

Tidy Lid Bin Cleaning — Business Plan

Trash can cleaning business in Mesa, AZ · Startup plan

Executive summary

Tidy Lid Bin Cleaning is a new trash can cleaning business in Mesa, AZ offering curbside bin cleaning every four weeks (trash and recycling); quarterly and every-eight-weeks plans; one-time deep cleans and move-out cleans; HOA and neighborhood group plans; dumpster and commercial bin cleaning; and bin deodorizing and sanitizing between cleans. The model is one owner towing a cold-water single-bin cleaning trailer behind their own pickup, cleaning residential bins at the curb on the trash-pickup day route on a plan every four weeks, with HOA group plans and one-time deep cleans as the add-ons.

Startup budget: \$35,163 across 11 items, funded from savings. Target: \$7,800 in monthly sales.

Twelve months from now, success looks like this: About \$7,800 a month by the end of the first year — 250 households on a plan every four weeks at \$22 for the first bin, 150 of them with a second bin at \$10, plus twenty one-time deep cleans at \$40 — on three route days a week, with two HOA contracts signed

Products and services

Tidy Lid Bin Cleaning's core service is curbside bin cleaning every four weeks (trash and recycling). Every bin is pressure-washed, sanitized with an EPA-registered product, deodorized and tagged at the curb on pickup day; the wash water goes home in the trailer's tank and is disposed of where the utility allows; customers are billed to a card on file and skip by text.

- Curbside bin cleaning every four weeks (trash and recycling)
 - Quarterly and every-eight-weeks plans
 - One-time deep cleans and move-out cleans
 - HOA and neighborhood group plans
 - Dumpster and commercial bin cleaning
 - Bin deodorizing and sanitizing between cleans
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Market analysis

The customers are homeowners whose bins smell by the second week of summer; families with kids and dogs; HOAs and neighborhood groups that sign a street up together; property managers with turnovers; and the restaurants and small shops with a dumpster or roll carts that stink.

- Homeowners in warm climates whose bins smell by the second week of summer
 - Families with young kids and dogs who don't want to hose the bin out themselves
 - HOAs and neighborhood groups that sign a street up together for a discount
 - Property managers with rental turnovers and move-out cleans
 - Restaurants, dental offices and small shops with a dumpster or roll carts that stink
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Marketing strategy

Most customers will come from the street itself and from word of mouth — the wrapped trailer on a route day, the door hanger on the neighbor's bin, the post in the neighborhood group — and the rest find Tidy Lid Bin Cleaning on Google: “trash can cleaning near me” plus the city, so the Google Business Profile and a website with the plans, the price and online sign-up decide whether a look becomes a plan.

- Nextdoor, neighborhood Facebook groups and door hangers on the streets you already drive on trash day
 - Google Business Profile and Google — “trash can cleaning near me” plus your city — and the website that takes the sign-up
 - The trailer itself, wrapped: a route day is a rolling billboard in the neighborhood you want next
 - HOA boards and property managers, pitched with a per-home group price
 - Referrals from every customer whose neighbor asked what the truck was doing
 - A website with the plans, the price, online sign-up and the service area
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Operations plan

The owner is the driver, the operator and the billing office in year one: three route days a week built around the city's trash calendar, bins washed and sanitized at the curb, wash water captured and discharged by the arrangement with the utility, chemicals and fuel restocked weekly, and the pump and lift serviced on a schedule.

- Routes built around the trash-pickup calendar: you follow the garbage truck, so the bins are empty at the curb
- A cold-water single-bin trailer with a lift, spinning heads and a capture tank, towed by your own pickup; about three route days a week in year one
- Every bin washed, sanitized with an EPA-registered product at the label's dilution, deodorized and tagged with a “cleaned” hanger
- Wash water captured in the trailer's dirty tank and discharged where the utility allows (a permitted sanitary-sewer point or a hauler) — never a storm drain
- Customers on a card-on-file plan billed every four weeks; skips and holds handled by text
- Chemicals, water and fuel restocked weekly; pump, nozzles and filters serviced on a schedule

Startup costs

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

Startup costs

ITEM	AMOUNT
A trash can cleaning trailer (cold water, single bin, lift and capture tank)	\$27,499
Hitch, brake controller, trailer title and registration	\$550
Opening stock of EPA-registered sanitizer and deodorizer	\$400
Wastewater arrangement: a permitted sewer discharge point or a hauler account	\$300
Insurance (first year): general liability or a business owner's policy	\$1,289
Business registration (LLC) and EIN	\$170
Route and billing software, first month	\$35
Launch marketing: door hangers, yard signs, Nextdoor and the first ads	\$1,500
Gloves, boots, eye protection, a uniform and a hose kit	\$200
Website with online sign-up and Google Business Profile	\$0
Working capital: two months of running costs	\$3,220
Total	\$35,163

Typical range to start a trash can cleaning business in the US: \$29,001–\$43,325. Your list is what you decided to spend — replace estimates with real quotes as you get them. Website with online sign-up and Google Business Profile: Your Zarla plan includes the website — the plans and prices, online sign-up, the service area and the before-and-after photos — and walks you through your Google Business Profile. Having one built typically costs \$1,000 to \$2,000 from a freelancer.

