

ZIP 28480 — #1 of 10: Top-to-Median Gross Rent Gap

ZIP 28480 leads NC in rent gap

1.7x top-to-median rent spread — source: ALEX Intelligence, 2026

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THE DATA

1.7x

Top-to-Median Gross Rent Gap (2024)

ZIP 28480 in Wilmington's core has the widest rent disparity in North Carolina.

This 1.7x gap between top-tier and median rents reflects a deepening divide in housing affordability. At the top end, luxury rentals command premium pricing, while median rents remain constrained by income growth and supply limitations. The gap is not a national trend but a local structural imbalance unique to the Cape Fear region's evolving rental market.

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

<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-10-21-wilmington-spread-gross-rent-zcta>



01

Luxury demand is outpacing supply

The 1.7x rent gap indicates that high-end rental units are not just filling demand—they are setting new benchmarks. In ZIP 28480, where median gross rent hits \$2,336, the premium tier is capturing disproportionate value. This suggests a market where investment is concentrated in high-return segments, leaving middle-income renters with limited options despite rising demand.

02

Affordability is eroding from within

The rent spread is not just about luxury vs. middle; it's a signal that even median housing is becoming less accessible. This internal stratification threatens long-term stability, especially as coastal cities like Wilmington attract remote workers who can afford premium rents but not the full spectrum of housing.



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