Grow That Local

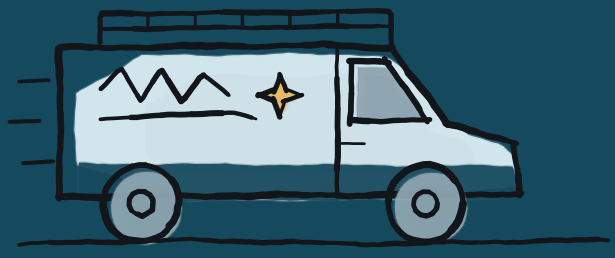
a free guide

What a Google Ads click costs a painter, by city

What one Google Ads click on a painting search costs in the US, the Southeast and 10 Southeast cities, which searches cost most, and what a monthly budget really buys.

For painting business owners comparing lead sources.

- 13 short sections in 5 parts
- 39 things you can do in the next 24 hours
- An example in every section
- Sources for every figure



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Before you start

Of the six trades in these guides, painting has the biggest gap between a cheap-looking average and what a hiring click really costs. The one-word search "painter" is huge and cheap, and most of the people typing it aren't looking for a house painter. This guide shows the price of the clicks that bring estimates.

We took Google's click price estimates for 25 searches people use when they want a painter ("painters near me", "interior painting", "exterior house painting", "painting contractor" and more) for the whole US, all 50 states and DC, 10 regions and 10 Southeast metro areas. The data is Google Ads keyword data, pulled through DataForSEO, a data company that resells it, in November 2026.

How to read the numbers:

- **Typical click** is the average price of one click across all of the painting searches, weighted by how often people make each one. Busy searches count more.
- **Middle search** is the median: half the searches cost more per click, half cost less.
- **The "painters near me" click** is the price of the one search most owners want to show up for. It's usually the best number to plan a budget with.

The limits, in plain words:

- **These are Google's estimates, not your bill.** Each price is Google's average cost per click for that search in that place (Google Ads API reference, developers.google.com). It's what advertisers paid on average, not what any one business pays.
- **Your own price depends on you.** How good your ad and page are, the hours you run, how tightly you match searches and where you show all move it. Part 5 covers each one.
- **Small places are rough.** Google leaves many small searches unpriced, and one pricey search can pull a metro's average up. Read the three numbers together.
- **A click is not a lead.** Most people who click don't call. Every per-lead figure here is our estimate, built from a click price and a conversion rate we state.
- **A metro area here is a TV market**, which is wider than the city itself.

Every click price comes from one source: GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026. Where we do math on top of it, we say "GTL estimate" and give our reasoning. Every example is made up to show the idea.



Part 1

What a painting click costs

1 The painting click price across the US

The idea. Across the US, the typical painting click costs $5.92. The middle search costs $11.29. Prices run from $0.82 for "trim painting" to $17.38 for "interior painting". The "painters near me" click costs $14.78, and people make that search about 135,000 times a month (GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026, docs.dataforseo.com).

The typical painting click looks low because one search pulls it down: "painter" gets about 550,000 searches a month at $2.13 a click (GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026, docs.dataforseo.com). Many of those people want an artist, a painting class or a famous painting (GTL estimate). The searches that bring estimates cost far more: "painters near me" is $14.78 and "interior painting" $17.38.

Of the 70 local trades we measured, painting has the 49th priciest typical click. Google's competition score for these searches averages 38 out of 100. That score is the share of ad spots that advertisers fill (Google Ads API reference, developers.google.com).

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter sees "$6 a click" in a sales pitch. They check the table: "painters near me" is about $15. They plan with $15 and ask the seller which searches the $6 clicks come from.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down the US "painters near me" price from this section, not the typical click.
- [ ] Find your metro or state in sections 2 and 3 and write its price next to it.
- [ ] Open Google Keyword Planner, set your town, and check "interior painting" there.

2 The Southeast and its 10 metro areas

The idea. In the Southeast and Upper South, the typical painting click costs $5.67, 4% less than the US. The "painters near me" click costs $14.48 there (GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026, docs.dataforseo.com).

The same gap shows in every metro: typical clicks look low, "painters near me" does not. Nashville has the priciest typical click of the 10 metros, $6.37, and its "painters near me" click is $13.54. Lexington has the cheapest typical click, $2.22, but "painters near me" there is $8.68 (GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026, docs.dataforseo.com).

