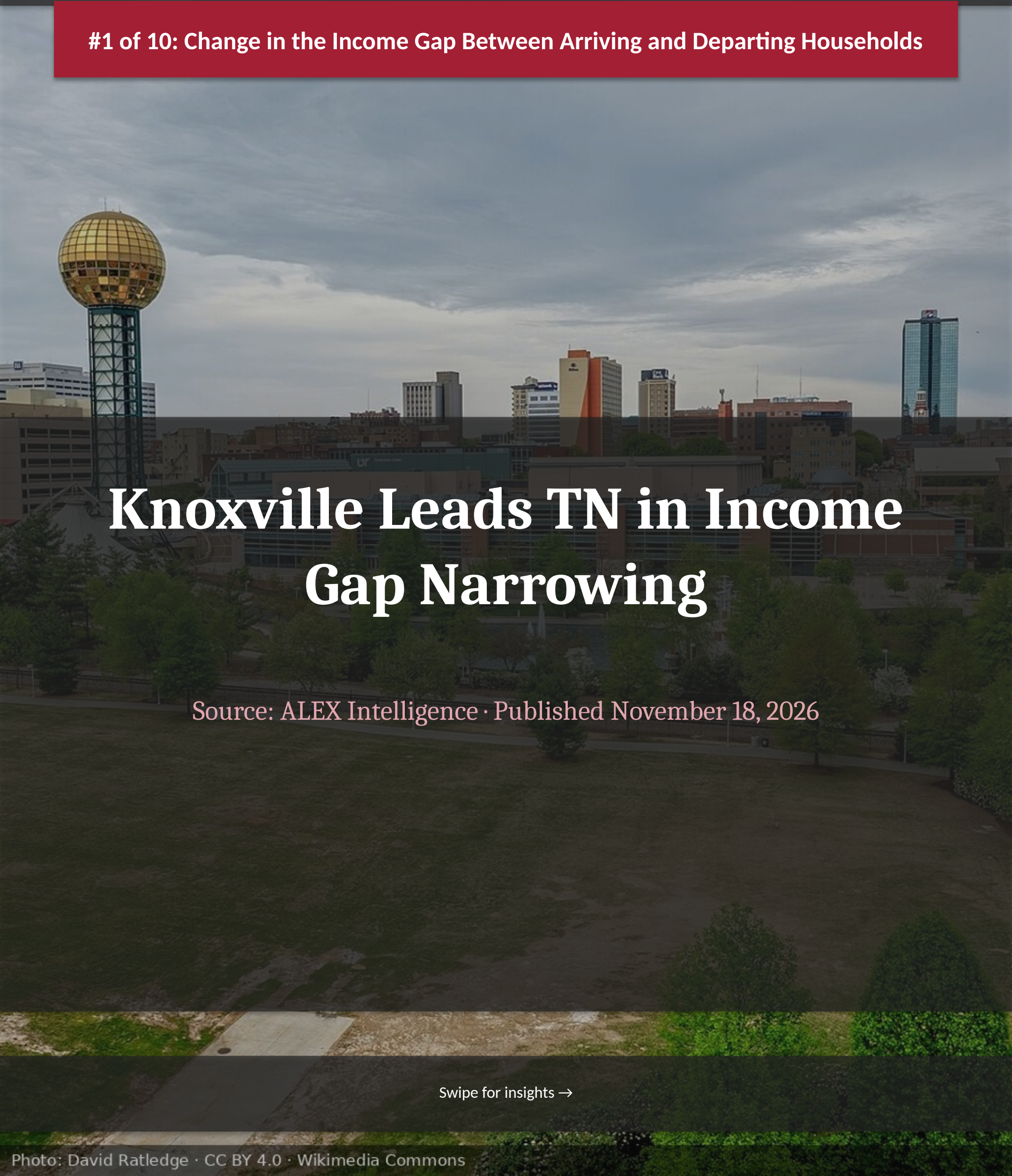
#1 of 10: Change in the Income Gap Between Arriving and Departing Households



Knoxville Leads TN in Income Gap Narrowing

Source: ALEX Intelligence · Published November 18, 2026

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THE DATA

18.5%

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

This marks the largest narrowing of the earnings gap between new arrivals and outgoing residents among all Tennessee counties with sufficient migration data.

The 18.5% reduction in the income gap between incoming and outgoing households reflects a significant shift in Knoxville's demographic and economic profile. This trend suggests that high-earning departures are being increasingly balanced by high-earning arrivals, reducing the net outflow of income from the region. Such convergence is rare in post-pandemic migration patterns and indicates growing economic parity in the local labor market.



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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/2026-11-18-knoxville-mig-trend-agi

01

Migration is becoming more balanced

The narrowing income gap signals that Knoxville is no longer losing high-earning households at a disproportionate rate. Instead, the city is attracting professionals and remote workers whose incomes are closing the gap with those leaving. This shift reduces economic polarization and supports more stable neighborhood dynamics, especially in areas undergoing revitalization. The trend suggests that Knoxville's appeal is evolving beyond affordability to include broader career and lifestyle alignment.

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02

Talent retention is improving

As the income gap narrows, the city is likely retaining more of its existing workforce while also attracting higher-earning newcomers. This dual dynamic reduces the risk of brain drain and increases the likelihood of long-term residential commitment. With fewer high-income residents exiting without replacement, demand for quality housing and services remains steady, supporting sustainable development rather than speculative booms.

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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

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