

Register Your Business Structure with the State

Register with the Rhode Island Department of State, Secretary of State's Office if your business will be structured as a corporation, limited liability company (LLC), partnership or nonprofit corporation. *(Note: Sole proprietors and general partnerships can skip this step and go to the next section to "Determine Your Licensing Requirements at the Municipal Level").*

Once the structure is determined, you'll need to check to see if the name of your business is available (<https://www.sos.ri.gov/divisions/business-services/business-basics/your-name>). Articles of Incorporation (corporation) or Articles of Organization (LLC) can then be filed for approval with the Rhode Island Department of State, Secretary of State. These can be filed either via Secretary of State's online portal, or by printing out the appropriate forms and filing them in person at the office of the Secretary of State along with the applicable filing fee. Visit the Secretary of State Business Portal for more information (see link below).

To Start or qualify to do business in Rhode Island go to: the RI Department of State, Secretary of State's (SOS) Business Portal <http://sos.ri.gov/divisions/business-portal/business-basics>

About Registering a Business Name and Entity

Utilizing the Name Availability Guidelines, you can search the RI Department of State, Secretary of State's corporate database to determine if your preferred business name is available for use in this state. DISCLAIMER: Names in the Secretary of State's database only include businesses that are registered with the RI Department of State including:

- Corporations
- Limited Liability Companies
- Nonprofits
- Limited Partnerships
- Limited Liability Partnerships

Because sole proprietors and general partnerships are not registered with the RI Department of State, they are unable to check those for name availability.

You should contact the City or Town in which your business is located to ensure that you are fully compliant.

If your business will be organized as a **sole proprietorship** or a **general partnership**, you will need to contact your city/town hall to register the name of your business. In addition, you should contact your city/town hall to:

- Determine if there are zoning requirements for your business
- Determine if a certificate of occupancy is required from the building official and/or local fire marshal
- Obtain information on licenses or permits, such as: Sunday retail sales, liquor licenses, entertainment licenses, peddler's licenses or other special licenses. Please visit <http://www.ri.gov/towns/> for a list and websites of all Rhode Island cities and towns.