



ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
COLLABORATIVE

## EDC BUSINESS START-UP GUIDE

Starting a new business is an exciting endeavor but navigating all of the requirements that a new business may need can be daunting. The EDC Business Start-up Guide is designed to provide you with the steps and the resources needed to set-up your new business.

Some businesses may be categorized as an industry that requires specific filing and compliance. In addition to the resources presented here, it is recommended that you contact the city and state offices where your business will operate to ensure compliance with all requirements of business ownership for your industry and location.

EDC's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has a team of expert business advisors available to provide you with additional no-charge assistance in setting up your business. To make an appointment, call (805) 409-9159.

### RESEARCH AND BUSINESS PLAN

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**Market Feasibility:** Before you begin any business venture, it is important to adequately research the industry and potential market of your product or service. Best practice is to look at your competition locally, nationally and for some businesses internationally. As you conduct your research using the organizations and tools in this guide, identify what makes your product or service different than your competition. How can you bring more value to the market you are entering? How are you helping people fulfill a need or desire they have? Your local library may have online tools available for industry and market research such as **ReferenceUSA** and **First Research**, searchable databases that contain economic industry profiles and directory information of thousands of U.S. businesses and households.

**Business Plan:** Writing a business plan is an essential step in the initial start-up phase of any business. A strong business plan should include a summary of your product or service, market position, sales and distribution strategies, marketing and financial projections and an analysis of the estimated start-up capital needed. If you are planning to apply for a loan, a business plan will most likely be required.

- **SBA Business Plan Guide-** SBA provides a guide to writing a plan quickly and efficiently using business plan templates. Learn more at [SBA Business Plan Guide](#).
- **SCORE Financial Planning Worksheets-** Financial planning and cashflow management spreadsheets (Excel) from are available through SCORE. Learn more at [SCORE Financial Planning Worksheets](#).

**Trademark Search:** It is recommended that you conduct a trademark search through the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's searchable database (TESS) before you decide to name your business. Access online at [USPTO](#).

## PERMITS AND LICENSES

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Opening a business legally while maintaining compliance with all permits and license requirements can be complicated. Use the checklist list below to guide you through the process.

### Steps to obtaining business permits and licenses:

1. Determine the business name.
2. Determine the business entity.
3. Confirm with the city your business will be located in for information on all permits and licenses that may apply.
4. Visit the state websites listed herein for guidance on permit requirements.
5. Apply for a Fictitious Business Name if the business will be conducted under any name other than your surname.
6. File a Fictitious Business Name in a local newspaper.
7. Contact the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration for information on whether your business will need to file sales and use taxes. Apply for a seller's permit if your business will be reselling merchandise.
8. Apply for a business license with the city or unincorporated area of the county that the business will be located in.
9. Apply for your FEIN number for tax filing purposes.
10. Apply for a Dun & Bradstreet D-U-N-S® Number to establish your business credit file.

**Determine Business Name:** As a business owner, you will need to define a unique business name. Conducting local searches as well as using the USPTO's TESS database is a good place to start. Additionally, check your proposed name availability on the CA Secretary of State's website [California Secretary of State](#). Lastly, be sure to conduct a "Google" search for your business name to identify business names that may be in use but have not been registered with regulatory agencies.

**Determine Business Entity:** Corporation, company or partnership filings: If you are considering becoming a corporation (either stock or nonprofit), a limited liability company or a partnership (limited, limited liability or general), you must file with the Secretary of State's Office. **If you choose to open your business as a sole proprietor you do not need to register with the Secretary of State.**

Secretary of State  
Business Programs Divisions  
1500 11<sup>th</sup> St.  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 657-5448

**Confirm Permit/License Requirements:** The best thing you can do before you open your business and preferably during the research phase of your new venture, is to confirm all of the permit and license requirements necessary to maintain compliance with all local, state and national regulations. Do not make assumptions on which permits and licenses apply to your business and which do not. Be sure to receive confirmation from the different regulatory agencies. In addition to a general business license, there may be home occupational, health and safety and regulatory permits that apply specifically to your type of business. A good place to start is with your local city or county office. Contact information is

listed below. Note: If you live in an unincorporated community area of Ventura then you must apply for a county business license.

