

[Your business name] — Business Plan

Car wash in [Your city] · Startup plan

Executive summary

[Your business name] is a new car wash in [Your city] offering exterior hand wash and dry; full wash with interior vacuum and windows; express wax, tire shine and add-ons; and unlimited monthly wash plans and fleet accounts. The model is a busy-road site, fast throughput, add-ons that lift the ticket, and unlimited monthly plans that keep revenue steady when it rains.

Startup budget: \$116,750 across 11 items, with funding still to be decided.

Twelve months from now, success looks like this: [What success looks like twelve months from now]

Products and services

[Your business name]'s core service is exterior hand wash and dry. The menu is three or four packages with add-ons priced separately, every car follows the same wash sequence so paint is never scratched, and monthly plans bill automatically.

- Exterior hand wash and dry
 - Full wash with interior vacuum and windows
 - Express wax, tire shine and add-ons
 - Unlimited monthly wash plans and fleet accounts
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Market analysis

The customers are commuters who want a clean car fast, owners who won't let a machine touch their paint, rideshare drivers and small fleets washing weekly, and dealerships and rental lots that need cars turned around.

- Commuters who want a clean car in 20 minutes on the way home
- Owners who don't want a machine touching their paint
- Rideshare drivers and small fleets that need washes every week
- Dealerships and rental lots that need cars turned around fast

Marketing strategy

Most customers will find [Your business name] on Google and through word of mouth — searching for a car wash near them or driving past a busy, well-signed site. Reviews on the Google Business Profile, a first-wash offer on the road sign, and a website with the menu, monthly plans and a fleet-inquiry form turn that traffic into regulars.

- Google Business Profile and Google Maps — “car wash near me” plus your city
- Word of mouth and drive-by traffic on a busy road — the site is the marketing
- Road signage, a first-wash offer and a banner the day you open
- Fleet, rideshare and dealership accounts pitched directly
- A website with your wash menu, prices, monthly plans, hours and a fleet-inquiry form

Operations plan

The owner runs the bays in year one with a small trained crew, watches car counts and water use daily, maintains the equipment and reclaim system on a schedule, and pushes monthly plans and fleet accounts so revenue doesn't depend on the weather.

- A menu of three or four wash packages with add-ons priced separately, posted on a board at the entrance
- Water reclamation and an oil-water separator so wash water meets local discharge rules
- Bay equipment — pressure washers, foam systems, vacuums — checked daily and serviced on a schedule
- Unlimited monthly plans on recurring billing so revenue doesn't depend on the weather
- Staff trained on one wash sequence so every car leaves the same and paint never gets scratched

Startup costs

What it will take to open the doors, with funding still to be decided.

Startup costs

ITEM	AMOUNT
Lease deposit and first months' rent on an existing wash site or a lot with water and drainage	\$18,000
Bay equipment: pressure washers, foam and chemical systems, vacuums, hoses and dryers (new or used)	\$35,000
Water reclamation system and oil-water separator	\$15,000
Site work: bay surfaces, drainage, lighting, canopy and signage	\$16,500
Insurance (first year)	\$4,000
Pay stations, POS and card readers	\$4,500
Opening stock of soaps, waxes, towels and tire shine	\$2,000
Business license, wastewater discharge permit and inspections	\$1,750
Website and Google Business Profile	\$0
Membership billing and fleet invoicing software (first year)	\$0
Working capital (first three months)	\$20,000
Total	\$116,750

Typical range to start a car wash in the US: \$38,500–\$198,000. Your list is what you decided to spend — replace estimates with real quotes as you get them. Website and Google Business Profile: Your Zarla plan includes the website with your wash menu and monthly plans and walks you through your Google Business Profile — a designer typically charges \$1,500 or more to build one. Membership billing and fleet invoicing software (first year): Your Zarla plan includes invoicing and a customer list for fleet accounts with the website — you may still want a dedicated membership-billing system as the plans grow.

