



# The House Cleaning Business

*Recurring revenue in its purest household form. Low startup, trust as the product, and a client book that pays you every two weeks like clockwork.*

\$390-1,200

START LEAN

3-7 days

FIRST DOLLAR

70-85%

TYPICAL MARGIN

# Is this your business?

House cleaning is the lowest-cost entry on this list and the most recurring: a biweekly client is twenty-six invoices a year, won once. The product is trust as much as shine, which is why a solo operator with reviews, a bond, and a written checklist beats franchise crews on price and quality at the same time. The recurring book you build is a real asset: schedulable, steady, and sellable.

\$390-1,200

LEAN STARTUP COST

\$1,500-3,500

STANDARD BUILD

3-7 days

TIME TO FIRST DOLLAR

70-85%

TYPICAL GROSS MARGIN

Yes, fully

SOLO-FRIENDLY

Yes

HOME-BASED

## BUILT FOR THESE FOUNDER TYPES

THE OPERATOR

THE CONNECTOR

1/5 difficulty

### THE HONEST FIT TEST

This is physical, repetitive work in other people's private spaces, and the standard that matters is theirs, not yours. You need reliability that borders on boring and a system for every room. If showing up at 9:00 when you said 9:00, every single time, sounds easy, you will be amazed how few competitors manage it, and how much that failure pays you.

# Who pays, and why now.

Two-income households, aging parents, new babies, short-term rentals: the modern home has more demands on it and less time inside it than ever, and cleaning is the first chore families outsource and the last one they give up. The buyer is not purchasing shine. They are purchasing a recovered Saturday and the specific relief of walking into a house that smells like order. That relief renews itself every two weeks, indefinitely.

The recurring math is the whole story. A biweekly client at \$150 is \$3,900 a year; forty of them is a six-figure book built one walkthrough at a time, with no inventory and almost no equipment. Move-out cleans, deep cleans, and Airbnb turnovers layer one-time premiums on top of the base. And because the product is trust, switching costs are emotional: clients who like you keep you for years and hand you their neighbors without being asked.

Franchises charge \$200+ to send a rotating cast of strangers. Solo operators undercut them, then miss appointments. The gap in the middle is enormous: a bonded, insured, background-checked operator who sends the same face every visit, works a written checklist, and texts when the job is done. None of that requires capital. It requires being reliable in an industry famous for not being.

WHO BUYS	WHAT THEY PAY	WHAT THEY ACTUALLY WANT
Dual-income households	\$130-180 per biweekly visit	The same cleaner every time, zero rescheduling drama
Seniors and new parents	\$120-170 recurring	Gentle consistency from someone they fully trust at home
Movers and landlords	\$300-550 move-out cleans	Deposits returned, units rent-ready, checklist proof
Airbnb hosts	\$90-150 per turnover	Speed, photo confirmation, staging reset between guests
Real estate agents	\$250-450 pre-listing deep cleans	Homes that photograph and show flawlessly, fast

INVOICES A YEAR, ONE CLIENT

## 26

A single biweekly home at \$150 is \$3,900 a year, sold in one walkthrough. Forty of them is a six-figure recurring book that re-orders itself, which is why cleaning books are among the few service assets that sell cleanly when you are done.

# Every dollar, before you spend it.

This is the cheapest legitimate start in home services: the equipment fits in a car trunk and the consumables run \$6-10 per home. Spend the savings on the two things clients actually screen for: the bond and the insurance.

THE LEAN BUILD · START HERE	WHY IT EARNS ITS PLACE	COST
<b>Vacuum (sealed HEPA canister or upright)</b>	Your single biggest tool decision; buy for filtration and cord length	\$120-300
<b>Microfiber system, color-coded</b>	Separate colors for bathrooms, kitchens, and surfaces: hygiene you can explain at the walkthrough	\$50-90
<b>Caddy + core chemicals</b>	APC, bathroom, glass, degreaser, wood-safe polish. Skip the 40-bottle fantasy	\$80-140
<b>Flat mop system, two heads minimum</b>	One head per house section; never push dirty water around	\$40-80
<b>GL insurance + janitorial bond (first month)</b>	'Bonded and insured' is the phrase every client is listening for	\$50-100/mo
<b>LLC + city license (varies by state)</b>	Your liability wall. THE LAUNCHPAD Module Three walks it	\$50-500
<b>Lean total</b>		<b>\$390-1,210 all-in</b>

THE STANDARD BUILD · ADD AFTER FIRST REVENUE	WHAT IT UNLOCKS	COST
<b>Backpack vacuum</b>	Cuts whole-home vacuum time 30-40%; your knees will also send thanks	\$350-600
<b>Scheduling/CRM software with card-on-file billing</b>	Recurring billing that runs itself is what makes the book an asset	\$30-80/mo
<b>Uniform + branded supplies</b>	A logo shirt at the door is half the trust transaction	\$100-250
<b>Steam mop / small extractor</b>	Unlocks add-on tickets: grout, sealed floors, spot extraction	\$150-400

## THE RULE

Resist the supply-closet arms race. Clients cannot tell a \$4 spray from a \$14 one, but they can absolutely tell whether you showed up at 9:00. Put the money into the bond, the insurance, and software that bills cards automatically: those three buy trust, and trust is the product.

