

Sample Business Plan to Help You Start a Tree trimming and arborist service Venture

GreenCrown Arborists, LLC (Colorado LLC, formed March 15, 2024) provides certified tree trimming and emergency storm response services to Denver metro homeowners and commercial properties at \$150-\$1,800/job. Targeting \$210,000 Year 1 revenue with 350 jobs at \$600 average ticket. Jordan Reed (ISA Certified Arborist, 12 years field experience, managed \$1.2M CO tree crew) leads operations. Plan dated October 26, 2023.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Denver metro homeowners lose \$4.7M annually to preventable tree damage (Denver Forestry Dept 2022), with 68% of properties having trees requiring immediate trimming due to bark beetle infestations. GreenCrown solves this through ISA-certified crews charging \$600 average job (vs. \$450 for uncertified competitors) with 24/7 storm response. We capture 0.2% of Front Range SOM (\$1.2M) by servicing 350 jobs in Year 1 at 45% gross margin, scaling to 860 jobs at 58% margin by Year 3. Break-even occurs at 52 jobs/month (Month 18) when fixed costs of \$18,600 are covered by \$360 contribution margin per job.

We charge \$600/job (42% premium over uncertified operators) based on \$420 COGS: \$210 labor (0.7 crew hours at \$300/hr), \$126 equipment depreciation, \$84 fuel/insurance. Year 1 revenue of \$210,000 requires 29 new customers/month at 50% close rate from 58 leads. Path to profitability: Reduce CAC from \$222 to \$145 by Year 3 through referral program (32% of new jobs) and contract retention (75% renewal rate on \$450-\$1,200 annual plans).

We seek \$185,000: \$120,000 SBA 7(a) loan (10-year, 7.5% interest), \$65,000 owner equity. Funds deploy as 26% vehicles (\$48,000 truck + \$32,000 chipper), 24% equipment (\$18,000 PPE + \$14,000 grinder), 32% operations (\$59,000 marketing, insurance, working capital). This enables 350 Year 1 jobs, \$520,000 Year 3 revenue, and 22% IRR by Year 5 exit to regional consolidator (Davey Tree paid 4.2x EBITDA for Colorado acquisitions in 2022).

2. COMPANY OVERVIEW

GreenCrown operates as Colorado LLC (formed March 15, 2024) for liability protection and pass-through taxation. Located in Denver (80224 ZIP) to access 180,000 target residential properties within 30-mile radius where 41% have trees needing trimming (Denver GIS data). 80% owned by Jordan Reed (funded \$52,000 equity), 20% by Maria Lopez (funded \$13,000 equity).

Jordan Reed (President) managed \$1.2M tree crew at Colorado Tree & Landscape (2018-2023), reducing OSHA incidents by 63% through safety protocols. Maria Lopez (COO) grew digital leads 220% at GreenScape LLC (2020-2023) using Zoho CRM. Both hold OSHA 30-Hour certification.

Date	Milestone	Status	Next Steps
Mar 15, 2024	Company formation	Complete	N/A
Apr 10, 2024	ISA business accreditation	Pending	Submit documentation by 3/30
May 1, 2024	Vehicle acquisition	Ordered	Finalize SBA loan by 4/15
Jun 1, 2024	Launch operations	Planning	Hire 2 crew by 5/15
Sep 30, 2024	100 jobs completed	Target	Maintain 25 jobs/month
Dec 31, 2024	\$210,000 revenue	Target	Achieve 29 jobs/month avg
Jun 30, 2025	Break-even	Target	Reduce CAC to \$185
Dec 31, 2025	\$375,000 revenue	Target	Add second crew by Q3

3. MARKET ANALYSIS

U.S. tree care industry: \$10.2B 2023 (IBISWorld), growing at 5.1% CAGR to \$12.7B by 2027. Colorado SAM: \$185M (5.8% of national market). Front Range SOM: \$1.2M (0.65% of SAM), calculated as 180,000 residential properties (45% with trees needing service) x \$15 avg annual spend + 12,000 commercial properties x \$40 avg spend.

Target residential customers: Homeowners in ZIPs 80224/80231 (median income \$108,000), 35-65 years old, 68% own homes with mature trees. Budget: \$300-\$900/job. Commercial targets: Property managers (5-20 trees/property) spending \$2,400/year on maintenance. 72% require certified arborists per HOA contracts.

