

Fernhollow Skin Studio — Business Plan

Esthetician in Raleigh, NC · Startup plan

Executive summary

Fernhollow Skin Studio is a new esthetician business in Raleigh, NC offering custom facials, 60 and 90 minutes; acne and problem-skin treatment series; chemical peels within your state's scope; brow, lip and full-body waxing; lash and brow tinting; and retail skincare with a written home routine. The model is one licensed esthetician in a salon suite, a book filled by rebooking and a monthly facial plan, and retail matched to a written home routine for every client.

Startup budget: \$16,461 across 12 items, funded from savings. Target: \$8,000 in monthly sales.

Twelve months from now, success looks like this: A full book three days a week, sixty clients on a monthly facial plan, and retail at a fifth of revenue

Products and services

Fernhollow Skin Studio's core service is custom facials, 60 and 90 minutes. Every new client starts with a skin consultation and a health history, every treatment stays inside the state's scope of practice, and every visit ends with a written home routine and the next appointment booked.

- Custom facials, 60 and 90 minutes
 - Acne and problem-skin treatment series
 - Chemical peels within your state's scope
 - Brow, lip and full-body waxing
 - Lash and brow tinting
 - Retail skincare with a written home routine
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Market analysis

The clients are adults with acne, sensitive skin or pigmentation who want a professional plan, regulars who book a facial every four to six weeks, waxing clients on a three-to-six-week cycle, and brides, event guests and gift buyers who bring in first visits.

- Adults with acne, sensitive skin or pigmentation who want a professional plan rather than another product
 - Clients who book a facial every four to six weeks once they find an esthetician they trust
 - Waxing clients on a three-to-six-week cycle — the most reliable rebookings in the trade
 - Brides, event guests and gift buyers who bring first visits in the busy seasons
 - Clients referred by a dermatologist, a hair stylist or a friend with visibly better skin
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Marketing strategy

Most new clients find the studio on Google — they search for a facial or waxing in town, compare the Google Business Profile, the reviews and the prices on the website, and book online. Instagram shows real results with clients' permission, referral cards turn happy clients into the next ones, and word of mouth does the rest. The plan's real marketing is the rebooking made before the client leaves.

- Google Business Profile and Google — “facial near me”, “acne facial” and “waxing” plus your town
 - A website with your treatment menu, real prices and online booking, so a client can book without calling
 - Instagram before-and-after posts, with the client's permission, that show real skin
 - Rebooking before the client leaves and a monthly facial plan that fills the calendar in advance
 - Word of mouth, referral cards and reviews that name the treatment
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Operations plan

The esthetician runs the studio alone in the first year: online booking with a card on file, a consultation and health history for every new client, disinfection between every appointment to the state board's rules, and a small retail stock reordered from what clients actually buy.

- A skin consultation and health history before every first treatment, with contraindications and medications checked
- Treatments kept inside your state's scope of practice — deeper peels, lasers and needling only where your license allows
- Disinfection between every client to your state board's rules, with single-use items thrown away
- Online booking with a card on file and a published cancellation policy
- Retail stock kept small and matched to what you actually prescribe for home care
- Continuing education on the schedule your state's license renewal requires

Startup costs

What it will take to open the doors, funded from savings.

Startup costs

ITEM	AMOUNT
State esthetician license, exams and fingerprints	\$300
Treatment bed, steamer, magnifying lamp, towel warmer and wax pots	\$3,500
Salon suite or treatment room: deposit and first month	\$2,500
Opening stock of professional products for treatments and retail	\$2,500
Disposables, linens, disinfectant and a first stock of wax	\$650
Professional and general liability insurance (first year)	\$268
Salon or establishment license and inspection for the suite	\$175
Working capital: running costs for the first two to three months	\$6,000
Website with your treatment menu, prices and online booking	\$0
Online booking, intake forms and card payments (first year)	\$0
Business registration, LLC and EIN	\$268
Business cards, referral cards and a launch offer	\$300
Total	\$16,461

Typical range to start an esthetician business in the US: \$6,844–\$29,176. Your list is what you decided to spend — replace estimates with real quotes as you get them. Website with your treatment menu, prices and online booking: Your Zarla plan includes the website — your treatment menu, prices and booking — and walks you through your Google Business Profile; a designer typically charges \$2,000 or more to build one. Online booking, intake forms and card payments (first year): Online booking, invoicing and a client list come with your Zarla plan; card processing is charged per payment.

