## **Entity Validation Documentation Checklist**

A guide and checklist for deciding which documents to attach to your SAM.gov entity validation incident.

May 2022



## What documentation should I attach?

When you create the incident to validate your entity information, if requested, you must attach **acceptable documents** that prove your entity's legal business name, physical address, date of incorporation, and state of incorporation (U.S. entities) or national identifier (non-U.S. entities).

## What is an acceptable document?

It's a document that <u>an authoritative source</u> has used as evidence that your entity is what you say it is. See links to acceptable documents <u>here</u>.

## How many attachments should I provide?

Use as many attachments as needed to verify your information. If you have one acceptable document that includes all the requested information, you can attach just that document.

## Do I have to include my address on every document?

Proof of state or date of incorporation documents may include only your current legal business name (without the address), **but you must always submit with it at least one document, less than five years old, with your correct and current name and address.** 

## What file types are accepted?

Recommended file types are PDF, PNG, JPG/JPEG, BMP.



# What if my proof of state or date of incorporation (or founding) is very old or the name or address has changed since the entity originally was established?

If you are providing original documentation that is not current (e.g., a name change has occurred or the entity address has changed), or if the documentation you are providing is older than five years, **you must also submit additional, recent documentation** that proves that the change happened (e.g., transfer of business) along with your original paperwork. Provide details in the <u>incident text box</u> on SAM.gov for why there is a discrepancy between the documents you provided and indicate which information is current.

IMPORTANT: At least one document you submit must show, at a minimum, your entity's current legal business name and correct, current physical address together in the same document that is no older than 5 years. All documents must be in English or have a certified translation.

The address on the document must include what you put in your validation search (your current, correct address). Do **not** include documents with old addresses unless you are also including a document with evidence of your current name and current, correct physical address.

## **Your Checklist:**

- This optional checklist is to help you organize your documentation. Do not upload it to SAM.gov.
- Choose documents for each category on the following pages (see category links, below).
- Use one document to show all of the categories, or use as many as needed as long as at least one document contains both the correct legal business name and current, correct physical address.
- View next steps for how to create an incident, provide details, and attach documents.
  - Does at least one of your documents show your entity's correct business name and current, correct physical address in the same document (no older than 5 years)?

Category/categories to validate (choose those that need to be updated or verified)	Document(s) must included at least this minimum information	
Legal Business Name and Physical Address	☐ Current Legal Business Name ☐ Current Physical Address	
State and Date of Incorporation	<ul> <li>□ Current Legal Business Name</li> <li>□ State (or country) and Date of Incorporation (Month, Day, Year)</li> <li>□ Evidence (stamp/receipt, etc.) showing that it was filed or registered</li> </ul>	
National Identifier (non-U.S. entities only)	☐ Current Legal Business Name ☐ National Identifier	



Tip: submitting the correct documents is the best way to expedite review of

your validation incident!

## Documents to Validate **Legal Business Name and Physical Address**

Entity Type	Attach These <b>Acceptable</b> Documents (examples)	Unacceptable Documents - <b>Do Not Attach</b>
All Entities	<ul> <li>Certified copies of the following:         <ul> <li>Share certificates</li> <li>Articles of organization/incorporation</li> <li>Tax returns/filings*</li> <li>Certificate of formation</li> <li>Articles of formation</li> <li>Certificate of organization</li> </ul> </li> <li>Utility bills</li> <li>Bank statements*</li> <li>"Doing business as" documentation</li> <li>Stock ownership</li> <li>Employer Identification Number documentation from IRS</li> <li>Tax ID confirmation documents from IRS</li> <li>Company bylaws</li> <li>Operating agreements</li> <li>Non-expired driver's license (does not need to be a REAL ID)—sole proprietors and individuals doing-business-as only</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Applications you submitted without evidence of receipt or approval from an authority</li> <li>Your own documents that have not been stamped or verified by an authority</li> <li>Screenshots from SAM.gov, dla.CAGE.mil, or any other government system that stores your name and address</li> <li>Federal contract or grant award documents</li> <li>DUNS profiles</li> <li>Notarized entity administrator letters</li> <li>IRS form W-9 (request for Taxpayer Identification Number) and IRS form SS4 (application for an Employer Identification Number)</li> <li>Leases</li> <li>Passports, unless they include the current physical address</li> </ul>



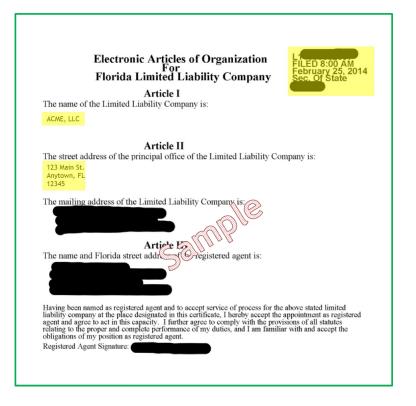
This is a list of examples. We accept documentation from state or federal verifiers (or a city/county in rare cases of at-home businesses that would involve an address validation), or a utility that requires a credit verification. We do not accept documentation that does not have proof that it was certified or validated by an authority.

