RESEARCH REPORT — NORTH ATLANTA SMALL BUSINESS SERIES

How Much Should a Local Business Budget for Google Ads?

What It Costs to Generate 10, 25 or 50 Leads a Month From Google Ads in 23 Industries, Based on 2026 Benchmarks

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

Data Sources: LocaliQ / WordStream, Google Ads Benchmarks 2026 (13,474 U.S. search campaigns, April 2025–March 2026) | Google Ads Help Center | Make It Loud analysis

$2,273
estimated monthly Google Ads budget for 25 leads for a home services business

$3,291
for 25 leads a month for a law firm, the highest of 23 industries

33 vs. 8
leads per $1,000 of ad spend for an auto repair shop vs. a law firm

$66.69
median cost per lead across all industries in 2026, the first decline in five years

BOTTOM LINE

There is no single right Google Ads budget, but there is a reliable way to estimate one: multiply your industry's typical cost per lead by the number of leads you need. Using LocaliQ's 2026 benchmarks from 13,474 U.S. search campaigns, a home services company would need about $2,273 a month to generate 25 leads, a dental practice about $1,824, and a law firm about $3,291. At the other end, an auto repair shop or restaurant could expect about 25 leads for roughly $749–$764. Put another way, $1,000 a month buys roughly 33 leads in auto repair but only 8 in legal services. These are starting estimates built on industry medians, not guarantees; actual results depend on local competition, the quality of the campaign and website, and how a business defines a lead.

Executive Summary

"How much should we spend on Google Ads?" is one of the first questions business owners ask, and one of the hardest to answer with public data. Google does not publish what advertisers spend, and the "average budget by industry" figures that circulate online rarely disclose where they come from. What is published, and reliable, is what results cost: the typical cost per click and cost per lead in each industry.

This report turns those costs into budgets. Using LocaliQ and WordStream's 2026 Google Ads Benchmarks, which analyzed 13,474 U.S. search campaigns across 23 industries from April 2025 through March 2026, we calculated the monthly ad spend needed to generate 10, 25 and 50 leads in each industry, and how many leads a fixed budget of $1,000, $2,500 or $5,000 a month would be expected to produce. It builds on Make It Loud's August 2026 study, "Rising PPC Costs," which examined the cost benchmarks themselves.

Finding 1 | The Budget Formula: Leads Needed × Cost per Lead

Monthly budget ≈ leads you need × your industry's cost per lead

A Google Ads budget is easiest to plan backward from a goal. If a business knows roughly how many new leads it wants each month (calls, form fills, booking requests) and what a lead typically costs in its industry, the budget follows. Across all 23 industries in LocaliQ's 2026 data, the median cost per lead was $66.69, the median cost per click $5.42 and the median conversion rate 8.18%.

Cost per lead is the most useful starting point because it already accounts for both click prices and how often clicks turn into leads. An industry with expensive clicks can still have a reasonable cost per lead if visitors convert well. Dentists pay a median $8.00 per click but convert 10.67% of clicks, for a $72.97 cost per lead, while furniture retailers pay just $3.97 per click but convert only 2.99%, for a $106.70 cost per lead.

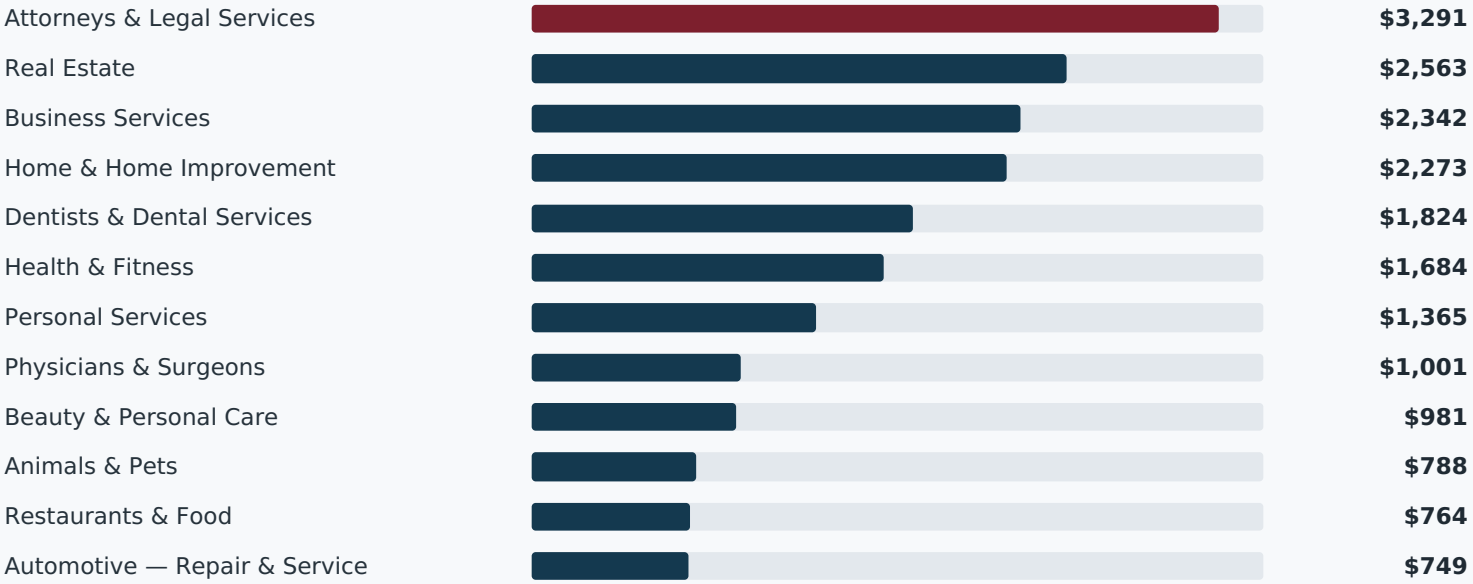
Finding 2 | What 25 Leads a Month Costs in Local Service Industries

