RESEARCH REPORT — NORTH ATLANTA SMALL BUSINESS SERIES

Do Google AI Overviews Matter for Local Businesses? Original Data From 512 Metro Atlanta Searches

How often Google's AI answers appear when people search for local services in metro Atlanta and North Georgia, which sources they cite, and what the published research says about clicks, citations and customers

Prepared by Make It Loud | North Atlanta Small Business Research Series

Data Sources: Make It Loud analysis of 512 live Google desktop results pages for 16 local services in 10 metro Atlanta and North Georgia cities, collected through the DataForSEO SERP API on November 19, 2026 | Pew Research Center (2025) | Ahrefs (2026) | Agarwal & Sen field experiment (2026) | Seer Interactive (2025, 2026) | Kaiser & Schulze (2026) | BrightLocal (2026) | Alphabet Q3 2026 earnings call

97%	21%	5%	57%
of cost and how-to questions showed a Google AI Overview	of local service searches (“plumber roswell ga,” “dentist near me”) showed one	of local searches showed an AI Overview in both of our two checks the same day	of local AI Overviews cited Google Business Profiles, the most-cited source

BOTTOM LINE

For people searching for a local service, Google's AI Overviews are still the exception, not the rule. In our test of 512 live Google searches across 16 services and 10 metro Atlanta and North Georgia cities, an AI Overview appeared on 21% of local service searches, but on 31 of 32 checks of cost and how-to questions such as “how much does a new roof cost.” Local AI Overviews were also unstable: only 13 of 240 local searches showed one in both of our same-day checks. When they did appear, they were built largely from Google Business Profiles, the same listings that power the map pack, which appeared on 92% of local searches. The published research adds that AI Overviews reduce clicks, that being cited is better than not being cited, and that more consumers are turning to AI tools for local recommendations. For most local businesses, the practical priorities are a strong Google Business Profile, a website that answers cost and process questions with local specifics, and accurate listings on the directories AI tools rely on, while measuring success in calls and bookings rather than AI mentions.

Executive Summary

Business owners are hearing two loud and contradictory messages about Google's AI Overviews, the AI-written summaries that now appear above many search results. One says AI answers are killing website traffic. The other says businesses must “get into AI Overviews” or be left behind. Almost none of the public data on either claim looks at local service searches, which are how most small businesses in metro Atlanta win customers.

This report combines two kinds of evidence. First, we collected our own data: we checked the live Google results page for 256 searches, each run twice on November 19, 2026, covering 16 common local services (from plumbers and roofers to pediatricians and personal injury lawyers) in 10 cities from Atlanta to Gainesville and Canton. For each results page, we recorded whether an AI Overview appeared and every source it cited. Second, we reviewed the most credible published research on AI Overviews and AI search, including a Pew Research Center browsing study, a randomized field experiment, two

large click-through studies and new research on how AI-referred visitors convert.

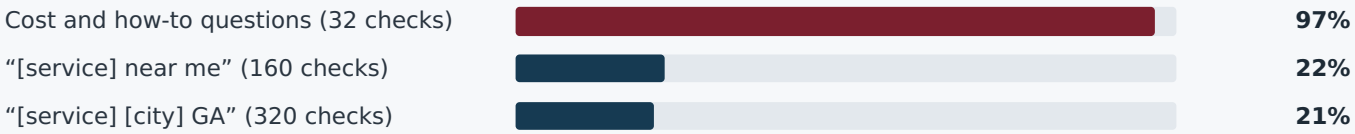
Finding 1 | AI Overviews Answer Questions, Not “Find Me a Plumber” Searches

The type of search mattered far more than the service or the city. Questions about cost or a problem, such as “how much does a dental crown cost without insurance” or “why is my AC blowing warm air,” triggered an AI Overview on 31 of 32 checks. Searches that signal someone is ready to hire, such as “roofer cumming ga” or “urgent care near me,” triggered one on only about one check in five: 67 of 320 city searches (21%) and 36 of 160 “near me” searches (22%).

