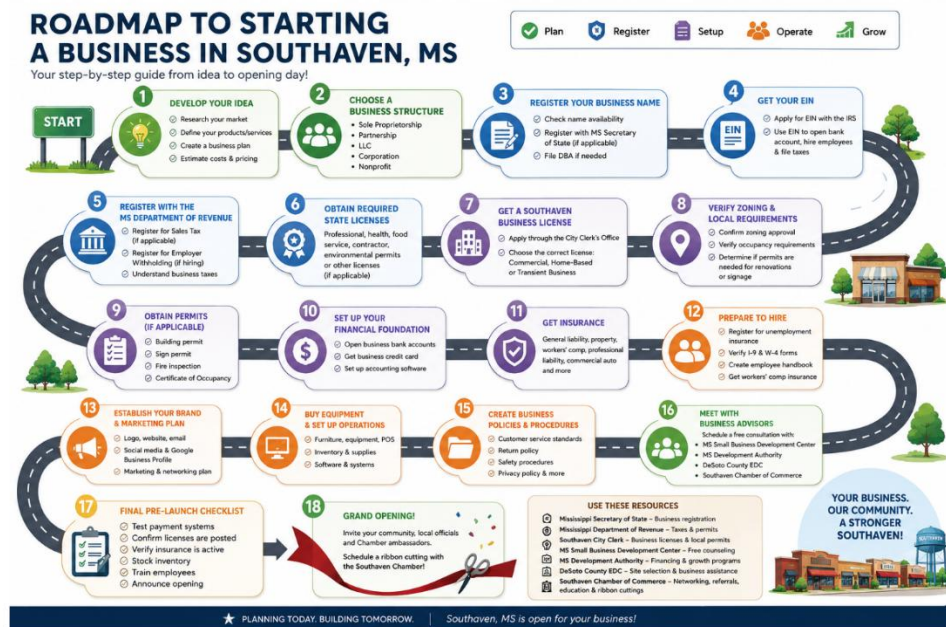


# Business Startup Checklist

## New Business in Southaven, MS



Roadmap provided by



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## Startup Checklist

Use this checklist as a roadmap from idea to opening day. This is a general checklist and we recommend you research each section fully.

### 1. Develop Your Business Idea

- Identify your target customers.
- Research competitors.
- Define your products or services.
- Create a value proposition.
- Estimate startup costs.
- Determine pricing.
- Prepare a basic business plan.

## Legal Formation

### 2. Choose a Business Structure

Select the structure that best fits your needs:

- Sole Proprietorship - Easiest to form with no state registration required, but you are personally liable for all business debts and lawsuits.
  - Partnership - The simplest structure if two or more people own a business together.
  - LLC - Protects your personal assets from business liabilities and offers flexible tax options (pass-through taxation).
  - Corporation - Ideal if you plan to raise venture capital or go public. It offers the strongest liability protection but requires stricter corporate formalities like boards of directors and annual meetings.
  - Nonprofit - charitable, educational, religious, scientific, or other public-benefit mission, with any surplus revenue reinvested into advancing that mission rather than distributed to owners or shareholders.
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### 3. Choose and Register Your Business Name

- Verify your business name is available.
  - Register your LLC or corporation with the Mississippi Secretary of State (if applicable).
  - Register a DBA (Doing Business As) if needed.
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### 4. Obtain a Federal EIN

- Apply for a free Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the [IRS](#).
  - Use your EIN to:
    - Open a bank account
    - Hire employees
    - File taxes
-

## State Requirements

### **5. Register with the Mississippi Department of Revenue**

- Register for Sales Tax (if selling taxable goods or services).
  - Register for Employer Withholding (if hiring employees).
  - Understand Mississippi business tax requirements.
- 

### **6. Obtain Required State Licenses**

Depending on your business, determine if you need:

- Professional license
  - Health permits
  - Food service permits
  - Contractor licensing
  - Environmental permits
- 

## Local Requirements

### **7. Obtain a Southaven Business License – City of Southaven**

Apply through the Business License.