### Local Permit/License Assistance

Ventura County		
Camarillo	<a href="http://www.ci.camarillo.ca.us">www.ci.camarillo.ca.us</a>	(805) 388-5300
Fillmore	<a href="http://www.fillmoreca.com">www.fillmoreca.com</a>	(805) 524-3701
Moorpark	<a href="http://www.moorparkca.gov">www.moorparkca.gov</a>	(805) 517-6200
Ojai	<a href="http://www.ojaicity.org">www.ojaicity.org</a>	(805) 646-5581
Oxnard	<a href="http://www.oxnard.org">www.oxnard.org</a>	(805) 385-8280
Port Hueneme	<a href="http://www.ci.port-hueneme.ca.us">www.ci.port-hueneme.ca.us</a>	(805) 986-6500
Santa Paula	<a href="http://www.ci.santa-paula.ca.us">www.ci.santa-paula.ca.us</a>	(805) 525-4478
Simi Valley	<a href="http://www.simivalley.org">www.simivalley.org</a>	(805) 583-6700
Ventura	<a href="http://www.cityofventura.ca.gov">www.cityofventura.ca.gov</a>	(805) 654-7800
Thousand Oaks	<a href="http://www.toaks.org">www.toaks.org</a>	(805) 449-2100
County of Ventura	<a href="http://www.ventura.org">www.ventura.org</a>	(805) 654-5000

#### Ventura County

Tax Collector  
Hall of Administration  
800 S. Victoria Ave.  
Ventura, CA 93009  
(805) 654-3744

**Additional Regulatory Licenses:** Approximately 250 different types of businesses require regulatory licenses. Examples are massage parlors and kiosk-type businesses. Contact the Sheriff's Department for information:

Ventura County Sheriff's Department - Licensing  
800 S. Victoria Ave.  
Ventura, CA 93009  
(805) 654-2371

**Local, State and Federal Permit Assistance Resources: For additional assistance contact the agencies below.**

- CalGold provides businesses with permit information on the city, county, state and federal level. Learn more at [www.calgold.ca.gov](http://www.calgold.ca.gov).
- The California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development offers comprehensive permit and regulatory compliance assistance to all businesses in California, helping business owners identify the permits needed to start a new business or expand an existing one. Learn more at [GO BIZ](#).

**Apply for a Fictitious Business Name:** If you plan to conduct business in a name other than your surname or the business has more than one owner you must file a DBA or "Doing Business As" name and publish it in a newspaper. You must run an ad in a major newspaper within 30 days of filing, once a week for four weeks. A list of approved publications will be provided to you at the time of filing. Proof of the run must be submitted within 30 days of the final run to the County Clerk's Office.

County Clerk Recorder Hall of Administration, Lower Plaza  
800 S. Victoria Ave.  
Ventura, CA 93009  
(805) 654-2263

**File Your Fictitious Business Name:** The Clerk's office has a list of approved publications that can be used. Locally, the most reasonable option is to advertise with the Santa Paula Times and the Santa Barbara Independent.

**Register with the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration:** Most cities require proof of registration with the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration before they issue a business license. This state agency is the governing body for sales and use tax and issues Seller's Permits. Any business that sells tangible personal property needs to obtain a State resale permit tax number from the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (formerly the BOE). To determine if your business requires such a permit, you may first contact them by telephone. Be sure to check with the department below to determine if sales or use tax is applicable to your product or service and do not make assumptions that sales and use tax is not applicable to your business's product or service. Learn more at [CDTFA](#).

California Department of Tax and Fee Administration  
4820 McGrath St., Ste. 270  
Ventura, CA 93003  
(800) 852-5711

**Apply For Your Business License:** Now that you have completed the steps above you can contact the city that you will be conducting business in to apply for your business license. All cities require a business license in order to operate. Visit your City Hall in person or online to obtain an application. At the time of filing the application, a fee must be paid and varies depending on the size and type of business. The license must be posted in plain sight at your place of business and must be renewed annually.