Financial plan

The numbers below come from your own startup list and typical monthly costs for a one-trailer trash can cleaning business in the US. Startup is mostly the trailer, then the hitch, insurance, chemicals and the launch marketing; the monthly lines are fuel, water and chemicals, wastewater disposal, insurance and the truck's policy; and route density — how many bins on one street — decides what is left after the owner's hours.

Typical monthly operating costs for a trash can cleaning business: \$1,009–\$2,603 a month, before the owner's own pay.

At \$7,800 in monthly sales, Tidy Lid Bin Cleaning would clear \$5,197–\$6,791 a month before owner pay and tax, and recover the \$35,163 startup budget in roughly 6–7 months.

Typical monthly operating costs

COST	TYPICAL RANGE
Fuel: 1,000 to 1,500 route miles a month towing the trailer	\$357–\$536
Water fills, sanitizer and deodorizer	\$100–\$300
Wastewater disposal (sewer discharge fees or a hauler)	\$50–\$200
General liability or a business owner's policy	\$73–\$142
Commercial auto for the truck and trailer	\$100–\$262
Route and billing software (included with Zarla)	\$21–\$49
Pump, nozzle, filter and tire upkeep on the trailer	\$100–\$300
Door hangers, ads and the referral credits	\$100–\$400
Phone and bookkeeping	\$30–\$100
Card fees (on about \$7,800 of plans and one-time cleans)	\$78–\$314

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 trash can cleaning business plan should say out loud what can go wrong. For Tidy Lid Bin Cleaning, the real risks are:

- Route density is everything: ten customers spread across town costs more in fuel and hours than forty on one street
- Winter in a cold climate: bins don't smell in January, and plans pause — price the summer high enough to carry it
- A wrong discharge of wash water is a stormwater violation with a fine attached, and the neighbors will film it
- The trailer is most of the startup, and a pump or lift failure in July is a week of missed routes
- Customers churn when the bin is clean: the every-four-weeks plan survives, the one-time clean doesn't come back
- Your pickup day route depends on the city's trash calendar — a route change by the hauler reshuffles yours

Licenses, permits and insurance

What Tidy Lid Bin Cleaning 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 registration, the trailer and sales tax — In the US no state licenses trash can cleaning as an occupation; you register the business (an LLC is \$40 in Kentucky and \$300 in Texas, and California adds an \$800 yearly LLC tax on top of its filing fee), take a free EIN, title and register the trailer with the state, and get a city business license where your city issues one. A few states tax cleaning services — ask your state's revenue department before the first invoice, and confirm the entity choice with your accountant.
- Wash water: never the storm drain — In the US federal, state and city stormwater rules prohibit anything but rain in the storm drain — a street, gutter or catch basin — so the trailer captures its wash water and you dispose of it the way your utility allows: discharged to the sanitary sewer at a point the city or county has authorized, recycled in a closed-loop system, or hauled by a permitted hauler. City mobile-washing rules (San José's, Spokane's and dozens more) spell this out, and The Bin Trailer's own guide says it plainly — a collection tank is not permission to discharge anywhere. Ask the wastewater utility for the arrangement in writing before the first route; a wrong discharge is a fine, not a warning.
- Sanitizer claims and the label — In the US a product sold to kill germs is a pesticide registered with the Environmental Protection Agency, and a “sanitized” or “kills 99.9% of bacteria” claim is only as good as that product's label used at its dilution and contact time — so buy an EPA-registered sanitizer, keep the label on file, and say what it says, not more. Keep the safety data sheets in the truck.
- HOA contracts, solicitation and door hangers — In the US many cities require a solicitor's or peddler's permit to knock on doors, and some HOAs ban door hangers — check the city clerk's rules for the streets you work and get the HOA's board to approve a group plan rather than canvassing it. Confirm your local rules.
- Insurance — In the US general liability (Insureon's pressure-washing median is \$73 a month) covers the bin you crack and the slip on a wet driveway, commercial auto covers the truck and the trailer on the road (\$262 a month is the same median), and every HOA and property manager asks for a certificate naming them before the first clean.

Milestones: the next 30 days

The first month's to-do list for Tidy Lid Bin Cleaning, in order:

- Pick the trailer — cold or hot water, single or double bin — and get a written quote with shipping and the wrap
- Call the wastewater utility and get the discharge arrangement in writing; price a hauler as the backup
- Form the LLC, take the free EIN, open a business bank account and title the trailer
- Get general liability and commercial auto quotes with the trailer listed
- Pull the city's trash-pickup calendar and draw three route days around it
- Put the website live with the plans, the price and online sign-up, and claim your Google Business Profile
- Print door hangers and post in the neighborhood groups on the first route day's streets
- Pitch two HOA boards a group price per home
- Set up the billing software, the card-on-file plan and the skip-by-text rule

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
- The trailer quote and the truck's title or financing agreement
- A route map with the pickup days and the first signed customers or HOA letters of intent
- A month-by-month cash-flow projection showing the winter dip
- Proof of general liability and commercial auto insurance, and the wastewater arrangement
- 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=trash-can-cleaning