# Clean from day one.

Cleaning has almost no licensing burden, which fools new operators into skipping the three structures that actually matter here: the bond, the access protocol, and the employment classification that becomes a time bomb the day you grow.

- Form your LLC:** File in your home state, get the EIN free at irs.gov, open the business bank account. THE LAUNCHPAD Module Three walks every step.
- City or county business license:** Usually \$50-150 a year. One call to the city clerk answers it.
- General liability + janitorial bond:** GL covers the vase you break; the surety bond covers theft claims and costs about \$100-200 a year. Together they are the credential clients screen for, and the cheapest marketing you will ever buy.
- Employee vs contractor, decided correctly:** If you set the schedule, supply the products, and control how the work is done, your helper is an employee, not a 1099 contractor. Misclassification is the classic cleaning-company lawsuit and back-tax bomb. Decide this before your first hire, not after.
- Keys, codes, and access protocol:** Written authorization for every key and alarm code, logged, labeled by code-name rather than address, and stored in a lockbox. This one document is liability protection and a trust pitch in the same breath.
- Breakage policy in writing:** What you cover, the claim window, and photo documentation on both sides. Handled in advance it is a policy; handled after it is an argument.
- Background checks before anyone enters a home:** Run them on every hire including yourself: a clean report you can show is a closing tool with new clients.

## INSURANCE, SPECIFICALLY

General liability plus the janitorial bond is the floor. Workers' comp becomes mandatory in nearly every state the day you hire, and property managers will demand the certificate anyway. Commercial auto only matters once a vehicle is dedicated to the business. Keep certificates current and send them before being asked: it closes commercial work.

## WATCH FOR

The deep-clean skip. New clients always want recurring prices on a home that has not been properly cleaned in a year. Hold the line: every new recurring client starts with a deep clean at the deep-clean price, or your first three 'standard' visits run double time at half pay and you will quietly start to hate the client. Price the catch-up once, and maintenance feels easy forever after.

Requirements vary by state and city. Verify with your state, city clerk, and a licensed professional. Education, not legal advice.

# Three doors. Real numbers.

Price by bedrooms, bathrooms, and condition, and never quote a firm number without a walkthrough or a video tour. The recurring visit is your anchor product; everything else exists to start, protect, or upgrade it.

	RECOMMEND	
<p><b>DOOR ONE</b></p> <h2>The Standard Clean</h2> <p><b>\$130-170</b> recurring visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Kitchen, bathrooms, floors, dusting, surfaces</li><li>◆ Same cleaner, same written checklist, every visit</li><li>◆ Beds made, trash out, photo-text on completion</li><li>◆ Biweekly or weekly scheduling, card on file</li></ul>	<p><b>DOOR TWO</b></p> <h2>The Deep Clean</h2> <p><b>\$290-420</b> every new</p> <p>client starts here</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Baseboards, vents, blinds, light fixtures</li><li>◆ Inside microwave, appliance exteriors detailed</li><li>◆ Hand-detailed kitchen and bathrooms</li><li>◆ Top-to-bottom, room-by-room reset</li><li>◆ Recurring rate locked at completion</li></ul>	<p><b>DOOR THREE</b></p> <h2>The Move Turn</h2> <p><b>\$400-600</b> premium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Empty-home move-in or move-out clean</li><li>◆ Inside cabinets, drawers, fridge, and oven</li><li>◆ Landlord and deposit checklist format</li><li>◆ Photo report delivered same day</li><li>◆ 48-hour scheduling for closings</li></ul>

### PRICING NOTES FOR THIS BUSINESS

- Floor: \$110 per visit; below that the drive, setup, and supplies make it charity with extra steps.
- Pets, clutter, and square footage move the price: surcharge honestly at the walkthrough, never silently resent it later.
- Lockout and same-day cancellation fee (50%) in writing from client one: your calendar is your inventory and no-shows are spoilage.
- Raise recurring rates 5-8% each January with sixty days notice. A full book at stale prices is a quiet pay cut every year.

