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

Charleston leads SC in income gap widening

Source: ALEX Intelligence · Published November 14, 2026

Swipe for insights →

Photo: Chanilim714 · CC BY-SA 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons

THE DATA

5.4%

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

Charleston tri-county recorded the highest increase in the earnings gap between incoming and outgoing households among all U.S. counties with comparable migration data.

This 5.4 percentage point rise marks a structural shift in who is moving into the region. The data reflects that incoming households now earn significantly more than those leaving, not just in absolute terms but in relative advantage. This trend is not driven by a single sector but by a broader pattern of high-income migration from other major metros.



Photo: Eoghanacht · CC0 · Wikimedia Commons

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/2026-11-14-charleston-sc-mig-trend-agi



01

Wealth concentration is accelerating

The widening income gap is not a temporary fluctuation but a sustained trend in economic stratification. As higher-earning households move in, they bring disproportionate influence over housing demand, local services, and civic priorities. This shift risks marginalizing long-term residents who are priced out of the same neighborhoods they once called home.

Photo: ProfReader · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons



Photo: Warren LeMay from Covington, KY, United States · CC0 · Wikimedia Commons

02

Migration is redefining economic identity

Charleston's migration profile is no longer just about lifestyle or retirement—it's becoming a magnet for high-earning professionals from other elite metros. This isn't just about wealth; it's about the reconfiguration of the city's economic ecosystem. The influx of high-income households is reshaping labor markets, driving up property values, and altering the demographic fabric of neighborhoods.

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