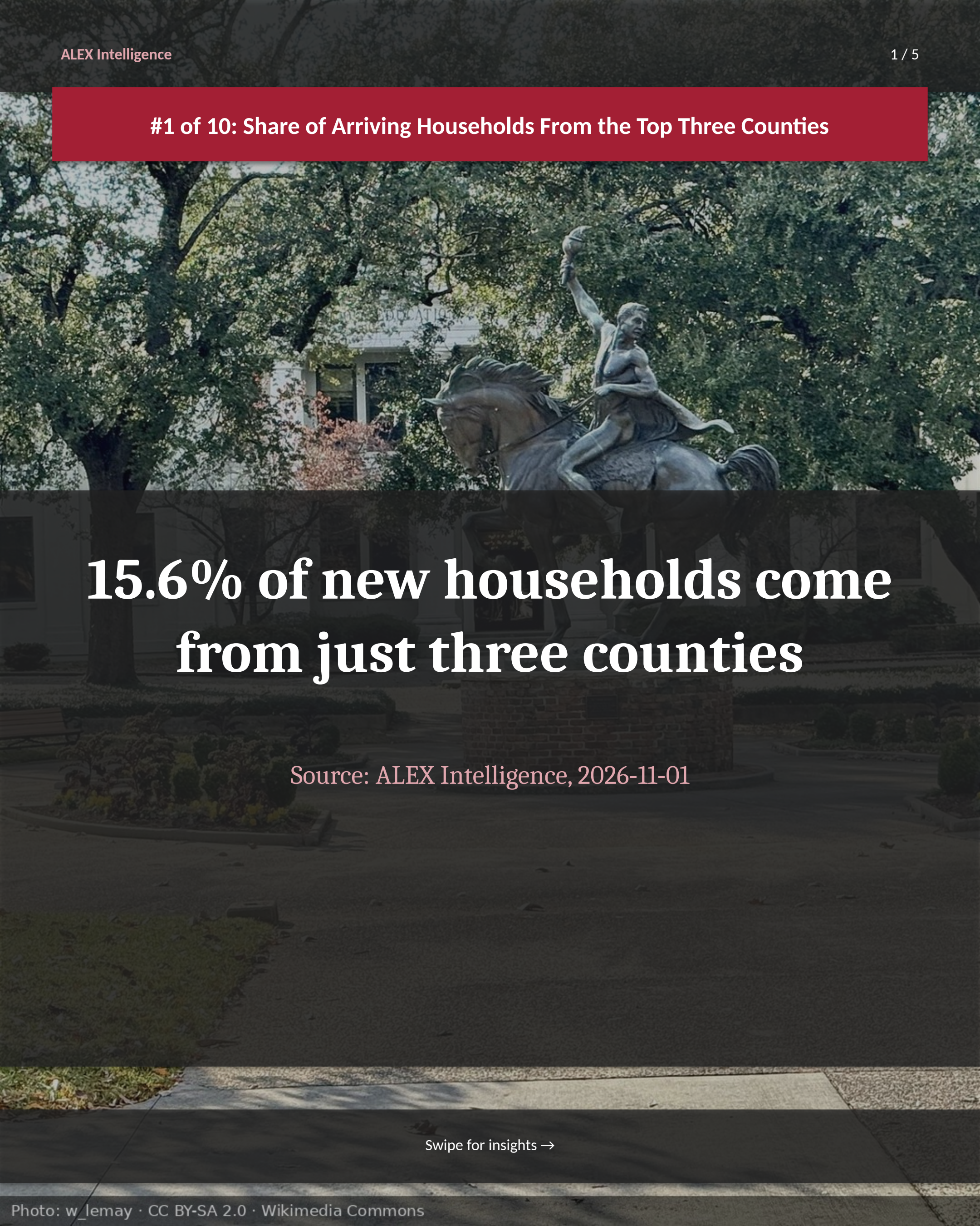


#1 of 10: Share of Arriving Households From the Top Three Counties

A bronze statue of a man on a horse, holding a torch, in front of a building with 'EDUCATION' on it. The statue is the centerpiece of a landscaped area with trees and a paved walkway.

15.6% of new households come from just three counties

Source: ALEX Intelligence, 2026-11-01

Swipe for insights →

THE DATA

15.6%

Share of Arriving Households From the Top Three Counties (2023)

This level of concentration indicates that migration to Columbia is not broad-based but instead driven by a few key sending regions. The dominance of Mecklenburg County, NC, and two South Carolina counties—Sumter and Orangeburg—suggests strong regional ties and limited diversification in migration patterns. This could signal a vulnerability in long-term population growth if those sending areas experience economic shifts.

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/2026-11-01-columbia-sc-mig-county-top3>



Photo: w_lemay · CC BY-SA 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons

01

Migration is not spreading—yet

The fact that 15.6% of all new households come from only three counties reveals a narrow migration funnel. This suggests that Columbia's growth is not being sustained by a broad, resilient network of sending regions but is instead dependent on a small number of high-output counties. If any of these three—Mecklenburg, Sumter, or Orangeburg—were to slow their outbound movement due to economic or policy shifts, Columbia could face a sudden drop in new demand, undermining housing market stability.

02

The Midlands is a magnet for regional outliers

The top three sending counties are not typical of the broader South Carolina or even the Midlands metro. Mecklenburg County, NC, is a major urban center with a strong economy and high housing costs, while Sumter and Orangeburg are rural or mid-sized South Carolina counties. Their consistent outflow to Columbia suggests that the Midlands offers a rare combination of affordability, access to services, and livability that attracts people from both high-cost and lower-income areas alike. This cross-spectrum appeal may explain why Columbia remains resilient despite national affordability pressures.



Photo: Thomas Kirchel · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Real Estate Strategy & Intelligence Leader. Democratized Blue Ocean Strategist & Operator.

Diane Hart Alexander, MBA, MHA

Chair & CEO, ALEX Companies

Designated Broker, Alexander Tiffany Southwest, LLC dba ALEX.realestate, et.al.

Texas License #574877-B · Broker License #565194-BB

diane@alex.realestate · +1 713.591.9902

ALEX

ALEX Intelligence
deep intelligence

ALEX Real Estate
genius real estate

ALEX Advisory
uncontested strategy

ALEX Cares
purposeful philanthropy