Market trends: 1) 14% annual increase in storm damage claims (State Farm 2023), 2) 31% of Denver trees infested by bark beetles (CSU 2023), 3) 63% of homeowners pay premium for eco-friendly services (National Arbor Day Foundation), 4) 48% adoption of digital booking in landscaping (IBISWorld).

Segment	Size (\$)	Growth Rate	Our Share Target	Rationale
Residential trimming	\$720,000	5.8%	0.3%	350 jobs x \$600 avg = \$210,000
Commercial contracts	\$360,000	7.2%	0.5%	45 contracts x \$800 avg = \$36,000
Emergency response	\$90,000	12.1%	1.8%	90 jobs x \$500 avg = \$45,000
Tree removals	\$30,000	4.3%	0.4%	35 jobs x \$857 avg = \$30,000

Category	Total Addressable	Serviceable Available	Serviceable Obtainable	Methodology
Residential	\$10.2B	\$185M	\$720,000	180,000 homes x 45% service rate x \$89 avg spend (IBISWorld)
Commercial	\$2.1B	\$38M	\$480,000	12,000 properties x 60% service rate x \$67 avg spend

4. COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Market fragmented: Davey Tree (\$250M CO revenue) holds 18% share but charges 35% premium (\$810 avg job). Colorado Tree & Landscape (15 employees) dominates commercial contracts but lacks digital tools. 72% of local competitors are unlicensed operators charging \$450/job with no insurance (Denver Business License data).

Our advantages: 1) ISA certification (only 15% of local firms) reduces insurance premiums by 22% (\$2,100/year savings), 2) Digital client portal increases retention to 75% (vs. industry 58%), 3) Mulch recycling cuts disposal costs by \$3,600/year, 4) 24/7 storm response captures 18% of emergency jobs (vs. 8% for competitors).

Competitor	Revenue Est.	Pricing	Key Strength	Key Weakness	Our Differentiation
Davey Tree	\$250M	\$810/job	National scale	Slow response (24+ hrs)	4-hr emergency dispatch
Colorado Tree & Landscape	\$1.8M	\$650/job	Commercial contracts	No digital estimates	Online instant quote tool
Tree Tech CO	\$950K	\$580/job	Google Ads expertise	No ISA certification	Certified arborist on staff
Local independents (avg)	\$220K	\$450/job	Low price	No insurance/licensing	Full liability coverage
DYI homeowners	N/A	\$150/job	Cost	High injury risk	OSHA-compliant safety

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
ISA certification (12-yr lead)	Limited brand recognition	CSU bark beetle grant funding	Unlicensed operators undercutting
Digital client portal (75% retention)	Single crew capacity (12 jobs/week)	Municipal storm response contracts	Winter demand drop (35% lower)
Eco-practices (22% insurance savings)	Dependent on owner for sales	HOA partnership program	OSHA injury claims
24/7 emergency service	High startup equipment costs	Tree health subscription model	Drought restrictions limiting work

5. PRODUCTS & SERVICES

We deliver tree trimming via 3-person crews using bucket trucks/chippers. Each job includes: 1) Digital safety plan, 2) Photo documentation of cuts, 3) Mulch recycling (85% of debris), 4) Post-service tree health report via client portal. Emergency response guarantees 4-hour dispatch with real-time GPS tracking.

Pricing set 15% above local average (\$600 vs \$520) based on ISA certification value (72% of HOAs require it). \$150-\$600 trimming jobs cover \$210 labor (0.7 hours x \$300/hr crew rate), \$126 equipment depreciation (\$75k equipment / 5 years / 12 months x 1.4 jobs/day), \$84 variable costs (fuel/insurance). Commercial contracts priced at \$450-\$1,200/year for 2-4 visits.

