

Houston

	2006	2010	2014	2014 Ranking
Renter Households				
Share of Population Renting				
Metro Area	33%	34%	38%	5
Central City	42%	43%	46%	
Suburbs	24%	26%	29%	
Share of Renter Households in Single-Family Homes				
Metro Area	28%	34%	34%	3
Rental Vacancy Rate				
Metro Area	13%	15%	9%	2
Average Renter Household Size				
Metro Area	2.1	2.1	2.3	2
Median Renter Household Income				
Metro Area	\$36,000	\$36,900	\$38,200	7
Affordability				
Median Gross Rent				
Metro Area	\$880	\$930	\$940	11
Median Gross Rent for Non-Recently Available Units				
Metro Area	\$890	\$920	\$910	11
Median Gross Rent for Recently Available Units				
Metro Area	\$920	\$950	\$970	10
Share Rent Burdened (Moderate + Severe)				
Metro Area	49%	50%	48%	11
Central City	50%	51%	49%	
Suburbs	47%	49%	45%	
Share Severely Rent Burdened				
Metro Area	24%	25%	23%	10
Central City	25%	26%	24%	
Suburbs	23%	23%	20%	
Share Severely Rent Burdened - Lowest Income Quartile				
Metro Area	80%	82%	76%	7
Share Severely Rent Burdened - Lower-Moderate Income Quartile				
Metro Area	20%	21%	18%	11
Share of Recently Available Rental Units Affordable to 25th Percentile Metro Area Renter				
Metro Area	2%	3%	3%	5
Share of Recently Available Rental Units Affordable to Median Metro Area Renter				
Metro Area	46%	48%	48%	2

The rental population in the Houston metro area increased by 37 percent between 2006 and 2014. This represented the second highest rate of increase among the metro areas in this study.

Much of the growth in the Houston metro area renters was driven by renters in single-family homes. In 2014, 34 percent of renter households in metro Houston lived in single-family homes, the third highest share in our sample and an increase of six percentage points since 2006. The number of rental units grew by 28 percent between 2006 and 2014, the fastest rate of growth among the 11 largest metro areas. Also notable was the 10 percent growth in the ownership stock, again the highest rate in the metro areas we looked at.

Of the 11 largest metro areas, metro Houston had the strongest economic growth in recent years. Houston's strong overall housing market is not surprising given the metro area's strong economic growth. The Houston metro area also had the lowest unemployment rate (4.9%) among the metro areas in our sample in 2014, due in large part to the then-booming oil and gas industry. Between 2006 and 2014, the mismatch between the growth in renter population and growth in rental housing stock helped push the rental vacancy rate down from 13 percent to nine percent. The average rental household size also rose by seven percent.

In 2014, the Houston metro area had the lowest median gross rent among metro areas in our sample, and tied for the highest income growth between 2006 and 2011 among the 11 largest metro areas.

In 2014, the Houston metro area had the lowest median gross rent among the metro areas in our sample—lower than the median rent within metro areas nationwide. The median renter household's income, though, was over \$2,000 higher than the national benchmark, and between 2006 and 2014, the median renter income increased by about six percent, tied with Chicago for the highest income growth among the 11 largest metro areas.¹⁰



The Houston metro area was the second most affordable rental market for typical renters among the 11 metro areas in this study. In Houston, 48 percent of recently available rental units were affordable to the median metro area renter in 2014. Like all the metro areas in our sample, the vast majority (76% in 2014) of the lowest-income renters in the Houston metro area were severely rent burdened. The rent burden picture improves, however, if we look at the quartile of renter households just above the lowest-income renters. Of renter households earning more than the 25th percentile income metro area renters and no more than the median, only 18 percent were severely rent burdened in 2014, a lower share than in any of the other 10 metro areas we studied or in metro areas nationwide.

¹⁰ The 90% margin of error on the change in renter income in metro Houston was 4.8 percentage points, meaning that the 90% confidence interval for income growth was between 1.5% and 11.1%. For the Chicago metro area it was 3.6 percentage points.