Top Income Gap in NC — ALEX Intelligence 2026

The Triangle's Income Gap: 5.4%

Top-ranking income inflow outpaces outflow — ALEX Intelligence, 2026

THE DATA

5.4%

Income Gap Between Arriving and Departing Households (2023)

This marks the Triangle’s strongest net income gain among North Carolina’s major metros.

The data reveals a fundamental shift in demographic quality: households moving into the Triangle earn 5.4% more on average than those leaving. This is not just a migration trend — it’s a signal of rising economic selectivity in the region’s housing market. Unlike markets that attract low- or moderate-income movers, the Triangle is filtering in higher-earning residents, which supports premium pricing, reduces turnover risk, and strengthens long-term property value appreciation.

Source: U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income Migration Data, county-to-county inflows, 2022-23 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-09-19-triangle-mig-agi-gap

01

Wealth Is Self-Reinforcing

The 5.4% income gap isn't a one-time anomaly — it's a feedback loop. As higher-earning households arrive, they increase demand for premium housing, upscale services, and quality schools. This, in turn, raises the cost of living, which filters out lower-income residents and further elevates the average income of new arrivals. This cycle is not just economic — it's structural, making the Triangle less vulnerable to downturns driven by affordability crises.

02

Stability Through Selectivity

Unlike markets that rely on volume-driven growth, the Triangle's strength lies in quality. The income gap suggests that the region is not simply attracting people — it's attracting the right people. This selectivity reduces tenant churn, increases rental stability, and supports long-term capital gains. For investors and developers, this means that building for high-income demographics is not just profitable — it's sustainable, even during macroeconomic volatility.

Real Estate Strategy & Intelligence Leader. Democratized Blue Ocean Strategist & Operator.

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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