

# Houston by the Numbers: Turning Employment Data into Regional Insight

2026 Local Employment Dynamics (LED) Partnership Hybrid Workshop

Prepared by Brenda Samman

Data Analytics and Research Department

Houston-Galveston Area Council

# Houston by the Numbers

This presentation demonstrates how Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) data, integrated with demographic and housing statistics from the American Community Survey (ACS) yields actionable insights into Houston's evolving workforce.

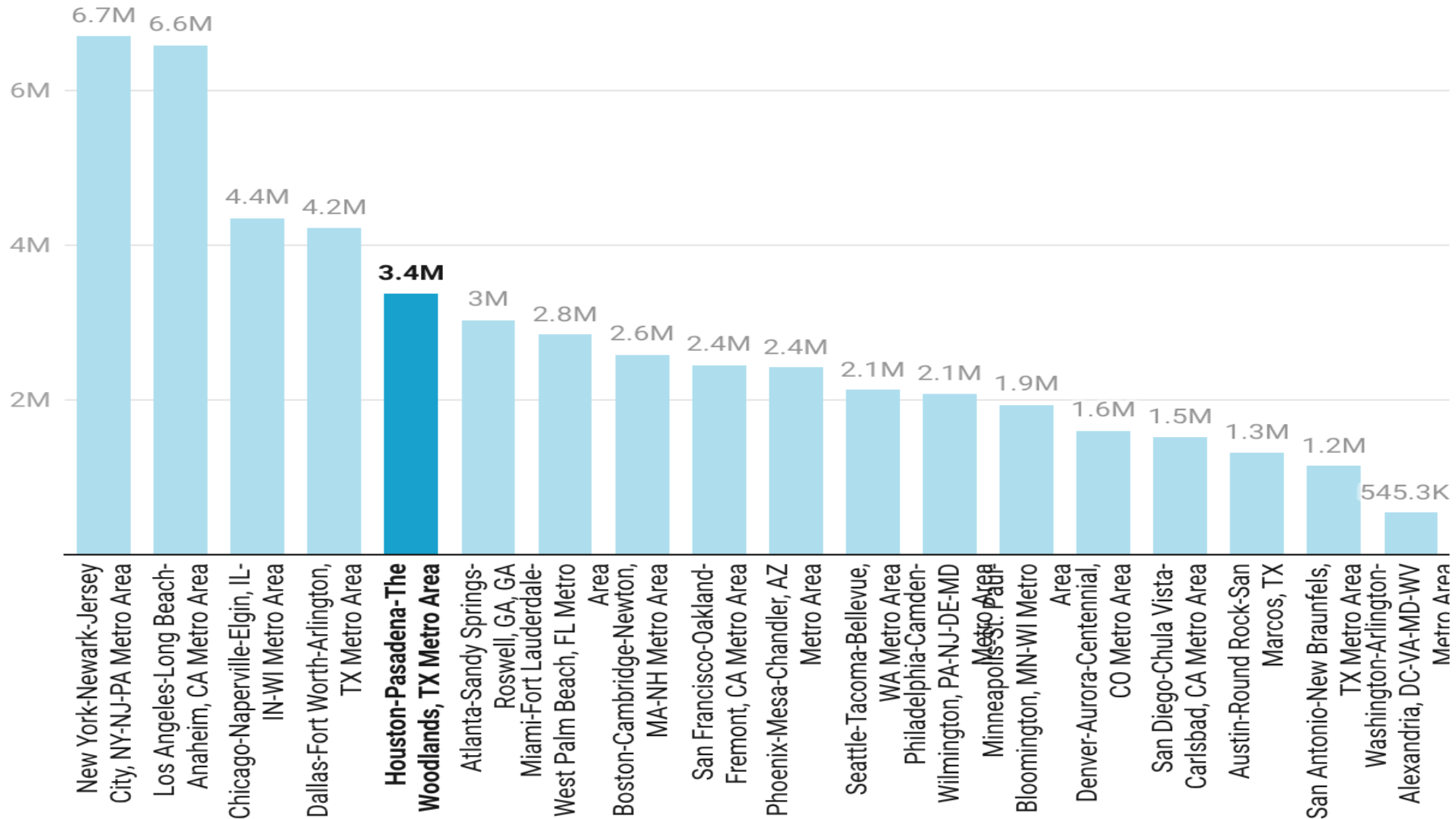
# Introduction

- **A Story of Scale & Growth:** The headline numbers are impressive: massive job growth, low unemployment, and a huge economic output. This confirms Houston's status as a national economic leader.