Tier	Price	Features	Target Customer	Expected % Revenue	Gross Margin
Basic Trimming	\$150-\$600	Crown thinning, debris removal	Homeowners	65%	42%
Emergency Response	\$200/hr min 2 hrs	24/7 dispatch, priority service	All	22%	68%
Annual Contract	\$450-\$1,200	2-4 visits, health reports	Commercial	13%	78%

Metric	Value	Calculation/Notes
Price per service	\$600	Avg of 350 Year 1 jobs
COGS per service	\$330	\$210 labor + \$126 equip dep + \$84 variable
Gross Profit per service	\$270	\$600 - \$330
Gross Margin %	45%	\$270 / \$600
CAC	\$222	\$1,200 Google Ads / 5.4 customers (267 clicks x 4% conv x 50% close)
LTV	\$1,080	(\$600 x 2.4 jobs) x 75% retention rate / 12% monthly churn
LTV:CAC	4.9:1	\$1,080 / \$222

Payback Period	9.8 months	$CAC / (\$270 \text{ GP} \times 2.4 \text{ jobs} \times 75\% \text{ retention})$
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6. MARKETING & SALES

Google Local Service Ads drive 68% of leads (267 clicks/month at \$4.50 CPC, 4% conversion to leads). Nextdoor/Facebook generate 22% of leads (\$15 CAC). Referral program delivers 32% of new jobs (\$50 credit cost). \$1,200/month Google Ads budget targets "tree removal Denver" (1,900 searches/month, \$5.20 CPC).

Sales cycle: 1) Lead from ad/referral (58 leads/month), 2) Instant online quote (45% completion rate), 3) On-site assessment (65% conversion), 4) Digital proposal (50% close rate), 5) 30% deposit via Stripe. Average cycle: 4.2 days. Close rate: 29% (58 leads -> 17 proposals -> 8.5 jobs).

Retention: Annual contracts include free health check (reduces churn to 2.5%/month vs industry 4.8%). Digital portal sends automated pruning reminders (increases repeat jobs by 37%). Loyalty program: 10% discount after 3 jobs. Target: 75% contract renewal rate.

Channel	Monthly Budget	Expected CAC	E Conversion L Rate	Expected Customers/Month	ROI	
Google Ads	\$1,200	\$222	1050%	5.4	3.7x	
Nextdoor	\$300	\$85	4.7	50%	2.4	5.1x
Referrals	\$150	\$29	N/A00%	5.2	37.2x	
Direct Mail	\$200	\$142	2.8	50%	1.4	2.7x

Month	Google Ads	Social Media	Content/SEO	Events	Other	Total	Expected Leads	Expected Customers
1	\$1,200	\$300	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,500	18.2	9.1
2	\$1,200	\$300	\$200	\$0	\$0	\$1,700	20.1	10.1
3	\$1,200	\$300	\$200	\$0	\$50	\$1,750	21.3	10.7
4	\$1,200	\$300	\$300	\$0	\$50	\$1,850	22.9	11.5
5	\$1,200	\$300	\$300	\$100	\$50	\$1,950	24.1	12.1
6	\$1,200	\$300	\$300	\$100	\$50	\$1,950	25.3	12.7
7	\$1,200	\$250	\$300	\$100	\$50	\$1,900	26.5	13.3
8	\$1,200	\$250	\$300	\$100	\$50	\$1,900	27.1	13.6
9	\$1,200	\$250	\$300	\$100	\$50	\$1,900	27.7	13.9
10	\$1,200	\$250	\$300	\$100	\$50	\$1,900	28.3	14.2
11	\$1,200	\$250	\$300	\$100	\$50	\$1,900	28.9	14.5
12	\$1,200	\$250	\$300	\$100	\$50	\$1,900	29.5	14.8

7. OPERATIONS

Daily workflow: 6:30 AM safety briefing -> 7:00 AM dispatch via Zoho Bookings -> 3 crews (1 lead + 2 climbers) complete 4 jobs/day (1.4 hours/job) -> 5:00 PM digital reporting. Capacity: 12 jobs/day. Winter (Dec-Feb) reduced to 8 jobs/day via storm response focus. All crews use OSHA-compliant PPE with daily equipment checks.

Key vendors: Denver Equipment Co. (stump grinder lease \$350/month), Ford Commercial (truck maintenance \$1,200/year), Grainger (PPE bulk discounts at \$1,800/year). Technology stack: Zoho One (\$89/month for CRM/scheduling), Geotab (\$25/vehicle for GPS), QuickBooks Online (\$30/month).

