

# What SOC 2 really costs a startup in 2026

For a 25-person B2B SaaS on AWS, SOC 2 Type II in year one runs about 63,000 to 98,000 dollars. The auditor invoice is the small part.

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Just got asked for SOC 2 by your first enterprise prospect? Here is the number nobody puts in the quote.

For a 25-person B2B SaaS on AWS going for SOC 2 Type II, year one runs about 63,000 to 98,000 dollars. Not the auditor invoice. The whole project.

## The breakdown

- Auditor (CPA firm): 12k to 30k dollars, the number you actually get quoted.
- Compliance automation tooling: about 11k dollars a year.
- Independent pen test: 4k to 12k dollars.
- Your own team's hours: about 36k dollars.

## The line founders miss

Around 405 hours of policy writing, wiring up logging, chasing vendor security docs and assembling evidence. At a blended 90 dollars an hour it is the single biggest cost, bigger than the auditor, and it pulls engineers off the roadmap for roughly 30 weeks.

## How fast you can actually get one

The other number missing from the quote is time. A SOC 2 Type II report covers a window of operating controls, and that window has a floor: auditors will not observe less than 3 months, and 6 months is the more common ask. The window only starts once your controls are in place, and getting them in place is the 405 hours above, which run for weeks before the clock even starts.

So a fresh Type II for the prospect who just asked is realistically months out, not weeks. If the deal cannot wait, a SOC 2 Type I, a point-in-time snapshot that your controls exist and are designed correctly, can be produced faster and is often accepted as a bridge while the Type II window runs. A short bridge letter then covers the gap between the two reports.

## Frequently asked questions

### How much does SOC 2 cost for a startup?

For a 25-person B2B SaaS on AWS, a SOC 2 Type II in year one runs roughly 63,000 to 98,000 dollars all-in. The auditor invoice is the small part; tooling, a penetration test and your own team prep hours make up most of it.

### **Is the auditor fee the biggest SOC 2 cost?**

No. The auditor invoice is usually the smallest of the four big lines. Compliance-automation tooling, a penetration test and internal engineering hours spent on policies and evidence typically cost more than the audit itself.

### **Can I make SOC 2 cheaper?**

The largest controllable cost is internal time, which automation tooling attacks by pulling most evidence on a schedule. The fixed Type II observation window does not move, but the prep work before it does, which is where most of the savings come from.

### **How long does it take to get SOC 2?**

A SOC 2 Type II report covers an observation window with a 3-month minimum, and 6 months is the more common period. That window only starts once your controls are actually in place, which is weeks of prep on its own, so a fresh Type II is realistically months out, not weeks. A point-in-time Type I report is faster and is often accepted as a bridge while the Type II window runs, with a short bridge letter covering the gap between reports.

### **Run your SOC 2 readiness estimate**

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