6800.

**Determine how the business will be organized.** The most common types of businesses are sole proprietors, a Limited Liability Company (LLC), or a Corporation. Each type has its own advantages. Applying for these statuses is done through the State of Georgia. You can research what type best fits your business by visiting the Secretary of State's website. <http://www.sos.ga.gov>

**Apply for a Sales Tax ID and Federal Tax ID.** If you are going to be selling items or products, the State of Georgia requires that you register and collect sales tax. And just like individual taxpayers, businesses are also expected to pay tax to the Federal Government. You can find more information about Federal Tax identification numbers at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

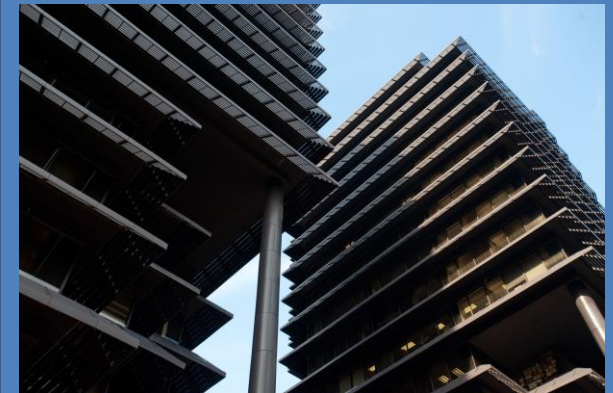
**Apply for a City of Dunwoody Occupational Tax Certificate (business license).** Every business that operates in the City of Dunwoody is required to obtain an occupational tax certificate. All of the forms are available at [www.dunwoodyga.gov](http://www.dunwoodyga.gov) or at City Hall. The forms require notaries, which are available free of charge at City Hall.

**Register with E-Verify if you have over 10 employees.** The State of Georgia requires any business with more than 10 employees nation/company-wide to register with E-Verify, a federal program administered online that verifies the status of workers.

**Check in with the Dunwoody Chamber of Commerce.** This is a great resource for first time business owners in that they can help you with many issues that are not covered here. They also host events that promote Dunwoody businesses and can connect you with other business owners. <http://dunwoodycommerce.org>

**Smart business\***

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS STARTING A BUSINESS

# Dunwoody

\* Smart people – Smart city

### What is a business plan?

A business plan is a written, detailed description that serves as the “resume” for the business, identifying its goals. It can include information about the entity’s financial standing, resources, decisions and plans. Business plans may also be used to keep invested parties informed about the company’s operation and goals.

### Why does my company need a business plan?

A business plan can be considered a crucial part of a loan package. It provides specific and organized information about the company and can explain how a loan will be repaid. A business plan may also serve as a guide to keep owners focused on the entity’s goals.

### What types of entities are on file with the Secretary of State Corporations division?

Business corporations, non-profit corporations, professional corporations, limited partnerships (LP), and a limited liability companies (LLC) are formed in Georgia by filing with the Corporations division of the Office of Secretary of State. In some instances, the above entities that form in other states choose to file with the Georgia Secretary of State as “foreign” entities.

### Where do I file a “C” or “S” corporation?

C and S corporations are filed with the IRS. The State of Georgia does not keep a record of this information. For more information on C and S corporations, please contact the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 or visit their website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

### What taxes is my company responsible for paying?

The Georgia Department of Revenue (DOR) has registration requirements for businesses selling products and goods, including alcohol, tobacco, and fuel. The DOR can also address wholesale or resale, state and sales tax identification registration, as well as withholding tax requirements. In addition, the entity is required to pay local taxes, in the form of the Occupational Tax Certificate.

### What is an Employer Identification Number or Tax Identification Number (EIN/TIN)?

An EIN and a TIN are one and the same. It is an identification number assigned to identify taxpayers who are required to file various business tax returns. It is generally used by corporations, sole practitioners, partnerships, non-profit associations, trust estates of descendants and other business entities.

### How do I obtain a Tax Identification Number?

Federal Tax/Employer Identification Numbers are issued through the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).



### What is a Certificate of Existence?

A Certificate of Existence (often referred to as “Certificate of Good Standing”) is a document that verifies a corporate entity is registered in its “home state”. This document is obtained from the State in which the corporation is based. It is often required by banks and landlords to verify the legal existence of the entity, and by a state in which the entity is filing as a “foreign entity”.

### Where can I get the forms to register my company with the Secretary of State’s Corporations Division?

Registration forms for business entities can be downloaded from the website at:

[www.sos.state.ga.us/corporations](http://www.sos.state.ga.us/corporations)

You can also contact the Corporations Division at 404-656-2817.

### How long does it take to complete a filing with the Corporations Division?

Many filings of articles of incorporation, amendments, mergers, or dissolutions are completed within 5-7 business days of receipt by the Division. Workload issues will sometimes result in a longer turnaround time, perhaps up to 12 business days. In particular, anticipate lengthier turnarounds in late December through January when the greatest volume is received. Large numbers of filings are also typically received at the end of each quarter: late March, late June, and late September.