

Bay Area Wages vs. Rent — Summary

Since 2015 (year-avg base) → Q3 2024

Headline

- Wages: 68.1%
- Rent CPI: 37.8%
- Real wages: 24.6%
- Wage-to-rent index: 22.0%

How to read this

Both the wage line and the rent line start at 100 in 2015. If wages rise faster than rent, affordability improves; if rent rises faster, it gets tougher. The wage-to-rent index summarizes affordability in one number (higher is better).

Data & Methods (short)

- Wages: BLS QCEW (Bay Area metro).
- Prices: CPI-U All Items & Rent of Primary Residence (FRED).
- Monthly CPI averaged to quarters; wages are quarterly. Both series are indexed to 2015=100.
- We also compute real wages (deflated by local CPI) and a wage-to-rent ratio.

Notes / Limits

- CPI-Rent is a renters’ price index (not listing medians).
- QCEW wages can spike with bonuses/stock; results are descriptive (not causal).