Side Hustle Guide

Realistic side income options that fit around a full life, with what each one actually requires to get started.

Side hustle	Startup cost	What you need	Reality check
Freelance writing	Low	A few writing samples (can be self-created), a simple portfolio site or doc	Content mills and job boards pay less at first; rates improve with a track record.
Virtual assistant work	Low	Comfort with email, calendars, and basic tools like Google Workspace	Often starts hourly; many VAs move to retainer clients within a few months.
Online tutoring	Low-Medium	Subject knowledge and a webcam; some platforms want a degree or certification	Pay varies widely by subject and platform — check requirements before committing time.
Selling printables or templates (Etsy, Gumroad)	Low	Canva or similar design tool, a niche idea	Income is passive after setup but slow to build without marketing.
Bookkeeping for small businesses	Low-Medium	Basic understanding of QuickBooks or Xero (free tutorials available)	Small businesses often need this and pay reliably once trust is built.
Social media management for local businesses	Low	A phone, basic design skills, and 2-3 example posts	Local businesses are often easier first clients than large brands.
Transcription or captioning	Low	Good typing speed and accuracy, a quiet space	Pay per audio minute is modest; speed and accuracy raise your rate over time.

How to pick one instead of trying all seven

- Pick the one that overlaps with a skill you already have, even loosely
- Give it 30 real days of consistent effort before judging whether it's working
- Track hours spent vs. money earned honestly — this tells you if it's actually worth continuing
- One side hustle done consistently beats five started and abandoned