THE ECONOMY AT A GLANCE
HOUSTON

GREATER HOUSTON PARTNERSHIP.
Making Houston Greater.

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WHO ARE WE?

Each fall, the U.S. Census Bureau releases the American Community Survey (ACS), its annual snapshot of the nation's economic, demographic, housing, and social characteristics. By examining ACS data over time, one can see shifts in the population. In the first of a three-part series, this newsletter will examine ACS data for '13 and '23 and discuss the changes in Houston over that time. The November issue will focus on how Houston compares to the nation's major metros. And the December issue will examine the differences in the 10 counties that comprise the Houston metro area.

Race and Ethnicity

Houston's Asian, Black, and Hispanic communities have grown substantially over the past 10 years while the white population has remained relatively unchanged. The region has also seen a surge in residents self-identifying as being of more than one race, a trend that is more common than it was a decade ago.

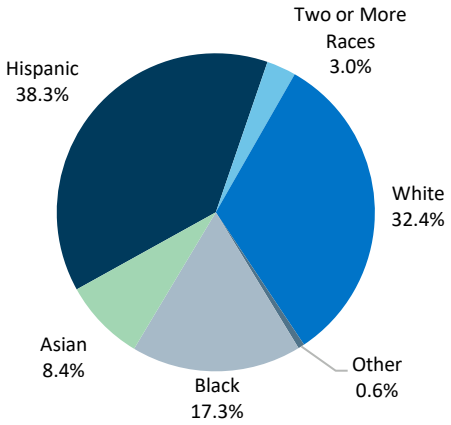
CHANGES IN METRO HOUSTON RACE/ETHNICITY

	Population		Change '13 – '23	
Race/Ethnicity	'23	'13	#	%
Hispanic	2,878,332	2,279,622	598,710	26.3
White	2,431,079	2,415,820	15,259	0.6
Black	1,299,242	1,063,017	236,225	22.2
Asian	627,663	438,349	189,314	43.2
Two or More Races	225,123	90,967	134,156	147.5
Some Other Race	36,945	12,351	24,594	199.1
AIAN	7,902	10,368	-2,466	-23.8
NHPI	3,966	2,664	1,302	48.9
Total	7,510,252	6,313,158	1,197,094	19.0

AIAN = American Indian Alaskan Native
NHPI = Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Hispanics comprise the largest racial/ethnic community in the region. However, no single group constitutes a majority of Houston's population. It's been that way since the late '90s.

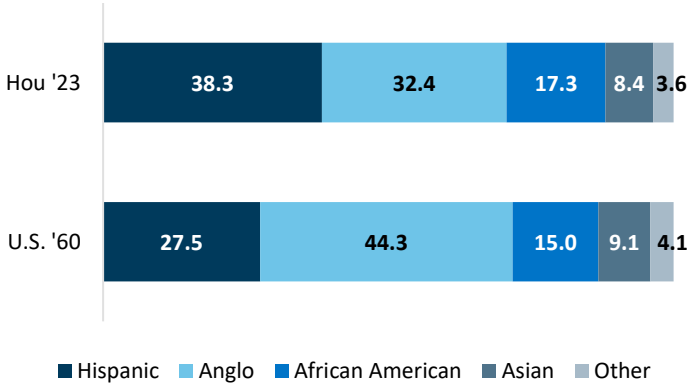
METRO POPULATION, RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION



Note: Other includes American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and other races.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

The demographic shifts that began in Houston 30 years ago are filtering through the rest of the nation. Houston's racial/ethnic composition today reflects the direction in which the U.S. is headed.

RACE/ETHNICITY, % OF POPULATION
Houston Today v. U.S. in '60



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Foreign-Born Population

Individuals born outside the U.S. represent a record share of the region's population. Ten years ago, the foreign-born comprised 22.6 percent of all area residents. Today, they comprise 24.8 percent. For the nation, foreign-born people represented 14.3 percent of the population in '23, down from 15.0 percent in '13.