Place	Typical click ($)	Middle search ($)	"painters near me" ($)
Whole US	5.92	11.29	14.78
Southeast and Upper South	5.67	10.45	14.48
Nashville	6.37	5.41	13.54
Tulsa	5.13	1.89	11.79
Louisville	4.28	3.17	15.65
Huntsville-Decatur	3.70	3.04	10.86
Memphis	3.01	2.94	9.75
Birmingham	2.80	4.64	11.66
Little Rock	2.79	1.43	10.78
Montgomery	2.78	1.06	3.96
Jackson, MS	2.37	0.48	4.46
Lexington	2.22	1.37	8.68

Metro areas are sorted from the priciest typical click to the cheapest. Source: GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026 (docs.dataforseo.com).

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter in Birmingham plans with the "painters near me" column and ignores the typical click. Their budget buys about a quarter as many clicks as the typical price suggests.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Find your metro row. Use the "painters near me" column to plan.
- [ ] If that column is small or missing, use the US price from section 1.
- [ ] If you're not in one of these 10 areas, use your state in section 3.

3 Where clicks cost most and least

The idea. Across the lower 48, the Mountain West has the priciest typical painting click at $10.71, and the Great Plains the cheapest at $5.18. By state, Colorado tops the list at $12.58 and South Dakota is lowest at $1.55 (GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026, docs.dataforseo.com).

Mountain states pay most for painting clicks: Colorado and Utah top the list (GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026, docs.dataforseo.com). A state's typical click also moves with how many people there search the one-word "painter," so check "painters near me" in Keyword Planner too (GTL estimate).

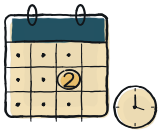
Rank	Priciest states	Typical click ($)	Cheapest states	Typical click ($)
1	Colorado	12.58	South Dakota	1.55
2	Utah	9.97	West Virginia	2.30
3	Alaska	9.71	Mississippi	2.40
4	Arizona	9.51	North Dakota	2.57
5	Florida	8.85	Hawaii	2.83

"Cheapest states" counts up from the very cheapest. A state's average also moves with which searches people there use most, not only with price. Source: GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026 (docs.dataforseo.com).

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter in Florida sees their state near the top. They keep ads for exterior repaints, which pay more per job, and fill interior work from referrals.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Find your state. Is it above or below the US typical click?
- [ ] Check "painters near me" for your state in Keyword Planner.
- [ ] Decide which jobs ads are for.



Part 2

The searches behind the price

4 The priciest searches

The idea. The priciest painting searches name a job: "interior painting" costs $17.38 a click, "painting contractor" $14.88 and "exterior painting" $14.43 (GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026, docs.dataforseo.com). In the Southeast, "interior painting" costs $20.44 and "commercial painting" $18.07.

Search	Click ($)	US searches a month
interior painting	17.38	12,100
painting contractor	14.88	27,100
painters near me	14.78	135,000
exterior painting	14.43	4,400
commercial painting	13.28	8,100

Searches with at least 50 searches a month. Source: GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026 (docs.dataforseo.com).

These searches read like someone ready for an estimate (GTL estimate). Painting jobs run into the thousands, so one signed job covers many clicks. If you take commercial work, "commercial painting" costs about the same per click as the home searches and can bring bigger jobs.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter bids only on "interior painting," "exterior painting" and "painters near me." Fewer clicks, but almost every caller asks for an estimate.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Pick the job searches from the table that match the work you want.
- [ ] Check your site has a page with photos for each.
- [ ] Decide whether you take commercial work.

5 The cheapest searches, and why cheap isn't a bargain

The idea. The cheapest painting searches are mostly people doing it themselves: "trim painting" costs $0.82 a click, "brick painting" $0.94 and "wallpaper removal" $1.48 (GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026, docs.dataforseo.com). Many want a how-to video or the right brush (GTL estimate).

Search	Click ($)	US searches a month
trim painting	0.82	9,900
brick painting	0.94	8,100
wallpaper removal	1.48	9,900
deck staining	1.68	27,100
painter	2.13	550,000

Cheapest first. Source: GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026 (docs.dataforseo.com).

"cabinet painting" is cheap too, at $2.65 a click, with about 40,500 searches a month (GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026, docs.dataforseo.com). Some of those people will pay a painter. If you paint cabinets, try "kitchen cabinet painting" with the do-it-yourself words blocked, and check the search terms after a week.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter's ads show on "deck staining" and get 200 cheap clicks and no calls. The search terms show "best deck stain" and "how long does stain take to dry." They block product and how-to words.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Look at the cheap searches in the table. Do you want those clickers?
- [ ] If you paint cabinets or decks, test them with do-it-yourself words blocked.
- [ ] Note the art and product words you'll block in section 13.



