Grow That Local

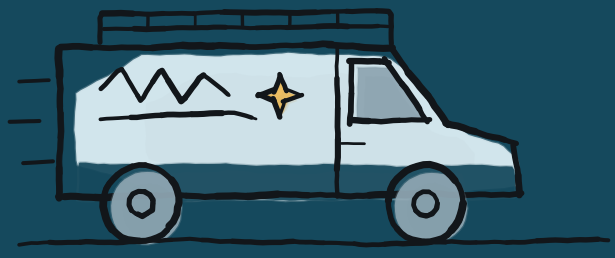
a free guide

Which local trades are growing: 2026

We read ten years of government counts for 25 local trades. Here's which ones are filling up with new businesses, which are consolidating into bigger shops, which are crowded with one-person operators, and what each means for an owner.

For owners, trade groups and local press.

- 15 short sections in 6 parts
- 43 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

"Is my trade getting more crowded?" is one of the most common questions local business owners ask. The government counts the answer every year. Few owners ever see it. So we pulled it together.

We used three free public sources:

- **Census County Business Patterns** counts every business location with paid employees, and how many people work there, by industry, every year. The newest year is 2023 (Census Bureau, census.gov).
- **Census Nonemployer Statistics** counts businesses with no paid employees, mostly one-person firms. The newest year is 2024 (Census Bureau, census.gov).
- **Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Projections** says how many jobs the government expects in each occupation in 2035 (BLS, bls.gov).

We compared 25 local trades across the US. For six home trades (roofing, landscaping, plumbing, HVAC, house cleaning and painting) we went deeper: every state, 10 Southeast metro areas, one-person businesses and the ten-year outlook. Each of those six has its own report (see the end).

The headline findings:

- From 2018 to 2023, businesses with paid employees grew 5.7% across the whole US economy. 21 of our 25 local trades grew faster than that.
- Barber shops (+39%), pet care (+32%), other building services such as pressure washing and gutters (+26%), roofing (+26%) and residential remodelers (+24%) grew fastest.
- Two shrank: carpet and upholstery cleaning (-10%) and masonry (-2%). Painting (+5%) and general auto repair (+3%) grew slower than the economy.
- Trades are changing in different ways. Roofing and cleaning are filling up with new small businesses. Plumbing, HVAC and landscaping are growing through bigger shops.
- One-person businesses vary hugely: about 16 for every cleaning business with staff, but under 2 for every plumbing and HVAC business.
- Utah was among the five fastest-growing states for all five of the home trade industries we ranked. Connecticut and Maryland were among the five slowest for four of the five.
- The BLS projects HVAC tech jobs will grow 11% from 2025 to 2035, and house cleaner jobs 0.6%. Projections, not facts.

Two rules we kept while writing it:

- Every figure comes from a named government source or from our own analysis of Google search data, cited where it appears. When we give our opinion, we say "GTL estimate" and explain why.
- Every example is made up to show how to use the numbers. None of them are real businesses.

Reporters, trade groups and bloggers are welcome to quote any figure here. Please credit the Census or BLS source named beside it, "as analyzed by Grow That Local", and link to this page.



Part 1

The national picture

1 25 local trades, ranked by growth

The idea. Here are 25 local trades, sorted by how fast their number of businesses with paid employees grew from 2018 to 2023 (Census County Business Patterns, 2013, 2018 and 2023, census.gov).

How to read it. "Businesses" counts locations with paid employees. "People on payroll" is everyone on their payroll in March. "Under 5 staff" is the share of businesses with fewer than 5 employees.