Houston's foreign-born population grew by more than 435,000 over the decade. Our foreign-born population now exceeds the total populations of 12 states (Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming) and the District of Columbia.

PLACE OF BIRTH, METRO HOUSTON RESIDENTS

Origin	'23		'13	
	Count	%	Count	%
Native Born	5,647,626	75.2	4,889,437	77.4
Foreign Born	1,862,626	24.8	1,423,721	22.6
Total	*7,510,252*	100.0	6,313,158	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Well over half (62.1 percent) of Houston's foreign-born residents came from Latin America, 25.8 percent came from Asia, 6.6 percent from Africa, 4.2 percent from Europe, 1.1 percent from North America, and 0.2 percent from Oceania.

TOP 20 COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN
HOUSTON FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION

Country	Residents	Country	Residents
Mexico	594,917	Philippines	50,042
El Salvador	129,500	Colombia	41,322
Honduras	111,736	Pakistan	34,816
India	104,357	Canada	19,555
Vietnam	101,468	U.K.	17,143
China	75,125	Korea	15,968
Venezuela	65,195	Nicaragua	15,290
Nigeria	56,618	Peru	13,906
Cuba	54,900	Brazil	13,549
Guatemala	50,106	Iran	11,905

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Nearly two-thirds (59.5 percent) of Houston's foreign-born entered the U.S. prior to '10 while the remainder (40.5 percent) entered after '10.

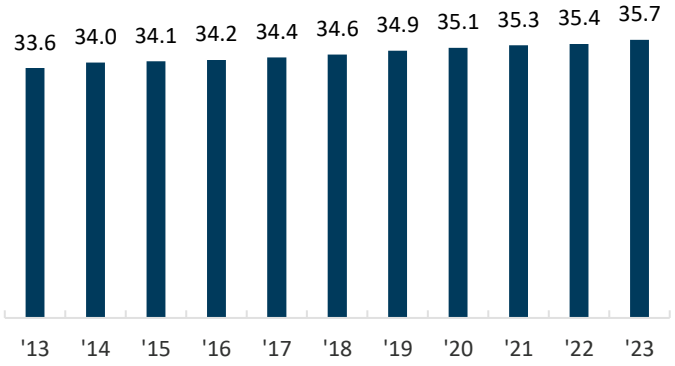
LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME

Among residents five years or older, 40.5 percent speak a language other than English at home, with 29.5 percent speaking Spanish, 5.1 percent an Asian/Pacific Islander language, 3.7 percent an Indo-European language, and 1.7 percent another language.

AGE

Houston has grown older. In '13, the region's median age was 33.6 years. In '23, the median was 35.7. By comparison, the median for the U.S. was 39.0 last year.

METRO HOUSTON MEDIAN AGE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Advances in medicine, better nutrition, and healthier lifestyles have increased human longevity nudging up the region's median age. In '83, someone who turned 65 might live another 16.7 years. In '23, someone who turned 65 might live another 18.9. As a result, the 65-plus population is Houston's fastest-growing age group, up 58.9 percent over the decade and accounting for one in eight residents versus one in 11 a decade ago.

The constant influx of families into Houston along with high local birth rates contribute to an expanding youth population. Children, adolescents, and teenagers from birth to 19 years old comprise over 2.1 million residents, the largest age cohort in the region. To put that in perspective, metro Houston has more young residents than Nashville, TN or San Jose, CA have total residents.

CHANGES IN METRO HOUSTON AGE PROFILE

Age Group	Residents		Change, '13 - '23	
	'23	'13	#	%
0-19	2,120,953	1,884,350	236,603	12.6
20-35	1,555,194	1,393,253	161,941	11.6
35-54	2,063,350	1,743,429	319,921	18.4
55-64	815,571	690,962	124,609	18.0
65+	955,184	601,164	354,020	58.9
Total	7,510,252	6,313,158	1,197,094	19.0

Note: columns may not sum accurately due to rounding.
Source: Partnership calculations based on American Community Survey data

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Over 4.1 million residents, 85.5 percent of the adult population, have graduated high school. That's up from 82.0 percent (3.3 million) in '13. Nearly 1.8 million residents have college degrees, up from 1.2 million ten years ago.