\*Tax returns or filings and bank statements should be redacted or limited; they only need to show relevant data to prove the information you are validating is true.

## Sample Documents for Legal Business Name and Physical Address

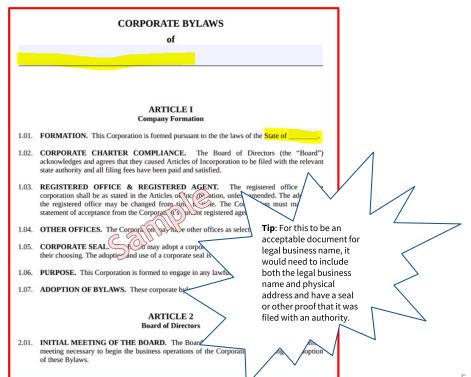
#### Acceptable for:

- Legal business name
- Physical address
- Shows it was officially accepted by an authoritative source (e.g. a seal, stamp, etc.)



#### Unacceptable Documentation

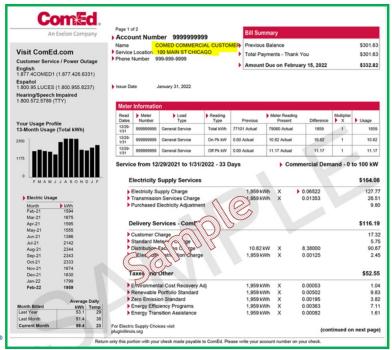
- Does not contain both legal name and physical address
- × Does not show evidence of official acceptance
- ✓ Contains legal business name



## Sample Documents for **Legal Business Name & Physical Address**

#### Acceptable for:

- This is an approved document type
- ✓ Legal business name
- Physical address (if it's the same as the Service Location on this sample statement)



#### Unacceptable Documentation

Even with the correct information, leases are unable to be verified and are not considered an acceptable form of documentation.





## Documents to Validate **State and Date of Incorporation**

Entity Type	Attach These <b>Acceptable</b> Documents (examples)	Unacceptable Documents - <b>Do Not Attach</b>
<ul> <li>All Entities Located in the U.S.</li> <li>Tribal Governments</li> <li>U.S. Territories</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Anything from the <u>Legal Business Name list</u> that also includes the <b>state</b> and <b>date</b> of incorporation</li> <li>Entities that are not incorporated may be able to submit <u>other documentation</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Applications you submitted without evidence of receipt/approval from an authority</li> <li>Your own documents that have not been stamped/verified by an authority</li> <li>Screenshots from SAM.gov, dla.CAGE.mil, or any other government system that stores your name and address</li> <li>DUNS profiles</li> <li>Federal contract or grant award documents</li> <li>Notarized entity administrator letters</li> <li>IRS form W-9 (request for Taxpayer Identification Number) and IRS form SS4 (application for an Employer Identification Number)</li> <li>Leases</li> </ul>
International Entities	<ul> <li>Anything from the <u>Legal Business Name list</u> that also includes the <b>country</b> and <b>date</b> of incorporation</li> <li>Entities that are not incorporated may be able to submit <u>other documentation</u>.</li> </ul>	

**This is a list of examples.** We accept documentation from state or federal verifiers (or a city/county in rare cases of at-home businesses that would involve an address validation), or a utility that requires a credit verification. We do not accept documentation that does not have proof that it was certified or validated by an authority.



## What if my entity is not incorporated?

If it is requested of you during entity validation, you must provide documents that match and support the date you entered into the Date of Incorporation field in SAM.gov. If your entity is not incorporated, provide documentation of the date that your entity legally began doing business, was founded, or was established.

#### For example:

- The date a university department was founded.
- The date a sole proprietorship provides received their EIN.
- The date a township or city office was established.

In addition to entering this on the validation screen in SAM.gov, the documentation you submit (if requested) must display this date.

If you looked at the guidance on the <u>State and Date of Incorporation document list</u> and did not see any documentation that fits for your entity, check the next page for <u>examples of documents</u> that have been accepted or rejected for validation of entities without a date of incorporation.

Note: it is not typical for entities that are individual people (i.e. sole proprietors and those doing-business-as) to be asked for date of incorporation documentation. You do not need to include evidence for state and date of incorporation unless it's requested of you during entity validation.