Vendor/Supplier	Service	Monthly Cost	Contract Terms	Backup Option
Denver Equipment Co.	Stump grinder lease	\$350	12-month, 30-day cancel	Colorado Tool Rental
Ford Commercial	Truck maintenance	\$100	36-month included in purchase	Local diesel mechanic
Grainger	PPE bulk orders	\$150	No contract, net 30	Home Depot Pro
Costco Business	Diesel fuel	\$900	No contract	Shell Fleet

Tool	Purpose	Monthly Cost	Users	Alternatives Considered
Zoho One	CRM/scheduling	\$89	4	Jobber (\$99), Housecall Pro (\$79)
Geotab	Fleet GPS tracking	\$25	4 vehicles	Verizon Connect (\$35)
QuickBooks Online	Accounting	\$30	2	Xero (\$29)
Stripe	Payment processing	\$45	4	Square (\$50)

8. MANAGEMENT TEAM

4-person team: President (salary \$72,000), COO (salary \$60,000), 2 Crew Leads (salary \$48,000 each). Salaries set at 75th percentile for Colorado landscaping (BLS 2023). No bonuses until Year 2 profitability. Maria Lopez (COO) manages all hiring via LinkedIn Recruiter (\$129/month).

Advisory board: David Chen (ex-Davey Tree regional manager, 0.5% equity), Sarah Kim (Denver environmental attorney, \$150/hr retainer). Both provide quarterly strategy reviews.

Month	Role	Salary	Priority	Source	Onboarding Time
4	Crew Lead #1	\$48,000	High	LinkedIn	2 weeks
4	Crew Lead #2	\$48,000	High	LinkedIn	2 weeks
6	Part-time Admin	\$30,000	Medium	Craigslist	1 week
10	Second Crew	\$96,000	Low	Indeed	3 weeks

9. FINANCIAL PLAN

Key assumptions: 15 new customers/month Year 1 (growing to 25/month Year 3), \$600 average revenue per job, 45% gross margin Year 1 (improving to 58% by Year 3 via crew efficiency), 4.8% monthly churn, \$222 CAC Year 1 (declining to \$145 by Year 3). Fixed costs: \$18,600/month (rent, payroll, software).

Revenue generated from 350 Year 1 jobs: 228 trimming (\$136,800), 77 emergency (\$38,500), 45 contracts (\$34,700). Growth drivers: 1) Referral program (32% of new jobs), 2) Commercial contracts (13% of revenue), 3) Emergency service premium (22% higher margin).

Cost structure: 55% variable costs (labor, fuel, insurance), 45% fixed costs (salaries, rent, software). Variable costs scale at 0.7% per additional job due to route optimization. Fixed costs increase 8% annually for wage adjustments.

Funding: \$185,000 covers 6 months runway. \$120,000 SBA loan (7.5% interest, \$1,400 monthly payment), \$65,000 equity. Milestones: 100 jobs by Month 4, break-even by Month 18, \$375,000 Year 2 revenue.

Category	Item	Cost	Notes
Equipment	2024 Ford F-350 Truck	\$48,000	Financed via SBA loan
Equipment	Trailer Mounted Chipper	\$32,000	20" capacity, new
Equipment	Climbing & Safety Equipment	\$18,000	ISA-compliant PPE
Equipment	Stump Grinder	\$14,000	Purchased outright
Equipment	Chainsaws/Hand Tools	\$7,500	Stihl professional grade
Insurance	Liability & Workers' Comp	\$9,500	\$2M coverage
Licensing	Business License & Permits	\$2,200	Denver + 5 suburbs

Technology & Software Setup	\$5,800	Zoho customization
Marketing Launch Campaign	\$12,000	6 months Google Ads
Facility Lease Deposit & Buildout	\$10,000	\$1,800 x 2 + improvement
3 Months Operating Expenses Capital	\$26,000	\$18,600 x 3 - \$29,800 receivable
Professional Accounting Setup Fees	\$5,000	LLC formation tax planning
Contingency Buffer	\$18,500	For equipment overruns
Total Startup Costs	\$185,000	

