Local AEO Checklist

Get Your Business Featured in AI Answers for Local Searches

Created by Mainstay Automation - AEO-GEO Bridge Pioneers

What is Local AEO?

Answer Engine Optimization (AEO) for local businesses means optimizing your content so AI assistants like ChatGPT, Google AI Overviews, and Bing Copilot mention your business when people ask location-based questions.

Goal: When someone asks "best plumber in Phoenix" or "emergency dentist near me," AI gives your business as the direct answer.

Phase 1: Foundation Setup ✓

Google Business Profile Optimization

- ☐ **Claim and verify your Google Business Profile**
- ☐ **Add 10+ high-quality photos** (storefront, team, work examples)
- ☐ **Write detailed business description** with services and location
- ☐ **Add all service categories** that apply to your business
- ☐ **List specific service areas** (neighborhoods, zip codes you serve)
- ☐ **Add business hours including special hours** (holidays, emergencies)
- ☐ **Enable Q&A section** and answer the first 5 common questions
- ☐ **Respond to all reviews** professionally and promptly

Website Local Information

- ☐ **Add your full address** to every page footer
- ☐ **Display phone number prominently** (clickable on mobile)
- ☐ **Create location-specific pages** for each service area
- ☐ **Add "serving [city]" to page titles** and headers
- ☐ **Include local landmarks** in your content naturally

Phase 2: Local AEO Content Creation ✓

Answer Common Local Questions

Create pages that directly answer these question patterns:

Service + Location Questions:

- ☐ **"Best [service] in [city]"** - Create comparison page showing why you're best
- ☐ **"[Service] near me"** - Optimize homepage with local SEO

- ☐ **"Emergency [service] [city]"** - Create emergency service page
- ☐ **"Cheap/affordable [service] [city]"** - Create pricing/value page
- ☐ **"[Service] [city] reviews"** - Create testimonials page

Local Process Questions:

- ☐ **"How much does [service] cost in [city]?"** - Create local pricing guide
- ☐ **"Do I need a permit for [service] in [city]?"** - Answer local regulations
- ☐ **"How long does [service] take in [city]?"** - Timeline expectations
- ☐ **"What [service] companies are licensed in [city]?"** - Highlight your credentials

Location-Specific FAQ Pages

- ☐ **Create FAQ section** answering these for your area:
  - Local permit requirements
  - Average costs in your market
  - Seasonal considerations (weather, etc.)
  - Local regulations or codes
  - Service area boundaries
  - Response times for different areas

Phase 3: Local Schema Markup ✓

Essential Local Business Schema

- ☐ **Add LocalBusiness schema** to your homepage
  - Business name, address, phone
  - Service areas (cities/regions)
  - Business hours
  - Business type/category
- ☐ **Add Service schema** for each main service
  - Service name and description
  - Areas served
  - Pricing information (if provided)

Local FAQ Schema

- ☐ **Add FAQ schema** to location-specific Q&A content
- ☐ **Structure questions** as customers actually ask them
- ☐ **Include local terms** (neighborhood names, local references)

Phase 4: Content Formatting for AI ✓

Direct Answer Format

- ☐ **Start pages with direct answers** (50-word summaries)
- ☐ **Use location in the first sentence** ("In Phoenix, the average cost...")
- ☐ **Create numbered lists** for processes and steps

- ☐ **Bold key information** (prices, phone numbers, addresses)
- ☐ **Use tables** for comparing services or pricing

Question-Based Headers

- ☐ **Use H2s as questions** ("What permits do I need in Phoenix?")
- ☐ **Answer immediately** in the paragraph below
- ☐ **Include local variations** ("Phoenix requires..." vs "Scottsdale requires...")

Phase 5: Local Citations & NAP ✓

Business Directory Listings

- ☐ **Ensure consistent NAP** (Name, Address, Phone) everywhere
- ☐ **Update Yelp business profile** with complete information
- ☐ **Create Facebook business page** with local details
- ☐ **List in industry-specific directories** (Angie's List, HomeAdvisor, etc.)
- ☐ **Submit to local business directories** (city chamber, local sites)

Local Content Integration

- ☐ **Mention local landmarks** naturally in content
- ☐ **Reference local events or seasons** in blog posts
- ☐ **Create neighborhood-specific pages** if you serve multiple areas
- ☐ **Include driving directions** or local transportation references

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Phase 6: AI Testing & Optimization ✓

Monthly AI Testing

- ☐ **Test ChatGPT** with your local questions:
  - "Best [your service] in [your city]"
  - "Emergency [service] [city]"
  - "[Your service] near [local landmark]"
- ☐ **Test Perplexity** with the same questions
- ☐ **Test Google AI Overviews** (if available in your area)
- ☐ **Document results** and track improvements monthly

Content Optimization Based on Results

- ☐ **If not appearing:** Create more direct answer content
- ☐ **If appearing but not prominently:** Improve answer clarity
- ☐ **If competitors appear instead:** Analyze their content structure
- ☐ **Add more local context** to existing answers

Phase 7: Advanced Local AEO ✓

Hyper-Local Content

- ☐ **Create service pages for specific neighborhoods**
- ☐ **Write content about local regulations** or requirements
- ☐ **Reference local suppliers or partners** you work with
- ☐ **Include local case studies** with neighborhood names
- ☐ **Create seasonal local content** (winter prep, summer maintenance, etc.)

Emergency/Urgent Query Optimization

- ☐ **Optimize for "urgent" keywords** (emergency, ASAP, same day)
- ☐ **Create clear availability information** (24/7, emergency hours)
- ☐ **Add response time commitments** ("30-minute response time")
- ☐ **Include emergency contact methods** (phone, text, online chat)

Success Metrics to Track 📊

AEO Visibility Metrics

- **AI Mention Frequency:** How often you appear in AI answers for local queries
- **Direct Answer Captures:** Questions where you're the primary answer
- **Local Query Coverage:** Percentage of local questions where you appear

Business Impact Metrics

- **Phone Calls from AI References:** Track sources mentioning AI search
- **Local Organic Traffic:** Increase in location-based search visits
- **Quote Requests:** Local customers mentioning they "found you online"

Local AEO Quick Wins (Start Here!) 🚀

Week 1:

1. Complete Google Business Profile optimization
2. Add local FAQ section to homepage
3. Test 5 local questions in ChatGPT

Week 2:

1. Create "[Service] in [City]" pages for top 3 services
2. Add local schema markup to main pages
3. Write direct answers to top 10 customer questions

Week 3:

1. Optimize for "near me" searches
2. Create emergency service page with local details
3. Test all content in AI platforms and document results

Common Local AEO Mistakes to Avoid ❌

- **Generic content:** Don't just copy/paste - include local details
- **Inconsistent business info:** Keep NAP identical everywhere
- **Vague locations:** Be specific about service areas and neighborhoods
- **Missing emergency info:** Local searches often have urgency
- **No local proof:** Include local references, landmarks, partnerships

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Remember: Local AEO is about being the definitive local answer. When AI assistants need to recommend a local business, you want to be the obvious choice.

For advanced Local AEO strategies and implementation support, visit Mainstay Automation

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