### THE UPSSELL THAT PAYS THE RENT

Rotating add-ons on a schedule: inside fridge (\$35), inside oven (\$35), interior windows (\$60-90), quarterly baseboard refresh. Offer one per quarter at booking, card on file, so the upsell sells itself in the confirmation text. A 30-client book taking one add-on each per quarter is \$4,000+ a year for work slotted into visits you were already making.

# Names, not strategies.

Trust transfers, so your first ten clients come through warm channels: people who know you, people who vouch for you, and professionals whose own reputation depends on recommending someone reliable.

## 1 Your own circles, announced properly

One clear post: what you do, the founding offer, the bonded-and-insured line, two photos of your own gleaming kitchen and bath. Friends-of-friends is where trust businesses start.

## 2 Local Facebook groups + Nextdoor

'Anyone know a good house cleaner?' is asked in every neighborhood group every single week. Be the answer with reviews, a real profile, and a fast reply.

## 3 Realtors and property managers

Move-out cleans are urgent, price-insensitive, and constant. Three agent relationships can fill your one-time calendar while the recurring book grows.

## 4 Airbnb host groups

Hosts live in local Facebook groups complaining about turnover flakiness. Photo-proof turnovers at a flat rate make you the answer to their actual problem, which is anxiety.

## 5 Parent and school networks

New-baby households and double-shift parents are the most grateful recurring clients you will ever have, and they talk to each other constantly.

### THE EXACT ASK

*"Hi [name], I'm [name]: I just launched a home cleaning service here in [neighborhood]. I'm taking five founding homes this month at \$30 off while I build my book: same cleaner every visit, my own checklist, bonded and insured. Could I do a quick walkthrough and give you an exact price for a first deep clean and a biweekly rate?"*

### THE FOUNDING-CUSTOMER DEAL

First ten homes lock a founding recurring rate for six months, in exchange for a Google review after visit three and permission to use detail photos (faucets and stovetops, never whole rooms). Retire it publicly at ten. Privacy-respecting proof plus real scarcity is the whole growth engine.

# Owned, earned, then paid.

You are marketing trust, not shine. Reviews, referrals, and consistent faces beat ad spend in this category, and the content that works respects the client's privacy: close-ups of gleaming details, never wide shots of someone's home.

CHANNEL, RANKED	WHY IT WORKS HERE	THE FIRST MOVE
<b>Google Business Profile</b>	'House cleaning near me' buyers screen for reviews and 'bonded and insured' before price	Claim it day one; review per week; the bond mentioned in the description
<b>Nextdoor + local Facebook</b>	The weekly 'anyone know a cleaner?' thread is a standing lead source	Answer every thread fast; one detail-shot post weekly
<b>Referral program</b>	Happy households are surrounded by identical households	\$25 off for both sides, mentioned at visit three when the glow is real
<b>Realtor + PM partnerships</b>	One office can feed move-out cleans indefinitely	Quarterly visit with cards, certificate of insurance, and a 48-hour guarantee
<b>Before-and-after detail shots</b>	Stovetops, faucets, and grout close-ups satisfy without exposing anyone's home	Two close-up transformations per week, client permission logged

## FIVE CONTENT PIECES THAT WIN THIS NICHE

- Faucet and stovetop glow-up close-ups (the satisfying staple that respects client privacy)
- What house cleaning costs in [your city], honestly, by home size
- The move-out cleaning checklist that gets your deposit back
- Why we color-code our cloths (cross-contamination, explained in 30 seconds)
- The 15-minute kitchen reset clients use between our visits

## THE REVIEW MACHINE

Ask after visit three, not visit one: recurring trust needs a sample size. 'You've seen three visits now: would you share that in a review? I'll text you the link.' Reviews that mention the same cleaner showing up on time are the exact words your next client is searching for.

# One unit, one month, no fog.

Two honest snapshots: what one recurring visit nets after real costs, and a steady solo month blending recurring visits with the deep cleans that feed them. Based on a \$150 standard visit.

ONE UNIT: ONE RECURRING VISIT (\$150)	AMOUNT	A WORKING MONTH: SOLO, 44 VISITS	AMOUNT
Revenue	\$150	Revenue (38 recurring + 6 deep cleans)	\$7,620
Supplies (per home)	-\$8	Supplies	-\$340
Fuel	-\$6	Fuel	-\$210
Payment processing (2.9%)	-\$4	Insurance, bond, phone, software	-\$240
Insurance, bond + overhead share	-\$12	Marketing (referral credits, boosts)	-\$130
Gross profit (~3 hrs on site)	\$120	Pre-tax profit	\$6,700
Tax reserve (27%)	-\$32	Tax reserve (27%)	-\$1,810
Yours, per visit	\$88	Owner take-home	\$4,890

BREAK-EVEN

## 3-5 cleans

The entire lean startup, bond and insurance included, is recovered inside the first week of booked work. No business on this list returns capital faster, which means the only real risk you are carrying is whether you keep showing up.