Rank	Trade	Businesses, 2023	Change, 2018 to 2023	Change, 2013 to 2023	People on payroll, 2023	Payroll change, 2018 to 2023	Under 5 staff
1	Barber shops	7,789	+39%	+97%	29,017	+17%	76%
2	Pet care (not vets)	25,551	+32%	+73%	175,116	+51%	58%
3	Other building services (pressure washing, gutters, chimneys, duct cleaning)	18,069	+26%	+45%	90,169	+25%	74%
4	Roofing	25,519	+26%	+47%	215,242	+16%	65%
5	Residential remodelers	135,337	+24%	+49%	480,272	+31%	81%
6	Other specialty trades (fencing, driveways and more)	42,748	+23%	+44%	309,293	+24%	67%
7	Glass and glazing	6,945	+15%	+28%	68,694	+7%	52%
8	Siding	9,142	+15%	+26%	41,885	+16%	75%
9	Home builders (building for owners)	60,635	+15%	+26%	236,076	+28%	78%
10	Pest control	16,535	+12%	+27%	139,150	+17%	57%
11	Landscaping	117,969	+11%	+25%	802,899	+18%	71%
12	Electricians	83,342	+11%	+18%	1,015,983	+18%	59%
13	Janitorial, including house cleaning	67,799	+10%	+25%	1,088,193	+1%	61%
14	Flooring	17,989	+9%	+31%	84,998	+5%	77%
15	Drywall and insulation	20,760	+8%	+22%	250,758	-4%	61%
16	Other building equipment (garage doors, elevators and more)	8,107	+8%	+17%	150,522	+11%	46%
17	Beauty salons	84,176	+8%	+11%	391,064	-11%	69%
18	Plumbing and HVAC	111,207	+7%	+19%	1,214,761	+14%	58%

Rank	Trade	Businesses, 2023	Change, 2018 to 2023	Change, 2013 to 2023	People on payroll, 2023	Payroll change, 2018 to 2023	Under 5 staff
19	Finish carpentry	32,219	+7%	+25%	177,042	+15%	74%
20	Tile	10,685	+6%	+23%	58,611	-1%	72%
21	Framing	12,417	+6%	+23%	86,861	-2%	71%
22	Painting	38,280	+5%	+22%	208,201	+7%	75%
23	General auto repair	84,859	+3%	+7%	403,389	+13%	66%
24	Masonry	18,258	-2%	+2%	139,844	-2%	69%
25	Carpet and upholstery cleaning	6,673	-10%	-14%	36,157	-4%	72%
	All US businesses	8,361,342	+5.7%	+11.7%	139,831,742	+6.8%	

Source: Census County Business Patterns, 2013, 2018 and 2023. Every industry code used means the same thing in all three years (section 14).

Example (sample numbers). A made-up fence company finds its trade in "Other specialty trades": +23% in five years, four times the economy. They decide that the referrals that filled their calendar in 2018 won't be enough by 2027, and set up a review request after every job.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Find your trade's row. Write down its five-year change.
- [ ] Compare it with "All US businesses" (+5.7%). Faster means more new competitors than the economy as a whole.
- [ ] Note the "Under 5 staff" share. A high share means most of your competitors are small.

2 The fastest growers

The idea. The five fastest-growing trades have one thing in common: they're easy to start. A barber needs a chair. A pressure washing business needs a trailer. A pet sitter needs a phone. Roofing is the exception that needs more gear, and still grew 26% in five years.

- **Barber shops** grew 39% in five years and nearly doubled in ten. Payroll grew only 17%, so the new shops are small.
- **Pet care** (grooming, boarding, sitting, training) grew 32%, and its payroll grew 51%, the fastest payroll growth of the 25 trades.
- **Other building services** (pressure washing, gutter and chimney cleaning, duct cleaning) grew 26%.

- **Roofing** grew every year from 2013 to 2023: 47% in ten years.
- **Residential remodelers** grew 24%, with 81% of them under 5 staff, the highest share in the table.

Source: Census County Business Patterns, 2018 and 2023 (Census Bureau, census.gov).

Example (sample numbers). A made-up pressure washing owner sees their trade up 26% in five years. Their town has twice as many trailers on the road as when they started. They stop competing on "lowest price" and start showing before-and-after photos with each street name.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] If your trade is in the top six, assume more competitors next year than this year.
- [ ] Write down what you have that a business started this year can't have yet: reviews, years, photos, past customers.
- [ ] Put the strongest one on the first screen of your website.

3 The slow growers and the shrinking

The idea. Four trades grew slower than the economy or shrank from 2018 to 2023, and a fifth only just kept up (Census County Business Patterns, census.gov).

