



What is a Business Plan?

A document that summarizes the operational and financial objectives of a business and contains the detailed plans and budgets showing how the objectives are to be realized.

A good business plan will contain the following:

- Resume or brief explanation of your background and relevant experience
- Information on your legal structure and management team
- Current balance sheet
- Your business vision, mission statement, key values, and goals
- Production plans
- Marketing plans
- Estimated start up costs
- A projected income statement with a written explanation of your budget assumptions
- A projected balance sheet with a written explanation of your budget assumptions
- A sensitivity analysis showing the business's break-even points
- Less than 10 total pages so that people actually read it

Helpful Publications for Writing a Business Plan

Cornell Cooperative Extension

- *Landscape Business Planning Guide* - <http://aem.cornell.edu/outreach/extensionpdf/eb0313.pdf>
- *Writing a Business Plan: A Guide for Small Premium Wineries* - <http://aem.cornell.edu/outreach/extensionpdf/eb0206.pdf>
- *Writing a Business Plan: An Example for a Small Premium Winery* – <http://aem.cornell.edu/outreach/extensionpdf/eb0207.pdf>

NY FarmNet Publications - www.nyfarmnet.org or 1-800-547-3276

- *Starting an Ag-Business? A Pre-Planning Guide* - www.nyfarmviability.org/aic/pdf/Pre-businessPlanWorkbook.pdf
- *Doing Business Together: A Joint Business Agreement Guide (Partnerships, Mergers, Joint Ventures, Strategic Alliances, and Contracts)*
- *Business Transfer Guide: Senior Generation*
- *Business Transfer Guide: Junior Generation*

Sustainable Agricultural Research Education (SARE)

- *Building a Sustainable Business* - www.sare.org/publications/business.htm (order hard copy for \$17 or download PDF online for free)

Great resource for a beginning farmer interested in alternative, sustainable, and/or general agriculture. It is 280 pages of education and practical exercise to guide the beginning farmer through the financial, management, and interpersonal skills needed to start a successful farm business.

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Getting Help Writing a Business Plan

- **Cornell Cooperative Extension** – www.cce.cornell.edu
The type of programming offered in each county is unique so contact your county extension office to see if they have a farm management or small business development educator. Often these educators offer business plan workshops and are willing to advise, review, or assist in writing your plan.
- **NY FarmNet and NY FarmLink** - www.nyfarmnet.org and <http://nyfarmlink.org/>
New York FarmLink maintains a database of farms available for sale or rent in addition to farmers who are seeking business partners to join or gain equity in their business. New York FarmNet has business plan writing publications in addition to several farm counselors throughout the state who offer free and confidential help on any topic of concern, including: finances, farm changes, farm transfer, natural disaster, personal stress, family communication, and marital conflict.
- **New York State Small Business Development Center** - www.nyssbdc.org
A network of 23 regional centers delivering business counseling and training free of charge to New Yorkers who want to start a business or improve the performance of an existing business.
- **New York State OnLine Permit Assistance** - <http://opal.gorr.state.ny.us>
This site will help you find the New York State business permits you may need.
- **Empire State Development's Entrepreneurial Assistance Program** – 1-800-STATE NY
Part of New York State's economic development agency, they have 9 centers across the state to provide specialized help to women, minority group members and persons with disabilities who are starting or operating an early stage businesses.
- **Federal Small Business Administration** - www.sba.gov/ny
Federal agency with offices throughout the state providing counseling services and loan guarantees. They have a special emphasis area to work with women, minorities, veterans, and businesses involved in international trade.
- **SCORE “Counselors to America’s Small Business”** - www.score.org
SCORE is a nonprofit organization offering free advice and training using experienced volunteers. Check the website for chapters in your area.

