



The Pet Waste Removal Business

The least glamorous subscription business in America: weekly routes, card-on-file billing, margins near ninety percent, and customers who never want the job back.

\$350-1,100

START LEAN

7-14 days

FIRST DOLLAR

80-90%

TYPICAL MARGIN

Is this your business?

Nobody dreams of this business, which is exactly why it prints. Pet waste removal is a pure subscription: weekly visits, flat monthly billing on a card on file, almost no equipment, and churn so low it embarrasses software companies. The entire game is route density: stack enough yards on the same streets and you earn more per hour than most licensed trades, one latched gate at a time.

\$350-1,100

LEAN STARTUP COST

\$2,000-4,000

STANDARD BUILD

7-14 days

TIME TO FIRST DOLLAR

80-90%

TYPICAL GROSS MARGIN

Yes, fully

SOLO-FRIENDLY

Yes (mobile)

HOME-BASED

BUILT FOR THESE FOUNDER TYPES

THE OPERATOR

THE BUILDER

1/5 difficulty

THE HONEST FIT TEST

You will scoop dog waste in August heat and January slush, smile at dogs who adore you, and obsess over routing apps. If you need the work itself to sound impressive at dinner parties, skip this one. If a route that pays like a utility bill, sells in one sentence, and never gets cancelled sounds like the quiet win it is, welcome to the best-kept secret in home services.

Who pays, and why now.

Around 65 million American households own a dog, every one of those dogs produces waste daily, and someone in every household silently resents being the one who deals with it. The pandemic pet boom normalized outsourcing the chore: what sounded indulgent in 2015 is now a \$70-140 monthly line item families defend like their streaming services. The pitch is one sentence long and the prospect already understands the problem viscerally.

The subscription mechanics are the story. A weekly client pays \$69-99 a month for one dog, stays for years, and churns mainly when they move. An \$85-a-month client retained three years is a \$3,000 customer acquired with a door hanger. Twice-weekly and multi-dog plans push monthly values to \$120-200, and the service takes twelve minutes a visit once the initial cleanup is done. Almost nothing else in home services combines this retention with this little labor.

Competition validates rather than threatens. National franchises (DoodyCalls, Pet Butler, Scoop Soldiers) prove the model works at scale, yet most metros still run on solo scoopers with no card-on-file billing, no gate photos, and no sanitation protocol. The professional standard is cheap to meet and instantly visible: subscription billing, a texted photo of the latched gate, disinfected boots between yards. That last one is a sales point, not a nicety: parvo and giardia travel on equipment.

There is also a commercial layer most solos never touch: HOAs and apartment complexes with pet stations need weekly bag restocking, can emptying, and common-area sweeps. Contracts run \$150-450 a month per property, stack neatly onto residential routes, and renew annually with one invoice.

WHO BUYS	WHAT THEY PAY	WHAT THEY ACTUALLY WANT
Dual-income dog households	\$69-99/mo weekly; \$109-139 twice-weekly	The chore gone and a yard safe for kids' bare feet
Multi-dog homes	\$120-200/mo	A yard that does not smell like three dogs live there
HOAs and apartment complexes	\$150-450/mo per property	Stocked stations, clean commons, zero resident complaints
Seniors and mobility-limited owners	\$69-110/mo	To keep the dog without the bending and the bags

DRIVE TIME BETWEEN STOPS ON A WINNING ROUTE

Under 10 min

A yard takes about twelve minutes. The drive between yards is what you actually pay for, which makes density the entire business model: ten yards on three adjacent streets out-earn twenty scattered across the county, every single week, forever.

Every dollar, before you spend it.

This is the cheapest startup in the catalog: the tools fit in a trunk and the expensive part is the software that bills cards automatically. Spend on the system, not the scoop.