## Non-Incorporated Entities: Additional Documents for **Date and State of Incorporation**

Entity Type	Attach These <b>Acceptable</b> Documents (examples)	Unacceptable Documents - <b>Do Not Attach</b>
Sole Proprietors, DBA	<ul> <li>If nothing on the <u>State and Date of Incorporation list</u> fits for you, instead you could provide:</li> <li>Schedule C from the year you started doing business with evidence that it was filed, such as a preparer's name, e-filing software receipt If you are an individual who is part of a partnership, the year the partnership was formed might be the correct information and documentation.</li> </ul>	<ul><li>Passports</li><li>Driver's licenses</li></ul>
Partnerships	If nothing on the <u>State and Date of Incorporation list</u> fits for you, instead you could provide:  • Formation documents, partnership agreements  • Partnership Tax Return* showing when the partnership was initiated	Unfiled partnership agreements
<ul> <li>State/Local Government Entities (e.g., a town, state office or department)</li> <li>U.S. Territory Entities</li> <li>Tribal Government Entities</li> </ul>	If nothing on the State and Date of Incorporation list fits for you, instead you could provide:  Town charter  Documentation from state governments for town existence Governor's declarations Formal resolution from town council establishing office	<ul> <li>Photos of your town's sign</li> <li>Documentation from your own government (must be certified outside of your governing body)</li> </ul>



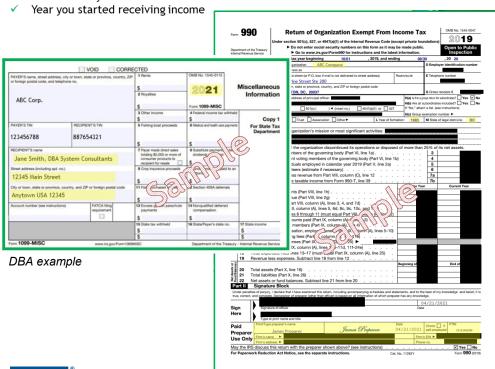
This is a list of examples. We accept documentation from state or federal verifiers (or a city/county in rare cases of at-home businesses that would involve an address validation), or a utility that requires a credit verification. We do not accept documentation that does not have proof that it was certified or validated by an authority.

\*Tax returns or filings and bank statements should be redacted or limited; they only need to show relevant data to prove the information you are validating is true.

## Sample Documents for **State and Date of Incorporation**

#### Acceptable for:

- This is an approved document type
- ✓ Legal business name
- State where your business is established



## Unacceptable Documentation

Even with the name of the city entity and the year on the sign, this is not officially certified documentation so it is not an approved document for this criteria.







## Documents to Validate National Identifier

Entity Type	Attach These <b>Acceptable</b> Documents (examples)	Unacceptable Documents - <b>Do Not Attach</b>
<ul> <li>All Entities Located in the U.S.</li> <li>Tribal Governments</li> <li>U.S. Territories</li> </ul>	Not Required	• N/A
International Entities	<ul> <li>Employer Identification Number Documentation</li> <li>Tax Identification Documents*</li> <li>Tax Returns/Filings*</li> <li>All documents must be translated into the English language following these guidelines.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Applications you submitted without evidence of receipt/approval from an authority</li> <li>Screenshots from SAM.gov, dla.CAGE.mil, or any other government system that stores your name and address</li> <li>Federal contract or grant award documents</li> <li>DUNS profiles</li> <li>Notarized entity administrator letters</li> <li>Documents in languages other than English without translation</li> </ul>

**This is a list of examples.** We accept documentation from state or federal verifiers (or a city/county in rare cases of at-home businesses that would involve an address validation), or a utility that requires a credit verification. We do not accept documentation that does not have proof that it was certified or validated by an authority.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Your national identifier is issued by the government of your country and could be your passport number, driver's license number, or other national or tax identification number. If you use a Tax Identification Number (TIN), you can only use one that has all numeric values (no letters or special characters).



<sup>\*</sup>Tax returns or filings and bank statements should be redacted or limited; they only need to show relevant data to prove the information you are validating is true.

## **English Translation Guidance**

If you submit a document containing foreign language to SAM.gov, you **must** also include a **full English language translation of that document with certification**. You will attach a copy of both the original document and the full English translation.

The translator must certify the translation as complete and accurate, and by the translator's certification, assert that he or she is competent to translate from the foreign language into English. We suggest using this format which includes the translator's name, signature, address, and certification date on the translated document.

