

How to Form an LLC in California Yourself (2026 Costs and Steps)

A free step-by-step guide from BusinessOwner.com. State information verified from official sources on September 15, 2026.

Quick answer

The cost to file an LLC in California is \$70. You can file the Articles of Organization with the [California Secretary of State, Business Entities](#). As of September 15, 2026, the Secretary of State was reviewing online LLC formation requests received 09/10/2026.

Step 1: Check that your LLC name is available

Search the California Secretary of State's business name records to ensure your desired name is available before filing.

Step 2: Choose a registered agent

You may choose an individual who resides in California or a registered corporate agent as your agent for service of process. The business entity itself cannot be its own agent. The individual agent's name and physical street address become public record.

Step 3: File your Articles of Organization (Formation - Articles of Organization, filed online in bizfile Online)

File the Articles of Organization online through the Secretary of State's bizfile Online portal. The filing fee is \$70. This is the total state cost to file online. You may also pay an additional fee for expedited processing if needed:

- **24-Hour Filing Service (Class C):** \$350. Available online; filing response guaranteed within 24 hours, excluding weekends and holidays.
- **Same Day Filing Service (Class B):** \$750. Available online; document must be received by 9:30 a.m., response by 4:00 p.m. the same day.

Step 4: Create an operating agreement

Create an operating agreement that covers ownership, roles, voting procedures, and what happens if a member leaves.

Step 5: Get your EIN from the IRS

Get your Employer Identification Number for free from the IRS at <https://www.irs.gov/ein>.

Step 6: Keep your LLC in good standing

File a Statement of Information with the Secretary of State. The initial report is due within 90 days of initial registration and costs \$20. Subsequent reports are due every two years after the initial filing, in the month of registration (even or odd years based on the year of registration), and also cost \$20. All Statement of Information filings are online only. You must file a new one when your agent for service of process resigns or is no longer valid.

You must pay an LLC Annual Tax to the California Franchise Tax Board. The amount is \$800, regardless of profit. This tax is due on or before the 15th day of the 4th month after the beginning of the taxable year. A separate LLC fee (based on total income) is due by the 15th day of the 6th month of the taxable year for LLCs that owe it.

Frequently asked questions

Can I file my Articles of Organization by mail?

No, domestic LLC Articles of Organization are filed online only.

How much does it cost to file an LLC in California?

The filing fee is \$70. This is the total state cost to file online.

When is the Statement of Information due?

The initial Statement of Information is due within 90 days of initial registration. After that, it is due every two years in the month of registration.

Is there an annual tax for LLCs in California?

Yes. There is an \$800 annual tax regardless of profit, due on or before the 15th day of the 4th month after the beginning of the taxable year. A separate LLC fee based on total income may also apply.

Can I be my own registered agent?

You can be your own registered agent if you are an individual who resides in California. The business entity itself cannot be its own agent.

Want us to file it for you? \$249 plus state fees.

Want the whole business set up? Book a call with BusinessOwner.com.

Sources

Official sources, last verified September 15, 2026:

- bizfileonline.sos.ca.gov
<https://bizfileonline.sos.ca.gov/>
- [Forms, Samples and Fees :: California Secretary of State](https://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/forms)
<https://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/forms>
- [Limited Liability Companies - California \(Domestic\) :: California Secretary of State](https://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/forms/limited-liability-companies-california-domestic)
<https://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/forms/limited-liability-companies-california-domestic>
- [Limited Liability Companies - Statement of Information :: California Secretary of State](https://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/forms/limited-liability-companies-statement-information)
<https://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/forms/limited-liability-companies-statement-information>
- [Service Options :: California Secretary of State](https://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/service-options)
<https://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/service-options>
- [Current Processing Dates :: California Secretary of State](https://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/processing-dates/)
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- [Frequently Asked Questions :: California Secretary of State](https://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/faqs)
<https://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/faqs>
- [Web Pay | LLC Payment Types | California Franchise Tax Board](https://webapp.ftb.ca.gov/webpay/help/llc)
<https://webapp.ftb.ca.gov/webpay/help/llc>
- [IRS: Get an employer identification number](https://www.irs.gov/ein)
<https://www.irs.gov/ein>

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