From about $749 for auto repair to $3,291 for legal services

For a business that wants about 25 leads a month, roughly one every weekday, the estimated budget ranges widely. Among local service industries, legal services top the list at about $3,291 a month, followed by business services ($2,342), home and home improvement ($2,273) and real estate ($2,563). Dentists would need about $1,824, while physicians and surgeons, whose cost per lead fell 30% year over year, would need about $1,001.

Restaurants, pet businesses and auto repair shops sit at the low end, under $800 a month for 25 leads. For home services, the industry most of Make It Loud's North Atlanta clients work in, 25 leads a month at the national median works out to about $2,273, or roughly $75 a day.

Estimated Monthly Google Ads Budget for 25 Leads, Local Service Industries



Make It Loud calculation: 25 × median cost per lead, LocaliQ/WordStream Google Ads Benchmarks 2026 (13,474 U.S. search campaigns, April 2025–March 2026).

Finding 3 | What a Fixed Budget Buys

$2,500 a month: about 27 leads for home services, 34 for dentists, 19 for law firms

Many small businesses start with a set amount rather than a lead target. At the 2026 medians, $1,000 a month would be expected to produce about 11 leads for a home services company, 14 for a dental practice and 8 for a law firm, but 33 for an auto repair shop and 25 for a medical practice.

Small budgets carry a practical risk: in high-cost industries, $500 or $1,000 a month may produce so few leads that it is hard to tell whether a campaign is working. A home services campaign spending $500 a month would average about five leads, few enough that one good or bad week can swing the results. That is one reason many advertisers in expensive categories find that a modest budget concentrated on their most profitable services and nearest service areas performs better than a thin budget spread across everything.

Expected leads per month	Median cost per lead	$1,000/mo.	$2,500/mo.	$5,000/mo.
Automotive — Repair & Service	$29.96	33	83	167
Restaurants & Food	$30.57	33	82	164
Animals & Pets	$31.50	32	79	159
Beauty & Personal Care	$39.25	25	64	127
Physicians & Surgeons	$40.04	25	62	125
Personal Services	$54.60	18	46	92
Health & Fitness	$67.36	15	37	74
Dentists & Dental Services	$72.97	14	34	69
Home & Home Improvement	$90.92	11	27	55
Business Services	$93.69	11	27	53
Real Estate	$102.51	10	24	49
Attorneys & Legal Services	$131.63	8	19	38

Budget ÷ median cost per lead, rounded. Source: Make It Loud calculation from LocaliQ/WordStream Google Ads Benchmarks 2026.

Finding 4 | Expensive Clicks Don't Always Mean Expensive Leads

Click prices alone can mislead budget planning. Personal services pay a median $7.17 per click, among the highest, but convert 12.34% of clicks, bringing cost per lead to $54.60. Physicians and surgeons pay $4.76 per click and convert 12.43%, for a $40.04 cost per lead. By contrast, real estate clicks cost a median of just $3.22, but only 3.70% convert, pushing cost per lead to $102.51.

Personal services pay the fourth-highest median click price but get leads for $54.60, below the $66.69 overall median

For business owners, the takeaway is that the quality of the landing page, the offer and how quickly calls are answered can move cost per lead as much as click prices do. A business that converts more of its visitors needs a smaller budget to hit the same lead goal.

Industry	Cost per click	Conversion rate	Cost per lead
Attorneys & Legal Services	$9.87	5.55%	$131.63
Home & Home Improvement	$8.33	8.05%	$90.92
Dentists & Dental Services	$8.00	10.67%	$72.97
Personal Services	$7.17	12.34%	$54.60
Physicians & Surgeons	$4.76	12.43%	$40.04
Real Estate	$3.22	3.70%	$102.51
Automotive — Repair & Service	$4.35	15.51%	$29.96

Medians. Source: LocaliQ/WordStream Google Ads Benchmarks 2026. Because each metric is a separate median, cost per click divided by conversion rate does not exactly equal the median cost per lead.

