

## Licenses for home businesses

**Dear Karen:** I'd like to start a home-based business. Do I need to get a business license?

**Answer:** Depending on what city your home-based business is in, you may need both a municipal home-based business license and a county fictitious business-name statement. Not all cities require business licenses, so check with your city's business development office.

If you're located in an unincorporated part of Los Angeles County, contact the Los Angeles County Business License office at (213) 974-2011; for the city of Los Angeles, call (213) 626-9271.

You can get information on registering your fictitious business name (also called a DBA, or a "doing business as" statement), obtaining permits and licenses, residential zoning requirements and many other small-business issues at the Los Angeles County Office of Small Business: [www.laosb.org](http://www.laosb.org).

An officer at the bank where you open a merchant account also should be able to give you pertinent information about licensing in your city and about getting a seller's permit from the California State Board of Equalization so you can collect sales tax if you plan to sell retail products.

An online firm, [Businesslicenses.com](http://Businesslicenses.com), can also assist you with licensing and permits. Its fees start at \$19.99 and go as high as \$175, depending on how much of the work you want to do yourself, said the site's founder and president, David Polatseck.

Got a question about running or starting a small enterprise? E-mail it to [karen.e.klein@latimes.com](mailto:karen.e.klein@latimes.com) or mail it to In Box, Los Angeles Times, 202 W. 1st St., Los Angeles, CA 90012.