

10 STEPS TO STARTING A BUSINESS



Looking to start your own business in Carlsbad?

There are several necessary steps to starting a business. The steps may vary depending on the type of business you intend to launch. Following the steps below will give you a general idea and help the process run smoothly.

We are here to help you! Reach out to our Small Business Liaison at business@carlsbadca.gov with your business questions or fill out our business [questionnaire](#) to receive information directly to your email.

Step 1. Creating a Business Plan

Creating a business plan is critical to building a successful business. [San Diego & Imperial SBDC](#), [SBA Business Planning Guide](#), and [SCALE](#) offer a multitude of resources to help with the planning process.

Step 2. Choosing a Business Structure

Select a legal structure that best fits your business needs. Sole proprietorships do not require business entity filing with the state, but LLCs, corporations, and partnerships must register with the [California State of Secretary](#). Check [SBA Business Structure Guide](#) for more information on the different types of business structure.

Step 3. Registering a Business Name

If your business does not include your surname, you will need to file a [Fictitious Business Name \(FBN\)](#) with the County of San Diego. Learn more and file at the [San Diego County Clerk's Office](#).

Step 4. Obtaining a Business License

To operate any business in Carlsbad, you must have a business license. You can apply through the [Finance Department – Business License](#) page and find out about the [required information](#) needed.

Step 5. Business Location & Permit

Before leasing or purchasing a space, verify that your business type is allowed in your chosen location. Use the [Carlsbad Zoning Map](#) and email planning@carlsbadca.gov for guidance. Staff will notify you if any additional land use or building permits may be required prior to occupying or renovate the space.

Step 6. Financial Readiness & Funding

If your business requires funding beyond friends and family, securing funding for your small business can be complex. Some options include [SBA Loans](#), [CDC Loans](#), along with [investment companies](#) and [venture capitalist](#) looking to invest in small businesses.

Step 7. Hiring & Workforce Considerations

Understand employer responsibilities, including payroll taxes, employee benefits, and labor laws. Learn how to [hire and manage employees](#), review the [state employer requirements](#), and feel free to check out [Carlsbad Life in Action: Workforce Resources](#).

Step 8. Understanding Taxes & Employer Obligations

Register for an [Employer Identification Number](#) with the IRS or any other necessary tax IDs. Check out these Business Tax Guides outlined by the [IRS](#) and [CA Secretary of State](#) to understand state and federal tax requirements.

Step 9. Ongoing Business Support & Networking

Utilize local resources for business support, mentoring, and networking opportunities such as [San Diego & Imperial SBDC](#), [Small Business Center Network](#), and [SD Workforce Partnership](#). For Networking, look at local business organizations or trade organizations, like the [Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce](#), [Carlsbad Village Association](#), and others.

Step 10. Ongoing Compliance & Growth

Stay informed on business regulations, licensing renewals, and growth opportunities. For any questions, contact Carlsbad Economic Development at business@carlsbadca.gov. For additional details, visit the [City of Carlsbad Business Resources Page](#).