Consider Five Alternatives to Starting a New Nonprofit

Start with a good idea for a nonprofit.

Scan the field to learn whether a nonprofit is already doing this work.

By scanning the field, you determine the following...

A good local nonprofit exists with a similar mission.

...talk with that nonprofit about your idea...

A good nonprofit exists with a similar mission, but it’s not local.

...contact that nonprofit to find options for bringing their work to your community...

No nonprofit does similar work. Or, no nonprofit has the capacity/interest to support your good idea.

...consider issues of liability, filings and paperwork, tax deductibility and costs/labor associated with incorporation...

...prepare to start from scratch a new entity...

1. Join an existing effort.
   - Volunteer for the nonprofit; join their board; or apply to work for them as a staff member.

2. Create a special program.
   - Start a new initiative within that nonprofit and operate as part of their organization.

3. Find a sponsor organization.
   - Pursue fiscal sponsorship and operate under another nonprofit for short or long-term.

4. Start a local chapter.
   - Join the existing nonprofit and start doing work locally under their umbrella as a chapter or affiliate.

5. Maintain an unincorporated association.
   - As a small organization, you may avoid the hassles of incorporating and still get many benefits of formal nonprofits.

Choose to incorporate and move forward with starting a nonprofit.

Over time, you may decide that you are ready to start a new entity.

Start a Successful Nonprofit
After carefully weighing all of your options, slowly move forward with starting a new nonprofit.