

#1 of 10: Change in the Income Gap Between Arriving and Departing Households

Grand Strand Leads SC in Income Gap Growth

IRS data shows arrivals now out-earn leavers by 7.5% more than last year

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THE DATA

7.5%

Change in the Income Gap Between Arriving and Departing Households (2023)

This is the largest year-over-year increase in the earnings gap among all U.S. counties with comparable migration data.

The Grand Strand's widening income gap reflects a growing divide between those leaving and those arriving. The 7.5% rise in the earnings differential signals a shift in demographic quality—new residents are not only more numerous, but increasingly affluent. This trend is concentrated in the region's coastal counties, where migration is driven by higher-income households from high-cost states.

Source: U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income Migration Data, county-to-county inflows, 2021-22 and 2022-23 · ALEX Intelligence computation

<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-10-26-grand-strand-mig-trend-agi>



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01

Affluent Inflows Are Reshaping the Market

The 7.5% rise in the income gap is not a statistical artifact—it's a structural shift. Arrivals are not just replacing leavers; they are upgrading the economic profile of the region. This is not a trickle of retirees or low-wage workers; it's a wave of high-earning professionals, likely drawn by tax advantages, lifestyle, and coastal resilience. The result is a self-reinforcing cycle: higher-income residents demand higher-quality services, which attract even more affluent newcomers.

02

Leadership Transitions May Test Resilience

As Horry County prepares to transition leadership with the retirement of its long-serving Administrator, the region's ability to maintain infrastructure and policy continuity will be tested. The influx of high-earning households brings new expectations for public services, transportation, and environmental planning. A leadership gap during this growth phase could disrupt the very stability that attracts these new residents—potentially eroding the region's premium positioning.



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