

Host your help center in a subfolder of your website

Domain, access and SEO

Serve your help center from a path of your own website, like www.yoursite.com/docs, instead of its own subdomain. Your articles then build up your main domain, and customers stay on the address they already know, from your homepage to your answers.

Who can do this: Owners and Admins · **Plans:** Growth and Catalyst, and their 14-day trials

How it works

Your website's web server or CDN acts as a proxy. It forwards every request under your path to your help center at yourname.helpcenter.io, with the path, cookies and headers intact. Your help center recognizes those requests and answers with pages whose links, canonical tags and sitemap use your address. Your website stays where it runs today.

You set it up in **Settings** → **Subfolder hosting**, in four steps: choose the address, add a proxy rule to your website, check the setup, then go live. Nothing changes for your visitors until the last step.

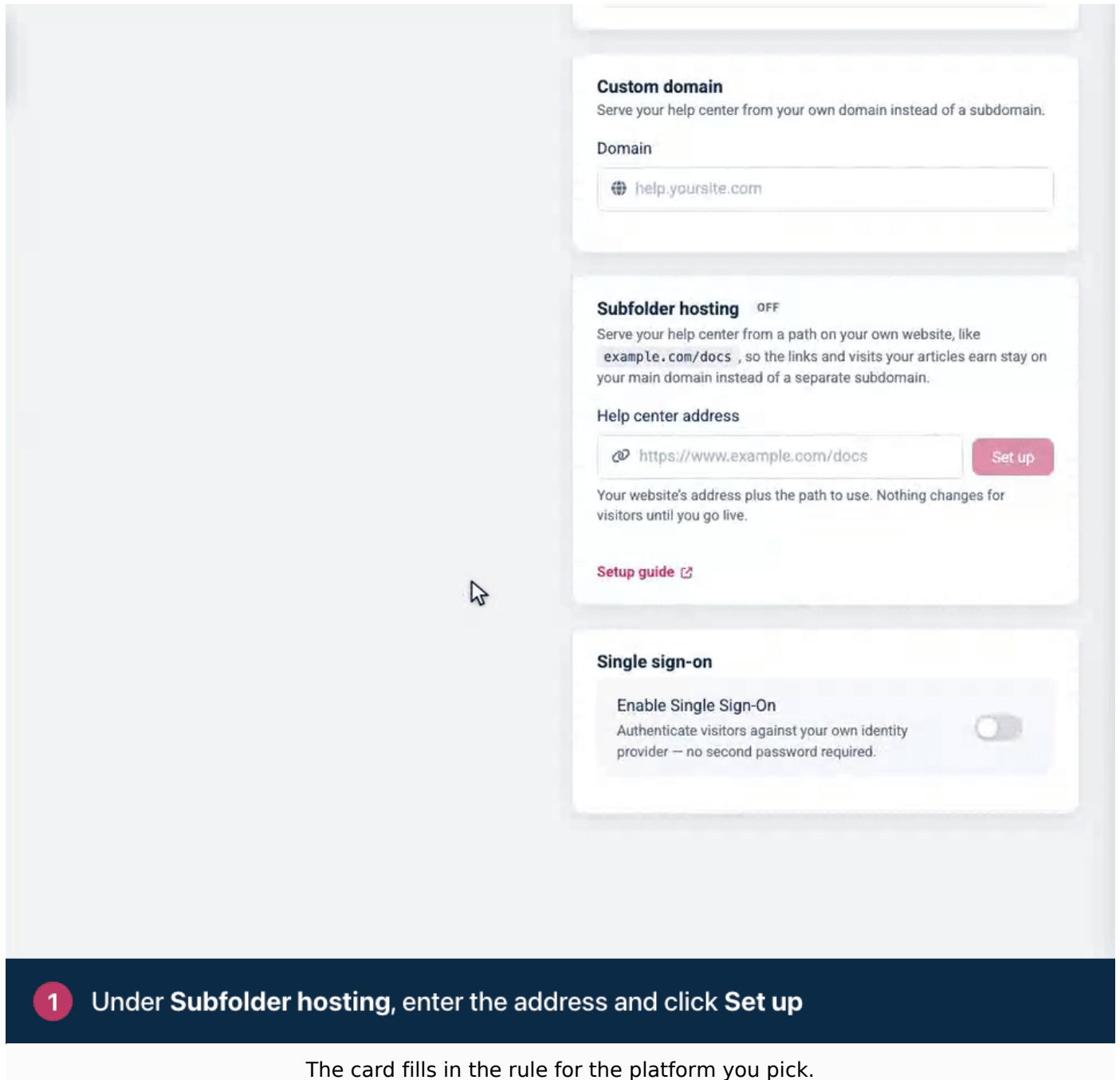
Before you start

- Your help center is public. Private and password-protected help centers sign their readers in on HelpCenter.io, which a page on your own website cannot do. A help center with **JS-only access** only opens inside the widget, so turn that off first.

