[Your business name] — Business Plan

Dog grooming business in [Your city] · Startup plan

Executive summary

[Your business name] is a new dog grooming business in [Your city] offering full grooms: bath, haircut, nails and ears; bath and brush-outs between haircuts; breed trims, hand scissoring and puppy first grooms; nail trims, teeth brushing and de-shedding; and senior-dog and anxious-dog appointments. The model is one groomer, prices set by size and coat, every client rebooked before they leave, and a book of regulars on four-to-eight-week cycles that keeps the calendar full.

Startup budget: $28,843 across 10 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 full grooms: bath, haircut, nails and ears. Every dog has vaccination records on file and notes on its clip, blade and temperament; matting and behavior surcharges are on the price list and explained before the groom; and no dog is ever left unattended on the table or in a dryer.

- Full grooms: bath, haircut, nails and ears
- Bath and brush-outs between haircuts
- Breed trims, hand scissoring and puppy first grooms
- Nail trims, teeth brushing and de-shedding
- Senior-dog and anxious-dog appointments

Market analysis

The customers are owners of doodles, poodles and other breeds whose coats need a cut every few weeks, busy owners who want a standing appointment with a groomer who knows their dog, owners of senior, large or anxious dogs who need a calm one-on-one groom, and the vets, walkers and trainers asked where to go.

- Owners of doodles, poodles, shih tzus and other breeds whose coats need a cut every four to eight weeks
- Busy owners who want a regular standing appointment and a groomer who knows their dog
- Owners of senior, large or anxious dogs who need a calm, one-on-one groom
- Vets, dog walkers, trainers and boarding kennels asked where to get a dog groomed

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Marketing strategy

Most new clients will come from Google and word of mouth. An owner searches “dog groomer near me” and books the groomer whose before-and-after photos and reviews they trust, so the Google Business Profile, the photos and a website with prices and online booking do the selling; recommendations at the dog park, from vets and from walkers do the rest. Rebooking at the end of every groom keeps them.

- Rebooking at the end of every groom — a standing appointment is worth more than any new client
- Google Business Profile and Google — “dog groomer near me” is searched with the dog in the car, and the reviews and photos decide the call
- Before-and-after photos on Instagram and Facebook, which clients share themselves
- Word of mouth at the dog park and from vets, walkers and trainers
- A website with your prices by size, the services you offer and online booking

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Operations plan

The groomer grooms, books and answers messages in year one, keeps notes on every dog, services the clippers and blades on a schedule, and tracks dogs per day and the rebooking rate every week. A bather is hired once the book is full three weeks ahead, so the groomer spends every hour on the work only a groomer can do.

- Prices set by size and coat, with a matting and behavior surcharge written on the price list and explained before the groom starts
- Vaccination records on file for every dog before the first appointment
- Every client rebooked before they leave, and reminders sent before each appointment
- Notes kept on every dog — the clip, the blade, the temperament, anything the owner mentioned
- Dogs never left unattended on the table or in a cage dryer, and every lump, cut or skin issue reported to the owner at pickup
- Clippers, blades and shears serviced on a schedule, and the tub, table and kennels cleaned between every dog

Startup costs

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

Startup costs

ITEM	AMOUNT
Grooming equipment: tub, table, dryers, clippers and shears	$4,500
Salon space: lease deposit, plumbing, drainage and fit-out	$14,000
Insurance (first year): liability with animal bailee cover	$1,200
Grooming facility license and local business license	$275
Opening supplies: shampoos, blades, towels and cleaning	$1,250
Business registration, LLC and EIN	$268
Website and Google Business Profile	$0
Booking, reminders and payments software (first year)	$0
Signage, business cards and appointment cards	$850
Working capital: rent and living costs for the first months	$6,500
Total	**$28,843**

Typical range to start a dog grooming business in the US: $9,385–$52,000. 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 prices, photos and online booking, and walks you through your Google Business Profile — a designer typically charges $2,000 or more to build one. Booking, reminders and payments software (first year): Online booking, reminders, invoicing and customer records come with your Zarla plan; card-processing fees are separate.

