Jump Start Micro-Enterprise Credential: Government Agencies Important to Small Businesses

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Small businesses must interact with many federal, state and local government agencies.

Level of Government	Description	Examples Relevant to Small Businesses
Federal	An agency of the United States government	• Internal Revenue Service (IRS) – collects taxes. • Small Business Administration (SBA) – provides aid and advice to small businesses, assisting and protecting the interests of small business concerns. • Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) – assures safe and healthful working conditions.
State	An agency of Louisiana state government	• Secretary of State – register a business • Louisiana Workforce Commission – hire / support employees • Louisiana Department of Revenue – pay taxes • Louisiana Economic Development – grow a business • Industry Boards – regulate specific industries (see below)
Local	An agency of a parish or a city / town	• Parishes, cities and towns maintain agencies to collect taxes, inspect businesses for safety and compliance with local laws, etc.

It's not always easy to know which government agencies a small business needs to contact. The good news: ***entrepreneurs and small business owners can go to the* geauxBIZ *web portal for a helpful list of the government agencies they should contact.***

The Secretary of State's *geauxBIZ* portal gives current and potential business owners a single place to go for all the necessary information to operate within the state. Various state, parish and local agencies still approve all licenses and permits, but geauxBIZ is a the best starting point to learn which government agencies a small business must contact:

- *geauxBIZ* can help small business owners and entrepreneurs find resources to help plan, make key financial decisions, and complete legal activities necessary to start a business;
- *geauxBIZ* will produce a list of possible federal, state and local licenses and permits required for a new or existing business to reserve a new business name and complete required new business filings.

Part of earning the Micro-Enterprise Credential is going online to the geauxBIZ *student portal to learn how to register a new business in Louisiana.*

The table at the top of the next page provides a bit more detail on the Louisiana state government agencies that play important roles in helping every small business operate, pay appropriate taxes, abide by important laws and take advantages of opportunities to grow and prosper.

State Agency	Purpose / Responsibilities
Louisiana Secretary of State	• Help start new businesses by determining the federal, state and local forms they must file • Secure a start-up's business name • File the forms necessary to form a business entity (partnership, corporation, etc.) • Maintain the forms necessary to operate a business in good standing (example: annual report)
Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)	• File Wages and Pay Taxes – help employers and representatives submit tax reports and pay their taxes. • Unemployment Insurance – maintain the program that provides temporary financial assistance to workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own. • Workers' Compensation – help employers obtain and maintain workers' compensation insurance for all of their employees. ("Workers' Compensation" pays benefits to workers injured on the job, including payment for medical care and vocational rehabilitation services.) • Find, Train and Retain Workers – offer a variety of services that help Louisiana businesses find, train and retain effective employees. These services include: ◦ Online local, state and national job listings ◦ Assessments of education, skills and interests ◦ Job counseling, job placement assistance and referrals ◦ Education and training information ◦ Labor market information ◦ Access to computers, fax and copy machines ◦ Veterans' services
Louisiana Department of Revenue (LDR)	The LDR fairly and efficiently collects state tax revenue to fund public services.
Louisiana Economic Development (LED)	LED is responsible for strengthening the state's business environment, creating a more vibrant Louisiana economy. LED creates jobs and economic opportunity for Louisiana citizens and businesses.

There are also a large number of state boards that regulate businesses in specific industries. The table below offers examples of state boards that regulate many small businesses.

State Board	Purpose / Responsibilities
Louisiana State Board of Cosmetology	The Louisiana State Board of Cosmetology regulates, controls and monitors members of the Cosmetology industry to maintain public health and welfare standards for the consumer public; insures that individuals receiving licenses meet the educational requirements established by the State of Louisiana; and that licensed professionals maintain the highest standards while providing services to the public.
Board of Barber Examiners	The Board of Barber Examiners provides for the issuance of certificates of registration and protects the health and welfare of the general public from communicable diseases.
Real Estate Commission	The Real Estate Commission administers and regulates the Louisiana real estate licensing program.
State Plumbing Board of Louisiana	The board affords protection against incompetent, inexperienced, or unlawful acts by persons who perform work on plumbing and medical gas piping systems. The board qualifies and examines applicants for plumbers' licenses and serves, licenses, and enforces the law.