

Legal/Organizational

Illinois Church Organizational Guide & Legal Resources

Step 1: Have an organizational meeting

At this meeting you need to declare your church to exist. This does not have to be very complicated. Issues to discuss should include:

- What is the name of the church?
- Will you have a church covenant, bylaws, or a constitution?
- How will your church relate to other churches?
- Will you have a denominational or network affiliation? Do you have a sponsoring or parenting church?
- How will you handle finances?
- You may want to adopt financial policies for offering procedures, spending money, counting forms, etc.
- If you plan on opening a bank account, decide who is authorized to open a bank account in the name of the organization?
- Also in the action – specify who the authorized signers will be. Take an offering – so you can open up a bank account.
- Will you be incorporating your church with the State of Illinois?
- If so, who will keep your official records and minutes of business? (Clerk)

Step 2: Get an employer identification number (EIN)

Applying for a EIN: [Online Version](#) or the [downloadable version](#) to send in via mail,

Step 3: Submit articles of incorporation

[Instructions for Incorporating](#)

[Articles of Incorporation](#)

[Other Instructions and links from the Sec. of State's office](#)

Check out the [E-quip online training](#) for a seminar on Incorporation with Charles Campbell and Dave Edwards (legal counsel for IBSA).

An [additional resources](#) from NAMB:

Sample Constitutions

[Colorado samples - conventional and simple](#)

[NAMB Resources](#)

Step 4: Becoming Tax Exempt - 501c3

A church or network of churches can function under IBSA's umbrella 501c3 status if it is affiliated with IBSA, or if it is sponsored by a church or network of churches that is affiliated with IBSA. Otherwise, you will have to go through the 501c3 filing with the IRS (which is a relatively vigorous process), or else, choose to accept that your contributions will not be tax deductible.

Step 5: Sales tax exemption

[Sales tax exemption publication](#)

[Non-Profits Information](#)

Step 6: Open a bank account

If you have not already done so, conduct a meeting with your organizational leaders and approve action that will authorize someone to open a bank account in the name of the organization. Also in the action – specify who the signers will be. When you go to the bank, bring the minutes of the business meeting signed by everyone who attending your first meeting. You may also want to bring your Articles of Incorporation (if you have it), and your EIN #. Most banks will ask for your Articles of Incorporation – but we believe it is not really required. You probably can negotiate this with the bank.

Step 7: Affiliate with your association and IBSA

When your church or network of churches has reached a point of ongoing viability, you may petition your association and IBSA for affiliation. Please note that your local association and IBSA are two separate organizations and will have different procedures for affiliation. IBSA requires doctrinal soundness, filing an annual church profile (ACP), and participation in the Cooperative Program. [Email Sandy Barnard](#) for the packet (typically due the second Friday in September).

Contact your association to learn about their affiliation process and requirements. [A list of associations can be found by clicking here.](#)

Step 8: Launch a Website

There are several ways to set-up a web-site, here are the some options along with the pros and cons.

- Hire someone to set-up and maintain the site. (Costly, more of a custom design, at the mercy of the design company to make changes)
- Buy a template site and maintain it yourself. (Much cheaper option, easier to maintain, may not have all the features you want) [CloverSites.com](#) is a good example.
- Start a blog. (They are free, easy to maintain and simple to use) [WordPress.com](#) is a good one to check out. We recommend this type of web presence if you don't have a lot technology skills or money. Here is the [Get Started](#) page.