THE LEAN BUILD · START HERE	WHY IT EARNS ITS PLACE	COST
Long-handle scoop and rake set	Two sets, so a broken handle never cancels a route day	\$40-80
Buckets, liners, contractor bags	Double-bagging is the legal and olfactory standard	\$30-60
Kennel-grade disinfectant + sprayer	Boots and tools between every yard: your parvo protocol is a selling point	\$40-80
Gloves, boots, hi-vis shirts	Look like a service, not a favor	\$40-70
Route + billing software (first months)	Sweep&Go or similar: card on file, route optimization, gate photos	\$40-100
General liability insurance (first month)	Cheap here (\$30-60/mo) because the risk is low; carry it anyway	\$40-80
Door hangers + yard signs	The dog-dense streets you want are walkable in an afternoon	\$60-120
LLC + city license	Your liability wall. See the legal page	\$50-500
Lean total		\$340-1,090 all-in

THE STANDARD BUILD · ADD AFTER FIRST REVENUE	WHAT IT UNLOCKS	COST
Vehicle magnet or partial wrap	The truck on the same streets weekly becomes furniture, then becomes referrals	\$150-600
Hitch carrier or sealed bed bins	Odor-proof transport if you ever haul; keeps the cab civilized	\$150-400
Backpack sprayer + deodorizer line	The \$25-40/mo yard deodorizing upsell kit pays for itself in two clients	\$120-250
Website with instant signup	Quote, card, and first visit scheduled without a phone call	\$200-500

THE RULE

Get the billing system before the tenth client, not after the fiftieth. Per-visit invoicing turns this business into a collections hobby; flat monthly subscriptions on a stored card make it the annuity it is supposed to be.

Everything else in the kit is a rake.

Clean from day one.

Lightly regulated, with one trap hiding in plain sight: what you do with the waste. Get the disposal question answered for your county before you print a single door hanger.

- 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 clerk settles it.
- General liability insurance, \$1M:** Inexpensive in this trade and instantly differentiating: HOA and apartment contracts will require a certificate, so having one ready is a sales asset.
- Waste disposal rules:** Double-bagged waste left in the client's own trash bin is legal nearly everywhere and is the industry default. Hauling waste away can classify you as a waste transporter requiring county permits: confirm before you ever offer haul-away, and price it separately if you do.
- Sanitation protocol:** Kennel-grade disinfectant on boots and tools between every yard. Parvo and giardia transfer on equipment, a sick client dog is an existential Nextdoor event, and the protocol doubles as marketing copy.
- Service agreement:** Gate access, dogs secured during visits, weather make-up policy, photo notification consent, and your right to skip an unsafe yard. One page, signed at signup inside the software.
- Sales tax check:** A number of states tax services like this one. One call to the state revenue office prevents an ugly retroactive surprise.

INSURANCE, SPECIFICALLY

General liability at \$1M is the floor and nearly the ceiling: this is one of the lowest-risk trades in the catalog. Add commercial auto if the vehicle becomes dedicated, and workers' comp the day you put a tech on a route, which nearly every state requires from employee one. The real risk management here is operational: gates, dogs, and disinfectant.

WATCH FOR

The open gate. An escaped dog is the only catastrophic risk this business has, and it is entirely preventable. Photograph the latched gate after every visit and text it automatically: it is the single most powerful trust ritual in the niche. Double-check latches, never assume a yard is dog-free, and if a gate, latch, or dog seems off, skip the yard, message the client, and make it up free. No yard is worth a missing dog.

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

Three doors. Real numbers.

Flat monthly subscription, card on file, priced by dogs and frequency. Never per-visit, never invoiced after the fact. The subscription framing is not just billing mechanics: it is why nobody cancels.

	RECOMMEND	
<p>DOOR ONE</p> <h3>The Weekly</h3> <p>\$69-85 per month, one dog</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Full yard swept once a week◆ Waste double-bagged into your own bin◆ Latched-gate photo texted every visit◆ Flat monthly billing, cancel anytime	<p>DOOR TWO</p> <h3>The Twice-a-Week</h3> <p>\$109-139 per month, most-booked</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Two visits weekly, up to three dogs◆ Latched-gate photo every visit◆ Monthly deodorizer spot treatment◆ Priority make-up after storms◆ Holiday-week coverage included	<p>DOOR THREE</p> <h3>The Fresh Yard</h3> <p>\$159-209 per month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Twice-weekly service, up to four dogs◆ Monthly full-yard deodorize and sanitize◆ Patio and kennel-area wash-down◆ First-priority scheduling, same tech every time

PRICING NOTES FOR THIS BUSINESS

- Initial cleanup is a separate one-time fee, \$75-160 depending on neglect, quoted from photos or at the first visit. Waiving it is the founding offer; forgetting to charge it is a margin leak.
- Extra dogs add \$10-15 a month each. Dogs are the unit of work; price them like it.
- Sell only inside your chosen zips. Waitlist outliers politely until there are five of them: then it is a route day, not a favor.
- Raise every plan \$3-5 each spring with a warm note. On an \$85 subscription, nobody re-shops the market over four dollars.
- One-time-only cleanups (no subscription) start at \$89: they fund the route but they are not the business.

