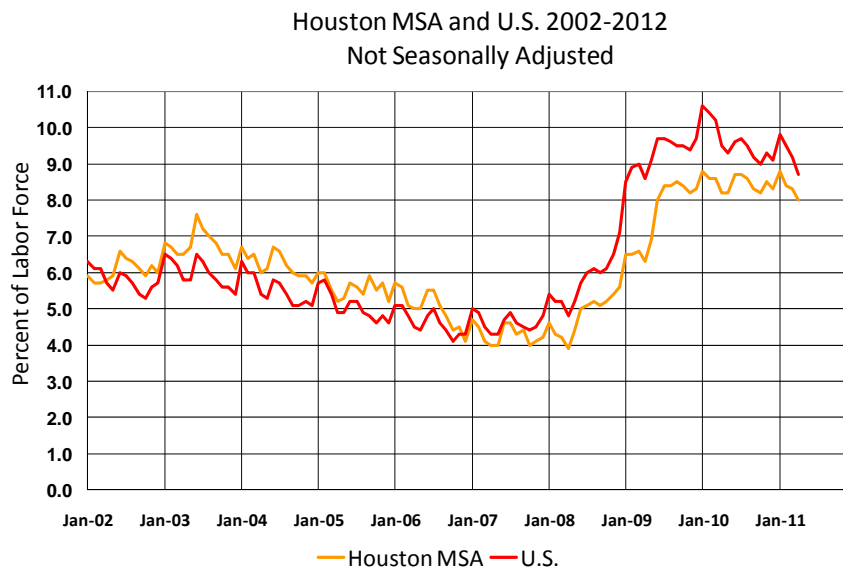


# Unemployment Rate

Houston's unemployment rate remains well below that of the nation.

## Unemployment Rate



Source: Texas Workforce Commission, May 2011

### DATA

- Houston's unemployment rate dropped below the national average in late '89 and generally remained marginally below it well into '92. Since then, the two rates have crisscrossed, but only rarely did they differ significantly from each other until the end of '08. In January '09, the gap widened to two full percentage points even as Houston began to feel the effects of the severe recession in which the nation already was mired. As of April '11, the gap narrowed to 0.7 percentage points.
- December '00 saw Houston's unemployment rate plunge to 3.5 percent — the lowest unemployment rate recorded in Houston since early '81. From that point, both the Houston and the national rates moved upward through mid-'03, then generally trended downward through '07 before moving sharply upward in the final three quarters of '08 and through '09. (Because seasonally adjusted rates are not published for metro areas, no rates are seasonally adjusted here.)
- Labor availability remains better here than in many other metropolitan areas. Because Houston's labor force is large, its April '11 unemployment rate of 8.0 percent translates into 232,300 unemployed workers seeking jobs.