

1.86x Income Gap Between Birmingham Counties — ALEX Intelligence 2026

1.86x Income Gap in Birmingham's Counties

Shelby vs. Bibb: A Divide That Shapes Real Estate

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THE DATA

1.86x

Ratio of Highest to Lowest County Median Household Income in the Market (2024)

This ratio reflects the extreme income disparity between Shelby County and Bibb County within the Birmingham metro area.

The 1.86x gap is not just a number—it's a structural fault line. Shelby County's \$97,961 median household income stands in stark contrast to Bibb County's \$52,541, a chasm that shapes everything from housing demand to school funding and civic investment. This isn't a regional anomaly; it's a defining feature of the Birmingham market's internal geography.

01

Income Drives Real Estate Demand

In Shelby County, high-income households are fueling demand for premium housing, new construction, and commercial upgrades. In Bibb County, affordability is the primary driver—yet infrastructure and services lag. This imbalance creates two distinct housing ecosystems: one with rising prices and limited inventory, the other with stagnant or declining values and underinvestment. The market is not monolithic—it's segmented by income, and that segmentation dictates opportunity.



02

The Risk of Inequality in Growth

This income divide isn't just economic—it's political and social. As core counties like Shelby and St. Clair attract capital and development, peripheral counties like Bibb and Walker risk becoming service deserts. Without deliberate policy and investment, the gap will widen further. For real estate strategists, this isn't a data point—it's a warning: growth without equity leads to long-term instability, especially when infrastructure and public services remain unevenly distributed.

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Diane Hart Alexander, MBA, MHA

Chair & CEO, ALEX Companies

Designated Broker, Alexander Tiffany Southwest, LLC dba ALEX.realestate, et.al.

Texas License #574877-B · Broker License #565194-BB

diane@alex.realestate · +1 713.591.9902



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