

Save Money: File Your Film LLC Without a Lawyer

By Lex Nova Lawyer x Thoolie

You do **not** need to pay LegalZoom, Rocket Lawyer, or a “producer services” company hundreds of dollars to form your film LLC. In most states, you can do it **yourself** — online — in under 30 minutes.

✓ It's official

✓ It's fast

✓ It's cheaper than you think

 **Lex Nova Tip:** The LLC is where the budget goes. The *filing* shouldn't be your biggest expense.

What You'll Need:

- A project name for your LLC (e.g., *Hot Girl Horror 2, LLC*)
- A registered agent (can be you in most states)
- Your business address (PO Boxes not accepted in some states)
- A card to pay the fee
- 10–30 minutes of your time

DIY Filing Instructions by State

California

Total Cost: ~\$90

Annual Franchise Tax: \$800 (first year often waived for new entities)

File Here: <https://bizfileonline.sos.ca.gov>

Steps:

1. Go to bizfileonline.sos.ca.gov
2. Create a free account

Disclaimer: This checklist is provided for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice or establish an attorney–client relationship. Every production is unique, and delivery requirements can vary by distributor, territory, or platform. You should consult a qualified entertainment attorney to review your specific distribution agreements and ensure full compliance with applicable laws and contractual obligations.

3. Select “**Form LLC (Articles of Organization)**”
4. Fill in your project name and agent info
5. Pay **\$70 filing fee**
6. Submit **Statement of Information** (\$20) right after
7. Get an **EIN** at irs.gov/ein

✓ You’re done. Use this LLC on all contracts going forward.

New York

Total Cost: \$200–\$400 (includes publication requirement)

File Here: <https://www.dos.ny.gov/corps/llcfile.html>

Steps:

1. Download & complete the **Articles of Organization**
2. File online or by mail — fee is **\$200**
3. **Must publish a legal notice** for 6 weeks in 2 newspapers in the LLC's county (this is what adds cost — varies by county)
4. File a **Certificate of Publication** with \$50 fee
5. Get an **EIN** at irs.gov/ein

✓ Tip: Form your LLC in Albany County if possible — it's cheaper to publish there.

Georgia

Total Cost: \$100

Annual Renewal Fee: \$50

File Here: <https://ecorp.sos.ga.gov/>

Steps:

1. Go to ecorp.sos.ga.gov
2. Click “**Create or Register a Business**”
3. Choose **Domestic LLC**
4. Fill out your form online
5. Pay **\$100** filing fee
6. Submit your **Annual Registration** (\$50, due every year)
7. Get your **EIN** at irs.gov/ein

✓ Tip: Georgia's online system is fast — approvals can be same-day.

Delaware (Common for Investors & Production Financiers)

Total Cost: ~\$90 to file + \$300 annual franchise tax

File Here: <https://corp.delaware.gov>

Steps:

1. Hire a **Delaware Registered Agent** (required — ~\$50–\$100/yr)
2. Go to corp.delaware.gov and download the **Certificate of Formation**
3. File by mail or via your agent
4. Pay **\$90** filing fee
5. Get an **EIN** at irs.gov/ein

✓ Delaware doesn't require you to live there — which is why it's popular for investors. But it's best used if you have out-of-state partners or future financing plans.

Final Tips

- Use your **SPE LLC name** on *all* contracts, call sheets, and invoices
- Don't mix personal funds with LLC expenses
- Always **create an Operating Agreement** (use Thoolie's for an ultra-low-budget-ready version)