AI Overview shown: cost and how-to questions 97%; “near me” searches 22%; “[service] [city] GA” searches 21%

That matches the largest published dataset on the question. Seer Interactive's 2026 analysis of 5.47 million queries from 53 brands found AI Overviews on 83.4% of price and cost queries but on only 5% of transactional queries and 1.5% of transactional “near me” queries. (Seer reported a much higher rate, 76.9%, for a broader “near me” group that mixed informational and local intent.) Our local rates are higher than Seer's transactional figures, which may reflect the services we chose, the date, or our method of loading AI Overviews that appear after the page renders.

How Often a Google AI Overview Appeared, by Type of Search



Make It Loud analysis of live Google desktop results, November 19, 2026. Each search was checked twice; percentages are of all checks.

Finding 2 | Local AI Overviews Come and Go

We ran every search twice on the same day, from the same location settings. For cost and how-to questions, the results were consistent: 15 of 16 questions showed an AI Overview both times. Local searches were not. Of 240 local searches, 90 (38%) showed an AI Overview in at least one check, but only 13 (5%) showed one in both. Even when the same search produced an AI Overview twice, the businesses and sources it cited often changed between checks.

90 of 240 local searches showed an AI Overview at least once; only 13 showed one both times

Placement varied too. Only 45 of 103 local AI Overviews (44%) appeared at the very top of the page; the rest appeared further down, often below the map pack and ads. And 106 of 134 AI Overviews (79%) loaded after the rest of the page, which means a quick look at a results page, or a rank-tracking tool that does not wait for them, can miss them. For a business owner, the takeaway is that a single screenshot of an AI Overview, whether it includes your business or not, says little about what customers will see tomorrow.

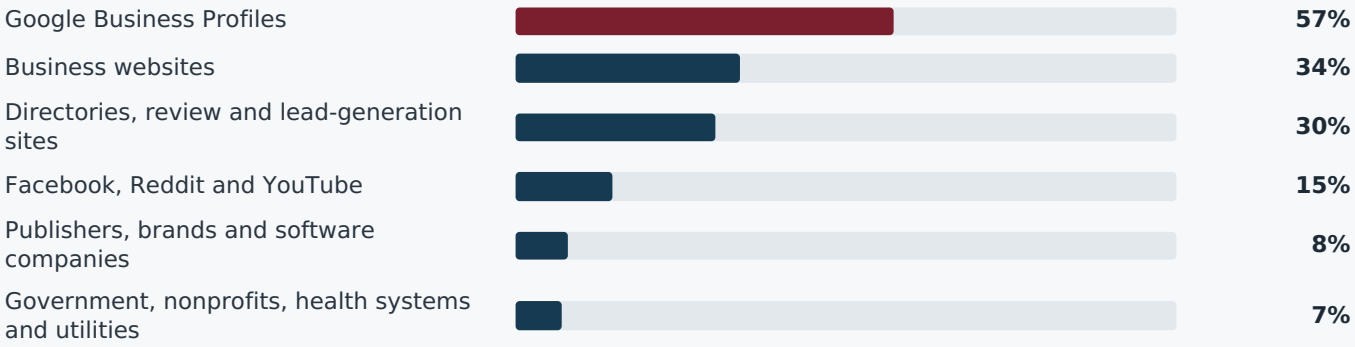
Finding 3 | Local AI Overviews Are Built From Google Business Profiles

When a local AI Overview did appear, it usually read like a summary of the map pack. A typical example for “garage door repair near me” in Atlanta named three local businesses with their star ratings and review counts, citing a Google Business Profile as its source. Across all 103 local AI Overviews, Google Business Profiles were the most common source, cited in 59 (57%) and making up 38% of all 364 citations. In 34 AI Overviews, they were the only sources cited. Of the 140 profile citations, 114 (81%) were for businesses that also appeared in the map pack on the same page. A further 26 local AI Overviews (25%) listed no sources at all.