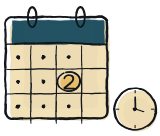
- **Carpet and upholstery cleaning** fell 10% in five years and 14% in ten. It's the only trade in our list that shrank over both periods.
- **Masonry** fell 2% in five years.
- **General auto repair** grew 3%, but its payroll grew 13%: fewer new shops, bigger existing ones.
- **Painting** grew 5%, but almost a third of painters are self-employed (section 6), so the count of companies with staff misses much of the competition.
- **Framing** grew 6%, just ahead of the economy, with payroll down 2%.

Slow growth isn't bad news for an established owner. Fewer new competitors means the ones already in town can win share by marketing better.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up carpet cleaner sees their trade shrinking. Fewer competitors, but also a sign of fewer carpets as homes move to hard floors. They add tile and grout cleaning and upholstery to their website.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] If your trade is in this list, look up whether your local competitors are fewer than five years ago (section 8, or data.census.gov).
- [ ] List one related service your customers ask for that you could add.
- [ ] Ask your three best customers what else they'd hire you for.



Part 2

The six home trades up close

4 Six home trades side by side

The idea. Here are the six home trades we studied most closely. Plumbing and HVAC share one Census count, so they share one row here (Census County Business Patterns, 2013 to 2023, census.gov, and Census population estimates (census.gov)).

Trade	Businesses, 2023	Change, 2018 to 2023	Change, 2013 to 2023	Payroll change, 2018 to 2023	Employees per business, 2023	People in the US per business, 2023
Roofing	25,519	+26%	+47%	+16%	8.4	13,198
Landscaping	117,969	+11%	+25%	+18%	6.8	2,855
Janitorial, including house cleaning	67,799	+10%	+25%	+1%	16.1	4,968
Plumbing and HVAC	111,207	+7%	+19%	+14%	10.9	3,029
Painting	38,280	+5%	+22%	+7%	5.4	8,798

Source: Census County Business Patterns, 2013, 2018 and 2023; population from Census population estimates for 2023.

Two notes. Janitorial includes office and commercial cleaning, so its employees per business runs high. And "people per business" counts only businesses with staff; one-person firms come next, in section 6.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up landscaper in a town of 30,000 divides by 2,855 and gets about 10 landscaping businesses with staff for a town that size. A made-up roofer in the same town divides by 13,198 and gets about 2. Landscaping is far more crowded per person, so the landscaper needs to win street by street.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Divide your town's population by your trade's "people per business".
- [ ] Count the businesses you see in the Google map for your trade.
- [ ] More than the average means you're in a crowded market. Read section 11.

5 More shops, or bigger shops?

The idea. A trade can grow in two ways: more small businesses open, or existing ones get bigger. The size of the businesses that grew tells you which (Census County Business Patterns, 2018 and 2023, census.gov).

Trade	Under 5 staff, change	20 to 49 staff, change	50 or more staff, change	Employees per business, 2013 to 2023
Roofing	+32%	+10%	+13%	8.4 to 8.4
Landscaping	+9%	+25%	+20%	5.8 to 6.8
Janitorial, including house cleaning	+15%	-1%	+2%	17.8 to 16.1
Plumbing and HVAC	+6%	+12%	+20%	9.0 to 10.9
Painting	+5%	-3%	+6%	5.3 to 5.4

Source: Census County Business Patterns, 2013, 2018 and 2023. Size is by employees in the week of March 12.

- **More shops:** roofing and cleaning. Their smallest businesses grew fastest.
- **Bigger shops:** plumbing, HVAC and landscaping. Their largest businesses grew fastest, and employees per business rose.
- **Steady:** painting. Every size grew slowly.

This matters for marketing. Against many new small shops, you win on proof and trust. Against bigger shops, you win on a personal touch and being easy to reach (sections 11 and 12).

Example (sample numbers). A made-up HVAC owner with 6 techs reads the table: shops with 50 or more staff grew 20%. Their real threat isn't a new one-truck shop. It's the big company with a call center. They decide to compete on the same tech every visit and the owner's cell number.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Find your trade's row and decide: more shops, or bigger shops?
- [ ] Write down your biggest local competitor and your newest one.
- [ ] Note which one wins more of your lost quotes. That's who your marketing must answer.

6 One-person businesses

The idea. Many local businesses have no employees at all. The Census counts them separately as "nonemployers". How many there are, compared with businesses with staff, varies hugely by trade (Census Nonemployer Statistics, 2022 to 2024, census.gov).