C Type	Monthly Cost	Annual Cost	Notes
Rent	\$1,800	\$21,600	1,200 sq ft warehouse
Salaries	\$12,000	\$144,000	1 lead, 2 crew, 1 admin

Benefits	\$2,400	\$28,800	20% of payroll
Insurance	\$800	\$9,600	Liability + workers' comp
Software	\$189	\$2,268	Zoho, Geotab, QuickBooks
Utilities	\$300	\$3,600	Electricity internet
Marketing	\$1,900	\$22,800	Google Ads, referrals
Fuel/variable	\$900	\$10,800	\$3.80/gal diesel, 240 gal/mo
Vehicle Maintenance	\$100	\$1,200	Truck/chip servicing
Equipment Repairs	\$300	\$3,600	Chainsaw grinders
Loan Payment	\$1,400	\$16,800	SBA 7(a) principal + interest
Depreciation	\$1,411	\$16,932	\$75,500 equipment / 5 years / 12
Fixed Total	\$19,889	\$238,668	
Variable Total	\$1,300	\$15,600	
Combined Total	\$21,189	\$254,268	

Cash Out (CapEx)	\$0	\$0	\$159,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cash Out (Debt)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400
Total Cash Out	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$179,000	\$35,996	\$38,880	\$41,664	\$44,398	\$45,790	\$47,182	\$44,398	\$41,614	\$38,830
Net Cash Flow	-\$20,000	-\$20,000	\$6,000	-\$26,396	-\$24,480	-\$22,464	-\$20,398	-\$19,390	-\$18,382	-\$20,398	-\$22,414	-\$24,430
Ending Cash	\$6,000	-\$14,000	-\$8,000	-\$34,000	-\$58,480	-\$80,944	-\$101,342	-\$120,732	-\$139,114	-\$159,512	-\$181,926	-\$206,356

Metric	Y1	Y2 Q1	Y2 Q2	Y2 Q3	Y2 Q4	Y3 Q1	Y3 Q2	Y3 Q3	Y3 Q4	Y3 Total
Revenue	\$210,000	\$100,000	\$115,000	\$120,000	\$130,000	\$145,000	\$155,000	\$160,000	\$160,000	\$520,000
COGS	\$115,500	\$51,000	\$56,350	\$57,600	\$61,100	\$66,700	\$69,750	\$70,400	\$68,800	\$265,650
Gross Profit	\$94,500	\$49,000	\$58,650	\$62,400	\$68,900	\$78,300	\$85,250	\$89,600	\$91,200	\$254,350
OpEx	\$224,114	\$58,000	\$59,000	\$60,000	\$61,000	\$62,000	\$63,000	\$64,000	\$65,000	\$254,000
EBITDA	-\$129,614	-\$9,000	-\$350	\$2,400	\$7,900	\$16,300	\$22,250	\$25,600	\$26,200	\$750
Net Income	-\$154,646	-\$12,000	-\$4,000	\$500	\$5,500	\$12,500	\$17,500	\$20,500	\$21,000	\$67,800
Ending Cash	-\$206,356	-\$238,356	-\$242,356	-\$239,856	-\$231,956	-\$215,656	-\$194,656	-\$170,656	-\$145,656	\$0

Metric	Value	Calculation
Monthly Fixed Costs	\$19,889	From OpEx table (ex-variable costs)
Variable Cost per Service	\$330	\$115,500 COGS / 350 jobs
Price per Service	\$600	\$210,000 revenue / 350 jobs
Contribution Margin per Service	\$270	\$600 - \$330
Contribution Margin %	45%	\$270 / \$600

Break-Even Units per Month	73.7	\$19,889 / \$270
Break-Even Revenue per Month	\$44,200	73.7 units x \$600
Expected Break-Even Month	Month 18	Projected at 75 jobs/month (Q3 Year 2)
Safety Margin	14.7%	$(100 - 73.7) / 73.7$

Metric	Y1	Y2	Y3	Industry Benchmark
Gross Margin %	45.0%	52.6%	58.0%	54.3% (IBISWorld)
Operating Margin %	-106.7%	-8.1%	13.0%	-5.2% (Year 1 avg)
Net Profit Margin %	-73.6%	-8.1%	13.0%	2.1% (Year 3 avg)
Current Ratio	0.8	1.2	2.1	1.5
Quick Ratio	0.6	0.9	1.7	1.0
CAC Payback Period	10.2 mo	8.7 mo	7.1 mo	9.0 mo
LTV:CAC Ratio	4.9:1	5.7:1	7.4:1	3.0:1
Monthly Burn Rate	\$12,887	\$1,000	N/A	N/A
Runway	2.0 mo	18.0 mo	N/A	N/A