Improvements in instruction and the passing away of older, less-educated generations have contributed to the rise in the education level of Houston's adult population. In '13, only 77.0 percent of the population over 65 had graduated high school and only 27.0 percent held a college degree. By '23, those numbers jumped to 83.1 and 33.0 percent, respectively.

METRO HOUSTON EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

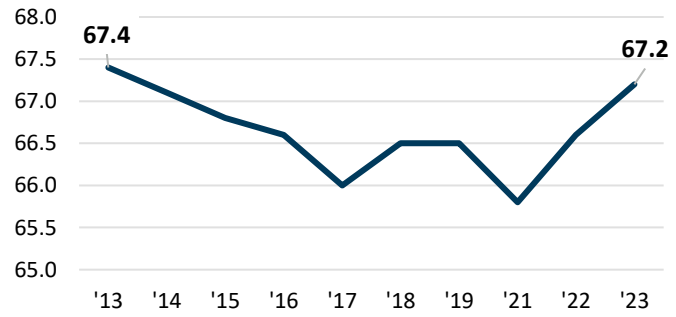
	'23	'13
Population 25 years and older	4,901,672	3,984,848
Highest Level of Education Attained	**% in '23**	**% in '13**
Less than 9th grade	7.9	9.5
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	6.6	8.4
High school graduate	22.5	23.8
Some college, no degree	18.8	21.2
Associate degree	8.2	6.1
Bachelor's degree	21.9	20.1
Graduate or professional degree	14.1	10.8
High school graduate or higher	85.5	82.0
Bachelor's degree or higher	36.0	30.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

The labor force participation rate (LFPR) is the percentage of the population 16 and older that is employed or unemployed but actively seeking work. Houston's LFPR began trending down in the '00s, hitting its nadir during the pandemic. It has risen since. At 67.2 percent, Houston's rate was above that of the U.S., which averaged 63.6 percent in '23, but still below the level of 10 years ago.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE, METRO HOUSTON*



* Percent population over 16 employed or actively seeking work.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Of note, one in three women (31.4 percent) with children under the age of six are in the workforce.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Education, health care, and retail dominate local employment, accounting for two out of every five jobs in the region. Energy, construction, and manufacturing account for roughly one in four.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, METRO HOUSTON

	'23		'13	
Industry	**Jobs**	**% Tot**	**Jobs**	**% Tot**
Mining[1]	83,151	3.8	114,487	2.3
Construction	335,944	8.9	265,175	9.1
Manufacturing	345,313	10.7	320,450	9.3
Wholesale trade	97,479	3.8	112,923	2.6
Retail trade	376,342	10.6	317,181	10.2
TWU[2]	272,055	5.6	167,836	7.4
Information	39,097	1.4	42,413	1.1
FIRE[3]	224,282	5.8	173,196	6.1
Business Services[4]	526,255	12.7	381,405	14.2
Education, Health Care	797,507	20.1	601,365	21.6
Leisure, Hospitality[5]	307,345	8.5	253,635	8.3
Other Services[6]	185,412	5.4	161,953	5.0
Public Administration	105,234	3.8	83,301	2.3

(1) Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining; (2) Transportation and warehousing, and utilities; (3) Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing; (4) Professional, scientific, and management, administrative services; (5) Arts, entertainment, recreation, hotels, restaurants, bars; (6) Personal care, repair, civic organizations.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Travel to Work

Houstonians are spending slightly more time in traffic these days. The average travel time to work was 30.5 minutes in '23, up from 29.1 minutes in '13.

- Most workers (72.0 percent) drove to work alone in '23, down from 79.7 percent in '13.
- Only 10.8 percent of all commuters carpool, almost the same share (10.9 percent) as 10 years ago.
- A fraction (1.4 percent) of all commuters used public transit in '23, down from 2.4 percent in '13.
- 1.1 percent walked to work, down from 1.5 percent 10 years ago.
- In '21, one in six Houstonians (15.5 percent) worked from home. In '23, one in eight (12.6 percent) did.

