

How to File a DBA: Action Checklist

- ☐ Decide whether you actually need a DBA (operating under any name other than your own legal name or entity's registered name)
- ☐ Search your Secretary of State business name database for conflicts
- ☐ Search your county's DBA/fictitious name index, if your state files locally
- ☐ Run a basic federal trademark search for the proposed name
- ☐ Confirm the correct filing office for your state: Secretary of State or county clerk/recorder
- ☐ Confirm the current filing fee directly on the official state or county site
- ☐ Confirm whether your state or county requires newspaper publication
- ☐ File the DBA application and pay the fee
- ☐ If publication is required, place the notice with a qualifying newspaper before the deadline
- ☐ Keep the approved DBA certificate (or proof of filing) in your business records
- ☐ Do NOT apply for a new EIN based on the DBA alone
- ☐ Bring the DBA certificate to your bank to open or update your business account
- ☐ Update invoices, contracts, and signage to the exact filed DBA name
- ☐ Calendar the DBA renewal date (commonly 1 to 5 years depending on the state)