

9 Essential Steps to Starting a Business in Liberal

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1 Obtain Basic Information

Prior to starting a business, entrepreneurs can diminish risks and increase the chance of success with planning and preparation. A host of resources are available for entrepreneurs seeking general information.

The Liberal Memorial Library provides considerable resource materials for entrepreneurs, such as information on market research and how-to books for a variety of businesses and industries.

Liberal Memorial Library
519 N. Kansas Ave.
Liberal, KS 67901
www.lmlibrary.org
(620) 626-0180

The State of Kansas has some excellent resources to explain the steps most business owners will need to take when starting or expanding a business in Kansas at www.kansas.gov/business/.

If you are already a business owner and want to find out about your legal requirements, visit www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business/managing-business/business-law-regulations.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has created a series of online resources for entrepreneurs. The Small Business Resource Guide includes pages of ideas, references and suggestions covering issues related to starting a business and provides a listing of financing options available through SBA. For a PDF version of the resource guide, visit www.smallbusiness3.com/pdf/english/kansas.pdf.

SBA Wichita District Office
271 W 3rd St, N Suite 2500
Wichita, Kansas
(316) 269-6616

2 Develop a Business Plan

What is a business plan?

A business plan is any plan that works for a business to look ahead, allocate resources, focus on key points and prepare for problems and opportunities. Unfortunately, many people think of business plans only for starting a new business or applying for business loans. But they are also vital for running a business, whether or not the business needs new loans or new investments. Businesses need plans to optimize growth and development according to priorities.

What is a startup plan?

A simple startup plan includes a summary, mission statement, keys to success, market analysis and break-even analysis. This kind of plan is good for deciding whether or not to proceed with a business, but it is not enough to run a business.

A business plan articulates what a business is, where it is going and how an entrepreneur wants to take it there. A business plan will likely include a summary, a company description, a marketing plan and an operations plan as well as management and organization information.

A business plan is critical – without a business plan, a business may fail. Most banks require a business plan prior to lending.

The SBA provides information about writing business plans at www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business/starting-business/writing-business-plan/.

3 Select a Location

Selecting the right location involves basic considerations such as proximity to customers and ease of access along with leasing and zoning restrictions. Financial incentives and tax credits offered by your local government may also influence your decision.

The following resources will help you understand some basic legal and regulatory issues you will encounter when selecting a business location, as well as practical advice for choosing right business location.

www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business/starting-business/establishing-business/choosing-location-equipment

www.morebusiness.com/running_your_business/businessbits/finding-location.brc

4 Finance Your Business

A series of local, area and statewide organizations and agencies are available to provide financial assistance to entrepreneurs starting a business.

Liberal area financial institutions

A listing of local banks and credit unions that provide financing for small businesses is available at the Liberal Economic Development Office.

Great Plains Development, Inc.

GPDI is a Kansas not-for-profit corporation formed in 1982. GPDI's service area includes the 28 counties in Southwest Kansas. The resources available through GPDI consist of numerous loan programs under GPDI's decision-making supervision, as well as loan programs GPDI works with but does not control.

GPDI works with other development groups throughout the District to help new and existing businesses and has formed partnerships with many agencies to promote the Kansas economy. Further information regarding GPDI may be found at www.gpdionline.com/.

State of Kansas

The Kansas Small Business Development Center has an excellent website for finding various sources of finance at ksbdc.kansas.gov/Pages/default.aspx.

Small Business Administration

The SBA maintains a website with business and financing resources at www.sba.gov/. You may also contact the Wichita office of the SBA.

SBA Wichita District Office
271 W 3rd St, N Suite 2500
Wichita, KS 67202
(316) 269-6616

Learn about government backed loans, venture capital and loans at www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/loans-grants/.

5 Register Your Business

One of the first decisions a new business owner faces is choosing a structure for the business. Businesses range in size and complexity from a self-employed plumber to a large corporation and can be organized in a variety of ways.

The principal types of business organizations are Sole Proprietorships, General Partnerships, Limited Partnerships, Limited Liability Partnerships, Corporations and Limited Liability Companies. Each structure has certain advantages and disadvantages.

Factors such as taxes, type of business, insurance needs, number of owners and financial needs will determine how the business should be organized. Choosing the appropriate organizational structure for your business is one of the most important decisions to make and may require advice from an attorney, an accountant or another knowledgeable business advisor.

Kansas Secretary of State

If you establish your business as a sole proprietorship or a general partnership, you do not have to register your business with the Kansas Secretary of State. All other types of businesses must be registered. Corporations must file Articles of Incorporation; LLCs must file Articles of Organization; Limited Partnerships must file Certificates of Limited Partnership. Filing is available online. A summary of registration and business renewal requirements as well as registration forms are available at

www.kssos.org/business/business.html.