THE UPSSELL THAT PAYS THE RENT

Yard deodorizing and sanitizing at \$25-40 a month rides along on visits you are already making: pure margin with a backpack sprayer. Skip DIY flea and tick treatments unless you get your state's pesticide applicator license: enzyme deodorizers need no license and sell better anyway. And every one-time cleanup ends with the same sentence: 'want me to just keep it this way for [price] a month?'

Names, not strategies.

Your first ten subscribers should live on three streets, not in three towns. Found the route, not just the business: every signup either densifies a street you own or starts a new one you intend to own.

1 Your own block, first

Walk the ten most dog-evident yards (flags, fences, the barking census) with door hangers naming the street: 'I'm building this street's Thursday route.' Specific beats generic by miles.

2 Nextdoor and local Facebook

One plainspoken intro post with the gate-photo promise, then answer every 'anyone know a pooper scooper?' thread within the hour. These threads are this industry's entire lead form.

3 Vets, groomers, daycares

Counter cards at all three. Staff get asked weekly and recommend whoever they remember; a two-sided \$20 referral credit makes you memorable.

4 Apartment and HOA managers

Pitch station servicing: restocking bags, emptying cans, weekly common-area sweeps. One property is \$150-450 a month, renews annually, and anchors a route day all by itself.

5 Friends with dogs

Convert the people who already trust you at founding rates, then mine their group chats. A texted gate photo forwarded between dog owners is the referral engine running on its own.

THE EXACT ASK

"Hi, I'm [name]: I run a pet waste removal service here in [neighborhood]. Once a week I make the whole yard spotless, everything is double-bagged into your own bin, and you get a photo of your latched gate every visit so you never wonder if the dog is secure. It's [price] a month for one dog, no contract. I'm building this street's route right now and the first ten homes get the initial cleanup free. Want me to take a look at the yard while I'm here?"

THE FOUNDING-CUSTOMER DEAL

First ten subscribers: the initial cleanup free (a \$75-160 value) and the founding rate locked for twelve months, in exchange for a Google review and a small yard sign for two weeks. The sign matters more than the review: this business spreads house to house, and a sign in a clean yard is the proof standing in the proof.

Owned, earned, then paid.

Local, visual in an unglamorous way, and powered by neighborhood word of mouth. The latched-gate photo and the route map do most of the work; your job is to be findable the moment someone finally snaps over a ruined pair of sneakers.

CHANNEL, RANKED	WHY IT WORKS HERE	THE FIRST MOVE
Nextdoor + local Facebook	The 'anyone know a scooper?'' thread is the highest-intent lead in the niche	Intro post, weekly presence, every thread answered within the hour
Google Business Profile	'Pooper scooper near me' is real, frequent, and barely contested in most metros	Claim day one; reviews weekly; service-area zips listed explicitly
Door hangers on serviced streets	'We're already on this street Thursdays' converts neighbors at double rates	Five hangers around every active yard, refreshed monthly
Vet and groomer counters	Trusted staff, asked constantly, with no good answer on file	Cards quarterly plus the two-sided \$20 referral credit
Referral credits	Dog owners cluster socially: parks, training classes, group chats	\$20 off both sides, mentioned in every monthly receipt email

FIVE CONTENT PIECES THAT WIN THIS NICHE

- What a weekly poop-scoop service costs in [your city] (the page nobody writes and everybody searches)
- The yard count post: '47 piles, one visit, one very relieved golden retriever' (gross-funny wins here)
- Why we disinfect boots between every yard: parvo, giardia, and what your last scooper skipped
- The latched-gate photo, explained: the text our clients say they would pay for by itself
- Dog math: what one week, one yard, and two labs actually adds up to

THE REVIEW MACHINE

Ask once, right after the initial cleanup, which is the most dramatic before-and-after this business ever produces: 'If the yard feels brand new, a quick review would help me build this route: link incoming.' Texted link, same hour. Reviews mentioning the gate photo and reliability convert better than any discount, and in a trade this unglamorous, thirty reviews is total neighborhood dominance.

One unit, one month, no fog.

Two honest snapshots: what one weekly client is worth each month, and a solo month at seventy yards, which is a four-day route once density is respected. The margin is the point: almost nothing is consumed but time and fuel.