Trade group	One-person businesses, 2024	Change, 2022 to 2024	Per business with staff, 2023
Janitorial, including house cleaning	1,173,265	+12%	16.2
Landscaping	537,970	+3%	4.4
Plumbing and HVAC	189,085	+9%	1.6
Building exterior group (roofing, framing, masonry, siding and more)	317,990	+6%	2.9
Building finishing group (painting, drywall, flooring, tile and more)	678,091	-0.3%	5.2
All US nonemployers	31,985,874	+7%	

Source: Census Nonemployer Statistics 2022, 2023 and 2024, and County Business Patterns 2023. The Census doesn't publish roofing or painting alone here, so they appear inside their groups.

Cleaning stands out: more than a million one-person businesses, growing 12% in two years. Plumbing and HVAC have the fewest, likely because of licensing (GTL estimate). The share of workers who are self-employed tells the same story: 31% of painters, 20% of roofers and landscapers, 14% of house cleaners, 8% of plumbers and 6% of HVAC techs (BLS Employment Projections 2025-35, bls.gov).

Example (sample numbers). A made-up house cleaning company with 6 cleaners reads the first row: about 16 solo cleaners for every company with staff. Price won't set them apart. They put their background checks, insurance and "same cleaner every visit" on the first screen of their website.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Find your trade group's row.
- [ ] If it's above 4 per business with staff, list three things a one-person competitor can't offer.
- [ ] Put those three on your website and Google profile.



Part 3

Where

7 The states that grew in every trade

The idea. We ranked every state with at least 100 businesses in 2018 for each of the five home trade industries, by five-year growth (Census County Business Patterns, 2018 and 2023, census.gov). Some states showed up again and again.

State	Times in the top 5	Times in the bottom 5
Utah	5 of 5	0
Idaho	4 of 5	0
Montana	3 of 5	0
South Dakota	3 of 5	0
Connecticut	0	4 of 5
Maryland	0	4 of 5
New York	0	3 of 5
New Jersey	0	2 of 5

Source: Census County Business Patterns, 2018 and 2023, for roofing, landscaping, janitorial, plumbing and HVAC, and painting.

The pattern holds across trades: the Mountain West is filling up with new businesses, and the Northeast corridor is the slowest. In the South, roofing grew fastest: Arkansas (+67%) and Alabama (+50%) led every state for roofing.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up landscaper in Utah sees their state in the top five for every trade we measured. New competitors are arriving across the board. They lock in their regulars for next season in January, before the newcomers start knocking.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Find your state in the table, or in your trade's report.
- [ ] If your state is a top-five grower, plan for more competitors every year.
- [ ] If it's a bottom-five state, focus on taking share from the competitors already there.

8 The 10 Southeast metro areas

The idea. We checked five home trade industries in 10 Southeast metro areas, using the same counties in both years. Each cell is the change in businesses with paid employees from 2018 to 2023 (Census County Business Patterns, 2018 and 2023, census.gov).

Metro area	Roofing	Landscaping	Plumbing and HVAC	Janitorial	Painting	All businesses
Nashville	+44%	+18%	+20%	+5%	+18%	+15%
Huntsville	+42%	+18%	+35%	+35%	-8%	+11%
Lexington	+100%	-1%	+13%	+21%	+34%	+8%
Little Rock	+108%	-1%	+20%	-11%	+11%	+5%
Birmingham	+33%	+13%	+18%	+8%	+8%	+5%
Tulsa	+38%	+16%	+10%	0%	-9%	+4%
Montgomery	+127%	+29%	+20%	+10%	0%	+4%
Louisville	+28%	+6%	-2%	+4%	+3%	+4%
Jackson, MS	+67%	+23%	+2%	+20%	-6%	+3%
Memphis	+35%	+7%	+5%	+16%	-19%	+2%

Source: Census County Business Patterns, 2018 and 2023, summed by county using the July 2023 Census metro area county lists. Small counts swing fast: Montgomery's roofing went from 11 to 25 businesses.