Google Business Profiles: 38% of all local AI Overview citations; 81% of cited profiles were also in the map pack

This matters because the map pack itself appeared on 440 of 480 local searches (92%), far more often than any AI Overview. On local searches, the map pack and the AI Overview largely draw on the same pool of businesses, so the factors that earn a map pack spot (an accurate, complete profile, reviews, relevance and proximity) appear to be the same factors behind local AI Overview mentions.

Share of Local AI Overviews Citing Each Type of Source (103 AI Overviews)



Make It Loud analysis. An AI Overview can cite several types of sources. Sources were classified by Make It Loud based on the cited site; directories include Yelp, Angi, MapQuest, Better Business Bureau, Nextdoor, Thumbtack and lead-generation sites.

Finding 4 | Websites Still Get Cited, Even Without Top Rankings

Business websites were the second most common source in local AI Overviews, cited in 35 of 103 (34%), mostly the sites of local contractors, installers and law firms. Directories and review sites such as Yelp, Angi and MapQuest appeared in 30%, and Facebook, Reddit and YouTube in 15%.

72% of business-website citations in local AI Overviews went to sites that were not in the top 10 organic results

Ranking first was not a prerequisite. Of the 85 business-website citations we could match to a domain, 61 (72%) went to sites that did not appear in the top 10 organic results on the same page. On local searches, those top 10 positions are crowded with directories such as Yelp, Facebook and MapQuest, so an AI Overview that names local businesses has to look elsewhere. Google does not explain how sources are chosen, but in our data, businesses with clear, specific service pages were cited even when their sites ranked below the directories.

Finding 5 | Local Pricing Pages Win Citations on Cost Questions

Cost and how-to questions produced longer AI Overviews that cited an average of 8 sources each. Business websites were cited in 29 of 31 (94%), but most were companies outside Georgia that had published detailed cost guides. YouTube, Reddit and Facebook appeared in 22 (71%), along with publishers, manufacturers, health systems and price-comparison sites.

Business websites appeared in 29 of 31 AI Overviews for cost and how-to questions; YouTube, Reddit or Facebook in 22

The local exceptions are instructive. Our questions did not name a city, but because the checks were set to an Atlanta location, Google localized several answers, and the businesses it cited had published Atlanta-specific pricing pages. Mr. Roofer of Atlanta's “Roof Replacement Cost Atlanta” page was cited for “how much does a new roof cost” in both checks; Atlanta house cleaning companies' pricing guides were cited for “how much does a deep house cleaning cost”; and a Kennesaw CPR provider's renewal guide was cited for “how long does CPR certification last.” For a local business, a page that answers “what does this cost here, and why” is one of the few reliable ways to appear in the AI Overviews that show up most often.

