



What to Do After Forming Your LLC



You filed your Articles of Organization and started your LLC—now what? Here are the most important next steps to ensuring your business is successful.

1 Understand Your Ongoing LLC Filing Requirements

Each state requires different forms, such as your business [annual reports](#) and state franchise tax reports, to be filed at different times. Failure to file these reports can lead to the company being revoked or administrative [business dissolution](#). Incfile includes lifetime company alerts with courtesy email reminders to inform clients of an upcoming filing requirement with all of our state filing packages—or you can [research filing times yourself](#).

2 Protect Your Business Name with a Trademark

A trademark is an essential asset for your business because it protects the brand name and identity that you worked so hard to create. When you secure a federal trademark for your business brand, it gives you exclusive rights to use your business name, logo or slogan once the trademark is approved. Federal Trademark Protection also prevents other businesses from using your brand name and brand identity. Incfile is happy to help with conducting a trademark name search on your business name. Our partnered attorneys will do the research to make sure the mark isn't already taken, ensure the filing is properly prepared and submitted to the government office, and provide sound legal advice throughout the entire process.

Benefits of [Incfile's Trademark service](#) include:

- Legal counsel from an experienced trademark attorney
- A thorough search of existing trademarks
- A registered trademark with the USPTO
- Handling all correspondence with the USPTO until the name is approved.

3 Set up Finances & Accounting for Your LLC

Once you form your LLC, there are important next steps to ensure your business finances and accounting are organized for tax season and peace of mind, and that your personal and business finances are kept separate to ensure safety of your personal assets. With the right accounting steps, your business will run smoothly and be set up for increased profits and success.

Choose a Bank

The right business checking account for your business should have minimum fees, so that your money goes into the business or your own checking account instead of spending on hidden, tricky bank fees. [According to NerdWallet](#) — who looked at the 10 biggest banks in the U.S. and some additional online banks — these are the best four free business checking accounts for your LLC:

Best Free Business Checking Accounts	
U.S Bank Silver Business	Allows 150 transactions a month for free. Has 3,000 bank branches in addition to online banking.
Capital One Spark Business	Online banking with no monthly limit on transactions.
Well Fargo Business Choise	Make 10 debit transactions a month and the \$14 monthly free is waived. Offers a total of 200 free monthly transactions and no charge for the first \$7,500 in cash deposits each month.
Bank of Internet Federal Bank Basic Business	Online-only bank that offers 200 free transactions a month and unlimited fee reimbursement for ATMs in the US.

Separate Business & Personal Expenses

Once you form your LLC, it's important to keep your business and personal assets separate to protect your personal assets from liability. It also makes tax season a whole lot easier when you have one clear account with all your business expenses, instead of all expenses mixed up within two accounts that need to be sorted. Once you choose a business checking account for your LLC, make sure you receive a business checking card or apply for a business credit card that you can use for all business expenses. You can also use a tool like [Expensify](#) to track and tag business expenses from your mobile phone.

Set Up Accounting Software

Choosing the right accounting software will allow you to track your accounts receivable — the money that is flowing in and out of your business. Accounting software will allow you to track bills, invoices, expenses and customers. This is also another important step in simplifying your year-end tax burden. With a clear, separate business checking account and card and an organized accounting software system, you'll (barely) dread tax season as a business owner.

Here are some favorite accounting software options for LLC business owners:

QuickBooks: This is a top option for a lot of business owners and starts out at only \$10 a month. You can automatically import banking transactions, track your customers and vendors and related bills and expenses, and integrate with a lot of other online finance tools. If you hire an accountant or tax support, they will all likely support QuickBooks. You can even use an online version in addition to a desktop version of their software. The drawback is that the learning curve for QuickBooks can sometimes be a bit steep.

Xero: Xero is online accounting software that is a great option for those who find QuickBooks to be too complicated and difficult to understand. Their plans start out at \$20 per month.

FreshBooks: Freshbooks is online accounting software that allows you to also track your time, expenses, collaborate on projects and view accounting reports. One drawback is that it doesn't currently have a way to track invoices that your business needs to pay. But, accounts start out at \$15 per month.

Bench: Bench not only allows you to track your accounts receivable, but they include the help of a real-life bookkeeper to run your accounting every month. For a Bench account starting out at \$125 a month, this is quite the deal instead of hiring your own bookkeeper.

Determine How You'll Accept Credit Cards

If you use QuickBooks or Freshbooks, you'll be able to accept credit cards to pay for invoices. If you have a brick and mortar location for your small business, you want to look into offering payments through a service such as [Shopify](#) or [Square](#).

Look Into Business Funding Options

In case your business runs out of cash flow, you want to have a backup option so your business doesn't go under. You can raise capital from investors, ask friends or family for loans, get a business credit card, take an online business loan, or look into government financing using the [SBA & BusinessUSA's financing tools](#). Also, it's important to remember that you can also bootstrap your business — which means, only using the funds you have in your bank account and not expanding until you get more business income.

Build a Business Website

Having a great online presence for your business is the number one way people will find you. You need to start with buying a domain name using a service such as [Web.com](#). Then you need to choose a service to host your website such as [Snapweb](#). Finally, design your website using a tool such as SquareSpace or WordPress. Make sure your website includes important business information such as how to contact you and business hours.

Choose a Virtual Phone System

Your business needs a phone number so that your customers, employees and vendors can reach you. A great option is to look into a tool such as [Grasshopper](#), which allows you to get a business phone that actually forwards to your cell phone, so you never miss an important call.

Design a Business Logo

A logo will reflect your business branding everywhere your customers interact with you — on your website, on your invoices, in your email signature, on business cards and more. Instead of trying to design a logo yourself, try a logo making service such as [99 Designs](#) or buy some really high-quality pre-made logos you can customize on [CreativeMarket](#).

Get Business Cards Created

Once you have a logo, create nice looking business cards that you can hand out when you're out networking or even running errands. You never know when a conversation about your business will come up, and you want to be able to give someone a place to research your business and contact you. A great tool to create inexpensive business cards is [Vistaprint](#).

Choose the Best Business Tools to Run Your LLC

In addition to accounting software, there is a number of online business software options that will lift a number of menial tasks and burdens off your full business-owner plate. Below are important business functions for your LLC and what we think are the best business tools for your LLC.

- **Project Management:** Asana, Basecamp, Trello
- **Productivity:** Todoist, Evernote
- **Collaboration:** Google Docs, Dropbox, Box
- **Social Media Management:** Hootsuite, Buffer, Sprout Social, BuzzSumo
- **Communication:** Skype, Grasshopper, Slack, Yammer
- **Email Marketing:** MailChimp, CampaignMonitor
- **Advertising:** Google AdWords, Bing Ads
- **Marketing Automation:** HubSpot, Hatchback
- **Customer Relationship Management (CRM):** Salesforce, Insightly, Zoho CRM
- **Customer Support:** ZenDesk, GetSatisfaction, SurveyMonkey
- **Human Resources:** Gusto, Hire Athena
- **Legal:** DocuSign, RightSignature
- **Ecommerce:** Shopify, Recurly, Vendio, Square
- **Website Development:** SnapWeb, Squarespace, WordPress, Jira
- **Analytics:** Google Analytics, SumAll
- **SEO:** SemRush, KWFinder, AHREFS, Moz
- **Hiring:** ZipRecruiter, Plum

Get a “Start a Business Checklist” to Follow

If you want to track your progress in getting your new business set up properly, we have a great virtual [Start a Business Checklist](#) that includes everything you need to do to launch your business. It even features downloadable PDFs you can access to download and print.