Business Name

The name used by a business can become a valuable asset. Great care should be taken in selecting and protecting a suitable business name. You should not begin using a business name until you are certain that it is available for use. It is helpful to check telephone, business or trade directories and other sources for business names that are confusingly similar.

A business name can be searched for availability and reserved for 120 days at www.accesskansas.org/businesscenter/.

6 License Your Business

State of Kansas

Depending on the type of business you plan to start, you might be required to obtain a Kansas license or permit. Network Kansas will help you with this process. Created by the Kansas Department of Commerce, the Network Kansas offers comprehensive information and guidance regarding the startup of a new business or expansion of an existing one. This information can be found at www.networkkansas.com/entrepreneurs/licensing-and-permitting.

City of Liberal

Having current and relevant information about local business helps fuel economic development in the City, including the ability to attract more high quality, good paying jobs. The most effective way for a City to gather information about business is through a business license program.

If you conduct any business within the Liberal city limits, you must obtain a City business license. Even if your business office is located elsewhere and you only do business occasionally in Liberal, you still need a City business license. Specific information on obtaining a City business license may be found at <http://www.cityofliberal.org/index/license-instructions.html>.

7 Comply with Federal, State & Local Tax Laws

Businesses are subject to various federal, state and local taxes. While businesses are likely to encounter all of the common taxes listed below, entrepreneurs are encouraged to consult a tax advisor and, depending upon the jurisdiction, relevant statutes.

Federal

Unless you are a not-for-profit, your business will be subject to federal income tax. For further information about federal taxes and tax incentive programs, consult the Tax Information for Businesses Website managed by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) at www.irs.gov/businesses/ or contact the IRS at 1-800-829-4933.

Employers with employees, business partnerships, corporations and other types of organizations must obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS. The EIN is also known as an Federal Tax Identification Number or Form SS-4. For more information or to apply for an EIN, visit www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=98350,00.html.

State of Kansas

If you operate a business which requires the payment of Kansas tax you must register with the Kansas Department of Revenue. Begin the registration process at least 4 weeks prior to the date you start your business. The business tax application contains information for registering twelve different business taxes administered by the Kansas Department of Revenue.

Businesses can register for most taxes at www.accesskansas.org/businesscenter/. This service also provides online registration with the Secretary of State for corporations to do business in Kansas and with the Kansas Department of Labor for unemployment taxes.

Seward County

All businesses in Seward County are required to file a personal property tax affidavit. The Seward County Appraiser's office is responsible for the appraisal of all real estate, both commercial and residential, and the appraisal of all personal property within Seward County. The Seward County Treasurer is tasked with the collection of property taxes in the County. For information, visit www.sewardcountyks.org/index.aspx?nid=185.

8 Additional Support: Technical Assistance & Consulting

Kansas Small Business Development Center
at Seward County Community College/Area Technical School

The primary focus of the KSBDC is on delivering business consulting and management training to small and mid-sized businesses in all of the 105 counties in Kansas. Since its inception in 1983, over 86,000 Kansas entrepreneurs have accessed KSBDC's services.

KSBDC confidential business consulting services are provided at no cost to the client by a network of eight regional and nine outreach centers. Counseling sessions are designed to help clients address start-up issues, marketing, business management, business planning, financing, accounting, strategic planning, human resources, taxes, and much more. Additional information about the Kansas Small Business Development Center may be found at www.swksbdc.com. KSBDC's Liberal Consultant is Mike O'Kane.

KSBDC
2215 N. Kansas Ave.,
Liberal, KS 67905-1137 (620) 417-1955.

Kansas Business Center

If you're thinking about starting a business, the Kansas Business Center is a one-stop-shop for the information and resources you will need in order to do business in Kansas. So, get started. This site will help you look at your financing, licensing, permitting and legal options. Then, when you're up and running, the Kansas Business Center will provide you the resources to help you monitor the annual requirements that ensure your business has the opportunity to thrive. Visit www.kansas.gov/businesscenter/.

8 Additional Support: Technical Assistance & Consulting

Kansas Department of Commerce

As the state's lead economic development agency, the Kansas Department of Commerce strives to empower individuals, businesses and communities to achieve prosperity in Kansas. Visit www.kansascommerce.com/.

Kansas Insurance Department

For questions regarding business insurance, the Kansas Insurance Commissioner has a website at www.ksinsurance.org/consumers/smbusiness.htm.

SBA Wichita District Office

For information on business development training and loan programs, visit www.sba.gov/localresources/district/ks/index.html?cm_sp=ExternalLink_-_Federal_-_SBA.

9 Ensure Compliance with Employer Responsibilities

Additional sets of responsibilities arise when a business hires employees. Employers should consider federal and state regulations. Available online resources include:

The Businesses with Employees website maintained by the IRS
www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=98862,00.html

The US Department of Labor website
www.dol.gov/

The Kansas Department of Labor website for businesses with employees
www.uitax.dol.ks.gov/one.asp