

Checklist for Starting a Business In Fortuna

□ **LOCATION.** Choose a physical address for your business

OK to have a post office box as well, but you will have to have a physical location. Contact the City Planning Department to check the zoning of a location before you sign a lease or buy a building. There is a variety of commercial zones and not all business types can be located in all zones. Be aware that realtors and leasing agents are often unaware or misunderstand zoning regulations.

If you are proposing a home-based business, call the City Planning Department. Not all business types qualify and may require a commercial location.

! If you are a domestic violence survivor concerned about safety, let the SBDC know so we can help you arrange for special privacy consideration.

□ **LEGAL STUFF.** Determine legal structure of business, work through legal issues.

Sole Proprietorship/Partnership/LLC/Corporation/B Corporation

Have legal documents drawn up if necessary (usually for a Partnership Agreement)

Trademarks/Patents/Copyrights/other proprietary information

! SBDC will help you figure out what to ask, but will not provide legal advice. Get a lawyer before you need one.

□ **PLAN.** Create a Business Plan

You increase your chance for success when you take time to first explore and evaluate your business and personal goals. Then use this information to build a comprehensive and well-thought-out business plan that will help you reach these goals. The process of developing one will help you think through some important issues that you may not have considered yet. Your plan will become a valuable tool as you set out to raise money for your business. It should also provide milestones to gauge your success. **The Small Business Development Center** offers business plan workshops throughout the county. You can reach them at (707) 445-9035 or check out our website.

□ **Fictitious Business Name Statement**

Humboldt County Recorder: 825 5th Street 5th Floor Eureka, (707) 445-7593. Under \$100.00 usually. You can pick up the forms or download them from the website: <http://www.humboldt.gov/1991/Fictitious-Business-Name-Statement>. Needed if the company name is different than your own. Required before you can open a business checking account. Filed copy of statement must be published in a local newspaper.



BizNet *Quick answers to small business questions.*

A program of the North Coast Small Business Development Center
www.northcoastsbdc.org/biznet

- ❑ **Business License**, Fortuna City Hall: 707-725-7600 / 621 11th Street

Website: www.fortunabusiness.com

Needed before you reach \$500 per fiscal year in sales. Cost dependent on your business specifics; will range from \$20.00 – \$465 depending on your Yearly Gross Receipts.

- **Permits:** Don't forget permits for signage at your place of business. Check with City of Fortuna Building and Planning Departments before occupying or building in any commercial location. The City department will help you determine if a location is zoned for your business type and help keep any additions legal and safe. Special Events and Fairs require permits.

Business Improvement District Assessment - Paid with Your Business License; Amount of assessment fee depends on business gross sales and location. Call the FBID office for an appointment early in the course of starting your business at 707-725-9261.

- ❑ **Business Bank Account**

ALL business expenses and income go through the business account – not a personal account
Choose a Business Accountant / Set up Basic Bookkeeping Procedures and Accounting Software

- ❑ **“Not My Money” Bank Account** – separate account solely for:

An account for Sales Tax. An account Self Employment Tax / Payroll Tax

- ❑ **Retail Seller's Permit:** 707-576-2100 / www.boe.ca.gov

Needed to buy goods wholesale and needed for most sales in California, and many services

- ❑ Federal Self Employment and income tax: www.irs.gov

- ❑ State Income tax: <http://www.taxes.ca.gov>

- ❑ **If you are an employer:**

Federal Tax ID #, the “Social Security #” for your Business at www.irs.gov

Fill out form SS-4 or go on-line: <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=102767,00.html>

Call toll free (800) 829-4933 or Fax- (215) 516-3990

Employment Development Department (EDD) Registration: an employer is required to file a Registration Form within 15 days after paying more than \$100 in wages to one or more employees:

http://www.edd.ca.gov/Payroll_Taxes/Am_I_Required_to_Register_as_an_Employer.htm#business_sub

Get an “Employer Guide” from the EDD at <http://www.edd.ca.gov/taxind.htm> or call 707-445-6532

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Workers Compensation Insurance – You MUST have it before hiring employees (call your insurance agent or State Fund (707) 443-9721)

Know the difference between employees and contractors, go to www.irs.gov

□ **Business Insurance:**

Comprehensive Liability is a must; Property coverage is necessary for any business assets and inventory, and maybe others such as Auto, Workers Compensation, Umbrella, etc. Ask your insurance agent, or find one via our referral list.

Contacts:

North Coast Small Business Development Center: Business advising and business skills workshops: 445-9720

Small Business Administration: Great site for business information: www.sba.gov

CalGold: A comprehensive listing of every permit you may need: www.calgold.ca.gov

Go Biz: A one-stop shop to start or grow a business in California: www.business.ca.gov/Business-Portal

Humboldt County Website: www.co.humboldt.ca.us

Fortuna Chamber of Commerce: Serving the greater Fortuna area business community and the Eel River Valley. Receive membership information by calling 725-3959 or visiting www.sunnyfortuna.com

Humboldt County Environmental Health: 445-6215

For Business Lenders, please consult or ask for our referral list.

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