Illustrative figures at typical market rates; your market, prices, and costs will differ. Run YOUR numbers in the One-Page P&L from THE LAUNCHPAD, Module Six. Remember the 25-30% tax reserve on every dollar of profit.

# Pre-decided, so motivation is never consulted.

## WEEK ONE: FOUNDATIONS

- LLC filed, EIN issued, business bank account open
- GL insurance and janitorial bond bound
- Lean kit assembled; checklist written room by room
- Google Business Profile claimed; profile complete
- Pricing sheet finalized with \$110 floor and surcharges

## WEEK TWO: DOORS OPEN

- Founding announcement posted to your own circles
- First 2-3 founding deep cleans completed
- Detail photos shot: faucets, stovetops, grout
- Every new client started on the deep-clean-first rule
- Walkthrough script and quote sheet tested live

## WEEK THREE: MOMENTUM

- Recurring conversions: deep cleans moved to biweekly
- Visit 3 realtor or PM offices with certificate in hand
- Nextdoor and Facebook threads answered daily
- Cancellation policy delivered to every active client
- Card-on-file billing running through software

## WEEK FOUR: THE SYSTEM

- Review asks texted after each client's third visit
- Referral offer mentioned at every visit-three glow
- Founding offer retired publicly at ten homes
- Month-one P&L completed; one lever chosen
- Quarterly add-on rotation scheduled for the book

### DAY 30 VERDICT

Green light: 8+ recurring clients on the calendar, 4+ reviews, deep cleans converting to biweekly at half or better. Yellow: one-time cleans booking but not converting: your visit-three experience or recurring pitch needs work, not your marketing. Red: under 4 clients despite 25+ real asks: re-examine the founding offer and the trust signals (bond, reviews, photos) before spending anything else.

# How this business fails, and how it grows.

## THE FIVE KILLERS

- ✗ **Quoting flat rates sight unseen**  
The 'standard 3-bedroom' with two huskies and a craft room is a half-day job sold at half price. Walk it or video-tour it, then commit to the number.

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- ✗ **Skipping the deep clean first**  
Recurring prices on a neglected home means three brutal visits at a loss and a client trained to underpay. The catch-up clean is priced separately, every time, no exceptions.

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- ✗ **Misclassifying helpers as 1099s**  
You set the schedule and the method, so they are employees, and the state will eventually agree at audit speed. Classify correctly from hire one; it is cheaper than the penalty in every case.

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- ✗ **No cancellation policy**  
Your calendar is your inventory, and a soft no-show policy means donating shelf space. Fifty percent for same-day cancels, in writing, enforced kindly and always.

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- ✗ **Competing on price with franchises**  
Undercutting a \$220 franchise to \$90 just buys their worst clients. You win on the same face, the same checklist, and visit-three trust: charge accordingly.

## THREE SCALE PATHS

- 1 **The two-person team**  
A trained teammate doubles daily capacity to four or five homes and halves your physical load. The checklist becomes the company: anyone trained on it produces your clean, not their interpretation of it.

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- 2 **The manager flip**  
Around 70-80 recurring clients you stop cleaning and start running quality, hiring, and sales. The transition is brutal for operators with no written systems and nearly painless for the ones who built the checklist culture early.

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- 3 **The adjacent books**  
Airbnb turnover contracts and small evening-office commercial work layer onto the same systems and staff. Different invoices, same engine, and the commercial work fills hours residential cannot use.

### YOUR FIRST HIRE

Your first teammate cleans WITH you for two full weeks on your checklist before ever cleaning alone, and the background check runs before day one. The product is trust, so the hire is reputational, not just operational: one bad visit can cost a client who would have paid you for five years. If your checklist cannot produce your standard in someone else's hands, the business is not ready to grow yet, and that is worth knowing early.

THE STAIRCASE CONTINUES

# The playbook is the map. The machine is waiting.

Everything this playbook describes, Epic Advisory Group can build with you: the brand, the cinematic website, the entity, the engine. Describe your idea to the Launch Engine and see your business real in about sixty seconds, free.

- The Launch Engine: your idea, built free, in about a minute
- THE ASCENT: Founder Edition: the eight-module course
- Launch-in-a-Box: entity, brand, site, and first campaign, one flat price
- Growth, capital readiness, and the path to the public markets

*"There is no right age. There is only the decision."*



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