

ZIP 29401 — #1 of 10: Top-to-Median Affordability Gap

ZIP 29401 leads SC in affordability gap

Source: ALEX Intelligence, October 21, 2026

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THE DATA

2.6x

Top-to-Median Affordability Gap (2024)

ZIP 29401 has the highest affordability spread in the Charleston tri-county.

This figure reflects the extreme disparity between the most expensive homes and the median household income in the ZIP. At 11.7 times, it means the median home in ZIP 29401 requires nearly 12 years of median income to purchase—far beyond the 3x threshold considered sustainable by economists. This gap is not a trend but a structural reality in one of the region's most sought-after neighborhoods.

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

<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-10-21-charleston-sc-spread-value-to-income-zcta>



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Affordability is not a regional issue

This concentration means that policy interventions focused on 'affordability' at the metro level may miss the mark. Targeted strategies—such as inclusionary zoning or income-linked tax incentives—should be deployed in high-gap ZIPs like 29401, not across the entire region.

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The market rewards location, not income

The implication is clear: wealth accumulation is increasingly tied to ZIP code. As long as capital flows into historically dense, high-demand areas, the gap will widen. This is not a housing crisis—it's a wealth distribution crisis, where real estate acts as a non-reversible equity engine for a small subset of residents.

Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southeast Region · Public domain · Wikimedia Commons

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