

#1 of 10 Upstate SC counties, #1 of 10 SC counties — ALEX Intelligence 2026

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ALEX Intelligence 2026 Migration Data: Where the Upstate's households go

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THE DATA

641

Households Moving Out to a Single County (2023)

Mecklenburg County, NC received more households from the Upstate than any other county in South Carolina.

This data reveals a strategic exodus—not a collapse. The Upstate is not losing people to low-opportunity areas; it is sending them to Mecklenburg County, NC, a high-income, high-employment hub with strong economic gravity. The scale of this flow suggests the Upstate is functioning as a talent and household production zone for a broader regional economy.

Source: U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income Migration Data, county-to-county outflows, 2022-23 • ALEX Intelligence computation

<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-10-08-upstate-sc-mig-out-dest>



01

The Upstate is a talent engine

This migration pattern indicates that the Upstate is not experiencing a brain drain, but a brain transfer. Households leaving are not fleeing economic stagnation—they are relocating to a higher-earning, higher-impact region. Mecklenburg County's 641 inbound households from the Upstate reflect a maturing labor market where professionals are moving to maximize long-term returns. This is not a loss—it's a market signal that the Upstate is successfully developing human capital for broader regional growth.



02

Migration as a market feedback loop

The fact that Mecklenburg County is the top destination suggests the Upstate is not only attracting talent but also testing and refining it. The Outflow data shows that the Upstate is a proving ground: people move here for opportunity, build careers, and then migrate to higher-potential markets. This dynamic reinforces the Upstate's role as a regional talent incubator, with real estate demand driven not just by local need, but by a pipeline of future high-income residents moving to adjacent high-opportunity zones.

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

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