



Starting a Non-Profit Organization Checklist

1. Define your mission and identify who you intend to serve.
2. Determine your core activities and assess whether they are consistent with a 501(c)3 organization.
3. Define your funding strategy and ensure it provides for sustainability.
4. Identify what needs you are serving and evaluate whether your needs are best served through a new non-profit, a partnership with an existing partnership or a fiscal sponsorship arrangement.
5. Decide on a business name and check availability of this name. Register the name.
6. Choose director for your non-profit corporation. In California you must have 3 directors.
7. Draft governing documents (articles of incorporation, by laws, conflict of interest policy). These documents serve as manuals on how to run your non-profit.
8. File Articles of Incorporation with your state's Secretary of State.
9. Draft your application for tax-exemption.
10. Hold board meeting to ratify application and governing documents.
11. Determine what state's you will be soliciting for donations in and file necessary state registrations.
12. Obtain necessary business licenses and permits.
13. Open a separate bank account for your foundation.