FREE WORKSHEET · APP BUDGET · 2026

Price your app right.

The App Budget Worksheet: every line item, before you sign.

Why this matters: the average app project reviewed on Clutch costs $90,780 and runs about 11 months, while most projects land between $10,000 and $49,999. Most quotes cover building the app and stop at launch. The running costs come after, and that's where budgets break.

How to use this: fill in page 2 for every quote you get, so you compare the same scope. Then run the 10-minute audit on page 3 before you sign anything.



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STEP 1 Build costs: compare quotes line by line

LINE ITEM	QUOTE A	QUOTE B	QUOTE C
Discovery and written scope			
UI/UX design (screens, prototype)			
App development (iOS / Android / cross-platform)			
Backend, database and APIs			
Admin dashboard or web app			
Testing and QA			
Project management			
App Store and Google Play submission			
Build total			

STEP 2 The 5 costs most quotes skip

☐ 01

Store fees

WHY Apple charges 99 USD per membership year for the Apple Developer Program. Google Play has a US$25 one-time registration fee. No account, no app in the store.

DO Budget $124 for year one and $99 every year after. Put both accounts in your company's name.

☐ 02

Hosting and services

WHY Servers, database, file storage, email and SMS, error tracking, and AI usage if your app calls a model. These bill every month, and they grow with users.

DO Ask each developer for a monthly estimate at 100, 1,000 and 10,000 users.

☐ 03

Maintenance and updates

WHY Phones and operating systems update every year. A common rule in industry budgeting guides is 15 to 25% of the build cost per year.

DO Write it down: build cost × 0.15 to 0.25 = your yearly maintenance budget.

STEP 2 The 5 costs most quotes skip (continued)

☐ 04 Store commissions

WHY If you sell digital goods or subscriptions inside the app, Apple and Google take a cut of those sales.

DO Check each store's current fee page for your case and price your plans with the cut included.

☐ 05 Your own time

WHY Someone on your side has to answer questions, test builds and make decisions every week. If nobody does, the project slows down and the bill goes up.

DO Name one decision-maker and block 2 to 3 hours a week for the build.

STEP 3 Questions to ask every developer

1. What exactly is in version one, and what's left out?
2. Who owns the code, designs and content once I've paid?
3. Whose name is on the App Store, Google Play, code repository and domain?
4. What isn't included in this quote?
5. What will hosting and services cost per month?
6. How do change requests work, and how are they priced?
7. What does support cost after the warranty period?
8. How often will I see working software I can test?

STEP 4 10-minute quote audit

- ☐ Same scope priced by every developer
- ☐ Monthly running costs estimated
- ☐ Store accounts in my company's name
- ☐ Payments tied to milestones I can test
- ☐ Every line item on page 2 filled in
- ☐ Maintenance budget written down
- ☐ IP assignment in the contract
- ☐ Warranty period after launch in writing

TOTAL

Your year-one number

BUILD TOTAL	STORE FEES	12 × MONTHLY SERVICES	MAINTENANCE (15–25%)	YEAR ONE

Rather have a team scope it with you?

Global McLien Software Solutions builds iOS, Android and cross-platform apps. Focused MVPs typically start at $10K–$15K, custom applications at $18.5K–$45K, and large platforms from $85K. Book a free 30-minute call and we'll price your app line by line, in writing.

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Sources: Clutch, Cost to Build a Mobile App (clutch.co/app-developers/resources/cost-to-build-mobile-app) and app pricing guide (clutch.co/app-developers/resources/cost-build-mobile-app), 2026. Apple Developer Program membership details (developer.apple.com/programs/whats-included). Google Play Console Help, Get started with Play Console (support.google.com/googleplay/android-developer/answer/6112435). Zoho, App development cost in 2026 (maintenance rule of thumb).

General planning information, not financial or legal advice. Ranges are starting points for a written scope, not a quote.