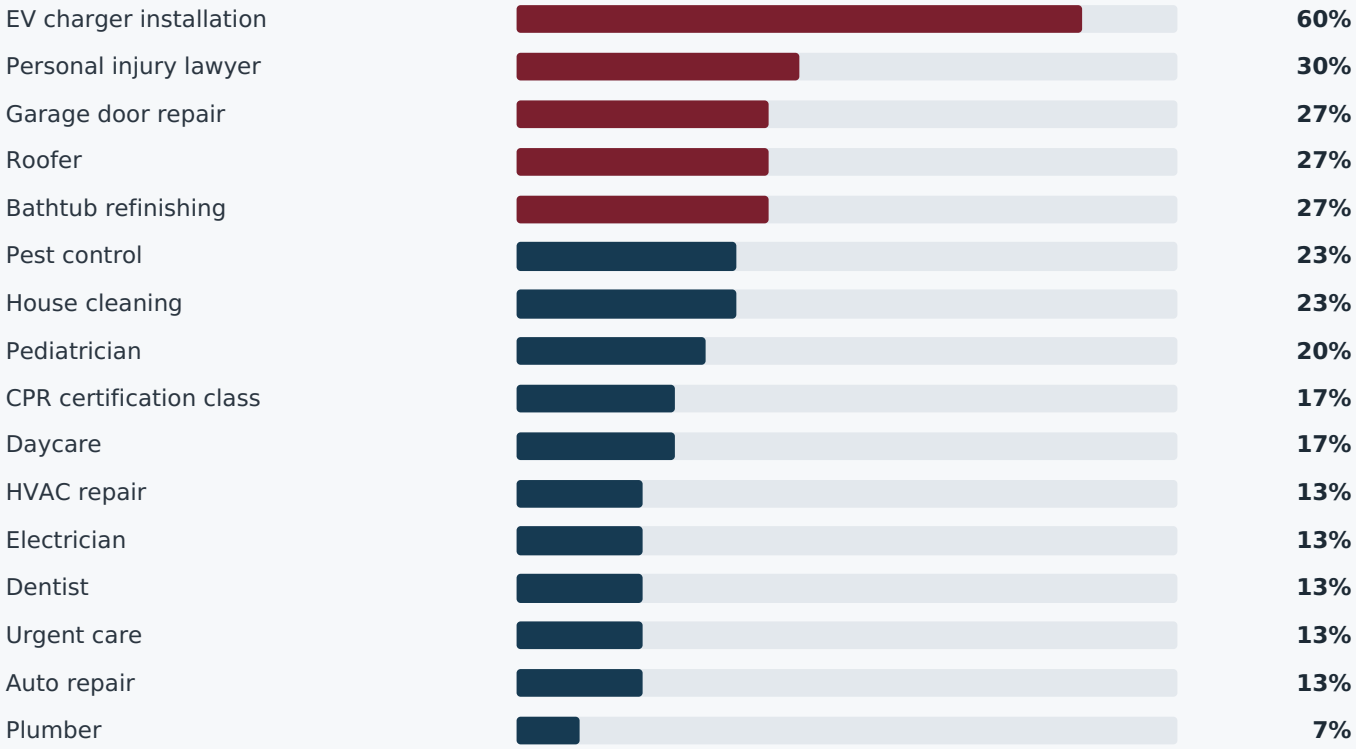
Finding 6 | Some Services See AI Overviews Far More Often Than Others

Across local searches, AI Overview rates ranged widely by service. EV charger installation stood out at 60% of checks, followed by personal injury lawyers (30%) and garage door repair, roofing and bathtub refinishing (27% each). Plumbers (7%), and HVAC repair, electricians, dentists, urgent care and auto repair (13% each) saw the fewest. A possible explanation is that newer or less familiar services prompt Google to explain more, while established emergency services are answered with the map pack, but our data cannot show why.

EV charger installation searches showed an AI Overview on 60% of checks; plumber searches on 7%

Differences among cities were smaller and less reliable. City searches in Duluth showed an AI Overview on 31% of checks and those in Atlanta on 12%, but with only 32 checks per city, those differences could easily be chance. We do not recommend drawing conclusions about individual cities from this sample.

AI Overview Rate on Local Searches, by Service (30 checks each)



Make It Loud analysis. Each service was checked as “[service] [city] GA” in 10 cities and as “[service] near me” from 5 cities, twice each. Small samples; differences of a few checks are not meaningful.

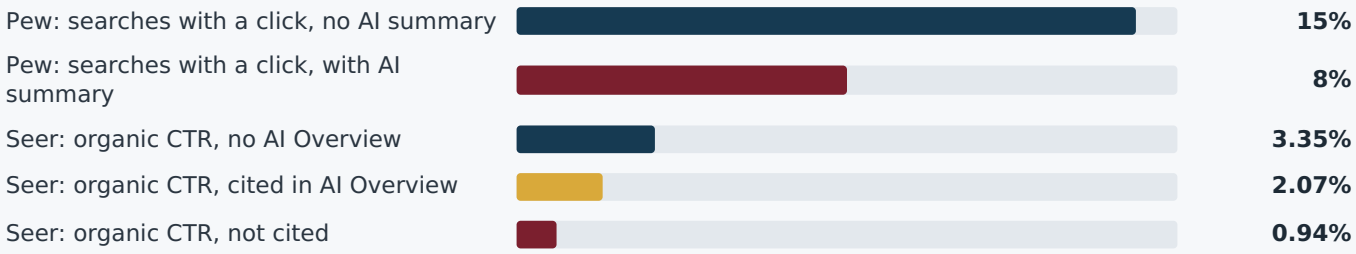
Finding 7 | Published Research: Fewer Clicks, but Citations Still Help

