



# DUNS Number

## Client Quick-Start Guide

Prepared by FLM Consulting & Solutions LLC | Effective: 2025–2026

### What Is a DUNS Number?

A **DUNS Number (Data Universal Numbering System)** is a unique, free, 9-digit identifier issued by **Dun & Bradstreet (D&B)**. Think of it as a social security number for your business. It links your company to a D&B business credit profile and is recognized by government agencies, lenders, suppliers, and partners worldwide.

**Important Update (Effective April 2022):** The federal government now uses the **Unique Entity ID (UEI)** — a 12-character alphanumeric code assigned through **SAM.gov** — as the primary identifier for federal contracts and grants. Your DUNS number remains valuable for business credit, banking, supplier relationships, state/local government contracts, and international business. You'll often need both.

### Why Your Business Needs a DUNS Number

<p><b>Federal &amp; State Contracting</b></p> <p>Required by many state and local agencies and historically the foundation for federal supplier registration. Keeps your profile active in procurement databases.</p>	<p><b>Business Credit Building</b></p> <p>D&amp;B's Paydex score (0–100) is used by lenders, suppliers, and partners to assess your creditworthiness. No DUNS = no D&amp;B credit file.</p>
<p><b>SAM.gov &amp; UEI Registration</b></p> <p>Even though SAM.gov now issues the UEI, D&amp;B data can enrich your entity profile and help validate your business details during registration.</p>	<p><b>SBA Certifications</b></p> <p>Programs like 8(a), WOSB, HUBZone, and SDVOSB may reference your D&amp;B profile during due diligence and eligibility reviews.</p>
<p><b>Banking &amp; Financing</b></p> <p>Many banks and lenders pull your D&amp;B report when evaluating business lines of credit, loans, or Net-30 accounts.</p>	<p><b>Supplier &amp; Partner Vetting</b></p> <p>Large corporations and primes vet subcontractors through D&amp;B. An active, clean profile signals legitimacy and capacity.</p>

### Before You Apply: Gather These Documents & Details

Have the following information ready **before** you visit [dnb.com](https://dnb.com). Incomplete submissions delay processing and may result in duplicate records.

#	Item / Description	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	<b>Legal Business Name</b> Exactly as it appears on your state registration or IRS documents. No abbreviations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<b>DBA / Trade Name</b> If your operating name differs from your legal name, include both.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<b>EIN (Employer Identification Number)</b> Your 9-digit federal Tax ID. Sole proprietors may use their SSN if no EIN exists.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<b>Physical Business Address</b> Must be a street address — no P.O. boxes. This is your registered business location.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<b>Mailing Address</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	If different from physical address, include it here.	
6	<b>Business Phone Number</b> A direct number tied to the business, not a personal cell if avoidable.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<b>Business Website</b> Include if you have one. Strengthens your profile's legitimacy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<b>Business Structure / Entity Type</b> LLC, S-Corp, C-Corp, Sole Proprietor, Partnership, Non-Profit, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<b>Year Business Was Established</b> The year you officially formed or began operating.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	<b>Number of Employees</b> Full-time equivalent count. Use 1 if you are a sole proprietor/owner-operator.	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	<b>Primary Business Activity</b> Brief description of what your business does (e.g., "IT consulting services").	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	<b>NAICS Code</b> Your primary North American Industry Classification System code. Find yours at <a href="https://www.census.gov/naics">census.gov/naics</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	<b>Annual Revenue (Approximate)</b> An estimate is fine. D&B uses this to populate your credit profile.	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	<b>Owner / Principal Name &amp; Title</b> Full legal name and your role (e.g., Founder & CEO, Managing Member).	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Step-by-Step: How to Obtain Your DUNS Number

1	<b>Go to the D&amp;B Website</b> Open your browser and navigate to <a href="https://www.dnb.com">www.dnb.com</a> . This is the only official source — do not use third-party sites that charge fees for a free service. <b>Note:</b> URL: <a href="https://www.dnb.com">https://www.dnb.com</a>   Look for "Get a D-U-N-S Number" or "Free D-U-N-S"
2	<b>Search for an Existing DUNS Number</b> Before applying, search D&B's database to confirm you don't already have one. Duplicate records can complicate your credit profile. <b>Note:</b> Use the D&B search tool. Enter your legal business name and address.
3	<b>Create a D&amp;B Account</b> Click "Sign Up" or "Create Account." You'll need a valid business email address. This account lets you manage and monitor your D&B profile going forward. <b>Note:</b> Use your business email (not personal). Save your login credentials securely.
4	<b>Click "Get a Free D-U-N-S Number"</b> From your D&B dashboard or homepage, select the option to obtain a free DUNS number. Ignore any upsell prompts for paid services — the DUNS itself is always free. <b>Note:</b> D&B may offer paid "expedited" options. The standard free option is sufficient.
5	<b>Complete the Online Application</b> Fill in all required fields using the information you gathered in the pre-flight checklist. Double-check that your legal name matches your EIN exactly. Mismatches delay processing. <b>Note:</b> Required: Legal name, physical address, EIN, entity type, business activity, employee count.
6	<b>Submit &amp; Confirm Your Application</b>