Part 3

What a monthly budget buys

6 Clicks for your budget

The idea. Divide your monthly budget by the price of a click and you get the clicks it buys. At the US "painters near me" price of $14.78, $1,000 a month buys about 68 clicks (GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026, docs.dataforseo.com). That count is a GTL estimate: your real price per click will sit above or below Google's average.

Google can spend up to twice your daily budget on a busy day, but no more than 30.4 times it in a month (Google Ads Help, support.google.com). So plan by the month, not the day.

Monthly budget ($)	Clicks at the US "painters near me" price	Clicks at the Southeast typical price
500	34	88
1,000	68	176
2,000	135	353

GTL estimate: budget divided by click price, rounded. Click prices: GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026 (docs.dataforseo.com).

Plan a painting budget with the "painters near me" price, not the typical click, or you'll expect more than twice the clicks you get (GTL estimate). Our busy season calendar for painters shows which months bring the most searches in your region.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter sets $1,000 for April. At $15 a click, that's about 67 clicks. At $6 a click they'd have expected about 170.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Pick a monthly budget you could lose for one month without worry.
- [ ] Divide it by the "painters near me" price. That's your click count.
- [ ] Write down the months you'd spend more and less.

7 From clicks to leads

The idea. A lead here means a call or a quote form from someone who clicked your ad. We use two rates, both GTL estimates. About 7 in 100 clicks is a cautious month: most clickers are comparing a few businesses, outside your area or not ready yet, and 7 in 100 is close to where our free Google Ads

calculator starts. About 15 in 100 is a strong month, with a clear page, a phone number at the top and tight targeting.

At the US "painters near me" price of $14.78, that puts one lead at about $99 in a strong month and $211 in a cautious one (GTL estimate built on the click price from GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026 (docs.dataforseo.com)).

Monthly budget ($)	Leads at 7 in 100	Leads at 15 in 100	Cost per lead ($), 7 in 100	Cost per lead ($), 15 in 100
500	2.4	5.1	211	99
1,000	4.7	10.1	211	99
2,000	9.5	20.3	211	99

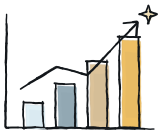
GTL estimate: clicks from section 6 times 7 in 100 or 15 in 100. Click price: GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026 (docs.dataforseo.com).

Painting customers usually get two or three estimates before they choose, so a booked estimate is not a signed job (GTL estimate). Put your own average job and how many estimates you win into the Google Ads calculator, and use how many leads you need to see how many estimates a month hit your goal.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter pays $150 for each ad lead and wins one estimate in three. That's $450 per signed job. On a $4,000 exterior repaint, it pays well.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Count how many estimates you gave last month and how many you won.
- [ ] Work out the most you could pay per lead and still profit on an average job.
- [ ] Run the free Google Ads calculator with your own numbers.



Part 4

Ads, or reviews and the map first?

8 When ads make sense for a painter

The idea. Ads make the most sense for a painter in three cases (GTL estimate). In exterior season, for repaints, where one job covers many clicks. When your schedule has a gap a few weeks out. And when you're new to a town. Google's Local Services Ads charge per lead instead of per click; our guide on whether Local Services Ads are worth it compares the two. For every painting marketing cost, read what marketing should cost a painter.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter runs ads from March to June and September to October, and only on exterior and interior job searches. In winter they rely on past customers for interior work.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Decide which months and which jobs your ads are for.
- [ ] Decide what booked-out looks like, so you know when to pause.
- [ ] Read the Local Services Ads guide before choosing between the two.

