STEP BY STEP GUIDE

YOUR LEGACY LAUNCH PAD

AEK CONSULTING INC.
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

Phase 0 — Clarify Your Foundation

- Complete the quick questionnaire to baseline where you are.
- Choose a strong name: Align with mission & longevity, check state registry, IRS exempt orgs, USPTO, and domain availability.
- Write your Vision and Mission statements.
- Set strategic objectives with SMART goals and assign owners & timelines.

Phase 1 — Pre-NPO Strategy & Plan

- Draft a lean business plan (10–20 pages): include problem, Theory of Change, program briefs, KPIs, and multi-year budget.
- Pick your primary NAICS code for filings and grants.

Phase 2 — Form Your Nonprofit at the State Level

- Appoint an incorporator, directors, and a registered agent.
- Prepare Articles of Incorporation with IRS-required clauses.
- Draft bylaws including board structure, officers, meetings, and fiscal policies.
- Adopt Conflict-of-Interest policy and incorporation statement.
- File Articles with the Secretary of State and complete required filings.
- Hold the Organizational Meeting and adopt bylaws, elect officers, and authorize filings.
- Register for state licenses and business registrations.

Phase 3 — Switch to Federal

- Obtain an EIN using IRS Form SS-4.
- Apply for 501(c)(3) status (Form 1023 or 1023-EZ) with narratives, budgets, and governance documentation.

Phase 4 — After IRS Approval

- Apply for state tax exemptions (income/sales/property).
- Keep your IRS Determination Letter for banks, grants, and donors.
- **Phase 5 — Registrations That Unlock Funding**
- Register for charitable solicitation in each fundraising state.
- Register at SAM.gov to get UEI and CAGE code for federal grants.

Phase 6 — Governance & Leadership

- Seat officers and confirm duties.
- Establish a Board of Directors and an optional advisory board.

Phase 7 — Brand, Credibility & Digital Presence

- Launch a professional website including mission, programs, and donation links.
- Protect brand assets via trademark and copyright registrations.

Phase 8 — Finance & Compliance Rhythm

- File annual IRS Form 990 on time.
- Maintain board minutes, policies, and internal controls.
- Track KPIs and report quarterly to the board.

Phase 9 — Fundraising Engine

- Implement a CRM to manage donors and volunteers.
- Create monthly donor programs and grant pipelines.
- Host events and partner with other nonprofits or corporations.
- Use Google for Nonprofits and TechSoup for tech savings.

Phase 10 — Transparency & Stewardship

- Publish an Annual Report and Case for Support.
- Send monthly newsletters and quarterly impact briefings.

Key Documents Checklist

- [ ] · Articles of Incorporation (IRS-compliant)
- [ ] · Bylaws and Conflict-of-Interest policy
- [ ] · Organizational minutes and officer elections
- [ ] · EIN Letter (CP-575) and IRS Determination Letter
- [ ] · State tax-exempt certificates
- [ ] · Charitable registrations and renewals
- [ ] · SAM.gov registration (UEI and CAGE)
- [ ] · Financial controls, retention, whistleblower policies
- [ ] · IRS Form 990 filings and audits
- [ ] · Annual Report, Case for Support, and website donate page