- You can change your website's web server or CDN configuration. Settings gives you a ready-made rule for nginx, Apache, Cloudflare, Vercel / Next.js, Netlify, Amazon CloudFront and IIS. Any other reverse proxy works too, as long as it forwards the full path, the request method, cookies and headers, and sends your help center's own address (yourname.helpcenter.io) as the Host header.
- If your website runs on Webflow, Framer, Wix, Squarespace or a WordPress host that cannot proxy a path on its own, put it behind Cloudflare and use the Cloudflare rule.

Choose the address

1. Go to **Settings** and find **Subfolder hosting**.
2. In **Help center address**, enter your website's address followed by the path, like `https://www.yoursite.com/docs`.
3. Select **Set up**. The card now shows **Testing** and the next steps.



The address must start with `https://`. The path is lowercase and one to three levels deep, like `/docs` or `/support/help`. It cannot be a path your help center already uses, such as `/content` or `/search`, or a language code, such as `/de`. This guide uses `/docs` as the example; the dashboard shows the path you chose.

Forward the path from your website

1. Under **Forward /docs from your website**, pick where your website runs.
2. Copy the configuration. It already holds your address, your help center and your proxy secret.
3. Add it to your web server or CDN, before any catch-all rule, then reload or deploy.

For example, this is the nginx rule for a help center at yourname.helpcenter.io served at www.yoursite.com/docs:

```
location ~ ^/docs(?:/|$) {  
    proxy_pass https://yourname.helpcenter.io;  
    proxy_ssl_server_name on;  
    proxy_set_header Host yourname.helpcenter.io;  
    proxy_set_header X-Forwarded-For $proxy_add_x_forwarded_for;  
    proxy_set_header X-Forwarded-Proto $scheme;  
    proxy_set_header X-HelpCenter-Proxy-Secret "YOUR-PROXY-SECRET";  
    proxy_redirect off;  
}
```

The rule must forward each request, not redirect it: visitors keep seeing your address. Forward the full path too. For nginx, that means proxy_pass with nothing after the host.

Where your website runs

Good to know

nginx

Add the rule inside the server block for your website, before any catch-all location (such as try_files for a CMS), then reload nginx.

Apache	Needs mod_proxy, mod_proxy_http, mod_ssl and mod_headers. Add the rule to your website's VirtualHost, then reload Apache.
Cloudflare	Create a Worker with the code from Settings and add the route for your path, like <code>www.yoursite.com/docs*</code> .
Vercel / Next.js	Add the two rewrites to <code>vercel.json</code> , or return them from <code>rewrites()</code> in <code>next.config.js</code> . Vercel rewrites cannot send the proxy secret, so visitors share Vercel's address for rate limiting, which is fine for most help centers.
Netlify	Add the two rules to <code>netlify.toml</code> . Status 200 makes Netlify forward the request instead of redirecting it.
Amazon CloudFront	Add your help center as an origin with the proxy secret as a custom header, and two behaviors for your path that allow every method and use the <code>AllViewerExceptHostHeader</code> origin request policy.
IIS	Needs URL Rewrite and Application Request Routing with the proxy turned on. Add the proxy secret header to the allowed server variables.

The proxy secret

Your proxy sends the secret in the `X-HelpCenter-Proxy-Secret` header. It lets your help center trust the visitor address your proxy passes on, so rate limits and article ratings

count each visitor rather than your proxy. It is already in the configuration you copied. Keep it private.

The secret is optional behind Cloudflare and Amazon CloudFront. To replace it, select **Rotate**, then **Rotate secret**. The old secret stops working at once, so update your proxy with the new one straight away.