9 When reviews and the map come first

The idea. Clicks in Google's map results are free. Google says local results are mainly based on relevance, distance and prominence, and that there's no way to pay for a better local ranking (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com). Painting is a trade people judge by photos, so a profile with real before-and-after pictures and reviews can win estimates without paying per click (GTL estimate). Our guide on how many reviews a painter needs gives the numbers for 10 Southeast cities.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter has 15 reviews and no job photos on their profile. They add 30 before-and-after photos and ask their last 20 customers for a review before they spend on ads.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Search "painters near me" from your shop and count the top three map results' reviews.
- [ ] Add before-and-after photos from your last five jobs to your profile.
- [ ] Text your last 10 customers your review link today.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: A ranking check and 10 fixes

So you can see where you stand in the free results before you pay for clicks. SEO is $400 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

SEO: growthatlocal.com/services/seo



Part 5

Four ways to pay less per click

10 Bid on exact searches

The idea. Google has three ways to match your keywords to searches. Broad match can show your ad on any related search. Phrase match, in quotes, shows it on searches that include your meaning. Exact match, in square brackets, shows it on searches with the same meaning (Google Ads Help, support.google.com). Broad match is the default. For a painter, broad match is how "painter" pays for "famous painters" and "painting classes" clicks (GTL estimate).

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter starts with five exact keywords: [painters near me], [interior painting], [exterior house painting], [painting contractor] and [house painter]. After a month they add phrase match for the two that booked the most estimates.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write five exact keywords in square brackets, for the jobs you want.
- [ ] Never use "painter" on its own as a keyword.
- [ ] Plan one review of results after 30 days.

11 Show ads only when you can answer

The idea. You can choose the hours and days your ads run, and raise or lower bids for certain times (Google Ads Help, support.google.com). Painting is rarely an emergency, so there's no reason to pay for clicks when nobody can answer or reply. Run ads in the hours you can call back the same day (GTL estimate).

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter runs ads weekdays 8 am to 6 pm and Saturday mornings, when homeowners plan weekend estimates. Evenings and Sundays are off.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down the hours you can return a call the same day.
- [ ] Set your ad schedule to those hours.
- [ ] Turn on a text reply for calls you miss.

12 Draw your area tight

The idea. You can show ads to people within a set distance of your shop, at least 1 km (Google Ads Help, support.google.com). Google's default, "Presence or interest," also reaches people elsewhere who show interest in your area. "Presence" sticks to people who are in or regularly in it (Google Ads Help, support.google.com). Every estimate takes a drive, and every job means days of driving back, so a painter's circle should cover the towns you'd happily work in for a week (GTL estimate).

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter sets a 20-mile circle and excludes one town across the river, where traffic doubles the drive.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Mark the towns you'd work in for a week-long job.
- [ ] Set your radius to cover them, and exclude any you'd skip.
- [ ] Switch location options to "Presence."

13 Block the searches that waste money

The idea. Negative keywords keep your ad off searches you don't want (Google Ads Help, support.google.com). The search terms report shows the real searches that triggered your ads (Google Ads Help, support.google.com). Read it every week for the first month and block what doesn't fit.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter finds clicks from "famous painters," "car painting near me" and "best paint for trim" in week one. They block all three ideas.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Add these as negative keywords to start: art, artist, canvas, portrait, famous, class, lessons, car, auto, body, nail, "spray paint", colors, best, "how to", diy, jobs, salary.
- [ ] Open the search terms report after 7 days.
- [ ] Block every search that would never ask for an estimate.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: A profile check-up with 10+ fixes

For the map results you don't pay per click for. Google Business Profile is $200 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Google Business Profile: growthatlocal.com/services/google-business-profile



Your first 24 hours, in one list

If you do these today, you'll know what a click costs you before you spend a dollar:

- [ ] Write down your metro or state "painters near me" price (sections 2 and 3).
- [ ] Plan your budget with that price, not the typical click (section 6).
- [ ] Count your reviews and add job photos to your profile (section 9).
- [ ] Pick five exact keywords, never "painter" alone (section 10).
- [ ] Add the starter negative keywords (section 13).
- [ ] Run the free Google Ads calculator with your own numbers.



Where to go next

To see whether Google's pay-per-lead ads would suit you better, read Google's Local Services Ads: worth it?. For every painting marketing cost on one page, read What marketing should cost a painter in 2026. For the whole job of getting more estimates, read The Painter Marketing Playbook.

To see how painting clicks compare with 69 other local trades, read What a Click Costs: Google Ads Prices for 70 Local Trades, 2026.



If you'd rather hand it off

Grow That Local does this work for painters every month. Each service starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay.

Best fit for this guide: SEO. Free sample: a ranking check and 10 fixes. SEO is $400 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

SEO — **$400 a month · 7-day full refund**
Climb Google for the searches that bring in jobs. Free sample: a ranking check and 10 fixes.

