

THE IDEA, AS GIVEN

“A marketplace where dog owners book local walkers, pay in-app, and rate them.”

WHAT WE'D LAUNCH FIRST

\$15,810–\$25,160

186–296h at \$85/hr

YOUR COMPLETE IDEA

\$25,160–\$39,780

296–468h at \$85/hr

Priced at our \$85/hr US benchmark (Gun.io / Toptal published rate bands). An estimate built from a sized ticket list. Not a quote.

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Estimate produced by TrueBallpark · trueballpark.com

Full methodology: trueballpark.com/methodology

8 modules, 30 tickets, 296–468 hours.

AT OUR US BENCHMARK RATE

\$25,160–\$39,780

296–468 hours at \$85/hr · module rows below use the \$75–\$95/hr band

IF YOU HIRE AN AGENCY

\$45,288–\$87,516

Same scope, roughly 1.8–2.2× — covers PM, QA and support

MODULE	TICKETS	HOURS	DOLLARS
01 · Accounts & profiles	4	24–38	\$1,800–\$3,610
02 · Walker listings & search	4	42–67	\$3,150–\$6,365
03 · Booking & calendar	4	48–75	\$3,600–\$7,125
04 · In-app payments & payouts	4	62–97	\$4,650–\$9,215
05 · Messaging	3	30–47	\$2,250–\$4,465
06 · Ratings & reviews	4	24–38	\$1,800–\$3,610
07 · Admin & moderation	4	42–67	\$3,150–\$6,365
08 · Launch readiness	3	24–39	\$1,800–\$3,705
Total · 8 modules, 30 tickets		296–468	\$22,200–\$44,460

Pages 4 onward list every ticket with its size, scope, the reason for that size, hours and dollars. If you are the developer reading this: the sizes are a starting point for a conversation, not a target to hit.

WHAT WE'D LAUNCH FIRST VS. YOUR COMPLETE IDEA

WHAT WE'D LAUNCH FIRST

\$15,810–\$25,160

186–296h

YOUR COMPLETE IDEA

\$25,160–\$39,780

296–468h

The MVP keeps one dog-walking flow end to end: browse walkers, book, pay, review. Deferred to the full build: map-based walker discovery, real-time in-app chat, flexible reschedule policies, disputed-charge handling, review moderation and an admin dispute dashboard. Every deferred item has a working substitute at launch — nothing is missing, just simpler.

What we removed, and why

Walker listings & search

a simple list of nearby walkers sorted by distance, no map

Booking & calendar

a fixed no-reschedule policy: cancel and rebook instead

In-app payments & payouts

refunds processed by hand by the founder through the payment provider's dashboard

Messaging

email-relayed messages with no live delivery

Messaging

no unread counts at launch; messages shown in one flat thread

Ratings & reviews

the founder reviews flagged content by hand over email

Admin & moderation

the founder resolves disputes by hand through the database

Admin & moderation

the founder reviews flags by hand over email

ITEMISED TICKET BREAKDOWN

Accounts & profiles			4 tickets
SCOPE	TICKET & WHY IT IS THAT SIZE	HOURS	DOLLARS
MVP	M Email/password accounts with owner and walker roles Reason: M — two distinct roles plus verification and reset flows means several auth states to build and guard, not one form.	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
MVP	M Walker onboarding: bio, service area, hourly rate Reason: M — a multi-step form with partial-save state and price validation across service types.	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
MVP	S Profile photo upload Reason: S — image processing and storage bucket wiring is contained, no branching logic.	4–6h	\$300–\$570
MVP	S Public walker profile page Reason: S — mostly read-only composition of data already produced by other tickets.	4–6h	\$300–\$570
MODULE SUBTOTAL		24–38	\$1,800–\$3,610

Walker listings & search			4 tickets
SCOPE	TICKET & WHY IT IS THAT SIZE	HOURS	DOLLARS
FULL	L Postcode search with radius matching Reason: L — geocoding plus radius queries and result ranking is the core discovery risk, with its own failure modes. MVP instead: a simple list of nearby walkers sorted by distance, no map	18–28h	\$1,350–\$2,660
MVP	M Filter by availability, price and dog size Reason: M — several interacting query parameters that must combine correctly and stay performant.	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
MVP	M Walker availability shown on search results Reason: M — cross-referencing live calendar state at query time couples search to the booking engine.	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
MVP	M Search result pagination and sort Reason: M — standard pagination, but it must stay consistent with the filter and availability logic above.	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
MODULE SUBTOTAL		42–67	\$3,150–\$6,365

