

Lakeland — #1 of 10: Renters Over the 50% Rent Threshold

Lakeland Leads TN in Severe Rent Burden

38.5% of renters spend over half their income on rent

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THE DATA

38.5%

Renters Over the 50% Rent Threshold (2024)

Lakeland, Tennessee, has the highest share of renters spending more than half their income on rent in the state.

This figure, drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024, reveals a deepening affordability crisis in a city often overlooked in regional housing discourse. With 38.5% of renters in Lakeland facing severe rent burden, the area is not just a bedroom community but a pressure point in the broader Memphis metro's housing ecosystem. The data suggests that even in areas outside the core city, housing stress is concentrated and escalating.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 • ALEX Intelligence computation

<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-10-12-memphis-severe-rent-burden-place-mkt>



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01

Affordability is a regional stress test

This pattern suggests that the region's housing policy and development strategy must shift from treating the city as a standalone entity to viewing the entire Memphis metro as a single, interdependent system. Without coordinated investment in affordable housing across all jurisdictions, the burden will continue to concentrate in places like Lakeland, where residents are already operating at financial breaking point.

02

The illusion of stability in high-demand markets

This contrast reveals a deeper truth: strong economic indicators can mask acute social strain. The market is not overheating in the traditional sense—demand is outpacing supply—but it is overheating for the wrong people. The real test of a resilient market is not just price growth, but whether it supports all residents, not just those who can afford the premium. Lakeland's data shows that, in this moment, it does not.



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