

#1 in Wilmington metro, #1 in North Carolina — ALEX Intelligence 2026

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75.5% of new arrivals come from just three states — ALEX Intelligence 2026

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THE DATA

75.5%

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

Wilmington's inbound migration is the most geographically concentrated in North Carolina.

This level of concentration — with 75.5% of new households arriving from just North Carolina, New York, and South Carolina — suggests a self-reinforcing regional identity. The influx from neighboring states and New York is not random; it reflects deep economic, cultural, and lifestyle alignment. This pattern is not seen in other NC metros, where migration tends to be more dispersed across the U.S.

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/2026-10-11-wilmington-mig-state-top3>



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01

Migration is a self-fulfilling cycle

Wilmington's high concentration of new arrivals from three specific states isn't just a demographic trend — it's a feedback loop. As more people from North Carolina, New York, and South Carolina settle in, they attract others from the same regions through word-of-mouth, social networks, and shared cultural expectations. This reduces the cost of integration for new residents and strengthens the market's distinct identity, making it more resilient to broader economic volatility.

02

Policy risk amplifies in a homogenous market

A migration pattern this tightly clustered increases the vulnerability of the local market to policy shifts in just three states. For example, if New York enacts stricter housing regulations or tax changes, the inflow to Wilmington could slow abruptly. Similarly, a downturn in South Carolina's economy could reduce the pipeline of new residents. This makes long-term planning and infrastructure investment more sensitive to external, non-local factors.



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