Households

Houston added 573,000 households over the decade. In '23, just under one-third (31.8 percent) of the 2.7 million households included someone under 18 and one-fourth (25.7 percent) someone over 65.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, METRO HOUSTON – ’23

Category	Count	%
Total Households	2,731,843	100.0
Married-couple household	1,359,944	49.8
With children of the householder under 18	595,614	21.8
Cohabiting couple household	168,079	6.2
With children of the householder under 18	65,281	2.4
Male householder, no spouse/partner present	480,975	17.6
With children of the householder under 18	37,682	1.4
Householder living alone	315,225	11.5
65 years and over	67,290	2.5
Female householder, no spouse/partner present	722,845	26.5
With children of the householder under 18	169,020	6.2
Householder living alone	360,717	13.2
65 years and over	135,255	5.0
Households with one or more people under 18	976,676	35.8
Households with one or more people 65 and over	700,810	25.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Marital Status

Half the region’s residents over 15, nearly 3.0 million residents, are married. One-third have never married. The remaining residents are either widowed, separated, or divorced. Those rates are little changed since ’13.

MARITAL STATUS, POPULATION 15 AND OLDER, ’23

	Count	%
Currently married	2,995,853	50.5
Never married	2,037,735	34.4
Divorced	516,487	8.7
Widowed	258,763	4.4
Separated	120,951	2.0
Total	5,929,789	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Fertility

The Census Bureau measures “fertility” as the number of births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 50. At the ’09 fertility peak, there were 71 births per 1,000 women. In ’23, there were 57 per 1,000. One-third (33.1 percent) of all births last year were to unmarried women.

FERTILITY RATES, METRO HOUSTON, ’23

Mother’s Age	Births Per 1,000 Women
15 to 50 years old	**57**
15 to 19 years old	14
20 to 34 years old	90
35 to 50 years old	39

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Household Income

Median household income was $79,463 in ’23, up 38.5 percent in nominal terms from $57,366 in ’13. Adjusted for inflation, median household income is up 5.4 percent over the decade.

- Roughly one-third (31.1 percent) of Houston households had incomes under $50,000 in ’23.
- A similar share (29.2 percent) had incomes between $50,000 and $100,000.
- Well over one-third (39.8 percent) reported incomes of $100,000 or more.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME, METRO HOUSTON, ’23

Income Range	Households	% Total
Less than $10,000	139,300	5.1
$10,000 to $14,999	84,877	3.1
$15,000 to $24,999	167,328	6.1
$25,000 to $34,999	177,537	6.5
$35,000 to $49,999	277,231	10.1
$50,000 to $74,999	449,924	16.5
$75,000 to $99,999	348,362	12.8
$100,000 to $149,999	474,108	17.4
$150,000 to $199,999	253,725	9.3
$200,000 or more	359,451	13.2
Total households	*2,731,843*	*100.0*

Poverty

In ’13, one in eight Houston families (13.2 percent) had household incomes that fell below the poverty line. That improved marginally over the decade. Last year, 11.0 percent of all families lived in poverty.

- In families with children under 18, the poverty rate slipped from 19.3 percent to 15.6 percent.
- In single-mother households with children under 18, the rate slipped from 32.5 percent in ’13 to 25.7 percent in ’23.
- For residents 65 and older, the rate rose from 10.0 percent to 11.9 percent.

Disability Status

One in 11 Houstonians (11.9 percent) indicated they have some form of impairment (e.g., hearing, vision, ambulatory, cognitive, self-care or independent living). That’s up from one in 10 (9.7 percent) a decade ago. Disabilities are more common across all age groups, not just Houston’s older population.

