Carolina Shores — #1 of 10: Annual Rent Against Local Pay

Carolina Shores leads NC in rent-to-income pressure

Source: ALEX Intelligence, November 16, 2026

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THE DATA

31.1%

Annual Rent Against Local Pay (2024)

Carolina Shores records the highest rent-to-income ratio in the Wilmington metro and across North Carolina.

The metric is drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, a nationally recognized benchmark for household affordability.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-16-wilmington-rent-to-income-place-mkt



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01

Affordability is the new frontier of market divergence

Carolina Shores' 31.1% rent-to-income ratio signals a structural shift: affordability is no longer uniform across the Cape Fear coast. While Wilmington and nearby towns like Leland and Carolina Beach hover near or below 25%, Carolina Shores stands out as a market where housing costs are straining household budgets more than any other city in North Carolina. This divergence suggests that even within a single metro area, income growth is not keeping pace with rental inflation in certain communities.

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02

Legacy communities face generational transition

The concentration of high rent-to-income pressure in Carolina Shores may be linked to its aging resident base. As these properties transition from family-held to investor or second-home ownership, rent pressures intensify, especially in areas with limited new construction and high demand from remote workers.

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