



## The 10 steps to starting a business in Carthage, Missouri

1. **Pick a Name** Your first step is to come up with a name for your new business. Some things to consider are:
  - a. **Is the name available in Missouri?** Run a search here. <https://bsd.sos.mo.gov/BusinessEntity/BESearch.aspx?SearchType=0> Be careful! This just shows if the name is taken in Missouri, if you have a reason to be concerned with trademarks, you need to consult a lawyer.
  - b. **Does the name explain what you do or make it easy for people to find you?**
  - c. **Is this a name you will be happy with for a long time?**
  - d. **Is there a website and e-mail extension available that go with that name?** A great place to start your search is here <https://www.godaddy.com/domains/domain-name-search>
2. **Choose an Entity Type** <https://www.sba.gov/starting-business/choose-your-business-structure> is a good primer, but I strongly suggest you discuss your plans and the details of your business with an expert before making this important decision.
3. **Form Your Entity**—You have to create an account with the state of Missouri here: <https://bsd.sos.mo.gov/loginwelcome.aspx?lobID=1> Then once you are logged in, select “Business Entity Online Filing” on the left.
  - a. Sole proprietors don’t have to do anything
  - b. Partnerships talk to a lawyer about an operating agreement (don’t skimp on this—whether you are wildly successful or the business fails, the boring details here are really important to understand before you get started)
  - c. Corporation
  - d. Limited Liability Company
4. **Get an EIN** <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>
5. **Get a Certificate of Occupancy** call Public Works at 417-237-7010. They will come and look at your space to make sure everything is safe. Even if you are renting a space and you aren’t doing any renovations, you still generally need this. Call them to make sure.
6. **Obtain a Carthage Business License** Call 417-237-7000, e-mail Jaclyn Scott at [j.scott@carthagemo.gov](mailto:j.scott@carthagemo.gov), or go in person to Carthage City Hall at 326 Grant Street (around the middle of the east side of the Carthage Square). This license costs \$50 for up to \$100,000 in

- gross sales, \$100 for up to \$300,000 in gross sales, \$200 for up to \$500,000 in gross sales, and \$400 for up to \$1,000,000 in gross sales. They accept payment by cash, check, or credit card.
- 7. **Apply for a Sales Tax License** If you are selling things that are subject to sales tax, you need to get a sales tax license.
  - 8. **Understand Rules About Signage** If you are going to have signs outside your business, call Public Works and get it approved before you order anything. Their phone number is 417-237-7010.
  - 9. **Apply for a Liquor License** This is a complicated process. Talk to a friend who has been through it several times—call Neely Myers at the Chamber of Commerce at 358-2373 or e-mail her at [nmyers@carthagechamber.com](mailto:nmyers@carthagechamber.com)
  - 10. **Get a License from the Health Department** If your business serves food, contact the Jasper County Health Department by calling 417-358-3111 or visit their office at 105 Lincoln St in Carthage.