All fictitious name certificates for businesses (commonly known as "doing business as" or "dba" certificates) are filed with the Town Clerk. Massachusetts requires any person or business entity who is conducting business under an alias (i.e. any other name than their own), including corporations, to file a business certificate in the community where their business is principally headquartered. This form (Business Certificates - DBA), also called a "DBA" which stands for "doing business as", contains the name and address of the business and the names and residences of the principals of the business. This certificate must be signed in the presence of a designated clerk in the Office of the Town Clerk or a Notary Public. The certificate is effective for four years and the filing fee is $75.00. The fee for filing an amendment is $10.00.

DBA certificates allow consumers to identify and locate the proprietor of a business. The filing of a "dba" certificate also serves as notice that the filer claims the exclusive use of the name contained in the certificate. Filing a business certificate at the local level, however, does not protect your name. If you have a business name or a symbol that you consider unique and valuable you may want to register it as a trademark or a service mark.

A "trademark" is any word, name, symbol or device, or combination of these used by a person (individual, partnership, corporation, or association) to identify his goods and to distinguish them from the goods of others.

A "service mark" identifies and distinguishes a person's services and is given the same protection as a trademark.

There is no requirement under the Trademark Law (M.G.L. Chapter 110B) that a person register with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. However, under M.G.L. Chapter 110, §5, any person doing business under name other than his own must file a business certificate with the town or city hall where he maintains an office.