DISABILITY STATUS, METRO HOUSTON POPULATION

	'23		'13	
	Count	% Pop	Count	% Pop
Population*	7,447,264	100.0	6,262,526	100.0
Without a disability	6,605,492	88.7	5,660,612	90.4
With a disability	841,772	11.3	601,914	9.6
Under 18 years	85,910	1.2	60,841	1.0
18 to 64 years	437,342	5.9	330,044	5.3
65 and older	318,520	4.3	215,266	3.4

* Non-institutionalized population
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Health Insurance Coverage

More Houstonians carry health insurance but the improvement has been marginal. Ten years ago, 76.6 percent of the metro population had coverage. In '23, 81.9 did. Nationwide, 92.0 percent of the population carried health insurance in '23.

Health Insurance Coverage in Metro Houston

	% Population	
	'23	'13
With health insurance	81.9	77.2
With private health insurance	61.7	57.5
With public coverage	27.7	26.0
No health insurance	18.1	22.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

Employment was no guarantee of having health insurance. One in five employed Houstonians (20.7 percent) lacked coverage in '23.

Mobility

One million Houstonians—14.0 percent of residents one and older—moved in the prior year. The majority changed apartments or houses within the Houston metro area, but a substantial number moved here from outside the region.

PLACE OF RESIDENCE, ONE YEAR AGO*

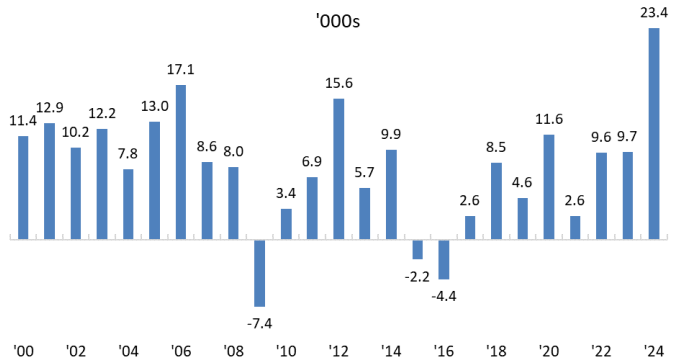
Location	Residents	%
Same house	6,406,362	86.4
Different house	1,008,972	13.6
Different house in the U.S.	920,079	12.4
Same county	572,969	7.7
Different county	347,110	4.7
Same state	205,601	2.8
Different state	141,509	1.9
Abroad	88,893	1.2
Total	7,415,334	100.0

* For population 1 year old and older.
Note: Question was asked in '23 about place of residence in '22.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

EMPLOYMENT UPDATE

Metro Houston created 23,400 jobs in August, a record for the month, according to data released today by the Texas Workforce Commission. August typically sees a net gain of 5,000 to 12,000 jobs. This year's surge represents a recovery of jobs lost early in July due to Hurricane Beryl alongside continued expansion of the local economy.

HOUSTON JOB GAINS/LOSSES, MONTH OF AUGUST



Source: Texas Workforce Commission

A few sectors of note:

- Hiring was robust in construction, adding 4,500 jobs in August. This aligns with reports from Dodge Data & Analytics which show construction contract awards through July up $6.6 billion over last year.
- Administrative and support services, which includes contract workers, added 2,800 jobs as business activities returned to normal post-Hurricane Beryl.
- Restaurants and bars added 2,600 jobs. Beryl knocked out power to many of Houston's eateries, so they were closed in the first two weeks of July. The job gains in this sector represent the industry returning to normal operations.
- Wholesale and retail added 1,700 and 1,600 jobs, respectively, as their operations returned to normal.
- Private education added 1,600 jobs as parochial and private schools started back earlier than the area's public schools. Significant gains in public education employment should appear in the September job data.

A handful of sectors reported job losses: arts, entertainment, recreation (-800), energy (-500), information (-500), and legal services (-500).

The metro area lost 360,000 jobs early in the pandemic (March-April '20). Since the economy reopened in May of that year, the region has created over 612,000 jobs, recouping 170.4 percent of its losses. Houston now has 252,000 more jobs than it did prior to the pandemic.