Our data shows where AI Overviews appear. Published research shows what they do. A Pew Research Center study tracking the browsing of more than 900 U.S. adults in March 2025 found that people clicked on a search result in 8% of visits to a Google results page with an AI summary, compared with 15% without one, and clicked a link inside the summary only 1% of the time. They were also more likely to end their browsing session (26% vs. 16%). Ahrefs' 2026 analysis of 300,000 keywords found the top-ranking result's click-through rate was about 58% lower when an AI Overview appeared. The strongest causal evidence comes from a randomized field experiment by Agarwal (Indian School of Business) and Sen (Carnegie Mellon) with 1,065 users in early 2026: users who saw AI Overviews made about 38% fewer clicks to websites (0.38 vs. 0.61 per search), with no difference in satisfaction. Google has said total organic clicks are “relatively stable” year over year but has not released data.

Pew: people clicked a result on 8% of searches with an AI summary vs. 15% without; 1% clicked a link inside the summary

Being cited does help relative to being left out. Seer Interactive found that on informational queries, brands cited in an AI Overview had an organic click-through rate of 2.07%, compared with 0.94% for brands that were not cited, though both were below the 3.35% rate on queries with no AI Overview. Seer notes these comparisons are not causal. Meanwhile, consumers are moving to AI tools: BrightLocal's 2026 survey of 1,002 U.S. adults found 45% had used ChatGPT or another AI tool for local business recommendations, up from 6% a year earlier. But early evidence suggests AI-referred visitors may be less valuable. Kaiser and Schulze, studying 973 e-commerce sites, found ChatGPT referrals were about 13% less likely to convert than Google organic visitors.

Clicks With and Without AI Overviews (Published Studies)



Pew Research Center (July 2025; March 2025 browsing data, 68,879 searches). Seer Interactive 2026 update (informational queries, January 2025–February 2026). The two studies measure different things and should not be compared directly.

What This Means for Local Businesses

1 Treat your Google Business Profile as your AI Overview strategy.
On local searches, Google Business Profiles were cited in 57% of AI Overviews and overlapped heavily with the map pack. Complete every field, choose accurate categories, add services and photos, keep hours current and earn steady, detailed reviews. The same work improves map pack visibility, which appeared on 92% of local searches.

2 Publish local cost and process pages.
Cost and how-to questions trigger AI Overviews almost every time, and local businesses with specific pricing pages for Atlanta were cited even when the question didn't name a city. Explain price ranges, what drives cost, timelines and local factors, in plain language, with real numbers.

3 Keep directory listings accurate.
Yelp, Angi, MapQuest, Facebook and similar sites appeared in many local AI Overviews and dominate the organic results for local searches. Consistent names, addresses, phone numbers and services across these sites give Google and AI tools reliable information to repeat.

4 Don't chase screenshots.
Only 5% of local searches showed an AI Overview consistently on the same day, and cited sources shifted between checks. Judge AI visibility over time and across many searches, not from a single result, and be wary of anyone guaranteeing AI Overview placement.

5 Measure calls and bookings, not AI mentions.
The published evidence shows AI Overviews reduce clicks, and early research suggests AI-referred visitors may convert less often. The goal is customers, so track phone calls, form fills and booked appointments by source, and use AI visibility as a supporting signal.