Review all entries carefully before submitting. D&B will generate your DUNS number. In most cases you'll receive it instantly online.

**Note:** Processing time: Instant (online) to 30 business days (mail). Online is strongly recommended.

## 7 Record and Secure Your DUNS Number

Write it down, save it to a secure document, and share it with your accountant and any team members handling contracting or procurement.

**Note:** Format: 9 digits (e.g., 123456789). Store it with your EIN and SAM.gov credentials.

## 8 Claim and Optimize Your D&B Profile

Log into your D&B account and review your full business profile. Update inaccurate information, add a business description, and verify all contact details.

**Note:** A complete, accurate profile = stronger D&B Paydex score potential.

## 9 Monitor Your D&B Profile Regularly

Check your D&B profile at least quarterly. Dispute inaccurate trade lines, update employee counts annually, and keep your address current.

**Note:** Sign up for free D&B alerts to be notified of any profile changes.

## 10 Register in SAM.gov for Federal Contracting

Head to SAM.gov to complete your System for Award Management registration and obtain your Unique Entity ID (UEI). Both identifiers are essential for federal contracting.

**Note:** URL: <https://sam.gov> | SAM.gov registration is free and must be renewed annually.

## Common Issues & FAQs

### Q: How long does it take?

A: Online applications typically generate a DUNS number instantly. If D&B requires verification it can take up to 30 business days. Always apply online.

### Q: Is there a fee?

A: No. A DUNS number is always free through dnb.com. If any site charges you, it is an unnecessary third-party service.

### Q: What if I already have a DUNS number?

A: Search D&B's database first. If your business was previously registered anywhere, a record may already exist. Claim it rather than creating a duplicate.

### Q: My legal name changed. What do I do?

A: Log into your D&B account and update your profile. Attach legal documentation (amended articles, IRS letter) to support the change request.

### Q: Do I need a separate DUNS for each business entity?

A: Yes. Each legal entity should have its own DUNS number. Do not share numbers across entities.

### Q: What is the D&B Paydex Score?

A: A 0–100 score based on how promptly your business pays its bills. A score of 80+ is considered good. Build it by opening trade lines with Net-30 vendors who report to D&B.

### Q: Do I need a DUNS for SAM.gov?

A: As of April 4, 2022, SAM.gov no longer requires a DUNS number. You'll receive a UEI during registration. However, maintaining your D&B profile is strongly recommended.

### Q: My address or info changed. Do I update D&B?

A: Yes — always. Outdated information causes mismatches in SAM.gov, procurement systems, and lender verifications. Update within 30 days of any change.

## After Your DUNS: What Comes Next

- **Register in SAM.gov**  
sam.gov — required for all federal contracts and grants. Renew annually.
- **Get Your UEI**  
Assigned automatically during SAM.gov registration. 12-character alphanumeric.
- **Pursue SBA Certifications**  
8(a), WOSB, HUBZone, SDVOSB — each requires active SAM.gov registration.
- **Open Net-30 Vendor Accounts**  
Establish trade lines that report to D&B to build your Paydex score.
- **Obtain a CAGE Code**  
Assigned by DLA after SAM.gov registration. Required for many DOD contracts.
- **Register on Sub-Portals**  
GovWin, eBuy, PTAC databases, and agency-specific procurement portals.

## Key Resources

Resource	URL / Notes
D&B DUNS Registration	<a href="http://www.dnb.com">www.dnb.com</a>
SAM.gov (UEI + Federal Reg.)	<a href="http://www.sam.gov">www.sam.gov</a>
NAICS Code Lookup	<a href="http://www.census.gov/naics">www.census.gov/naics</a>
SBA Certifications	<a href="http://certify.sba.gov">certify.sba.gov</a>
CAGE Code Info (DLA)	<a href="http://www.sam.gov">www.sam.gov</a> (assigned during registration)
PTAC / Procurement Assistance	<a href="http://www.aptac-us.org">www.aptac-us.org</a>



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