[Your business name] — Business Plan

Driving school in [Your city] · Startup plan

Executive summary

[Your business name] is a new driving school in [Your city] offering teen behind-the-wheel lessons in packages of 6 or 10; road-test preparation and use of the car for the test; lessons for nervous and adult first-time drivers; refresher lessons for seniors and returning drivers; and pick-up and drop-off from home or school. The model is one licensed instructor and one dual-control car, lessons sold in packages rather than by the hour, and a calendar kept full through the school year's slow months.

Startup budget: $15,143 across 12 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 teen behind-the-wheel lessons in packages of 6 or 10. Every student's permit is checked before the first lesson, every lesson is logged with the skills covered, and parents see progress in writing before the road test.

- Teen behind-the-wheel lessons in packages of 6 or 10
- Road-test preparation and use of the car for the test
- Lessons for nervous and adult first-time drivers
- Refresher lessons for seniors and returning drivers
- Pick-up and drop-off from home or school

Market analysis

The students are teens on the permit-to-license path whose parents book and pay, adults learning to drive for the first time, new arrivals who need to pass a US road test, and seniors and returning drivers who want their confidence back.

- Parents of 15- and 16-year-olds who need behind-the-wheel hours for the permit-to-license path
- Adults learning to drive for the first time, often nervous and ready to pay for patience
- New arrivals who need to pass a US road test
- Seniors and returning drivers who want their confidence back
- High schools, homeschool groups and online driver's-ed courses that refer students for the driving hours

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Marketing strategy

Most families find the school on Google — a parent searches for driving lessons in town, compares the Google Business Profile, the reviews and the packages on the website, and books online. Referrals from online driver's-ed providers and high schools bring steady students, and word of mouth among parents, after one family's teen passes the test, does the rest.

- Google Business Profile and Google — “driving school near me” and “driving lessons” plus your town
- A website with your packages, prices, the area you pick up from and online booking parents can use at night
- Referrals from online driver's-ed providers, high schools and homeschool groups
- Word of mouth among parents — one family's teen passing the test brings their friends
- Reviews that name the instructor and the road test passed

Operations plan

The owner teaches in year one: lessons booked online in packages with a 24-hour cancellation policy, the dual-control car maintained and insured for instruction, every lesson logged, and the instructor license, school license and surety bond renewed on schedule.

- Every student's learner's permit checked before the first lesson on a public road
- Lessons logged for each student — hours, skills and progress — for parents and, where your state requires it, the licensing agency
- The car booked in packages, with a 24-hour cancellation policy, so an empty hour is rare
- The dual-control car inspected, insured for instruction and kept spotless — it is the classroom and the ad
- Road-test routes practiced and the car ready for test appointments at the local testing office
- The instructor license and the school license renewed on schedule, with continuing education where required

Startup costs

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

Startup costs

ITEM	AMOUNT
A reliable sedan: down payment, or one you already own	$4,000
Commercial auto insurance for driver training (first year)	$3,750
Dual-control brake installed on the passenger side	$700
Driving school license application and fingerprints	$425
Instructor license and the state-approved course	$400
Surety bond premium (first year)	$300
Working capital: running costs for the first two to three months	$4,000
Office: a place of business open to the public, where required	$1,000
Roof sign or door magnets marking the car as a student driver car	$300
Website with your packages, prices and online booking	$0
Online booking, student records and card payments (first year)	$0
Business registration, LLC and EIN	$268
Total	**$15,143**

Typical range to start a driving school in the US: $5,485–$27,900. Your list is what you decided to spend — replace estimates with real quotes as you get them. Website with your packages, prices and online booking: Your Zarla plan includes the website — your packages, prices, pick-up area and booking — and walks you through your Google Business Profile; a designer typically charges $2,000 or more to build one. Online booking, student records and card payments (first year): Online booking, invoicing and a student list come with your Zarla plan; a lesson-logging app for state records is separate if your state requires one.

Financial plan

The numbers below come from your own startup list and typical monthly costs for a one-car driving school in the US. Commercial insurance and the car are the largest costs and are mostly fixed, so the plan turns on how many lesson-hours a week the car is booked, at what price, and how evenly bookings spread across the school year.

Typical monthly operating costs for a driving school: $755–$3,580 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
Office rent, where your state requires a place of business	$0–$800
Car payment, or saving toward the next car	$0–$600
Commercial auto insurance for driver training	$210–$420
Fuel	$250–$600
Maintenance, tires and brakes — including the second brake	$100–$300
Online booking, invoicing and a student list (included with Zarla)	$0–$30
Card processing fees, about 3% of what students pay by card	$75–$250
Google Business Profile photos, referral cards and school outreach	$50–$300
License and bond renewals, spread by month	$20–$80
Phone, bookkeeping and accounting	$50–$200

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

- Commercial auto insurance is large, due whether the car is booked or not, and rises with any claim
- One car and one instructor is one point of failure: a breakdown or an illness stops every lesson
- A student's mistake on a public road is always possible, which is why the second brake and the training matter
- Demand is seasonal and follows the school calendar and your state's teen-licensing rules
- State rules on hours, forms and approved courses change, and a school that falls behind can lose its license
- Evenings, weekends and school holidays are when students can drive

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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.

- Driving school license from your state — In the US a school that sells driving lessons is licensed by the state — by the DMV, the department of public safety or a licensing agency. California's DMV licenses the owner ($150 application, a $10,000 surety bond, a licensed operator and instructor, proof of insurance) and requires an established place of business open to the public, with a sign, inspected before the license is issued. Texas licenses driver education providers through its Department of Licensing and Regulation ($500 application and a $10,000 surety bond). Check your own state's agency before you advertise lessons.
- Driving instructor license — Most US states license each instructor separately from the school: typically 21 or older, a clean multi-year driving record, a background check and a state-approved instructor course. The school's license and the instructor's license are separate applications, even when you are both.
- Dual-control car, inspected and insured for instruction — Most US states require an instructor-side brake for behind-the-wheel lessons, and some set more — Texas asks for an instructor-side rearview mirror and a registered, inspected and insured car. The insurance has to be a commercial policy that covers paid instruction.
- Business registration and EIN — Many driving school owners in the US form an LLC; state filing fees run about $35 to $500. The EIN from the IRS is free.

Milestones: the next 30 days

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

- Read your state's driving school and instructor rules from the licensing agency itself
- Take the instructor course and apply for your instructor license
- Register the business, take the free EIN and open a business bank account
- Get commercial auto insurance quotes for driver training and buy the surety bond your state requires
- Have the dual-control brake installed and the car inspected
- Apply for the school license
- Set packages and prices from what schools near you charge
- Put your website live with your packages, prices, pick-up area and booking, and claim your free Google Business Profile
- Introduce yourself to an online driver's-ed provider and two high schools

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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 lesson-hours a week and your package prices
- Your instructor license, the school license and the surety bond
- The office lease, where your state requires a place of business
- Commercial auto insurance quotes or the policy for driver training
- The car's title or loan papers and the dual-control installation invoice
- 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.
