



## Federal Employer Identification Number

### Business Structure

When beginning a business, you must decide what form of business entity to establish. The business structure you choose influences everything from day-to-day operations, taxes, and personal liability. You will need to choose a business structure before registering the business with the appropriate federal and state government agencies. The most common forms of business are the sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, and S corporation. The US Small Business Administration provides more information about the more common business structures [here](#). It is highly recommended that you consult with a business counselor ([America's SBDC Iowa](#)), attorney, and/or accountant when deciding the appropriate structure for your business.

Your form of business determines which income tax return form you have to file. A Limited Liability Company (LLC) is a relatively new business structure allowed by state statute. Visit the [Business Structures](#) page to learn more about each type of entity and what forms to file.

### Federal Employer Identification Number

A Federal Employer Identification Number (aka Federal Tax Identification Number) is used by the US Internal Revenue Service to identify a business entity. To determine if you need an EIN, here is a link to learn more - [Do You Need an EIN?](#) If it's determined that you need an EIN for your business, you may apply for one online, by fax, or by mail.

- Online application - [Apply for an Employer Identification Number Online](#). This is a free service offered by the Internal Revenue Service. **Beware of websites on the Internet that charge for this free service.** Once the online application is completed, the information is validated during the online session, and an EIN is issued immediately.
- You can also apply by fax or mail by completing [IRS Form SS-4](#) and faxing it to (855) 641-6935 or mail to Internal Revenue Service, Attn: EIN Operation, Cincinnati, OH 45999.

All EIN applications (mail, fax, electronic) must disclose the name and Taxpayer Identification Number (SSN, ITIN, or EIN) of the true principal officer, general partner, grantor, owner or trustor. This individual or entity, which the IRS will call the "responsible party," controls, manages, or directs the applicant entity and the disposition of its funds and assets. Unless the applicant is a government entity, the responsible party must be an individual (i.e., a natural person), not an entity.