Financial plan

The numbers below come from your own startup list and typical monthly costs for a car wash in the US. Rent, equipment and water rules are the fixed bet; car counts, add-ons and memberships decide whether the reserve lasts until the site is busy.

Typical monthly operating costs for a car wash: \$4,670–\$30,950 a month, before the owner's own pay.

Add a monthly sales target and the plan will show how long it takes to recover the startup budget.

Typical monthly operating costs

COST	TYPICAL RANGE
Rent and property costs	\$2,500–\$10,000
Wash crew and attendants (once you hire)	\$0–\$12,000
Water, sewer, electricity and gas	\$800–\$3,000
Soaps, waxes, chemicals and towels	\$500–\$2,000
Equipment maintenance and repairs	\$300–\$1,500
Insurance	\$170–\$500
Membership billing and fleet invoicing software (included with Zarla)	\$0–\$150
Marketing, signage and first-wash offers	\$200–\$1,000
Card processing on washes and monthly plans	\$200–\$800

US ranges for a small operation; replace with your own figures as you learn them. Lines marked (included with Zarla) are what those tools cost separately — with Zarla they are part of one monthly plan.

Risks and honest downsides

Every car wash plan should say out loud what can go wrong. For [Your business name], the real risks are:

- Rent, equipment and site work are a large fixed bet before the first car rolls in
- Revenue follows the weather — a rainy week empties the bays, and winter is slow across the northern US
- Water and sewer rules can add tens of thousands in equipment, and a site without proper drainage can't legally open
- Express tunnel chains nearby compete on price and speed; an independent wash wins on hand care, add-ons and memberships
- Scratched paint or a snapped mirror is a claim, not a complaint — garage keeper's coverage and a trained crew are the defense

Licenses, permits and insurance

What [Your business name] needs before it can legally trade in the US. Rules vary by state and city — confirm each item with your local licensing office and an accountant.

- Business license and certificate of occupancy — From your city or county in most of the US; a wash site gets inspected for drainage, electrical and signage.
- Wastewater discharge permit — Most US municipalities require a permit to send wash water to the sanitary sewer, usually with an oil-water separator and often a reclamation system — stormwater drains are off limits.
- Water use and drought rules — Some Western states and cities restrict commercial water use or require reclaim systems; check with your local water utility before you sign a lease.
- Sales tax on washes — Varies by state — some states tax car-wash services and others don't; register with your state before opening.
- Business registration and EIN — Most owners form an LLC; register a DBA if the wash trades under another name.
- Insurance and workers' compensation — General liability plus garage keeper's coverage for customers' cars; workers' compensation is required in nearly every state once you have employees.

Milestones: the next 30 days

The first month's to-do list for [Your business name], in order:

- Walk former car-wash sites and lots already plumbed for drainage before pricing a fresh build
- Call your water utility and city about the discharge permit and any reclaim requirement
- Register the business, get an EIN and open a business bank account
- Price bay equipment and a reclaim system new and used from two or three suppliers
- Get insurance quotes that include garage keeper's coverage
- Set your wash menu and monthly-plan prices from real water, chemical and labor costs
- Set up a free Google Business Profile and put your website live
- Pitch two rideshare groups, a dealership or a rental lot on a fleet rate before opening day

Appendix: what a lender will ask for

This plan tells the story and shows the numbers. If you take it to a bank, expect to be asked for these documents as well:

- Two years of personal tax returns and a personal financial statement
- A month-by-month 12-month cash-flow projection built on realistic car counts and the seasonal dips
- The lease or letter of intent, and quotes for the equipment, reclaim system and site work
- Your wastewater discharge permit application and proof of insurance
- Signed fleet or dealership accounts, or pre-sold monthly plans, with expected monthly revenue
- Your credit report and the equipment as collateral

Template: replace every [bracketed] line and every estimate with your own figures. Written with Zarla's free business plan generator — zarla.com/business-plan-generator writes it from five questions.

Written with Zarla · zarla.com/business-plan-generator