10. RISK ANALYSIS

Top risks: 1) OSHA injury (probability 4/5, impact \$50,000 claim), 2) Unlicensed competitors undercutting prices (probability 5/5, impact 15% revenue loss), 3) Winter demand drop (probability 4/5, impact 35% revenue decline Q1), 4) SBA loan denial (probability 2/5, impact startup delay). Probability/impact scored 1-5 based on Colorado tree service incident reports (2022) and SBA denial rates (12% for 7(a) loans under \$150k).

Mitigation: 1) Mandatory OSHA 30-Hour training (reduces incidents by 63% per BLS), 2) Target HOAs requiring certified arborists (41% of commercial contracts), 3) Offer winter storm prep packages (\$250 flat fee), 4) Secure \$25k backup line of credit from Colorado Business Development Corp.

Risk	Probability	Impact	Risk Score	Mitigation Strategy	Contingency Plan	Owner
Worker injury	4	5	20	Daily safety briefings, \$2M liability insurance	Pause operations for retraining	Reed
Unlicensed competition	5	4	20	Emphasize certification in marketing	Match prices for commercial bids	Lopez
Seasonal demand drop	4	4	16	Winter storm prep packages	Reduce crew hours 20%	Reed
Loan denial	2	5	10	Apply for SBA CAPLines	Delay truck purchase, lease instead	Lopez
Equipment failure	3	4	12	Preventive maintenance schedule	\$10k repair reserve fund	Reed
Client non-payment	3	3	9	30% deposit via Stripe	Suspend services after 15 days	Lopez
Drought restrictions	2	4	8	Partner with CSU Forest Service	Shift to pruning services	Reed
Key person loss	1	5	5	Cross-train crew leads	Use ISA job board for replacement	Lopez

11. IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Critical path: SBA loan approval by April 15 (Month 2) to enable vehicle acquisition (Month 3). Delay risks missing May peak season (35% of annual revenue). Key dependency: Maria Lopez must complete Zoho CRM setup before hiring crew (Month 4) to track job costing.

Month	Milestone	Deliverables	Resources Needed	Success Metric	Owner
1	SBA loan application	Completed SBA Form 1919	\$5k legal fees	Application submitted	Lopez
2	ISA accreditation	Certification documentation	\$1,200 ISA fee	Approval received	Reed
3	Vehicle acquisition	Truck/chipper operational	\$80k equipment budget	Ready for service by 5/1	Reed
4	Crew hiring	2 certified climbers hired	LinkedIn Recruiter access	100% OSHA certification	Lopez
5	Service launch	First 20 jobs completed	Marketing budget	25 jobs/month achieved	Reed
6	Client portal launch	100% job reporting via portal	\$2k dev costs	75% client adoption	Lopez
7	Referral program	30 active referrals	\$150 marketing budget	25% of new jobs	Lopez
8	Commercial contracts	5 HOA agreements signed	Proposal templates	\$10k contract revenue	Reed
9	Break-even analysis	Revised financial model	Accountant review	Path to Month 18 break-even	Lopez
10	Second crew hire	4-person team operational	\$96k payroll budget	50 jobs/month capacity	Lopez
11	Emergency service	24/7 response system	GPS tracking setup	4-hr dispatch guarantee	Reed
12	Year 1 review	\$210k revenue achieved	Financial audit	Within 5% revenue variance	Lopez

12. APPENDIX

Supporting documents: 1) SBA loan commitment letter (draft), 2) ISA certification verification, 3) Denver Forestry Dept tree damage report (2022), 4) Detailed equipment quotes from Denver Equipment Co., 5) Zoho CRM workflow diagrams. All financial assumptions documented with IBISWorld, BLS, and WordStream data sources. Full sensitivity analysis available showing revenue impact of +/-15% job volume and +/-10% pricing changes.