APPMAKERS USA RESEARCH · ORIGINAL DATA

What 570 app inquiries show about rescues and AI-built apps (2025–2026)

AppMakers USA read every genuine app-project inquiry it received between July 1, 2025 and October 23, 2026. After removing spam, tests and duplicates, 570 remained. This page reports what those inquiries asked for, what state the apps were in, and what owners had already spent before they wrote to us.

Data through October 23, 2026 · Published November 22, 2026 · Last updated November 23, 2026

570
genuine app inquiries, July 2025 to October 2026

438
described a project in writing

74
were about an app that already exists

45
asked for a rescue, finish, fix or takeover

Key findings

1 in 6

inquiries was about an app that already exists. That was 74 of the 438 inquiries that described a project. 45 of them (1 in 10 of all inquiries) asked us to rescue, finish, fix or take over an app.

11 of 74

started in an AI or no-code builder, such as Lovable, Base44, Replit or FlutterFlow. 5 of the 11 arrived between July and October 2026.

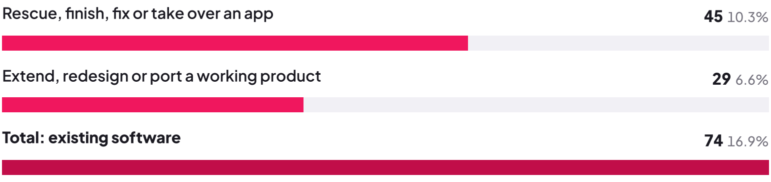
5 of 6

owners leaving a developer did not fully control their own code or accounts, in 6 sales calls.

How many app inquiries are about an app that already exists?

About one in six. Of the 438 inquiries that described a project, 74 (16.9%) were about software that already existed.

Inquiries about existing software
Share of the 438 inquiries with a project description, July 1, 2025 to October 23, 2026



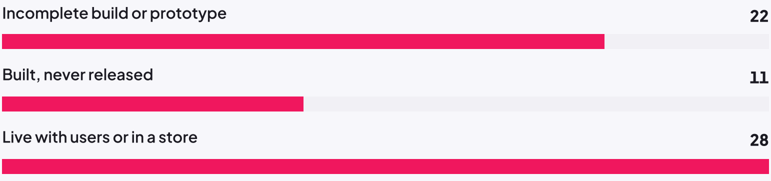
The share holds when we count only what buyers typed into our website form themselves: 22 of 124 (17.7%). We make no trend claim. In those form messages the share was 17.4% in the second half of 2025 and 18.2% in 2026.

This is one agency's inbox, and our site has a dedicated app rescue and takeover page, so rescue requests are likely over-represented here compared with the wider market. For market-wide figures, see our app development statistics for 2026. The next question is how far along these apps were when the owner wrote to us.

How far along were these apps when the owner asked for help?

Of the 61 apps that someone other than AppMakers had started and whose status was clear, 22 were incomplete builds or prototypes, 11 were built but not yet released, and 28 were live with users or in an app store.

App status at first contact
61 apps another team started, with a known status (13 did not say)



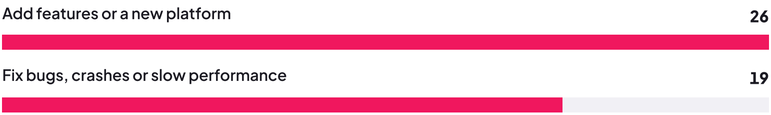
Among the rescue requests for apps another team had started, 29 of the 40 with a known status had not launched when the owner first contacted us. A typical one read like this: a web app with most screens done, a backend that half worked, and a mobile app still missing features. Another had been fully built by freelance developers and then never released. One owner described an incomplete app already sitting in the App Store.