ONE UNIT: ONE WEEKLY CLIENT, PER MONTH (4 VISITS, \$76)	AMOUNT	A WORKING MONTH: SOLO, 70 WEEKLY YARDS (A 4-DAY ROUTE)	AMOUNT
Revenue	\$76	Revenue (\$82 avg per yard)	\$5,740
Bags + disinfectant	-\$3	Fuel	-\$340
Fuel share (dense route)	-\$8	Bags, disinfectant, supplies	-\$140
Card processing	-\$2	Software, insurance, phone	-\$200
Software + insurance share	-\$5	Marketing (hangers, boosts)	-\$150
Gross profit (~50 min on-site total)	\$58	Pre-tax profit	\$4,910
Tax reserve (27%)	-\$16	Tax reserve (27%)	-\$1,325
Yours, per client month	\$42	Owner take-home	\$3,585

BREAK-EVEN

12-15 yards

At a dozen subscribers, a single month of revenue returns the entire lean build. From there the math is route math: every new yard inside your zips is almost pure margin, and every yard outside them is a tax you charge yourself.

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
- Insurance bound; certificate saved for commercial pitches
- Billing software live: card on file, gate photos enabled
- Google Business Profile claimed; service zips listed
- Disinfectant protocol and service agreement finalized

WEEK TWO: DOORS OPEN

- Founding route: 10 yards pitched on your own streets
- Gate-photo habit locked from the very first visit
- Nextdoor intro post up; every thread answered fast
- Door hangers out around every active yard
- Initial cleanups photographed for before-and-afters

WEEK THREE: MOMENTUM

- 20-30 yards active, clustered into route days
- Reviews requested after every initial cleanup
- Vet, groomer, daycare counters visited with cards
- First HOA or apartment station pitch sent
- Referral credit launched in receipt emails

WEEK FOUR: THE SYSTEM

- 35-45 yards target; route days locked by zip
- Founding offer retired publicly
- Deodorizing upsell offered to every active client
- Month-one P&L completed; one lever chosen
- Outlier waitlist reviewed: any street ready to open?

DAY 30 VERDICT

Green light: 30+ active subscriptions concentrated in two or three zips, fitting inside two route days. Yellow: 15-25 but scattered: stop selling wide, double down on the streets you already own. Red: under 10 despite 100+ doors and active posting: the offer is invisible, not unwanted: lead with the free initial cleanup and the gate photo, and re-run week two.

How this business fails, and how it grows.

THE FIVE KILLERS

- ✗ **Selling anywhere a card says yes**
Sprawl is the silent killer: a \$79 client twenty minutes away pays less than minimum wage after drive time. Own streets, not dots on a map.

- ✗ **Underpricing the initial cleanup**
A season of neglect is an hour of hard labor and three contractor bags. Quote it separately at \$75-160 or you start every subscription underwater.

- ✗ **Per-visit billing**
Invoicing after the fact creates collections work and a monthly cancel decision. Flat subscription, stored card, automatic: the billing model IS the retention.

- ✗ **Skipping the disinfectant**
Parvo travels on boots, and one sick-puppy rumor on Nextdoor ends a route business overnight. The protocol costs pennies a yard and doubles as your best marketing line.

- ✗ **Ignoring the commercial layer**
Pet stations are unglamorous even by this trade's standards, which is why \$150-450 monthly contracts sit unclaimed at HOAs that would sign this week if anyone asked.

THREE SCALE PATHS

- 1 **The second route**
When route one fills its days, open the adjacent zips with a part-time tech running your playbook: gate photos, disinfectant, the route order the software spits out. You sell; they scoop; the map grows one colored-in zip at a time.

- 2 **Commercial contracts**
Stack HOA and apartment station work until it covers your fixed costs by itself. Annual renewals, one invoice per property, and a moat: property managers do not re-shop vendors who never generate complaints.

- 3 **The licensed add-on ladder**
Deodorizing and enzyme treatments need no license; flea and tick yard applications at \$60-90 each do. Get the state pesticide applicator license deliberately and the route becomes a yard-health business with double the invoice.

YOUR FIRST HIRE

A part-time tech on your densest route day, W-2, trained on exactly three things: the route order, the disinfectant ritual, and the gate photo. If the route cannot be handed off with a one-page checklist, fix the checklist before the hire. You keep signups, commercial pitches, and the new zips: the parts that compound.

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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