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Residential Real Estate

Rent prices outpace wage growth by 38% in Tampa Bay, Zillow finds

Tampa Bay saw the highest rent-to-wage discrepancy in the nation since the pandemic.

NOLA LALEYE

By Devonta Davis – Digital Producer, Tampa Bay Business Journal
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Over the last few years, Tampa Bay residents have witnessed a surge in rent prices, and a new study shows that wages have not kept pace.

Since 2019, U.S. rents have grown 1.5 times faster than wages, according to a new analysis of rental data from Zillow and StreetEasy and wage data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Demand for rentals from the large millennial generation — many of whose members have remained renters longer than previous cohorts — and Gen Z adults have moved forward into the country's housing shortage, causing rents to rise quickly.

According to an analysis of rental data from 2019-2023, rent increased by 50% in Tampa Bay, compared to wages rising by 15.3%. This gives Tampa Bay the highest discrepancy in the nation and is 20% higher than the national average.

The trend cooled last year for much of the U.S., as national rent growth (3.4%) was outpaced by wage growth (4.3%). This was due to multifamily construction having helped absorb demand for apartments, keeping rent growth in check in much of the country.

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The story was not the same in Tampa Bay, where rent rose 2.7% compared to wages, which only grew by 0.4%.

With the Sunshine State being a migration hot spot since the pandemic, new residents were attracted by the possibility of year-round outdoor living and relatively affordable housing compared to many coastal markets.

Florida markets occupy three of the five spots where rent growth has most dramatically outpaced wage growth over the past five years.

Miami was second nationally on the list, with a 52.6% increase in rents compared to a 20.4% increase in wages, a 32.2 percent difference. Jacksonville also had a large rent-to-wage gap, with rents increasing 36.7% while wages grew just 9.7%. Orlando had the smallest difference in Florida, with rents growing 36.3% compared to wage growth of 17.4%.

Wages have consistently outpaced rents in recent years in only six major metros. The biggest gaps have been in San Francisco, San Jose and Houston.