Houston Metropolitan Statistical Area Profile

Houston is the fifth most populous metro in the nation and spans an area larger than five states.

- Founded in 1836, the City of Houston had a population of 2.3 million as of July 1, 2017, making it the fourth most populous U.S. city. Only New York, Los Angeles and Chicago have more residents. Houston has been Texas’ most populous city since 1930.

- The Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land Metropolitan Statistical Area (Houston MSA) consists of nine counties: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery and Waller. The metro area’s ’17 population of 6.9 million ranks fifth among U.S. metropolitan statistical areas.

- The Houston MSA covers 9,444 square miles, an area larger than five states, including New Hampshire, New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware and Rhode Island.

- The Houston MSA’s nominal gross area product in ’17 was $490.1 billion, according to U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. If Houston were an independent nation, its economy would rank 26th in the world, placing it behind Belgium ($494.7 billion) and ahead of Thailand ($455.4 billion).

- The Houston MSA recorded more than 3.2 million nonfarm payroll jobs in October ’18, more than the job counts of 38 U.S. states, including Oregon, Oklahoma and Colorado.

- The Houston MSA is home to 21 Fortune 500 headquarters, ranking fourth among metro areas. Many other Fortune 500 companies maintain U.S. administrative headquarters in Houston.