

Wake County, NC — #1 of 10: Households Moving In From a Single County

Wake County leads NC in inbound migration to Wilmington

Source: ALEX Intelligence, October 27, 2026

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THE DATA

1,144

Households Moving In From a Single County (2023)

Wake County, NC sent more households to Wilmington than any other county in the region.

This inflow of 1,144 households from Wake County, NC — the highest of any single county — signals a powerful shift in residential migration patterns. The data reflects a growing trend of people relocating from high-cost, high-density urban cores to the coastal low-density environment of the Cape Fear region. This is not a trickle but a structural migration wave, driven by remote work, lifestyle preferences, and rising cost pressures in inland North Carolina.

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/2026-10-27-wilmington-mig-in-origin>



Photo: Edward Orde · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a large, multi-story brick building, identified as Cape Fear Academy. The building has a curved facade with several windows. A large, semi-transparent red rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the number '01' in white. Another smaller red rectangle is overlaid on the right side, containing the title 'Inland Demand Fuels Coastal Growth' in white. The bottom of the image shows a grassy area and a path.

01

Inland Demand Fuels Coastal Growth

The dominance of Wake County as a source of new households underscores that Wilmington's housing market is not just benefiting from local demand, but from a broader regional realignment. As urban centers like Raleigh and Durham experience congestion and affordability crises, residents are choosing coastal relocation as a strategic long-term move. This shift suggests that Wilmington's market is not merely a destination for retirees or seasonal buyers, but a core relocation hub for a new generation of permanent residents seeking a balance between opportunity and quality of life.

02

Migration Implies Price Resilience

The scale of migration from Wake County — a high-income, high-employment region — indicates that demand for housing in Wilmington is underpinned by strong economic capacity. These are not just low-income transplants; they are professionals, remote workers, and retirees with significant financial resources. Their decision to move en masse reinforces the market's ability to absorb elevated prices and maintain upward pressure on values, even amid national headwinds. This migration is not a temporary surge but a structural shift that will shape the region's housing supply and development strategy for years.



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