Roofing grew faster than businesses overall in every one of the 10. Painting shrank in four. Nashville and Birmingham grew in all five, and Nashville's overall business count grew fastest of the 10.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up plumber in Huntsville sees their trade +35% while the area grew +11%. They read their trade's report and find that many of the newcomers are HVAC shops adding plumbing. They build pages for the plumbing jobs those shops do least: sewer lines and repipes.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Find your metro area's row and your trade's column.
- [ ] Compare it with "All businesses". Higher means your trade is filling up faster than the local economy.
- [ ] Read your trade's report for your metro area's people on payroll and one-person count.

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Part 4

The next ten years

9 What the government projects

The idea. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects jobs for each occupation from 2025 to 2035 (BLS Employment Projections 2025-35, bls.gov). These count workers in any business, not businesses.

Occupation	Jobs, 2025	Jobs, 2035 (projected)	Change	Openings a year	Self-employed
HVAC techs	440,900	489,100	+11%	40,600	6%
Plumbers, pipefitters, steamfitters	510,600	545,200	+7%	42,000	8%
Roofers	166,900	175,600	+5%	12,000	20%
Landscaping and groundskeeping workers	1,188,600	1,244,200	+5%	149,500	20%
Painters	326,900	336,700	+3%	24,900	31%
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	1,332,100	1,339,500	+0.6%	175,500	14%
All occupations	170,280,800	176,198,500	+3.5%		

Source: BLS Employment Projections 2025-35, occupational projections and worker characteristics table. Landscaping is 4.7% before rounding. Maids and housekeeping cleaners includes hotel housekeepers.

The skilled, licensed trades (HVAC, plumbing) are projected to grow fastest. Openings are much bigger than growth in every trade, because so many workers retire or leave each year. For an owner, hiring will stay hard whether the trade grows or not.

These are projections, not facts.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up HVAC owner reads +11% and 40,600 openings a year. More work is projected, and every shop is chasing the same techs. They start a "Careers" page and take on an apprentice each year instead of waiting for finished techs to apply.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Find your trade's row.
- [ ] Add a "Careers" or "We're hiring" page to your website, even if you're not hiring this week.
- [ ] Ask your best worker who they'd recommend.

10 What demand looks like

The idea. More businesses only hurts if demand stands still. Google search data shows when demand comes, trade by trade. Here are the six home trades.

Trade	Busiest search months	Slowest search months	Swing
Landscaping and lawn care	Apr, May, Mar	Dec, Nov, Jan	3.45
HVAC	Jul, Jun, Aug	Nov, Dec, Apr	1.63
Roofing	Sep, Aug, Mar	Nov, Dec, Feb	1.52
Plumbing	Jul, Jan, Oct	Jun, Nov, May	1.42
House cleaning	Apr, Mar, Jul	Dec, Jan, Feb	1.36
Painting	Sep, Oct, Apr	Dec, Nov, Jan	1.31

Source: GTL analysis of Google Ads search estimates, November 2022 to October 2026. "Swing" is the busiest month divided by the slowest.

We don't quote whether searches went up or down from one year to the next. Google's yearly totals fall for almost every trade, salons included. That reflects how Google reports searches, and searches moving to Maps and chat assistants, not fewer customers. Our trade season calendar has all 70 trades we measured.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up roofer knows roofing businesses grew 26% in five years. They can't change demand, but they can be first when it comes. They put "get ready" dates six weeks before March and September.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Find your trade's busiest months.
- [ ] Count back six weeks from the first one and write "get ready" on your calendar.
- [ ] Compare with your own invoices. Your phone is the final word for your town.



Part 5

What it means for owners

11 If your trade is filling up with new small businesses

The idea. Roofing, barbers, pet care, pressure washing and cleaning are all adding small businesses fast. Newcomers usually compete on price and availability. You can't win that fight forever, but you have something they don't: a track record.

- Show proof a new business can't have: your reviews, your years, photos of real jobs with the street or neighborhood named.
- Keep reviews coming at a steady pace, so your profile never looks quiet.
- Answer first. Text back every missed call within minutes.
- Keep past customers close. A newcomer has none.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up dog groomer sees pet care up 32% in five years, with new groomers opening nearby. They text every customer a rebooking link the day after each visit, if the customer agreed to texts. Their regulars book before a newcomer ever gets the chance.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Put your review count, years in business and five real job photos on your home page.
- [ ] Turn on missed-call text-back on your business phone.
- [ ] Text your last five customers asking for a review, if they've agreed to texts.

