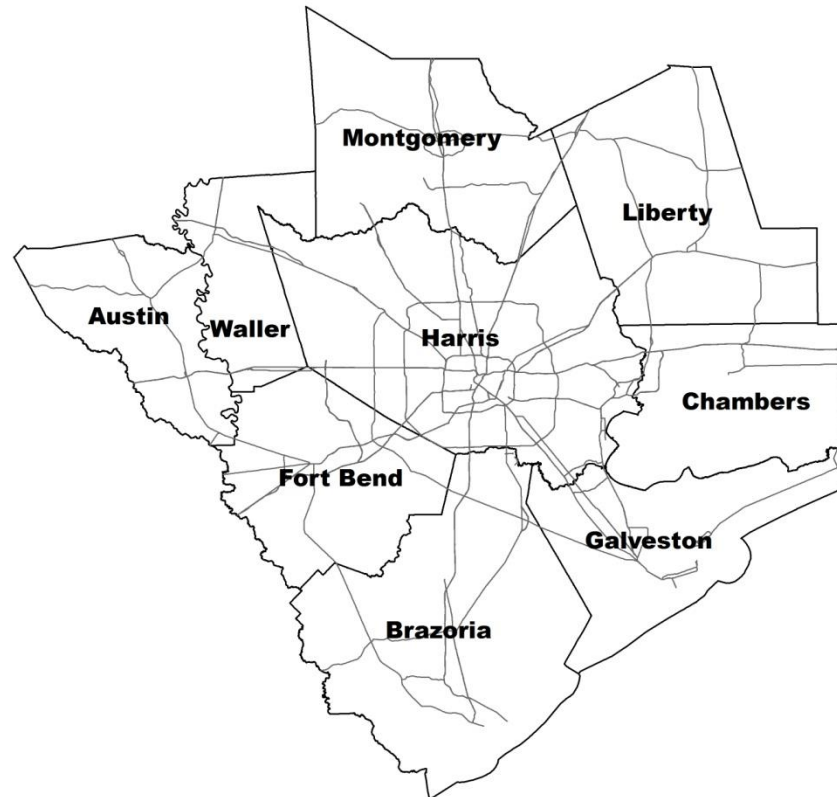# Houston Metropolitan Statistical Area Profile

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 '20, 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 '20 population is 7.2 million. If metro Houston were a state, it would have the 15th largest population in the U.S.

- 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 U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis estimates the Houston MSA's Gross Domestic Product at $512.2 billion in '19, making it the seventh largest U.S. metro economy. If the MSA were an independent nation, its economy would rank 27th in the world behind Belgium ($529.7 billion) and ahead of Nigeria ($448.1 billion) and Austria ($446.3), according to the International Monetary Fund.

- The Houston MSA recorded nearly 3.0 million nonfarm payroll jobs in December '20 and was home to more than 166,000 establishments in '20.

- The Houston MSA is home to 24 *Fortune 500* headquarters, ranking third among metro areas. Many other *Fortune 500* companies maintain U.S. administrative headquarters in Houston.