

How to file Articles of Incorporation

First we should explain what Articles of Incorporation (AOI) are and why they are important. AOI are a legal document that you file with your state's filing agency in order to establish a C-corporation or a S-corporation. The filing agency is typically your local secretary of state office. The documents provide important information such as your company's name and its address. In most cases you can choose to file your AOI by yourself, but if you have the resources to do so, hiring a lawyer to help you in this process would not be a bad idea.

Now to explain what should be included in your AOI.

I. Corporation name

- A. This is your company's legal name and must end with some signifier indicating its status as a corporation such as "Inc." or "Corp."

II. Corporation address

- A. This is your business's principal operating address and is located within the state in which you have filed your AOI

III. Registered agent

- A. This can be a person or a company that is in charge of receiving all official documents on your company's behalf

IV. Business purpose

- A. In some states you can give a general description of your business's intention to engage in lawful practices. Some states, however, require you to give a detailed explanation of your business's product or service.

V. Directors and officers

- A. Some states will require you to provide the names and addresses of your company's directors and officers. The former typically concern themselves with "big-picture" decisions and the latter oversee the more day-to-day decision making of the company. Directors are elected by shareholders and they in turn are the ones in charge of filling officer roles.

VI. Number of shares

VII. Class of shares

VIII. Incorporator

- A. The incorporator is the person or the company who fills out and files your form.

Finally, we will distinguish between the three methods of filing your AOI

I. File yourself through your secretary of state's office

- A. If you visit your secretary of state's office website there should be a page where you can register your corporation. You can also type in your search engine of choice "How to file articles of incorporation" and your state. The search engine should return your state's secretary of state website with a link to a page for creating and filing registration.
- B. Filing yourself represents your fastest option so for those looking to quickly get their business up and running you may want to file yourself. It is also the cheapest option because a lawyer or legal help site will assess you a fee for their assistance. You will still need to pay your secretary of state's office filing fee which should be in the range of \$100 to \$300 depending on your state.

II. File through a legal help site

- A. While filing by yourself may be cheaper and faster, using a legal help site takes all the work out of your hands. They will ask you for the requisite information for your incorporation registration and then fill out and file the registration on your behalf. You'll have to pay the site's fees on top of the filing fee, and help site can charge around \$150 for their help.

III. File with a lawyer's assistance

- A. This option is typically available for individuals or companies that already have an attorney on retainer, meaning that the company is already employing the aid of a lawyer. It could be a good idea to hire an attorney to help with this process as they can give clear counsel so you don't run into legal issues down the road. You will have to pay a fee to retain the attorney so this may not be option number one for those looking for cheap filing plans.

<https://www.fundera.com/blog/articles-of-incorporation>