Does Your Nonprofit Need a Business License?

Many counties and cities require nonprofit organizations to register for a business license, also referred to as a Business Occupational Tax Certificate. Nonprofits should consult their local government to make sure that they are in compliance with all the appropriate requirements. Organizations that do not have a valid and current business license when one is required could be subject to citations, penalties, and fines.

General tips

• Check with the local government of each county and city where you have a business location or conduct business, even if you are not sure whether your activities in that area trigger the need for a business license.
• Register with the county if you are located or conducting business outside of the limits of an incorporated city. Otherwise, register with the city.
• Always include your 501(c)(3) status letter with any application for a business license; make sure to tell the person handling your case that you are a nonprofit organization.
• Nonprofits may be exempted from paying occupation taxes, so you should discuss any possible exemptions with the local government issuing each of your business licenses well before taxes are due.
• Most local governments require you to renew your business license every year.
• Make note of upcoming deadlines.
• Review the information below about some of the counties and cities located in the Metro Atlanta area.

Cities

City of Atlanta

• Register using the City of Atlanta’s online portal, “ATLCORE”. There is a $75 registration fee, but nonprofits do not have to pay the $50 zoning fee. Please use Chrome to access the portal as other internet services will not function properly with ATLCORE.
• To renew the license, use the same ATLCORE online portal.

ATLCORE:
https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/departments/finance/revenue/applying-for-a-business-license
City of Clarkston
- Register with the City Clerk. There is no application fee for nonprofits. In the application, mark nonprofit as your gross receipts.
  1055 Rowland Street
  Clarkston, GA 30021
  404-296-6489
  [https://www.clarkstonga.gov/business-license](https://www.clarkstonga.gov/business-license)

City of Decatur
- Register with the Finance Office. Nonprofits must pay a $25 application fee.
  Decatur City Hall, First Floor
  509 North McDonough Street
  Decatur, GA 30030
  404-370-4100
  &

Counties

Clayton County
- Register with the Community Development Department.
  P.K. Dixon Building, Annex 2
  121 South McDonough Street
  Jonesboro, GA 30236
  770-477-3569
  [https://www.claytoncountyga.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/13174/637378468426170000](https://www.claytoncountyga.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/13174/637378468426170000)

Cobb County
- Register with the Community Development Department, Business License Division.
- Zoning sign-off is required before the business license application can be approved. The Zoning Office is in the same building as the Business License Division and can be contacted by phone at 770-528-2035.
  1150 Powder Springs Street
  Suite 400
Marietta, GA 30064
770-528-8410
https://www.cobbcounty.org/community-development/business-license

DeKalb County
- Register with the Department of Planning and Sustainability.
- Applications will be reviewed by the Zoning Department prior to issuance of a BOTC. There are no fees for the application with proof of nonprofit status.
  178 Sams Street
  Decatur, GA 30030
  404-371-2461

Fulton County
- A business license is required for nonprofits with 501(c)(3) status and you must apply by visiting the Business Occupational Tax Division Office in the Fulton County Government Building.
- Take your 501(c)(3) letter from the IRS with you to the Business Occupational Tax Division Office and fill out an application.
  Fulton County Government
  Building 141 Pryor Street
  Suite 7064
  Atlanta, GA 30303
  Hours of Operation Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
  Phone: (404) 612-7722
https://www.fultoncountyga.gov/inside-fulton-county/fulton-county-departments/finance/business-licenses

Gwinnett County
- Register with the Licensing & Revenue office. Nonprofits must pay the initial application fee and request annually to be exempted from further fees and taxes.
  446 West Crogan Street
  Suite 300
  Lawrenceville, GA 30046
  678-377-4100
https://www.gwinnettcounty.com/web/gwinnett/Departments/PlanningandDevelopment/LicensingandRevenue

Other cities and counties

Athens/Clarke County 706-613-3050
https://www.athensclarkecounty.com/138/Business-
Occupation-Tax

Alpharetta  678-297-6086  
https://www.alpharetta.ga.us/business/licenses

College Park  404-767-1537  
https://www.collegeparkga.com/departments/business_license__occupation_tax

East Point  404-270-7185  

Lawrenceville  678-407-6583  
https://www.lawrencevillega.org/233/Business-Licensing

Marietta  770-794-5520  
https://www.mariettaga.gov/318/Apply-for-a-Business-License

Roswell  770-594-6235  

Sandy Springs  770-206-2075  
https://www.sandyspringsga.gov/business-regulations-and-licensing