## TAXES AND BUSINESS CREDIT

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### LOCAL TAXES

Anyone conducting business of any kind in the unincorporated area of Ventura County must apply for a Business Tax Certificate. **Note: Business personal property tax may also apply to your business. Be sure to check with your local assessor's office to remain in compliance.**

Ventura County Tax Collector-Business Tax Bureau  
(Business License Division)  
800 S. Victoria Ave.  
Ventura, CA 93009  
(805) 654-2181

### STATE TAXES

**California Tax Service Center:** For more help understanding which state taxes may be applicable to your business contact the California Tax Service Center. The California Tax Service Center works to provide one-stop tax help through taxpayer resources and educational programs. Learn more at [California Tax Service Center](#).

**Register with the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration: If you have skipped this step as listed above and have not registered or contacted the CA Dept. of Tax and Fee Administration, make sure you register.** Any business that sells tangible personal property must obtain a State resale permit tax number from the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (formerly the BOE). To determine if your business requires such a permit, you may first contact them by telephone. Be sure to check with the department below to determine if sales or use tax is applicable to your product or service and do not make assumptions that sales and use tax is not applicable to your business's product or service. Learn more at [CDTFA](#).

California Department of Tax and Fee Administration  
4820 McGrath St., Ste. 270  
Ventura, CA 93003  
(800) 852-5711

**Obtain an FEIN:** Employer Identification Number (referred to as FEIN)--Must be obtained for tax purposes through the IRS by filing form SS-4. You can apply for an FEIN number online through the IRS. There is no deadline for filing Form SS-4; however to avoid substantial confusion, file your Form SS-4 early. If an income tax form is filed without an FEIN, the IRS will assign one. It is not uncommon for the IRS to assign more than one FEIN to a business, which can result in notices for delinquent tax returns that have been filed using a second FEIN. Apply at [IRS FEIN Number](#).

### Obtain a Dun & Bradstreet Number

Getting a Dun & Bradstreet D-U-N-S® Number for your business is the first step in establishing your business credit file. If you are already in business, you can call 1-888-814-1435 or visit [Dun & Bradstreet](#).

## **BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS**

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Ventura County have a number of organizations that offer start-up and ongoing assistance to local business owners with many of the services free of charge.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE'S SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER (EDC SBDC):**

The EDC SBDC's mission is to strengthen existing business entities, and assist start-ups through high-quality, no-cost counseling, high-quality, affordable training programs and access to capital. Learn more at [www.edcollaborative.com](http://www.edcollaborative.com).

4001 Mission Oaks Blvd, Suite A-1  
Camarillo, CA 93012  
(805) 409-9159

**WOMEN'S ECONOMIC VENTURES (WEV):** WEV programs combine classroom training, capital and individual technical assistance to support the small business entrepreneur through start-up, stabilization and growth phases. Most services are provided in Spanish and English. Learn more at <http://www.wevonline.org/>.

333 S. Salinas St.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93103  
(805) 965-6073

**SCORE-** SCORE offers a variety of mentoring and workshop training for business leaders and entrepreneurs. Learn more at <https://ventura.score.org/>.

400 E. Esplanade Drive  
Oxnard, CA 93030  
(805) 204-6022

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION**

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**LINKEDIN LEARNING:** Formerly Lynda.com, LinkedIn Learning offers the most in-demand business, tech and creative skill and learning resources from industry experts. Free access is available through the Camarillo Public Library. Learn more at <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/me>.

**SANTA BARBARA CITY COLLEGE CENTER FOR LIFELONG LEARNING (SBCCLL):** The Center for Lifelong Learning hosts a variety of fee-based craft and lifestyle classes at three locations in Santa Barbara. Learn more at <http://www.sbcc.edu/cll/>.

**VENTURA ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION (VACE):** Ventura Adult and Continuing Education prepares diverse learners with academic, vocational and technological competencies for the 21st century global workforce through a variety of craft and lifestyle classes. Learn more at <http://www.vace.com/>.

**CREATIVE LIVE:** Creative Live hosts online creative classes taught by industry leaders worldwide. Creative Live is one of the best resources available for ongoing training in creative arts. Learn more at <https://www.creativelive.com/>.