

Iowa LLC Formation Checklist

Step 1: Name Your Iowa LLC

The name of your Iowa LLC should be distinguishable from other business names in your state and must meet the Iowa naming guidelines.

How to Complete This Step:

Review Iowa's naming guidelines

- Your name must contain one of the following terms or abbreviations: limited liability company, limited company, L. L. C., LLC, L. C., or LC. "Limited" may be abbreviated as "Ltd.," and "company" may be abbreviated as "Co."
- Your name cannot include words that could confuse your LLC with a government agency (FBI, Treasury, State Department, etc.).
- In some states, certain restricted words (Bank, Attorney, University, etc.) may require additional paperwork and a licensed individual to be part of your LLC.
- Your name must be distinguishable from any existing business in the state. This includes Iowa reserved names.

[Brainstorm business names](#)

Check if the [web domain](#) is available

Make sure the name you want isn't already taken by doing a [business entity search](#) on the Iowa Secretary of State website.

Your Business Name:

Your Business URL:

Step 2: Choose a Registered Agent

A [registered agent](#) is the person or company you choose to accept official communication on behalf of your LLC.

Your registered agent must be:

- 18 years or older
- A resident of Iowa
- Available at all times during normal business hours (i.e., 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday through Friday) at their listed physical address (no P.O. boxes)

Many businesses choose to use a [registered agent service](#) for convenience and privacy.

Registered Agent Name and Address:

Step 3: File Your Certificate of Organization

The Certificate of Organization is the paperwork required to register your LLC. This document is filed with the Secretary of State, either [online](#), by [mail](#), or by fax. If filing by mail or fax, you will need to draft your own documents.

You will need to provide the following information:

- Name of the LLC (Step 1)
- Name and address of the registered agent (Step 2)

This is also a good time to decide if your LLC will be [member-managed or manager-managed](#).

A member-managed LLC structure is when the members of the LLC are involved with the management of the LLC. A manager-managed LLC is when a few assigned individuals are responsible for managing the LLC.

Step 4: Create an Operating Agreement

An [operating agreement](#) lays out the rules and management structure of your LLC.

Your operating agreement doesn't need to be filed with the state. You'll keep it in your LLC records file and return to it as needed to clarify rules and settle disputes.

Step 5: Get an EIN

An Employer Identification Number ([EIN](#)) is like a Social Security number for your business. EINs are free and easy to get from the IRS using [Form SS-4](#) or by filling out the [online application](#).