

Top In-Migration Growth in NC — ALEX Intelligence 2026

Asheville's In-Migration Surge Is Real

20.3% Rise in Households Moving In — ALEX Intelligence 2026

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THE DATA

20.3%

Five-Vintage Change in Households Moving In (2023)

Asheville's in-migration growth between 2017–18 and 2022–23 exceeds national trends and reflects deep regional displacement patterns.

This 20.3% increase in households moving into Asheville from other counties is not a passive influx — it's a deliberate, multi-year shift driven by economic and lifestyle realignment. The data captures the full flow of households, not just individuals, and includes multiple states and counties across the Southeast and Southwest. The top sources of in-migration are not just distant cities but adjacent counties like McDowell and Mecklenburg, suggesting a cascading effect from urban stress to mountain refuge.

Source: U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income Migration Data, county-to-county inflows, 2017-18 and 2022-23 · ALEX Intelligence computation

<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-09-17-asheville-mig-trend-in-long>



01

Migration Is a Resilience Signal

The fact that counties like McDowell and Mecklenburg — both experiencing economic strain and infrastructure pressure — are sending more households to Asheville signals that the region is being seen as a long-term buffer zone. This isn't a temporary retreat to the mountains; it's a strategic reallocation of household stability. The data suggests Asheville is becoming a de facto regional anchor for displaced economic units, not just a vacation destination.



02

The Hidden Cost of Attraction

The same counties sending households to Asheville — especially McDowell, a historically underserved Appalachian county — are losing their most mobile, economically active residents. This brain drain creates a counterintuitive paradox: Asheville gains population and economic momentum while its neighboring counties face deeper structural decline. The migration surge is not a net gain for the region but a redistribution of vulnerability.

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