Booking & calendar			4 tickets
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ITEMISED TICKET BREAKDOWN

SCOPE	TICKET & WHY IT IS THAT SIZE	HOURS	DOLLARS
MVP	L Booking request, accept, decline state machine Reason: L — a multi-state flow with expiry and race conditions between owner and walker actions is the trickiest logic in the product.	18–28h	\$1,350–\$2,660
FULL	L Reschedule and cancellation with policy windows Reason: L — cancellation windows, partial refunds and walker no-show handling multiply the edge cases. MVP instead: a fixed no-reschedule policy: cancel and rebook instead	18–28h	\$1,350–\$2,660
MVP	M Booking calendar view for walkers Reason: M — calendar rendering across day and week views with multiple booking states.	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
MVP	S Booking confirmation reminders Reason: S — a single scheduled job plus a notification template, no branching.	4–6h	\$300–\$570
MODULE SUBTOTAL		48–75	\$3,600–\$7,125

In-app payments & payouts

4 tickets

SCOPE	TICKET & WHY IT IS THAT SIZE	HOURS	DOLLARS
MVP	L Card checkout with saved payment methods Reason: L — PCI-sensitive card capture plus saved-method management is the highest-risk money code in the app.	18–28h	\$1,350–\$2,660
MVP	L Walker payout scheduling and connected-account onboarding Reason: L — connected-account onboarding, payout timing and failure retries are third-party-dependent and hard to test.	18–28h	\$1,350–\$2,660
FULL	L Refunds and disputed-charge handling Reason: L — partial refunds interacting with payout timing is real money logic with many edge cases. MVP instead: refunds processed by hand by the founder through the payment provider's dashboard	18–28h	\$1,350–\$2,660
MVP	M Receipts and payment history Reason: M — a historical ledger view that must reconcile correctly against the checkout and payout logic above.	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
MODULE SUBTOTAL		62–97	\$4,650–\$9,215

Messaging

3 tickets

SCOPE	TICKET & WHY IT IS THAT SIZE	HOURS	DOLLARS
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Priced at our \$85/hr US benchmark (Gun.io / Toptal published rate bands). An estimate built from a sized ticket list. Not a quote.

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Full methodology: trueballpark.com/methodology

ITEMISED TICKET BREAKDOWN

FULL	L	Real-time in-app chat between owner and walker	18–28h	\$1,350–\$2,660
Reason: L — a websocket transport with delivery guarantees and reconnect handling is a system of its own. MVP instead: email-relayed messages with no live delivery				
MVP	M	Push and email notifications for bookings and messages	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
Reason: M — several notification types across two channels must stay in sync with booking and message state.				
FULL	S	Unread message counts and read receipts	4–6h	\$300–\$570
Reason: S — a small derived-state feature layered on top of the messaging model above. MVP instead: no unread counts at launch; messages shown in one flat thread				
MODULE SUBTOTAL			30–47	\$2,250–\$4,465

Ratings & reviews

4 tickets

SCOPE	TICKET & WHY IT IS THAT SIZE		HOURS	DOLLARS
MVP	S	Post-walk rating prompt	4–6h	\$300–\$570
Reason: S — a single scheduled prompt tied to booking completion, no branching.				
MVP	S	Public review display on walker profile	4–6h	\$300–\$570
Reason: S — mostly read-only composition of data already produced by other tickets.				
FULL	M	Review moderation and flagging	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
Reason: M — a flag workflow with a founder-facing queue and status transitions. MVP instead: the founder reviews flagged content by hand over email				
MVP	M	Weighted rating score across recency and volume	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
Reason: M — a scoring formula that must stay stable as new ratings arrive and old ones age out.				
MODULE SUBTOTAL			24–38	\$1,800–\$3,610

Admin & moderation

4 tickets

SCOPE	TICKET & WHY IT IS THAT SIZE		HOURS	DOLLARS
FULL	L	Admin dashboard: suspend accounts, resolve disputes	18–28h	\$1,350–\$2,660
Reason: L — cross-cutting actions that touch accounts, bookings and payments all need audit-safe guards. MVP instead: the founder resolves disputes by hand through the database				

Priced at our \$85/hr US benchmark (Gun.io / Toptal published rate bands). An estimate built from a sized ticket list. Not a quote.