Key Economic Indicators

Clicking on the hyperlinks below will provide additional details on that indicator.

Aviation — The Houston Airport System (HAS) handled 62.4 million passengers in the 12 months ending August '24, up 6.0 percent from 58.9 million handled over the comparable period in '23. Traffic has surpassed pre-pandemic levels.

Construction — Dodge Data & Analytics reports that nearly $25.3 billion in construction contracts were awarded in the Houston area through the first seven months of this year. That's up 35.9 percent from the $18.6 billion awarded over the comparable period in '23. Residential and non-residential awards rose compared to last year while non-building contracts (i.e., streets, highways, utilities, etc.) declined.

Foreign Trade — Seaborne trade through the Houston-area ports—Freeport, Galveston, Houston, and Texas City—was valued at $155.0 billion through July of '24, a 3.2 percent increase from $150.2 billion over the comparable period in '23. Exports are up $8.8 billion (10.8 percent). Imports are down $4.0 billion (5.9 percent).

Home Sales — Brokers closed on 7,340 single-family homes in August, an 8.3 percent drop over last year. This was also the third-worst August of the past 10 years. The worst was in '17 when Houston was dealing with Hurricane Harvey. The second was in '15 when the Fracking Bust stifled home sales.

Inflation — Inflation rose 0.1 percent in August and 2.5 percent nationwide in the 12 months ending August '24. Core inflation, which excludes the volatile food and energy categories, rose 0.3 percent from last month and 3.2 percent over the year.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) publishes Houston-specific inflation data for the months of February, April, June, August, October, and December. From August '23 to August '24, Houston's inflation rate was 1.7 percent. The CPI numbers reported here are not seasonally adjusted.

Multifamily — Apartment occupancy continues to drift lower, pulling rents along with it. Landlords are offering incentives and discounts to entice would-be renters. Construction continues unabated, suggesting the market will remain soft for some time. Austin, Dallas/Fort Worth, and San Antonio also continue to struggle.

Purchasing Managers Index — Houston's economy expanded at a faster pace in August than July, according to the most recent Houston Purchasing Managers Index (PMI). Manufacturing expanded significantly faster than non-manufacturing.

Sales Tax — Sales and use tax collections in the 121 Houston-area cities that collect the tax totaled $955.7 million during the first seven months of '24, up 1.2 percent from the $944.0 billion collected over the comparable period in '23. Adjusted for inflation, however, collections are down 1.6 percent.

Vehicle Sales — Houston-area dealers sold 347,252 cars, trucks, and SUVs in the 12 months ending August '24, a minimal increase over the 347,242 sold over the comparable period in '23. Car sales dropped 2.5 percent and truck and SUV sales rose 0.7 percent.

Unemployment — Metro Houston's unemployment rate slipped from 4.9 in July to 4.7 percent in August but up from 4.5 percent in August of last year. The year-over-year bump reflects a record increase in the number of Houstonians entering the labor force this summer, not an increase in layoffs.

Initial claims for unemployment benefits ticked up immediately after Hurricane Beryl hit Houston but have since returned to normal levels. Claims averaged 4,009 per week in August, slightly below the average of 4,100 in the same month last year.

Patrick Jankowski, Margaret Barrientos, Clara Richardson, and Leta Wauson contributed to this issue of Houston: The Economy at a Glance.

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HOUSTON MSA NONFARM PAYROLL EMPLOYMENT (000)