12 If your trade is consolidating into bigger shops

The idea. In plumbing, HVAC and landscaping, the biggest businesses grew fastest. Bigger shops have call centers, fleets and ad budgets. A smaller business can't outspend them, but it can out-trust and out-reach them.

- Lead with the owner. "You'll get me, and the same tech every time."
- Answer the questions people are too stressed to ask: price ranges, how long it takes, who's coming.
- Build a page for every job and symptom you want, so you show up for the specific searches a big shop's general ads miss.
- Use equipment age or service dates as your calendar for past customers.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up landscaper with two crews loses commercial bids to a 50-person firm. They pick homes in four neighborhoods, send route-day texts, and add design work for those customers. That's work the big firm doesn't chase.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write one line about why customers like dealing with you instead of a big company, and put it on your home page.
- [ ] Add your photo and your team's photos to your website.
- [ ] Write one page for a job you want more of.

13 If you compete with many one-person operators

The idea. Cleaning, painting and landscaping all have four or more one-person businesses for every business with staff. Solo operators have no payroll, so they can often charge less. Win on what one person can't offer.

- Backup when someone is sick, and a crew that finishes faster.
- Insurance, licenses and background checks, shown up front.
- A written checklist, a warranty, and a clear way to reach you.
- Help with the big jobs: move-outs, full exteriors, storm cleanups.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painting company keeps losing interior jobs to solo painters. They add to every estimate: "Two days, not five. Insured crew. Touch-up kit left behind." Their win rate on estimates goes up even at a higher price.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] List three things your business offers that a one-person competitor can't.
- [ ] Put them on your website, your Google profile and your estimates.
- [ ] Decide which small jobs you'll pass to a solo operator you trust, and ask them to send you the big ones.

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Part 6

How we did it

14 What we collected

The idea. These are the facts behind every number in this report.

- **Businesses with staff:** Census County Business Patterns, 2012 to 2023, for 25 six-digit industry codes, for the US. For the five home trade codes, also every state and the counties of 10 Southeast metro areas. A "business" is one location with paid employees. People on payroll are counted in the week of March 12.
- **Same codes every year:** every code used maps one to one across the 2012, 2017 and 2022 industry code lists (Census NAICS concordances, census.gov), so 2013 and 2023 compare like for like.
- **Metro areas:** Nashville, Tulsa, Louisville, Huntsville, Lexington, Birmingham, Memphis, Little Rock, Montgomery and Jackson, MS, each built from the counties in its Census metro area as of July 2023, used for every year.
- **One-person businesses:** Census Nonemployer Statistics, 2022 to 2024. The Census changed its method in 2018 and its cutoffs in 2022, so we only compare 2022 onward.
- **The outlook:** BLS Employment Projections 2025-35.
- **Population:** Census population estimates, for people per business.
- **Demand:** GTL analysis of Google Ads search estimates, November 2022 to October 2026.

Example (sample numbers). To see how a five-year change works, picture a made-up trade with 200 businesses in a county in 2018 and 230 in 2023. That's 30 more, divided by 200: +15%.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] If you quote a figure, quote it as businesses with paid employees, not all businesses.
- [ ] If you compare two trades, compare their percentage changes, not their totals.

15 The limits, and how to quote this report

The idea. This is a careful count, not a forecast. Keep these limits in mind:

- **Census counts lag.** The newest business counts are for 2023, and one-person counts for 2024. Nothing here shows 2025 or 2026.
- **Businesses with staff only,** in County Business Patterns. One-person businesses are a separate count with its own method.
- **Some trades share a code.** Plumbing and HVAC are one Census industry. House cleaning sits inside janitorial services with office cleaning. One-person roofers and painters are only counted inside larger

groups.

- **Metro areas and small counts.** Metro areas are the city plus nearby counties. Since 2017, the Census leaves out county counts under 3 businesses, so metro totals can run a few low. A small trade in a small metro can double on a dozen new businesses.
- **Employment is a March snapshot.** Seasonal crews hired later in the year aren't counted.
- **Projections are not facts.** BLS projections count jobs, not businesses, and can be wrong.
- **Searches, not jobs.** Google search data shows when people look, not how many hire. We never quote its year-over-year changes.