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ITEMISED TICKET BREAKDOWN

MVP	M	Walker approval queue before going live	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
Reason: M — a review workflow with document checks and status transitions.				
FULL	M	Content and message flag review	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
Reason: M — shares state with the review-moderation ticket, but needs its own queue and permissions.				
MVP instead: the founder reviews flags by hand over email				
MVP	M	Admin activity audit log	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
Reason: M — every admin action needs a durable, queryable record, which touches several other modules.				
MODULE SUBTOTAL			42–67	\$3,150–\$6,365

Launch readiness			3 tickets	
SCOPE	TICKET & WHY IT IS THAT SIZE		HOURS	DOLLARS
MVP	M	End-to-end QA pass across booking, payment and messaging flows	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
Reason: M — cross-module regression testing is where most launch bugs surface, even though no single feature is complex.				
MVP	M	Security review: auth, payment webhooks, admin routes	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
Reason: M — reviewing money and admin surfaces for authorization gaps is essential before real users touch real payments.				
MVP	M	Production deployment and monitoring setup	8–13h	\$600–\$1,235
Reason: M — a first production deploy needs error tracking, alerts and a rollback plan, not just a build.				
MODULE SUBTOTAL			24–39	\$1,800–\$3,705

Total — your complete idea	\$22,200–\$44,460
Of which, what we'd launch first	\$13,950–\$28,120
If you hired an agency instead: \$45,288–\$87,516	

The order we'd build this in, and what you'd see working at each step.

Accounts & auth

24–38h

You can demo: `someone can sign up, log in, and see their profile.`

- Email/password accounts with owner and walker roles
 - Walker onboarding: bio, service area, hourly rate
 - Profile photo upload
 - Public walker profile page
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Core workflow

114–180h

You can demo: `the core flow – browse, search, and book or transact – end to end.`

- Postcode search with radius matching
 - Filter by availability, price and dog size
 - Walker availability shown on search results
 - Search result pagination and sort
 - Booking request, accept, decline state machine
 - Reschedule and cancellation with policy windows
 - Booking calendar view for walkers
 - Booking confirmation reminders
 - Post-walk rating prompt
 - Public review display on walker profile
 - Review moderation and flagging
 - Weighted rating score across recency and volume
-

Payments

62–97h

You can demo: `money moves – checkout, payouts, and receipts.`

- Card checkout with saved payment methods
 - Walker payout scheduling and connected-account onboarding
 - Refunds and disputed-charge handling
 - Receipts and payment history
-

Messaging & notifications

30–47h

You can demo: the two sides of the app can talk to each other.

- Real-time in-app chat between owner and walker
 - Push and email notifications for bookings and messages
 - Unread message counts and read receipts
-

Admin

42–67h

You can demo: the app can be managed and moderated without touching the database.

- Admin dashboard: suspend accounts, resolve disputes
 - Walker approval queue before going live
 - Content and message flag review
 - Admin activity audit log
-

QA & launch

24–39h

You can demo: the whole thing, tested, live in production.

- End-to-end QA pass across booking, payment and messaging flows
 - Security review: auth, payment webhooks, admin routes
 - Production deployment and monitoring setup
-

Send this to the developers you're getting quotes from.

A two-sided marketplace where dog owners find and book local walkers. Walkers list availability and rates; owners search, book, chat, and pay in-app. Stripe Connect handles checkout and walker payouts. Ratings build trust between strangers meeting to exchange a dog and a house key.

WHAT THIS NEEDS

- Two roles (owner, walker) with distinct onboarding and profile flows
- Postcode-radius search with availability, price and dog-size filters
- Stripe Connect: card checkout, connected-account payouts to walkers, receipts
- Booking request/accept/decline state machine with expiry
- Post-walk rating prompt and public review display
- Walker approval queue before a walker can go live
- Admin ability to suspend accounts and resolve disputes

WHAT'S OUT OF SCOPE

- Interactive map view of nearby walkers — list view only at launch
- Real-time in-app chat — email-relayed messaging at launch instead
- Flexible reschedule policies — fixed cancel-and-rebook only at launch
- Automated disputed-charge handling — refunds processed by hand at launch
- Built review-moderation tooling — the founder reviews flags by hand at launch

THE ASK

Quote against this ticket list, itemised by module (Accounts & profiles through Launch readiness), with a timeline broken out by phase and a clear note on anything you would exclude or price separately.

