# STEP-BY-STEP
# STARTING A SMALL BUSINESS CHECKLIST

415–951–3830 | www.joinhomebase.com

**Congrats! Downloading this checklist was the first step.**
Now you can use this list to help track and complete your to-do's before officially opening the doors to your new business.

## The basics

**Start here!** These are the first steps you'll want to take as you start your small business.

- [ ] **Come up with a business idea**
- [ ] **Conduct market research**
- [ ] **Write a business plan**
- [ ] **Secure funding**
- [ ] **Pick a business location**

## Legal and financial stuff

**Even small business need to follow the rules.** Here are some tasks that'll help you tackle taxes and other legal requirements for your business.

- [ ] **Choose a business structure**
  Choose one based on your business goals and needs.
  - [ ] Sole proprietorship (owned by just you)
  - [ ] Partnership (owned by your and other individuals)
  - [ ] Limited liability companies (LLC)

☐ **Choose a business name**

☐ **Register your business**

    ☐ Federal registration

    ☐ State registration

✳ Note: registration requirements vary from state to state.

☐ **Secure tax IDs**

    ☐ Federal tax ID (also known as EIN)

    ☐ State tax ID (if needed)

☐ **Apply for licenses and permits**

✳ Note: required licenses and permits can vary depending on your business activities and business location.

☐ **Open a business bank account**

☐ **Choose your payment methods**

    ☐ Cash

    ☐ Credit card

    ☐ Debit

☐ **Set up payment, invoicing, and accounting software**

    ☐ Payment processing, invoicing, or POS system

    ☐ Accounting software

☐ **Establish your record-keeping process**

# Operations and management

Here are the things that'll help you manage the day-to-day operations of your new small business.

☐ **Hire employees** (if needed)

☐ **Set up payroll**

☐ **Get business insurance**

☐ **Create your employee policies and handbook**

☐ **Purchase and license must-have tools**

    ☐ Employee scheduling and management software

    ☐ Payroll management platform

    ☐ Team communication app

☐ **Market your business**

## 3. Business vehicle or business use of car tax deduction

- [ ] Fuel
- [ ] Maintenance (inspections, parts, repairs)
- [ ] Ownership (registration, insurance)
- [ ] [insert custom line item]
- [ ] [insert custom line item]
- [ ] [insert custom line item]

## 4. Office space

- [ ] Office or desk rental fees
- [ ] Security deposit
- [ ] Lease cancellation fee
- [ ] [insert custom line item]
- [ ] [insert custom line item]
- [ ] [insert custom line item]

## 5. Charitable donations

- [ ] Charitable donations (cash or in-kind)
- [ ] [insert custom line item]
- [ ] [insert custom line item]
- [ ] [insert custom line item]

## 6. Office supplies

☐ Office supplies (pens, paper, notebooks)

☐ Office furniture (chairs, desks, filing cabinets)

☐ Computer software

☐ Electronics (computers, tablets, phones)

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

## 7. Depreciation

☐ Real estate (if you own commercial real estate for your business)

☐ Machinery

☐ Business use vehicles

☐ Office furniture and appliances

☐ Computers and other electronic equipment

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

## 8. Legal and professional fees

☐ Lawyer

☐ Bookkeeper

☐ Tax professional

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

## 9. Advertising and marketing

- ☐ Branding (eg., logo design, uniforms, vehicle wraps, swag)
- ☐ Website design and maintenance
- ☐ Business cards, door hangers, brochures
- ☐ Ad space (eg., Google, Facebook, TV, radio, newspapers, billboards)
- ☐ Holiday cards and thank-you notes
- ☐ Event sponsorship
- ☐ Stock images, video, audio
- ☐ [insert custom line item]
- ☐ [insert custom line item]
- ☐ [insert custom line item]

## 10. Employee wages and benefits

- ☐ Salaries and wages
- ☐ Employee bonuses
- ☐ Commissions
- ☐ Benefits
- ☐ Sick days
- ☐ Vacation time
- ☐ [insert custom line item]
- ☐ [insert custom line item]
- ☐ [insert custom line item]

## 11. Bad debts

- ☐ Unpaid invoices
- ☐ Unpaid employee loans or advances
- ☐ Vendor loans and lines of credit
- ☐ Customer loans and lines of credit
- ☐ [insert custom line item]
- ☐ [insert custom line item]
- ☐ [insert custom line item]

## 12. Education and training

- ☐ Certification for a skill or technique
- ☐ Classes, seminars, webinars, workshops
- ☐ Industry-specific books, magazines, journals
- ☐ Membership fees (professional organizations, chambers of commerce)
- ☐ Transportation to and from educational facility
- ☐ [insert custom line item]
- ☐ [insert custom line item]

## 13. Insurance premiums

- ☐ Health insurance
- ☐ Workers' compensation insurance
- ☐ Life insurance
- ☐ Liability insurance
- ☐ Unemployment insurance
- ☐ [insert custom line item]
- ☐ [insert custom line item]

## 14. Interest on business loans and credit cards

☐ Business loan interest

☐ Credit card fees and interest

☐ Line of credit fees and interest

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

## 15. Business meals

☐ Business meetings with customers

☐ Meals during business travel

☐ Employee parties and celebrations

☐ On-the-clock-meals

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

## 16. Telephone and internet expenses

☐ Phone bill

☐ Device payment

☐ Internet bill

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

## 17. Inventory

- ☐ Raw materials
- ☐ Shipping
- ☐ Storage
- ☐ Overhead
- ☐ Cost of labor
- ☐ [insert custom line item]
- ☐ [insert custom line item]
- ☐ [insert custom line item]

## 18. Banking fees

- ☐ Business checking and savings account fees
- ☐ Overdraft fees
- ☐ Wire transfer fees
- ☐ [insert custom line item]
- ☐ [insert custom line item]
- ☐ [insert custom line item]

## 19. Independent contractors

- ☐ Independent contractor fees
- ☐ Freelancer fees
- ☐ [insert custom line item]
- ☐ [insert custom line item]
- ☐ [insert custom line item]

## 20. Retirement plan contributions

☐ Roth IRA

☐ Traditional IRA

☐ Keogh plan

☐ Solo 401 (k)

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

## 21. Business travel

☐ Vehicle fare (plane, train, bus, subway, taxi, rideshare)

☐ Vehicle costs (rental, fuel, mileage, parking, tolls)

☐ Accommodations (hotel, motel)

☐ Laundry, dry cleaning

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]

☐ [insert custom line item]