Financial plan

The numbers below come from your own startup list and typical monthly costs for an independent esthetician in the US. Suite rent and products are the largest costs, so the plan turns on treatments a week, the average ticket, the share of visits already rebooked, and the retail each visit adds.

Typical monthly operating costs for an esthetician business: \$1,532–\$4,003 a month, before the owner's own pay.

At \$8,000 in monthly sales, Fernhollow Skin Studio would clear \$3,997–\$6,468 a month before owner pay and tax, and recover the \$16,461 startup budget in roughly 3–5 months.

Typical monthly operating costs

COST	TYPICAL RANGE
Salon-suite or treatment-room rent	\$1,000–\$2,000
Professional products and retail restock	\$200–\$800
Disposables, wax, laundry and disinfectant	\$100–\$300
Professional and general liability insurance	\$22–\$23
Online booking, intake forms and a client list (included with Zarla)	\$0–\$30
Card processing fees, about 3% of what clients pay by card	\$100–\$300
Google Business Profile photos, Instagram and referral thank-yous	\$50–\$300
Continuing education and license renewal, spread by month	\$10–\$50
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 esthetician business plan should say out loud what can go wrong. For Fernhollow Skin Studio, the real risks are:

- A treatment outside your license, or a reaction you didn't screen for, is the fastest way to lose both the client and the license
- Suite rent arrives every week or month while a new book takes months to fill
- Retail stock that doesn't sell ties up cash, and professional lines often set a minimum reorder
- Med spas and membership chains set a low price anchor for facials in many towns, so the plan needs a reason to pay more
- The work is physical and repetitive, and a wrist, back or neck strain stops the income
- Licensing is state by state, so moving states can mean new hours or a new exam

Licenses, permits and insurance

What Fernhollow Skin Studio 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.

- State esthetician license — Every US state now licenses estheticians — Connecticut, the last to start, has required a license since July 2020 — after a state-approved program: 220 hours for Florida's facial specialist registration, 600 in Connecticut and 750 in Texas. Most states then set a written and a practical exam; Florida and Connecticut set none. What the license lets you do is also set state by state: many states limit deeper chemical peels, microneedling and laser or light-based hair removal to a medical setting, a supervising physician or a separate license, and injectables are medical everywhere in the US — so put only the treatments your license covers on your menu. Check your own state board before you advertise, and again before you move states.
- Salon or establishment license for your room or suite — In the US most states license the place where services are performed as well as the person, so a salon suite or treatment room of your own usually needs its own salon or establishment license and an inspection. Texas, for example, licenses esthetician specialty salons through its Department of Licensing and Regulation. Ask your state board what applies before you sign the suite lease.
- Business registration and EIN — Many independent estheticians 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 Fernhollow Skin Studio, in order:

- Confirm your license is active and what your state asks of a salon suite or treatment room
- Tour two or three salon suites and compare rent, lease length and what is included
- Register the business, take the free EIN and open a business bank account
- Buy professional and general liability insurance
- Write your treatment menu inside your state's scope and price it from what comparable estheticians near you charge
- Order equipment and a small opening stock from one professional line
- Put your website live with your menu, prices and online booking
- Claim your free Google Business Profile with real photos of the suite
- Ask every first client to rebook before they leave, and every happy one for a Google review

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 treatments a week, your average ticket and retail
- Your esthetician license and the suite's salon or establishment license
- The salon-suite lease
- Quotes for the equipment and the opening product order
- Proof of professional and general liability insurance
- Your booking history and client count if you already work as an employee or on the side
- Your credit report

Sample plan for a fictional business, written by Zarla's free business plan generator. Every figure is a typical US range or calculated from the sample's own numbers — nothing is a market projection. Make it yours in five questions:

zarla.com/business-plan-generator?industry=esthetician