



Before you begin starting a nonprofit, consider:

Creating a nonprofit is the same as creating a business. You need to engage in some serious planning before you start filing incorporation papers, and applying for your tax exemption from the Internal Revenue Service.

Today there are multi-millions of nonprofits nationwide, with thousands being formed every day. Competition for resources (money, volunteers, etc.) is fierce. More than having compassion and commitment, it takes some research and planning to ensure the successful launch of your cause.

First, you need to identify the niche your nonprofit will fill by asking yourself these questions:

- What nonprofit am I interested in starting?
- What services or products will my organization provide?
- Is my idea practical, and does it fill an unmet need in the community?
- What is my competition?
- If other agencies in my local area are providing the same services, how will my agency be different?
- What is my nonprofit's advantage over existing nonprofit organizations?
- Can I deliver a better quality service?
- How will I sustain my operation, and can I create a demand for my organization?

Note that it might be wiser to consider joining forces, efforts, and energy with a like-minded nonprofit rather than compete with it.

The next step before developing your nonprofit organization is to answer these questions:

- What skills and experience do I bring to the nonprofit business?
- What insurance coverage will be needed?
- What equipment or supplies will I need?
- How will I compensate myself?
- What are my resources?
- Where will my organization be located?
- What will I name my organization?

Your answers will help you create a focused, well-researched operational plan that should serve as a blueprint for raising prospective funds, and better determine the likely success of your venture.

Source: <http://www.delawarenonprofit.org/infocentral/startup1.php>

Note: Nonprofit Leadership Center of Tampa Bay, Inc. does not provide tax or legal advice. Please consult with your attorney or accountant or tax advisor for advice specific to your situation.