

Top 3 Migration Sources in NC — ALEX Intelligence 2026

27.3% of Newcomers Come From Just 3 NC Counties

Wake, Onslow, and Mecklenburg dominate inbound migration to Wilmington

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THE DATA

27.3%

Share of Arriving Households From the Top Three Counties (2023)

This concentration reflects a deep regional imbalance in migration patterns across North Carolina.

The fact that nearly a third of new households in Wilmington originate from just three counties—Wake, Onslow, and Mecklenburg—signals a powerful, sustained outflow from high-cost, high-density urban centers. This is not a transient trend but a structural shift in where people are choosing to live. The implications for housing demand, infrastructure strain, and cultural integration are profound.

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/2026-09-21-wilmington-mig-county-top3>

01

Migration Is a Demand Engine

The data implies that future demand forecasting must treat these three counties as primary inputs. Any strategy that assumes broad or random migration will miss the mark.



02

The Market Is a Net Receiver of Regional Brain Drain

This dynamic also explains why the market is outperforming national averages in price growth despite elevated mortgage rates: it's not just demand—it's demand from a specific, affluent, and persistent demographic cluster.

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