

Setting Up Your Montana Nonprofit for 501(c)(3) Status

An Informational Guide from the Montana Secretary of State's Office

Starting a nonprofit is a powerful way to serve the communities of Montana. The Montana Secretary of State's Office is your first stop to form a nonprofit corporation, so you can then apply to the IRS for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

YOUR TWO MAIN STEPS

FORM YOUR MONTANA NONPROFIT CORPORATION

- File Articles of Incorporation online with the Montana Secretary of State at biz.sosmt.gov/forms/business.
- If you plan to seek 501(c)(3) status, be prepared to include or attach the IRS-required language when filing.

APPLY FOR FEDERAL 501(c)(3) STATUS

- After formation with our office, submit your application for tax exemption to the IRS.
- The IRS decides whether your organization qualifies as a 501(c)(3).



WHY SPECIFIC IRS LANGUAGE MATTERS

To qualify as a 501(c)(3), the IRS requires specific wording about your charitable purpose and what happens to assets if the nonprofit dissolves. This language is included in or attached to your Articles of Incorporation filed with our office, so your Montana organizing document supports your federal tax-exemption application.

For the exact sample language and instructions, visit the IRS resource:

irs.gov/charities-non-profits/suggested-language-for-corporations-and-associations-per-publication-557.

HOW THE MONTANA SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE HELPS



Provides online filing for nonprofit Articles of Incorporation.



Maintains your nonprofit's public records and annual reports to ensure you remain in good standing with the state.



Offers self-help tools and information to support accurate filings, including for organizations seeking 501(c)(3) recognition.

Thank you for helping strengthen Montana communities. The Montana Secretary of State's Office is honored to support your nonprofit's work and ongoing success.

NEED ADDITIONAL HELP?



406.444.3665



sosmt.gov/business/help-center