To quote a figure, please credit the Census or BLS source named beside it, "as analyzed by Grow That Local", and link to this page. Every free guide and tool we make is at growthatlocal.com/free.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up local reporter writing about roofers quotes: "Roofing businesses with paid employees in the US grew 26% from 2018 to 2023, more than four times the rate for all businesses, according to Census County Business Patterns, as analyzed by Grow That Local."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] If you quote this report, name the source and year, and link to this page.
- [ ] If you're an owner, look up your own county on data.census.gov (data.census.gov). Your own count beats ours for your town.



Your first 24 hours, in one list

If you do these today, you'll know whether your trade is filling up and what to do about it:

- [ ] Find your trade in the table in section 1. Write down its five-year change and its "Under 5 staff" share.
- [ ] Decide whether your trade is getting more shops or bigger shops (section 5).
- [ ] Find your state (section 7) and, in the Southeast, your metro area (section 8).
- [ ] Pick the plan that fits from sections 11 to 13 and do its first step.



Where to go next

If you work in one of the six home trades we studied most closely, your trade's report has every state, your metro area, one-person businesses and a plan for your marketing:

- Roofers
- Landscapers
- Plumbers
- HVAC companies
- House cleaners
- Painters

For when customers search for each trade, read When Customers Search: The Local Trade Season Calendar 2026. For what it takes to reach Google's top 3, read The State of Local Trade Marketing 2026.



If you'd rather hand it off

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

Best fit for this guide: Monthly report card. Free sample: your first report card, this month. The monthly report card is free.

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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.

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.

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.

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

Sources

Every statistic above, with where it comes from:

1. US Census Bureau, County Business Patterns, 2013, 2018 and 2023, for 25 industries and all industries, US; and 2018 and 2023 for the five home trade industries (238160, 561730, 238220, 561720, 238320) by state and by county in 10 metro areas: census.gov (data files: census.gov). (sections 1 to 5, 7, 8, 14, 15)
2. US Census Bureau, Nonemployer Statistics, 2022 to 2024, industries 56172, 56173, 23822, 2381 and 2383, and all industries: census.gov (section 6)
3. US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections 2025-35, occupational projections and worker characteristics: bls.gov (sections 6, 9)
4. US Census Bureau, population estimates for 2023: census.gov (section 4)
5. US Census Bureau, metro area county lists, July 2023: census.gov (section 8)
6. US Census Bureau, NAICS concordances 2022 to 2017 and 2017 to 2012: census.gov (section 14)
7. GTL analysis of Google Ads search estimates, November 2022 to October 2026, for the six home trades, US. (section 10)

Tools cited (not statistics), checked on 2026-11-13:

- data.census.gov, County Business Patterns 2023 table: data.census.gov (section 15)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. The fastest-growing trades are the easiest to start (section 2). Reasoning: barbers, pressure washing and pet care need little equipment, and most of their businesses have fewer than 5 staff.
2. Carpet cleaning is shrinking partly because homes are moving to hard floors (section 3). Reasoning: carpet and upholstery cleaning fell 14% in ten years while flooring contractors grew 31%, and hard floors need less of the service.
3. Plumbing and HVAC have few one-person businesses because of licensing (section 6). Reasoning: both trades usually need a license and years of training to work alone, which keeps solo numbers low next to cleaning or painting.
4. Against many new small businesses, proof and trust win; against bigger shops, a personal touch and being easy to reach win (sections 5, 11, 12). Reasoning: newcomers have no track record to show, while big shops can outspend but often can't offer the owner or the same person every time.
5. Hiring will stay hard whether a trade grows or not (section 9). Reasoning: the BLS projects yearly openings many times larger than yearly growth in every one of the six occupations, mostly from people leaving.
6. One-person operators can often charge less (section 13). Reasoning: they carry no payroll, and their average yearly takings in cleaning and landscaping are well below what an employed worker in those jobs earns (Census Nonemployer Statistics 2024 and BLS 2025 median wages).

want it done for you?

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