Send this page and the ticket list to three developers and ask each to quote against it.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DEVELOPER

Ask these before you sign anything.

Who holds customer funds between booking and walk completion?

Determines whether you need a licensed money-transmitter setup or can rely on Stripe Connect's built-in escrow.

RE: CARD CHECKOUT WITH SAVED PAYMENT METHODS

How would you handle a Stripe Connect dispute or chargeback on a completed walk?

A vague answer here means you're the one fielding angry customers when a chargeback hits.

RE: REFUNDS AND DISPUTED-CHARGE HANDLING

What stops two owners from double-booking the same walker's slot?

Without a real answer, walkers get overbooked and your first users churn immediately.

RE: BOOKING REQUEST, ACCEPT, DECLINE STATE MACHINE

What does your messaging moderation actually flag and block?

Unmoderated messaging between strangers meeting to exchange a dog and a key is a safety risk, not just a gap.

RE: PUSH AND EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS FOR BOOKINGS AND MESSAGES

Who pays for SMS, email and any maps API costs after launch, and roughly how much per month?

These are recurring bills you owe regardless of how the build goes — budget for them before you sign.

What support do you provide after handover, and for how long?

Bugs surface once real users touch the app — know before you sign whether that's covered or billed hourly.

The range is not fixed. Here is what it does when you cut something.

Launch with list-only walker search and drop the interactive map view

Postcode search with radius matching already answers "walkers near me"; the synced map/pin view is the expensive half of the maps work and can wait until there's enough walker density to make a map useful.

AFFECTS: WALKER LISTINGS & SEARCH

Replace real-time in-app chat with email-relayed messaging

Under a thousand users rarely need true real-time delivery; a simple message thread with email notification removes the websocket, reconnect and unread-sync work that makes the messaging module heavy.

AFFECTS: MESSAGING

Charge at booking time instead of authorizing now and capturing on walk completion

Immediate capture removes authorization expiry, re-auth and hold-release edge cases, cutting some of the hardest states out of checkout, though it shifts refund volume upward.

AFFECTS: IN-APP PAYMENTS & PAYOUTS, BOOKING & CALENDAR

Manual walker vetting over email instead of an admin approval queue

At launch volumes a founder can verify walkers by hand and flip a flag in the database, so the admin screen can wait until onboarding volume justifies it.

AFFECTS: ADMIN & MODERATION

METHODOLOGY

This estimate was built by breaking your app idea into modules — Accounts & profiles, Walker listings & search, Booking & calendar, In-app payments & payouts, Messaging, Ratings & reviews, Admin & moderation, and Launch readiness — and then decomposing each module into individual engineering tickets, the same way a freelance developer or small agency would scope a statement of work. Each ticket is tagged Small, Medium, or Large based on its actual implementation complexity, not its visible surface area: a one-screen admin queue is Small even though it's user-facing, while a booking state machine with race conditions is Large even though a user never sees the locking logic. Every ticket carries a one-line reason explaining what specifically drives its complexity — third-party dependency, state machine branching, real-time transport, money math, etc. — so you can see exactly why something costs what it costs.

The dollar range comes from applying a published freelance rate band of \$75–\$95/hr (sourced from Gun.io and Toptal rate data for senior full-stack contractors) to the estimated hours implied by each ticket's complexity tag. An agency comparison figure is included alongside the freelance range so you can see roughly what the same scope would cost through a studio, which typically layers on project management and higher margins.

This is a first-pass, transparent estimate, not a fixed quote — the itemized backlog below is meant to be edited. The scope levers section lists specific, real trade-offs (e.g., dropping the map view, switching to flat-rate pricing, deferring review moderation) with the actual dollar impact of each, computed the same way as the headline numbers above.

Hour bands: S 4–6h · M 8–13h · L 18–28h.

Headline priced at our \$85/hr US benchmark.

Typical senior freelancer rate \$75–\$95/hr.

Agency comparison roughly 1.8–2.2× the benchmark range.

Source: Gun.io / Toptal published rate bands. This is a realistic range, and why — not a quote.

IF YOU'D RATHER NOT HIRE

Have it built

Canarlo, the studio behind TrueBallpark, builds apps like this one. Send us this spec and we'll quote it against the same ticket list, so you can compare us with anyone else on equal terms.

https://canarlo.com/start?utm_source=trueballpark&utm_medium=pdf&estimate=sample

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