

1. **INCORPORATE WITH THE STATE**

File Articles of Incorporation with the local Secretary of State; this legally creates the nonprofit entity.

2. **OBTAIN AN EIN**

Assigned by the Internal Revenue Service, which serves as the organization's tax ID and is required for banking, hiring, and federal

3. **ESTABLISH BYLAWS & GOVERNANCE POLICIES**

This defines how the organization operates, including board roles and decision-making, ensuring accountability and compliance.

4. **APPLY FOR 501C(3) STATUS**

Processed by the IRS to secure federal tax exemption, allowing donations to be tax-deductible and enhancing credibility with donors.

5. **REGISTER FOR CHARITABLE SOLICITATION (CO-1)**

Register with the Illinois Attorney General Charitable Trust Bureau before fundraising, as required by state law.

6. **APPLY FOR SALES TAX EXEMPTIONS (IF NEEDED)**

Application with the Illinois Department of Revenue, such as sales tax exemption, to reduce operational costs.

7. **OPEN A NONPROFIT BANK ACCOUNT**

Open bank accounts to manage funds properly, maintain transparency, and keep organizational finances separate from personal.