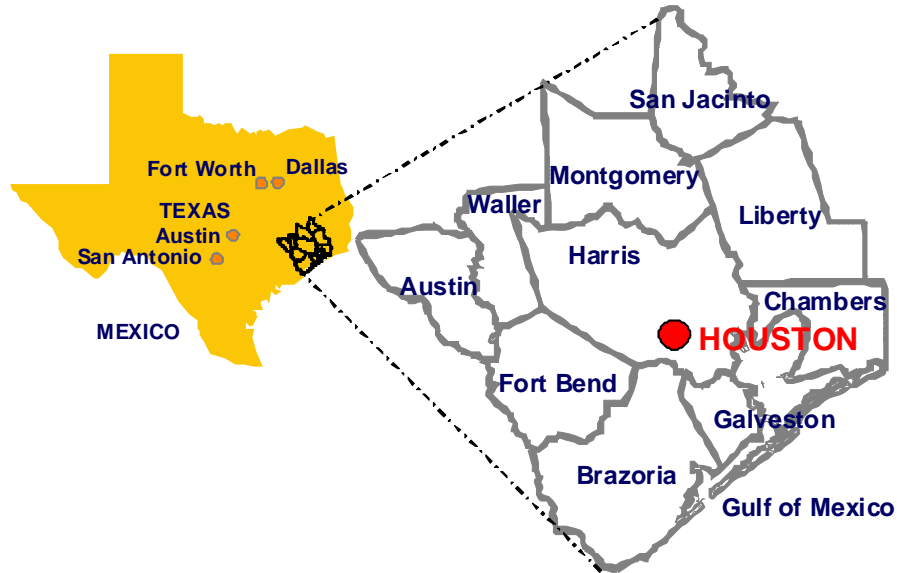


Houston Area Profile

The Houston Metropolitan Statistical Area is the sixth most populous metropolitan area in the United States.



- Founded in 1836, the City of Houston had a population of 2.14 million in mid-2006. Houston is the fourth most populous city in the United States, trailing only New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, and is the largest in the southern United States and Texas.
- The Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown Metropolitan Statistical Area (Houston MSA), consists of 10 counties: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto and Waller. The metro area's mid-2007 population of 5,628,101 ranks sixth among U.S. metropolitan statistical areas.
- The Houston MSA covers 10,062 square miles, an area slightly smaller than Maryland but larger than Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Hampshire or Vermont.
- The Houston MSA's Gross Area Product (GAP) in 2007 was \$416.6 billion, according to The Perryman Group — slightly larger than Belgium's, Malaysia's, Venezuela's or Sweden's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), according to the CIA's *World Factbook*. Only 28 nations other than the United States have a GDP exceeding Houston's GAP.
- The Houston MSA recorded 2.6 million payroll jobs in March 2008 — more than the job counts of 29 states, including Colorado, Alabama or South Carolina.