				Change from		% Change from	
	August 24	July 24	August 23	July 24	August 23	July 24	August 23
Total Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	**3,444.7**	**3,421.3**	**3,364.2**	**23.4**	**80.5**	**0.7**	**2.4**
Total Private	***3,008.2***	***2,986.1***	***2,940.9***	***22.1***	***67.3***	***0.7***	***2.3***
Goods Producing	***557.7***	***552.0***	***536.0***	***5.7***	***21.7***	***1.0***	***4.0***
Service Providing	***2,887.0***	***2,869.3***	***2,828.2***	***17.7***	***58.8***	***0.6***	***2.1***
Private Service Providing	***2,450.5***	***2,434.1***	***2,404.9***	***16.4***	***45.6***	***0.7***	***1.9***
Mining and Logging	71.9	72.4	71.5	-0.5	0.4	-0.7	0.6
Oil & Gas Extraction	32.4	32.6	31.9	-0.2	0.5	-0.6	1.6
Support Activities for Mining	38.1	38.3	38.2	-0.2	-0.1	-0.5	-0.3
Construction	246.2	241.7	230.3	4.5	15.9	1.9	6.9
Manufacturing	239.6	237.9	234.2	1.7	5.4	0.7	2.3
Durable Goods Manufacturing	150.0	149.2	171.2	0.8	-21.2	0.5	-12.4
Nondurable Goods Manufacturing	89.6	88.7	88.7	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0
Wholesale Trade	183.4	181.7	178.6	1.7	4.8	0.9	2.7
Retail Trade	317.6	316.0	319.2	1.6	-1.6	0.5	-0.5
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	191.6	188.8	189.4	2.8	2.2	1.5	1.2
Utilities	23.3	23.2	22.2	0.1	1.1	0.4	5.0
Air Transportation	22.6	22.6	22.4	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.9
Truck Transportation	30.2	29.9	29.9	0.3	0.3	1.0	1.0
Pipeline Transportation	14.3	14.2	13.7	0.1	0.6	0.7	4.4
Information	32.0	32.5	33.1	-0.5	-1.1	-1.5	-3.3
Telecommunications	11.3	11.4	11.5	-0.1	-0.2	-0.9	-1.7
Finance & Insurance	123.4	122.2	120.4	1.2	3.0	1.0	2.5
Real Estate & Rental and Leasing	70.0	69.0	67.3	1.0	2.7	1.4	4.0
Professional & Business Services	562.5	560.6	557.9	1.9	4.6	0.3	0.8
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	280.8	282.1	276.1	-1.3	4.7	-0.5	1.7
Legal Services	*32.3*	*32.8*	*31.9*	*-0.5*	*0.4*	*-1.5*	*1.3*
Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping	*28.6*	*28.9*	*29.1*	*-0.3*	*-0.5*	*-1.0*	*-1.7*
Architectural, Engineering & Related Services	*77.8*	*78.1*	*74.3*	*-0.3*	*3.5*	*-0.4*	*4.7*
Computer Systems Design & Related Services	*40.9*	*40.9*	*42.5*	*0.0*	*-1.6*	*0.0*	*-3.8*
Admin & Support/Waste Mgt & Remediation	234.5	231.4	234.9	3.1	-0.4	1.3	-0.2
Administrative & Support Services	*221.0*	*218.2*	*222.3*	*2.8*	*-1.3*	*1.3*	*-0.6*
Employment Services	*79.6*	*78.7*	*80.4*	*0.9*	*-0.8*	*1.1*	*-1.0*
Private Educational Services	71.3	69.7	71.3	1.6	0.0	2.3	0.0
Health Care & Social Assistance	395.8	394.0	380.2	1.8	15.6	0.5	4.1
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	41.6	42.4	40.9	-0.8	0.7	-1.9	1.7
Accommodation & Food Services	325.2	322.7	320.7	2.5	4.5	0.8	1.4
Other Services	136.1	134.5	125.9	1.6	10.2	1.2	8.1
Government	436.5	435.2	423.3	1.3	13.2	0.3	3.1
Federal Government	34.6	34.6	33.3	0.0	1.3	0.0	3.9
State Government	96.7	96.4	93.9	0.3	2.8	0.3	3.0
State Government Educational Services	*52.0*	*51.7*	*51.1*	*0.3*	*0.9*	*0.6*	*1.8*
Local Government	305.2	304.2	*296.1*	1.0	9.1	0.3	3.1
Local Government Educational Services	*204.7*	*204.1*	*199.0*	*0.6*	*5.7*	*0.3*	*2.9*

SOURCE: Texas Workforce Commission