

Your Tool Stack & Budget

The Operator’s Map — Cohort 01 What you will use, what it costs, and when to set it up. Verified pricing, July 2026.

The short version

Two paid subscriptions cover everything the program requires — about **\$45–50 per month**. Every other tool runs on its free tier for the full eight weeks. **Nothing needs to be purchased before Week 1**. Session 1 walks through setup, in order, together.

The stack

Tool	What it does in your system	What you pay	Notes
Claude Pro	Your AI thinking partner — and Claude Code, the engine behind most of what you will build	\$20/mo	The one AI subscription the program requires. The free tier hits daily limits too fast for real building, and does not include Claude Code.
n8n Starter	The automation engine — where workflows run without you	~\$25/mo	n8n Cloud has no permanent free plan. The 14-day trial covers your setup weeks; see the timeline below for how to pay for only one month.
Airtable	Structured data — your records, pipelines, and logs	\$0	The free plan (1,000 records per base) is more than enough for the program.
Google account	Email, Docs, Sheets, Calendar — the surfaces your automations touch	\$0	A personal Google account works fully with everything we build.
Zoom	Live sessions, Wednesdays 12:00–1:15 pm CT	\$0	You join sessions; you never host. Joining is always free.
WhatsApp	The cohort community	\$0	
Loom	Async module videos	\$0	Watching is free, no account limits.

The budget, honestly

Scenario	What is in it	Monthly
Required	Claude Pro + n8n Starter	~\$45–50
With every optional upgrade	Adds business email (\$8.40), Airtable Team (\$24), your own domain (~\$1)	~\$80

You will not cross \$100/month on this program unless you choose subscriptions the curriculum does not ask for.

One sequencing trick worth money: do not start your n8n trial until Week 2, when the first automations begin. The 14-day trial then carries you to roughly Week 4, and a single paid month covers you through graduation — total n8n spend for the entire program: about \$25.

When free stops being enough — upgrade triggers

- **Airtable:** more than 1,000 records in one base, more than ~100 native automation runs a month, or more than 5 collaborators. (We route automations through n8n, which keeps you far from that ceiling.)
- **Google:** you want email on your own domain, or you pass 15 GB of storage.
- **Claude:** Pro limits only become a constraint at heavy daily volume — most operators never touch it during the program.

Setup timeline

When	What to set up
Before Week 1	Nothing. Arrive as you are.
Week 1 (Session 1)	Claude Pro + your Google account, configured together, governance-first.
Week 2	Start the n8n 14-day trial as the first automations begin. Airtable free account.
Week 4	n8n trial ends — one paid month (~\$25) carries you through graduation.