Finding 5 | Turning a Monthly Budget Into a Daily Budget

Google Ads budgets are set per day; monthly charges are capped at the average daily budget × 30.4

Google Ads budgets are entered as an average daily amount. According to Google, an account can spend up to twice its average daily budget on a busy day, but over a calendar month it will not be charged more than the average daily budget times 30.4, the average number of days in a month. To translate a monthly goal, divide by 30.4: a $2,273 monthly budget for 25 home services leads works out to about $75 a day, and a $1,824 dental budget to about $60 a day.

Seasonality also matters. Home services demand in Georgia swings with the weather, so many businesses raise daily budgets during peak months, such as early summer for air conditioning and fall for heating, and lower them in slower months rather than spending evenly all year.

What This Means for Local Businesses

1. **Start from a lead goal, not a round number.**
Decide how many leads you need each month, multiply by your industry's cost per lead, then adjust as your own results come in.

2. **Give a new campaign enough budget to learn.**
In high-cost industries, very small budgets produce too few leads to judge results. Concentrating spend on your best services and closest areas often works better than spreading it thin.

3. **Improve conversion before raising spend.**
A faster, clearer landing page and prompt call handling lower cost per lead, which stretches every dollar of the budget.

4. **Track leads that become customers.**
Cost per lead is a starting point. The budget that matters is the one that produces profitable jobs, so track which leads turn into revenue.

The Data: Estimated Monthly Budget by Industry, All 23 Industries

Industry	Cost per click	Conv. rate	Cost per lead	10 leads	25 leads	50 leads
Attorneys & Legal Services	$9.87	5.55%	$131.63	$1,316	$3,291	$6,582
Furniture	$3.97	2.99%	$106.70	$1,067	$2,668	$5,335
Real Estate	$3.22	3.70%	$102.51	$1,025	$2,563	$5,126
Apparel / Fashion & Jewelry	$4.44	4.50%	$97.51	$975	$2,438	$4,876
Business Services	$5.87	4.85%	$93.69	$937	$2,342	$4,684
Home & Home Improvement	$8.33	8.05%	$90.92	$909	$2,273	$4,546
Education & Instruction	$4.81	13.14%	$77.48	$775	$1,937	$3,874
Industrial & Commercial	$5.87	8.20%	$75.19	$752	$1,880	$3,760
Finance & Insurance	$3.39	2.64%	$74.44	$744	$1,861	$3,722
Dentists & Dental Services	$8.00	10.67%	$72.97	$730	$1,824	$3,648
Career & Employment	$5.81	3.05%	$67.36	$674	$1,684	$3,368
Health & Fitness	$6.17	6.94%	$67.36	$674	$1,684	$3,368
Personal Services	$7.17	12.34%	$54.60	$546	$1,365	$2,730
Shopping & Gifts	$4.14	4.01%	$49.40	$494	$1,235	$2,470
Travel	$2.14	5.83%	$44.70	$447	$1,118	$2,235
Automotive — For Sale	$2.27	6.01%	$44.26	$443	$1,106	$2,213
Sports & Recreation	$2.77	7.69%	$44.26	$443	$1,106	$2,213
Physicians & Surgeons	$4.76	12.43%	$40.04	$400	$1,001	$2,002
Beauty & Personal Care	$4.62	10.35%	$39.25	$392	$981	$1,962
Animals & Pets	$4.06	16.22%	$31.50	$315	$788	$1,575
Restaurants & Food	$2.05	8.05%	$30.57	$306	$764	$1,528
Automotive — Repair & Service	$4.35	15.51%	$29.96	$300	$749	$1,498
Arts & Entertainment	$1.63	5.91%	$26.84	$268	$671	$1,342
All industries (median)	**$5.42**	**8.18%**	**$66.69**	**$667**	**$1,667**	**$3,335**

Estimated monthly budget = leads × median cost per lead. Source: LocaliQ/WordStream Google Ads Benchmarks 2026; Make It Loud calculations.

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

Approach. Cost per click, conversion rate and cost per lead come from LocaliQ and WordStream's Google Ads Benchmarks 2026 (published September 2026), based on 13,474 U.S. search advertising campaigns running between April 1, 2025, and March 31, 2026, with at least 52 campaigns per industry. The report's "averages" are medians. Estimated budgets multiply each industry's median cost per lead by 10, 25 or 50 leads; expected leads divide a monthly budget by the median cost per lead. Daily budget conversions use Google's 30.4-day monthly charging limit as described in the Google Ads Help Center.

Limitations. These are planning estimates, not measurements of what businesses actually spend; we found no reliable public data on actual Google Ads spending by industry. Benchmarks reflect campaigns managed through LocaliQ and WordStream, are national rather than Atlanta-specific and include both Google and Microsoft search ads. Costs vary by market, competition, season, campaign quality and how each advertiser defines a conversion; a lead is not a customer. Because each metric is a separate median, they cannot be combined exactly. As published, two pairs of industries share identical cost-per-lead figures (Health & Fitness and Career & Employment at $67.36; Automotive — For Sale and Sports & Recreation at $44.26); we used the figures as published. Industry names are shortened in some tables.

LocaliQ / WordStream. Marino, S. “Google Ads Benchmarks 2026: Competitive Data & Insights for Every Industry,” updated September 16, 2026. wordstream.com/blog/2026-google-ads-benchmarks

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