



Not sure where to start? Brock Waterman, Business Consultant with the Southwest Wisconsin SBDC has created a document to help! See below for a quick list of items and links. If you prefer a more in-depth document you can request the Business Startup Packet from the Wisconsin SBDC Business AnswerLine (contact info below).

- 1) The first question is to ask yourself if entrepreneurship or business ownership is for you and your family. It is important to make sure you have the support of your family. It can help to set expectations by establishing financial and time deadlines. For more in-depth information: www.sba.gov/content/entrepreneurship-you
- 2) For those ready to further the SBA has a great list of questions to consider:
www.sba.gov/starting-business/how-start-business/20-questions-starting
- 3) If you want to launch a business you will need to learn about your market and region. You have two options:
 - A) Request "Market and Industry Analysis Resources" document from AnswerLine (contact info below)
 - B) Review article from SBA www.sba.gov/starting-business/how-start-business/understand-your-market
- 4) When you have decided to start your business Southwest Wisconsin SBDC Business Consultant Brock Waterman can help! Before your first phone or in-person session you need to complete and email to Brock either the one-page "Business Information" (available from the AnswerLine) or a first draft of your Business Plan.
- 5) Need help creating pro forma financials (so you can apply for financing)? Brock can help you via a template we use. The process works best if you think about what 3 costs:
 - A) Startup costs (what you need to get business open)
 - B) Fixed costs (bills you will have to pay each month)
 - C) Variable costs (costs associated with each sale, service provided, and/or product sold)
- 6) Before filing documents decide on a business name. Use your past research to inform your decision and check:
 - Wisconsin to make sure it is not used (www.wdfi.org/apps/CorpSearch/Search.aspx)
 - The trademarks and/or service marks database if you want a national brand (www.uspto.gov)
 - Website domain names (www.godaddy.com/domains/domain-name-search.aspx?countryview=1)
 - Google via several search queries to see what else is out there and how stiff the competition is
 - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Yelp and other social media platforms for name availability
- 7) Ready to start the business? If you are forming an LLC or Corporation you will likely have to do the following 5 items:
 - A) To form a LLC or Corporation in Wisconsin do this at: www.wdfi.org/apps/CorpFormation/
 - B) The online FEIN (Federal Employer Identification Number) application which issues the number immediately is done at: www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=102767,00.html
 - C) Business Registration (WI Tax) - Department of Revenue at: www.revenue.wi.gov/fags/pcs/btr.html
 - D) Wisconsin Seller's Permit/Sales Tax at: www.revenue.wi.gov/DORForms/btr-101.pdf
 - E) Setup a bank/credit union account and credit card and keep finances separate from personal accounts
- 8) Get insurance see *Consumer's Guide to Insurance for Small Business Owners* (oci.wi.gov/pub_list/pi-085.pdf)