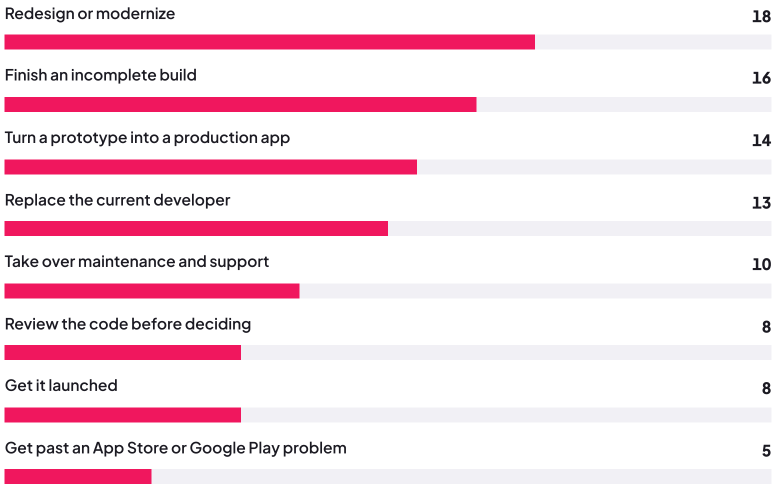
Live apps came to us with different problems. One had a home feed that lagged once real users arrived, one had lost its Google Play developer account, and one had a paywall that new users were not converting through. The difference between an app demo and a production-ready app explains most of the gap we saw. What the owners asked us to do about it varied more than we expected.

What do app owners ask for when the app already exists?

Most asked for more than one thing. We coded each of the 74 requests for every need it named.

Needs named in existing-app inquiries
74 inquiries; one inquiry can name several needs





Replacing the developer came up in 13 requests. Owners said the developer missed dates, communicated poorly or left the project, or that every fix produced new bugs. One said the developers had tried to scam them. One founder wrote that they had to keep working with a team they were unhappy with until launch, because they had no other option. 7 of the 74 asked specifically for a US-based team, someone in their time zone, or a team they could meet in person.

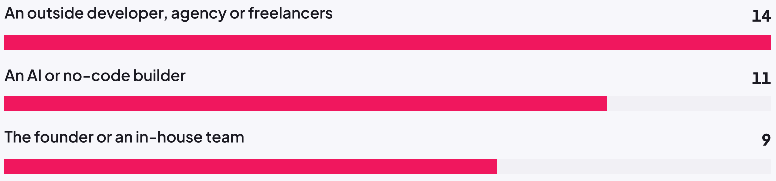
The store problems were narrow and specific. One app was rejected repeatedly under App Store Guideline 5.6. One iPhone build was rejected because its purchases did not use Apple's in-app purchase system, which App Review Guideline 3.1.1 requires for digital goods. One owner's Google Play developer account was terminated, and two more needed help getting a build approved. Who built these apps in the first place explains a lot of this.

Who built these apps first?

Of the 34 inquiries that said who built the app, 14 named an outside developer, agency or freelancers, 11 named an AI or no-code builder, and 9 said the founder or an in-house team built it. The other 40 did not say.

Who built the first version

34 existing-app inquiries that said who built it



Apps first built with AI or no-code tools

The 11 AI-built apps were mostly prototypes. 10 of the 11 asked us to turn a prototype into a production app, and 7 were still incomplete. The tools named were Lovable, Base44, Replit, FlutterFlow, Glide and Google AI Studio. We counted an app only when the owner named the tool, so 11 is a floor.

Only 1 of the 11 asked for a new feature. The rest needed the app to work in production. One needed Apple in-app purchases before its iPhone build could be approved. One needed a backend that would not crash once its beta opened. One needed billing and webhooks finished, plus a security review of code written mostly by AI. 5 of the 11 arrived between July and October 2026. That is a small count, so read it as early, not as a trend. Our guide on how long it takes to fix a vibe-coded app covers what that work involves. The owners who came from another developer had a different problem: money already spent.

What has a stalled app already cost its owner?

Three owners told us what they had paid a previous developer: about $20,000, $70,000 and $86,000.

The $86,000 had been paid over about a year, and the app's live build had stopped working. The $70,000 had bought an app that was built but months late, where each fix created new bugs.

Who holds the code

We looked at 6 sales calls from September and October 2026 with owners moving away from another developer. In 5 of the 6, the owner did not fully control their own code or accounts.

- In 3, the outside developer still held the code repository or the cloud and API credentials.
- In 1, the owner had seen demos but never the code.
- In 1, the person who had written the code claimed the app as their own.

That is 6 calls, so it is a count, not a rate. On 4 of them our proposed first step was a code review, where one of our engineers reports what can be kept. On 2, our team took charge of the list of exactly what the owner should request from the current developer. Code from an outside team can cost more to keep than to rebuild, and the review is how we tell which one a project is. Our post on what to do when your original developer disappears walks through the same steps.