Websites — **from $1 a month · 7-day full refund**
A fast, good-looking site that turns visitors into calls. Free sample: a preview of your new site.

Google Business Profile — **$200 a month · 7-day full refund**
Show up in the map when neighbors search for what you do. Free sample: a profile check-up with 10+ fixes.

Review requests — **$100 a month · 7-day full refund**
More 5-star reviews, without the awkward asking. Free sample: your first 10 requests sent.

Social media posts — **$200 a month · 7-day full refund**
Fresh posts every week, made from your real job photos. Free sample: two weeks of posts, ready to go.

Email newsletter — **$50 a month · 7-day full refund**
Stay top of mind, so past customers call you first. Free sample: your first newsletter, written.

Win-back texts — **$100 a month · 7-day full refund**
Bring past customers back for their next job. Free sample: your first 25 customers texted.

Neighborhood postcard — **$400 a month · 7-day full refund**
Your ad in mailboxes across nice neighborhoods. Free sample: your ad, designed and shown on the card.

Monthly report card — **free**
See how you stack up against local competitors. Free sample: your first report card, this month.

Text us at (423) 924-2014, or start at growthatlocal.com/start.

Sources

Every statistic above, with where it comes from:

1. GTL analysis of Google Ads keyword data (DataForSEO), November 2026. Google Ads average cost per click and monthly search estimates for 25 painting searches (22 counted after Google merged close variants), for the US, all 50 states and DC, 10 regions and 10 Southeast metro areas (TV markets), pulled November 12, 2026. Typical click = average weighted by each search's monthly searches; middle search = median. (sections 1 to 13)

Rules, tools and guidance cited (not statistics), each checked on the official page on 2026-11-13:

- DataForSEO, Google Ads search volume API, response fields (cpc: the amount paid in US dollars for each click on the ad for a keyword; competition_index: 0 to 100): docs.dataforseo.com (all sections)
- Google Ads API reference, KeywordPlanHistoricalMetrics ("Average Cost Per Click in micros for the keyword"; competition index "determined by the number of ad slots filled divided by the total number of ad slots available"): developers.google.com (before you start, section 1)
- Google Ads Help, "About overdelivery and your average daily budget" (up to twice the daily budget in a day, no more than 30.4 times it in a month): support.google.com (section 6)
- Google Business Profile Help, "Tips to improve your local ranking on Google" (local results are mainly based on relevance, distance and prominence; no way to pay for a better local ranking): support.google.com (section 9)
- Google Ads Help, "About keyword matching options" (broad, phrase and exact match; quotes for phrase, square brackets for exact): support.google.com (section 10)
- Google Ads Help, "About Ad Scheduling" (choose hours and days; bid adjustments by day and time): support.google.com (section 11)
- Google Ads Help, "Target ads to geographic locations" (radius targeting, at least 1 km): support.google.com (section 12)
- Google Ads Help, "About advanced location options" ("Presence or interest" is the default; "Presence" reaches people in or regularly in your area): support.google.com (section 12)
- Google Ads Help, "About negative keywords" (exclude search terms; negative broad, phrase and exact match): support.google.com (section 13)
- Google Ads Help, "About the search terms report" (shows the searches that triggered your ads): support.google.com (section 13)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. Clicks per budget = budget divided by the click price (sections 6, 7). Reasoning: Google charges per click, and your own price will sit above or below its average.
2. About 7 in 100 ad clicks become a call or form in a cautious month, and about 15 in 100 in a strong one (section 7). Reasoning: 7 in 100 is close to our calculator's starting point; painting shoppers compare estimates, so a strong month needs a clear page with photos and tight targeting.
3. Most people searching the one-word "painter" aren't hiring a house painter (sections 1, 5). Reasoning: the word covers artists, classes and famous paintings, and its click price is a fraction of "painters near me."

4. Cheap searches like "trim painting" are mostly do-it-yourselfers (section 5). Reasoning: they name a small task people often do themselves.
5. Ads suit exterior season, schedule gaps and new towns; photos and reviews come first when you trail the top three (sections 8, 9). Reasoning: painting is judged by pictures, and map clicks are free.
6. Exact match, reply-time hours, a tight radius and negative keywords cut wasted clicks (sections 10 to 13). Reasoning: each one keeps your ad off searches, hours or places that can't become an estimate.

want it done for you?

Every part of this guide is something we do.

Each one starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay. Text us at (423) 924-2014 or start at growthatlocal.com/start.

Grow That Local