Check the setup

1. Select **Check setup**. HelpCenter.io sends a few requests through your address, the way your visitors' requests will arrive.
2. Fix anything the check reports, then select **Check setup** again.

https://www.northwind.example/docs

Copy

Change

2 Forward /docs from your website

Add this to the web server or CDN in front of **www.northwind.example**. It forwards `/docs` to your help center at `northwind.helpcenter.io`. Pick where your website runs:

nginx

Apache

Cloudflare

Vercel / Next.js

Netlify

Amazon CloudFront

IIS

Apache

Copy

HelpCenter.io: serve your help center at https://
Needs mod_proxy, mod_proxy_http, mod_ssl and mod
Add to the <VirtualHost> for www.northwind.examp
SSLProxyEngine On
ProxyPreserveHost Off
ProxyPassMatch "^/docs(/.*)?\$" "https://northwind.
<LocationMatch "/docs(?:/|\$)">
RequestHeader set X-HelpCenter-Proxy-Secret "Z
</LocationMatch>

ProxyPreserveHost Off sends the help center's own Host
header, which it needs to find your help center.

Proxy secret

.....

Show

Copy

Rotate

Sent by your proxy as `X-HelpCenter-Proxy-Secret`, it lets us
trust the visitor address your proxy passes on, so rate limits and
article ratings count each visitor. Already in the configuration above.
private.

Apache configuration copied to clipboard

Close

Saved. Set up your proxy next, then check it.

Close

Check setup

2 Pick where your website runs and copy the rule

When every check passes, the card says you can go live.

Check	What it confirms
Reach your help center at your address	Your website forwards the path to this help center.

Keep the /docs path

Requests arrive with the path intact, so every page resolves and is cached at our edge.

Pass cookies both ways

Cookies reach your help center and come back, so contact forms, ratings and comments work.

Forward form posts

POST requests reach your help center.

Identify your visitors

Your proxy sends the proxy secret and each visitor's address. The secret is optional, but a wrong one fails the check.

Load your help center

Your help center's home page loads at your address.

Go live

1. Once the check passes, select **Go live**, then **Go live** again to confirm.
2. Copy the Sitemap: line the card shows and add it to the robots.txt at the root of your website. Search engines only read robots.txt there, so this is how they find your help center's sitemap.

Going live:

- redirects every page on your helpcenter.io address, and on your custom domain if you have one, permanently to the same page under your subfolder;
- points canonical links, the sitemap and shared links at your subfolder;
- lets search engines index your subfolder. Before you go live, pages under it ask search engines not to index them, so nothing is listed twice.

Keep your proxy rule in place. If your website stops forwarding the path, your help center goes offline for your visitors until you undo this in Settings.

Change the address or turn it off

- **Change** puts a new address back into testing until it passes the setup check and you go live. Update your proxy rule for the new path; your proxy secret stays the same.
- **Stop redirecting to /docs** moves a live subfolder back into testing: your help center answers at its own address again, and pages under the subfolder stop being indexed.
- **Turn off subfolder hosting** removes the address and the proxy secret. Remove the proxy rule from your website too, or visitors there will see an error.

Good to know

- If your help center is hidden from search engines, it stays hidden under your subfolder too.

- Our servers limit how many requests one address can send each second. Behind Cloudflare or Amazon CloudFront every visitor keeps their own address, but a proxy that is a single server sends all your visitors from its address, even with the proxy secret. If your help center gets a lot of traffic and your proxy is one server, contact support before you go live.
- Statistics keep counting these visits in the default **Engagement events** view. The **Backend requests** view may not count them.
- If you move to a plan without subfolder hosting, a live subfolder keeps working, and you can still check it, stop redirecting or turn it off. Changing the address or going live again needs a plan that includes it. See [plans and pricing](#).

Troubleshooting

The check says your website answered with a redirect. Your rule redirects visitors instead of forwarding the request. Use a proxy rule (in nginx, `proxy_pass`; in Netlify, status 200), not a redirect.

The check says your website answered 404, or that something other than HelpCenter.io answered. The rule is not active, or your website's own pages answer first. Check that the rule is saved and reloaded, and place it before any catch-all rule.

The check says an old, cached answer came back. Your proxy or CDN caches the setup check. Do not cache anything under your path's `/_hc/`.

The check says your proxy removes /docs before forwarding. Forward the full path. In nginx, write `proxy_pass` with no path after the host.

The check reports a problem with form posts or cookies. Allow every request method, forward the Cookie header, and pass Set-Cookie back unchanged. Contact forms, ratings and comments need all three.

The check says the proxy secret does not match. Copy the secret again from Settings. It changes whenever you rotate it.

The check says the request arrived without the right Host header. Make your proxy send your help center's own address as the Host header, like Host: yourname.helpcenter.io.

Related articles

- [Use your own domain](#)
- [Control who can see your help center](#)
- [SEO settings for your help center](#)
- [Hide your help center from search engines](#)
- [Show your help center only inside your app](#)