## **Certification by Translator**

I [insert typed name], certify that I am fluent (conversant) in the English and [insert foreign language] languages, and that the above/attached document is an accurate translation of the document attached entitled [insert translated document name].

[Signature]

[Typed Name]

[Address]

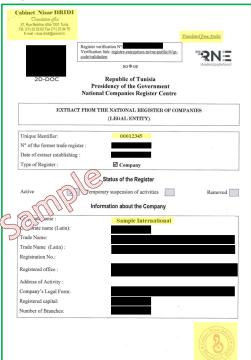
[Certification Date]



## Sample Documents for National Identifier

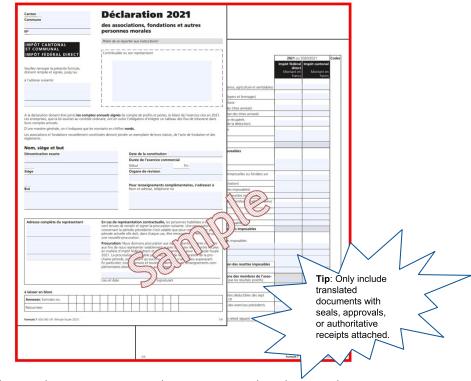
#### Acceptable for:

- This is an approved document type
- ✓ Legal business name
- National Identifier
- Includes evidence it was received and processed by an authoritative source
- ✓ Translated into English



#### Unacceptable Documentation

- × Templates or self-filled tax forms will not be accepted without tax preparer's credentials or a government receipt attached indicating it was received.
- × International documentation must be translated into English.





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## **Example Scenario**

An entity administrator for ACME, LLC entered the following current information on the entity validation screen\*:

Entity Legal Business Name: ACME, LLC

Physical Address: 123 Main St. Anytown, HI 96701 Date/State of Incorporation: January 1, 1957

Because the entity changed **physical addresses** recently, the potential entity matches offered in SAM.gov didn't show the correct, current address.

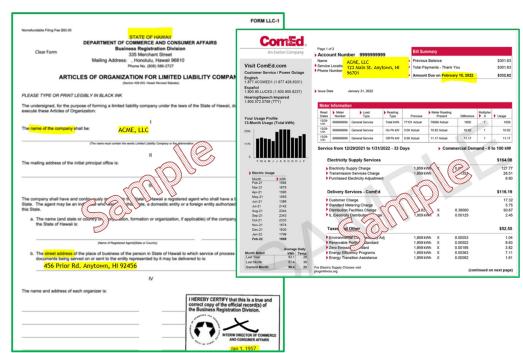
The **date of incorporation**—or founding—could also not be validated.

The administrator was requested to provide documentation to support both of these pieces of entity information.

Fortunately, they have a copy of their originally approved **articles of organization**. But because the information is older than 5 years, and because the address is not current the administrator must also include another document. The administrator chooses a recent **utility bill** that displays both the correct legal business name and the correct, current physical address.

Together, these documents show adequate evidence of the information that needs to be updated in SAM.gov for this entity.

\*For Illustrative Purposes Only



TIP: If the entity had been organized more recently (less than 5 years) the articles of organization could have been used alone if the address was current and correct.

Also, if just the physical address had been out of date, and there was no a need to validate the date of incorporation, the administrator could have included just the utility bill, which has the correct, current physical address along with the legal business name.

## **Creating an Incident: Attach Documents and Complete the Text Box**

Read this <u>article</u> about how to create an incident and attach your documents.

**Note:** When you create an incident, there is a text box on the screen. Please clearly state what is not correct about the matches presented or state that no matches were presented. Clearly state the correct name, address, or other data for which you are providing documentation. Provide the name (electric bill, articles of incorporation. etc.) of the document(s) you are including and what each should be used to validate. Providing as much detail as possible will help the validation agents reviewing your incident resolve the issue.

#### For example:

"My entity physical address does not show in any of the matches I was presented. My correct name and address is \_\_\_\_\_. I included a recent utility bill with my correct legal business name and physical address for evidence." "My date of incorporation was not accepted. My correct date of incorporation is MM/DD/YYYY. I have included my original articles of organization from MM/DD/YYYY which shows this, but since it's older than 5 years, I also included a recent utility bill that confirms our current legal business name and current, correct physical address."

"There were no matches for my entity. I have included my tax return and receipt to show my legal business name, physical address, and the date and state my business was established."

- → Learn more about what you can expect after submitting your validation incident, including how to check the status of your validation request.
- → Browse our collection of help FAQs here to learn more about entity validation.
- → Did the entity validation team request additional documentation? Did you forget to add a document or find a better document to evidence your entity information after submitting your incident? Follow these instructions to update your attachments.

