



# Cook County Department of Revenue General Business License Unit

## THREE STEPS TO OBTAIN A GENERAL BUSINESS LICENSE

**1. Determine the Legal Entity for Your Business:** One size does not fit all, so choose the legal entity that best suits your needs. Please consult your lawyer on which legal entity best fits your business needs. You may operate as a sole proprietor or a legal entity. If you plan to do business as a legal entity in Illinois, you will need to be registered with the Illinois Secretary of State. If you are not registered, you can file a new corporation, LLC or Limited Partnership with the Illinois Secretary of the State by mail or in person at **69 W. Washington, Chicago, IL 60602, Suite 1240** or online at [www.sos.state.il.us](http://www.sos.state.il.us). For more details please call Illinois Secretary of State at **312-793-3380**.

**2. Register with the Appropriate Government Branch Section:** Obtain an Illinois Business Tax Number (IBT): If you hire employees, buy or sell products wholesale or retail, or manufacture goods, you will need an Illinois Business Tax (IBT) number. If you do not have an IBT number you may apply for one at the Illinois Department of Revenue by mail or in person at **100 W. Randolph, Chicago, IL 60601** or online at [www.revenue.state.il.us](http://www.revenue.state.il.us). For more details please call Illinois Department of Revenue at **1-800-732-8866**.

**Obtaining a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN):** Obtain a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN): A Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) is also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number, and is used to identify a business entity. If you operate your business as a "C" corporation or an LLC, you are required to obtain an FEIN to file and pay any federal tax obligation. If you do not have an FEIN you may apply for one at the United States Internal Revenue Service by mail or in person at **230 S. Dearborn, Chicago, IL 60604**, or online at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). For more details, please call the United States Internal Revenue Service at **1-800-829-4933**.

**Obtaining an Assumed Name Certificate- For Sole Proprietors Only:** Sole proprietors or partnerships conducting business in Illinois under an assumed name (a name other than your own) are required to file for an Assumed Name Certificate with Cook County by mail or person at **50 W. Washington, East Concourse Lower Level, Chicago, IL 60602** or online at [www.cookctyclerk.com](http://www.cookctyclerk.com). For more details, please call the Cook County Clerk's Office at **312-603-5652**.

**3. Applying for a Cook County General Business License:** Every business operating in the unincorporated area of Cook County requires a General Business License (GBL) unless exempted by the County General Business License Ordinance.

### Applicants must have the following information to complete a General Business License application:

- Name, residence address and social security number of every owner or any individual who owns 5 percent or more interest in the business.
- The exact business address and PIN number of the property where the business is located.
- A description of the business activity.
- State of Illinois Business Tax Number (IBT).
- Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN).
- Assumed Name Certificate number if operating as a Sole Proprietor.
- Any other documentation required by the Cook County Director of Revenue or his designee in accordance with their procedures. Please see the GBL application for the full list of applicable information required.

**Zoning:** Zoning: Applications for a business license will be reviewed by the Building and Zoning Department to determine if the business activity is permitted in the zoning designation of your business location.

**Application Fees:** The license fee for a GBL is \$40.00 for a 2 year license.

**Getting Started:** Applications are currently being accepted online only, please visit:

[www.cookcountygov.com/gbl](http://www.cookcountygov.com/gbl)

**Cook County Department of Revenue**

118 N. Clark St. Room 1160, Chicago, IL 60602

312-603-6780 and press option 6