Financial plan

The numbers below come from your own startup list and typical monthly costs for a one-groomer dog grooming business in the US. Rent and the groomer's own hours are the constraint, so the plan turns on dogs groomed per day, the average ticket and how many clients rebook — a mobile van swaps the rent for fuel and a van payment.

Typical monthly operating costs for a dog grooming business: $1,500–$8,450 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 utilities (hot water, drying and ventilation)	$1,000–$3,500
Shampoo, conditioner, blades, towels and cleaning	$200–$600
Liability and animal bailee insurance	$50–$150
Blade sharpening, clipper service and equipment repair	$50–$200
Booking, reminders and payments software (included with Zarla)	$0–$100
Marketing and local advertising	$100–$500
Phone, bookkeeping and card fees	$100–$400
Bather or assistant wages (once the book is full)	$0–$3,000

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

- A dog hurt on the table or in a dryer is the risk every groomer fears — never leave a dog unattended, and carry animal bailee cover
- An empty book costs the same rent as a full one, and a new groomer's book takes months to fill
- Groomers' wrists, shoulders and backs wear out: lifting large dogs, a hydraulic table and a sustainable number of dogs a day matter over a career
- Matted, aggressive or elderly dogs take far longer than the price assumes unless the surcharge is on the price list and explained upfront
- A single bad review about a nicked ear or an uneven cut travels fast in a local dog community
- One groomer is one point of failure — illness or an injury closes the book until you're back

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.

- A business license, and a home-occupation or zoning permit for a home salon — Most US cities require a business license for a grooming business, and a salon in your home usually needs a home-occupation permit — some neighborhoods don't allow customers' dogs coming and going at all, so check the zoning before you plumb in a tub.
- A state grooming facility license in the few states that require one — Most US states have no license for groomers or grooming salons. A few do: Connecticut requires a grooming facility license from its Department of Agriculture ($200, renewed every two years, with the town's zoning sign-off), and Colorado licenses grooming facilities under its Pet Animal Care Facilities Act, renewed each year. Other states have debated groomer licensing, so check yours when you register.
- Liability insurance with animal bailee cover — Not a license, but the thing that protects the business: general liability covers a client who trips in the salon, and animal bailee cover pays when a dog in your care is cut or injured. Insureon's median for pet groomers is about $50 a month for general liability.
- Sales tax registration where it applies — In the US, shampoos, collars and treats sold over the counter are taxable retail sales in most states, and some states tax pet grooming itself as a service — register with your state's revenue department if either applies to you.
- Business registration and EIN — Most US groomers form an LLC; state filing fees run about $35 to $500. The EIN from the IRS is free, and you'll need it to open a business bank account and hire a bather.

Milestones: the next 30 days

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

- Decide your model — a home salon, a rented room, a storefront or a van — because the costs and the permits are different
- Check your city's business license and zoning, and whether your state licenses grooming facilities
- Register the business, take the free EIN and open a business bank account
- Get liability quotes with animal bailee cover before the first dog
- Price the tub, table, dryers and clippers, and plan plumbing, drainage and ventilation for the space
- Write your price list by size and coat, with the matting and behavior surcharge, and your vaccination policy
- Set up a free Google Business Profile and put your website live with your prices, photos and online booking
- Introduce yourself to local vets, dog walkers, trainers and boarding kennels
- Rebook every client before they leave, and ask each happy one for a Google review with a photo of their dog

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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 from dogs groomed per day and your average ticket
- Your grooming experience, certifications or a reference from the groomer you trained under
- The lease or letter of intent for the space, or the quote for the van
- Quotes for the tub, table, dryers and plumbing work
- Your business license, insurance quote and any state facility license
- Your credit report

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.