Choose the appropriate license:

- Commercial Business
- Home-Based Business
- Transient Business

Business licenses are issued Monday–Friday through the City Clerk's Office.

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## 8. Verify Zoning Requirements

Before signing a lease:

- Confirm zoning approval.
  - Verify occupancy requirements.
  - Determine if permits are needed for renovations or signage.
- 

## 9. Obtain Building or Sign Permits (if applicable)

- Building permit
  - Sign permit
  - Fire inspection
  - Certificate of Occupancy (if required)
- 

## Financial Setup

### 10. Open Business Banking

- Business checking account
  - Business savings account
  - Business credit card
  - Accounting software
- 

### 11. Set Up Accounting

- Choose accounting software.
  - Create a bookkeeping system.
  - Determine payroll process.
  - Set quarterly tax reminders.
-

## **12. Obtain Insurance**

Consider:

- General Liability
  - Commercial Property
  - Professional Liability
  - Workers' Compensation
  - Commercial Auto
  - Cyber Liability
- 

## **Hiring Employees**

### **13. Prepare for Hiring**

- Register for unemployment insurance.
  - Verify I-9 documentation.
  - Complete W-4 forms.
  - Create an employee handbook.
  - Obtain Workers' Compensation insurance if required.
- 

## **Marketing**

### **14. Establish Your Brand**

- Logo
  - Brand colors
  - Website
  - Professional email
  - Social media accounts
  - Google Business Profile
-

## **15. Develop a Marketing Plan**

- Networking strategy
  - Chamber membership
  - Referral partners
  - Advertising budget
  - Grand opening event
  - Email marketing
- 

## **Business Operations**

### **16. Purchase Equipment**

- Furniture
  - Computers
  - POS system /Payment Processing
  - Inventory
  - Office & Facility supplies
  - Software subscriptions
- 

### **17. Create Business Policies**

- Customer service standards
  - Return policy
  - Privacy policy
  - Terms and conditions
  - Safety procedures
-

## Growth Resources

### 18. Meet with Free Business Advisors

Schedule meetings with:

- Mississippi Small Business Development Center
- Mississippi Development Authority
- DeSoto County Economic Development Council
- Southaven Chamber of Commerce

These organizations offer free business counseling, financing guidance, training, and networking opportunities.

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## Opening Day

### 19. Final Pre-Launch Checklist

- Test payment systems.
- Confirm licenses are posted.
- Verify insurance is active.
- Stock inventory.
- Train employees.
- Announce opening.
- Invite local officials and Chamber ambassadors.
- Schedule a ribbon cutting with the Southaven Chamber.

## Helpful Contacts

Organization	Purpose
<b>Mississippi Secretary of State</b> <a href="https://sos.ms.gov">https://sos.ms.gov</a>	Business registration
<b>Mississippi Department of Revenue</b> <a href="https://dor.ms.gov">https://dor.ms.gov</a>	Sales tax and business taxes
<b>Mississippi Small Business Development Center</b> <a href="https://mississippisbdc.org">https://mississippisbdc.org</a>	Free startup consulting
<b>Mississippi Development Authority</b> <a href="https://mississippi.org">https://mississippi.org</a>	Financing and business growth
<b>Southaven City Clerk – Business License Office</b> <a href="https://southaven.org">https://southaven.org</a>	Local business licenses
<b>DeSoto County Economic Development Council</b> <a href="https://desotocounty.com">https://desotocounty.com</a>	Site selection and business assistance
<b>Southaven Chamber of Commerce</b> <a href="https://southavenchamber.com">https://southavenchamber.com</a>	Networking, referrals, ribbon cuttings, business education
<b>Federal Internal Revenue Service</b> <a href="https://irs.gov">https://irs.gov</a>	Apply for EIN number

# ROADMAP TO STARTING A BUSINESS IN SOUTHAVEN, MS

Your step-by-step guide from idea to opening day!



★ PLANNING TODAY. BUILDING TOMORROW. Southaven, MS is open for your business!

**Roadmap provided by**



**Accredited Chamber**  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

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