Before you switch developers, get these first

1. A full copy of the code: a GitHub repository or a zip of everything.
2. Admin access to your App Store and Google Play accounts.
3. The cloud, database and API credentials the app runs on.
4. Your own login to any AI or no-code tool the app was built in.

Get Your Codebase Reviewed →

How we did this

Source

A read-only export of AppMakers USA's sales CRM (Pipedrive) on October 24, 2026. Nothing in the CRM was changed.

Records

Every website-form lead and every sales deal created June 25, 2025 to October 23, 2026.

Cleaning

We removed the records our sales team had labeled spam (a random sample of 45 confirmed the label), internal tests and empty imports. We read the remaining inbox leads one by one to remove vendor pitches, scams and gibberish. We merged duplicates by contact, then name, then message text. That left 570 unique prospects created between July 1, 2025 and October 23, 2026.

Coding

Each of the 438 inquiries with a project description was read and coded for existing software. Keyword flags found candidates, and each candidate was read in full. The 74 existing-app inquiries were then coded for app status, what the owner asked for, who built the app, and money already spent. Each inquiry was read and coded by our team, with software help for the first sort, and every code was made from the full inquiry text and sales notes.

Limits

This is the inbound mail of one US agency, shaped by our own marketing and our rescue page. It is not the app market. Small groups are shown as counts, not percentages, and every share shows its numerator and denominator.

Every count behind the charts is in the appendix at the end of this PDF

Frequently asked questions

What is a paid discovery phase in app development?

A paid discovery phase is a short engagement before the build where the team turns an idea into a scope, designs and a line-item estimate. At AppMakers USA its size and price depend on the project.

Should I finish my existing app or rebuild it?

It depends on the code, which is why the first step is a code review that reports what can be kept. Code from an outside team can cost more to keep than to rebuild. Our guide on whether to refactor or rebuild an app lists the signs for each.

Can I use these numbers in my own article?

Yes. Cite "AppMakers USA, What 570 App Inquiries Show (2026)" and link to this page. Every count behind the charts is in the appendix at the end of this PDF.

Appendix: every count behind the charts

All counts cover genuine app inquiries to AppMakers USA from July 1, 2025 to October 23, 2026. "Base" is the group each share is taken from. Small groups are shown as counts only. Free to cite under CC BY 4.0 with credit to AppMakers USA, What 570 App Inquiries Show (2026).

Inquiries about existing software

Category	Count	Base	Share
Rescue, finish, fix or take over an app	45	438	10.3%
Extend, redesign or port a working product	29	438	6.6%
Total: existing software	74	438	16.9%
Existing software, buyer-written form text only	22	124	17.7%

App status at first contact

Category	Count	Base	Share
Incomplete build or prototype	22	61	count only
Built, never released	11	61	count only
Live with users or in a store	28	61	count only

Apps someone other than AppMakers started, with a known status; counts only.

Needs named in existing-app inquiries

Category	Count	Base	Share
Add features or a new platform	26	74	35.1%
Fix bugs, crashes or slow performance	19	74	25.7%
Redesign or modernize	18	74	24.3%
Finish an incomplete build	16	74	21.6%
Turn a prototype into a production app	14	74	18.9%
Replace the current developer	13	74	17.6%
Take over maintenance and support	10	74	13.5%
Review the code before deciding	8	74	10.8%
Get it launched	8	74	10.8%
Get past an App Store or Google Play problem	5	74	6.8%

One inquiry can name several needs.

Who built the first version

Category	Count	Base	Share
An outside developer, agency or freelancers	14	34	41.2%
An AI or no-code builder	11	34	32.4%
The founder or an in-house team	9	34	26.5%

Existing-app inquiries that said who built it.

Is your app one of the 74?

1 in 6

app inquiries we received was about an app that already exists

11 of 74

existing apps started in an AI or no-code builder

5 of 6

owners leaving a developer did not fully hold their own code

If your build stalled or you are leaving your developer, start where our takeovers start. Since 2014, AppMakers USA's app rescue and takeover team has taken over more than 100 apps that another developer started and shipped them to real users. Every takeover begins with a code review that tells you what can be kept and what it will cost to finish. We are a senior team in Los Angeles, Santa Monica, San Diego and New York, and app rescue is what we specialize in.

Get Your Codebase Reviewed →

Prefer to talk it through first? Book 15 minutes with Aaron, our COO →

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