The Local Data at a Glance

Measure	Result
Searches checked (256 searches, each checked twice)	512
AI Overview on cost and how-to questions	31 of 32 (97%)
AI Overview on “[service] [city] GA” searches	67 of 320 (21%)
AI Overview on “[service] near me” searches	36 of 160 (22%)
Local searches with an AI Overview in both checks	13 of 240 (5%)
Local AI Overviews at the top of the page	45 of 103 (44%)
Local searches showing a map pack	440 of 480 (92%)
Local searches showing paid ads	73 of 480 (15%)
Local AI Overviews citing a Google Business Profile	59 of 103 (57%)
Local AI Overviews citing a business website	35 of 103 (34%)
Local AI Overviews citing no sources	26 of 103 (25%)

About Make It Loud

Make It Loud Digital Marketing is a Metro Atlanta digital marketing agency serving small and midsize businesses across Gwinnett, Forsyth, Hall and Cherokee counties and beyond. The agency provides search engine optimization, generative engine optimization (GEO) and AI search visibility, Google Business Profile management, website design, pay-per-click advertising, social media, podcast production and AI consulting for home service, healthcare, professional service, automotive and nonprofit clients. More research is published at makeitloud.net/research.

Methodology, Limitations & Sources

Original data. On November 19, 2026, Make It Loud collected live Google desktop results pages through the DataForSEO SERP API (Live Advanced endpoint, English, with asynchronously loaded AI Overviews requested). We checked 256 searches: 16 services in the form “[service] [city] GA” for 10 cities (Atlanta, Alpharetta, Roswell, Johns Creek, Cumming, Suwanee, Duluth, Lawrenceville, Gainesville and Canton), each set to that city's location; “[service] near me” for the same 16 services from 5 of those cities; and one cost or how-to question per service, set to Atlanta. Each search was run twice, a few minutes apart, for 512 results pages; all returned usable data after one automatic retry. For each page, we recorded the result types shown, whether an AI Overview appeared, its position, every source it cited, the map pack and the top 10 organic results. Make It Loud classified cited sources by type; Google Business Profile citations were identified by Google's business-listing links, and redirected links were identified by the site name Google displayed.

Literature review. We reviewed published studies, surveys and company statements on AI Overviews and AI search from 2025–2026, prioritizing randomized experiments and large datasets, and report figures from the original sources or the publishers' own summaries.

Limitations. Our data reflects one day, desktop results and a single data provider's view of Google; results for real users vary with device, search history, precise location and time. The sample of 16 services and 10 cities is not representative of all businesses, and per-city and per-service figures rest on small numbers. Source classifications involve judgment, and we did not verify the location of every cited business. Our method of loading delayed AI Overviews may produce higher rates than studies that do not. The published studies cover different time periods, query types and countries, mostly non-local searches, and several are observational rather than causal; the Agarwal and Sen paper is a preliminary draft. Make It Loud is a digital marketing agency that sells search and AI visibility services.

Make It Loud. Original analysis of 512 Google results pages collected via DataForSEO, November 19, 2026. Raw data available on request.

Pew Research Center. “Google users are less likely to click on links when an AI summary appears in the results,” July 22, 2025.

Ahrefs. Updated study of AI Overviews and click-through rates, 300,000 keywords, December 2023 vs. December 2025 (2026).

Agarwal, A. and Sen, A. “Google AI Overviews and Publisher Traffic: Evidence from a Field Experiment,” preliminary draft, April 2026.

Seer Interactive. “AIO Impact on Google CTR” (September 2025) and 2026 update (5.47 million queries, January 2025–February 2026).

Google. Liz Reid, “AI in Search is driving more queries and higher quality clicks,” The Keyword, August 6, 2025; Alphabet Q3 2026 earnings call, October 2026.

Kaiser, C. and Schulze, J. “Frontiers: ChatGPT Referrals to E-Commerce Websites,” *Marketing Science* (2026); “Can Advertising Fund Free AI?” SSRN working paper, October 2026.

BrightLocal. Local Consumer Review Survey 2026, February 11, 2026 (1,002 U.S. adults).