- **A Story of Quality & Equity:** Digging deeper, the data reveals underlying challenges in real income inequality, and skills gaps that headline numbers can hide.
- **Tools for Insight:** Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) are the key to unlocking this second story. QWI data allows us to move beyond broad totals and analyze employment dynamics by industry, age, gender, race, and education.

A light blue map of the Houston-Galveston Area Council region, showing county boundaries. The map is centered on the Gulf of Mexico coast.

# The Numbers: A Job Creation Powerhouse

# Total Employment 2024

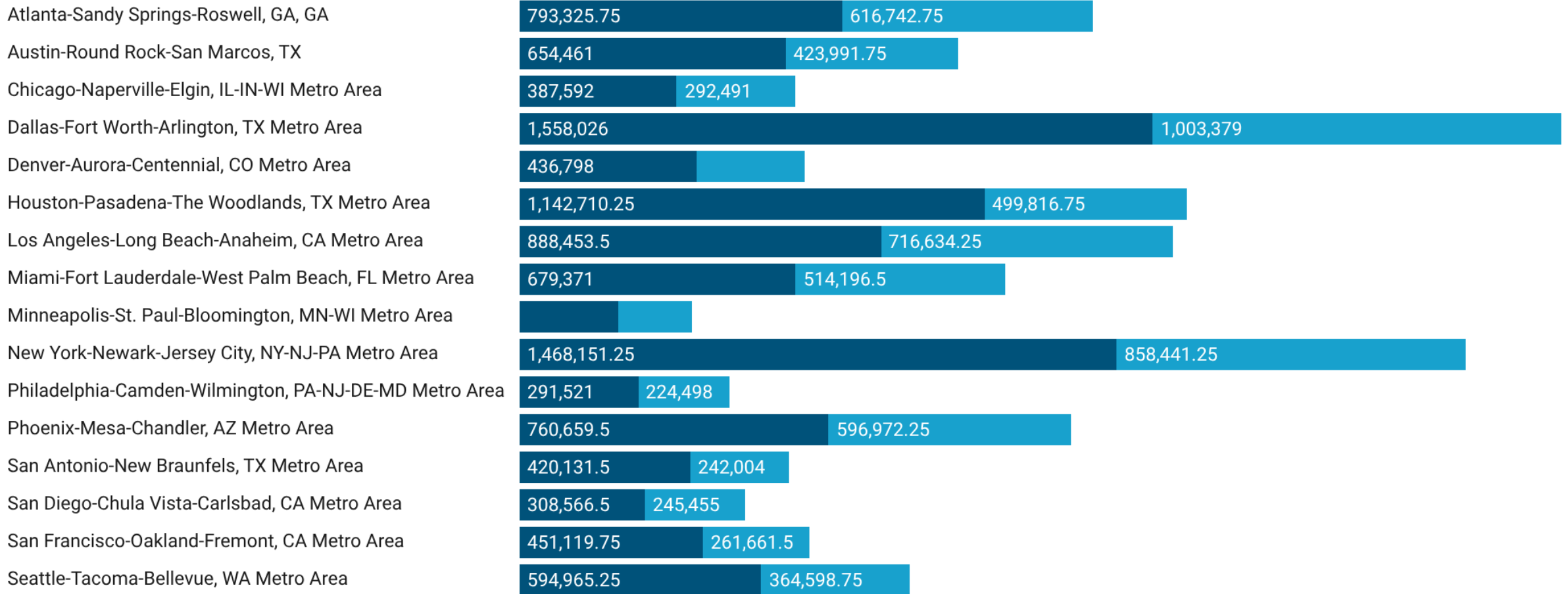


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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI), 2024

# Employment Growth

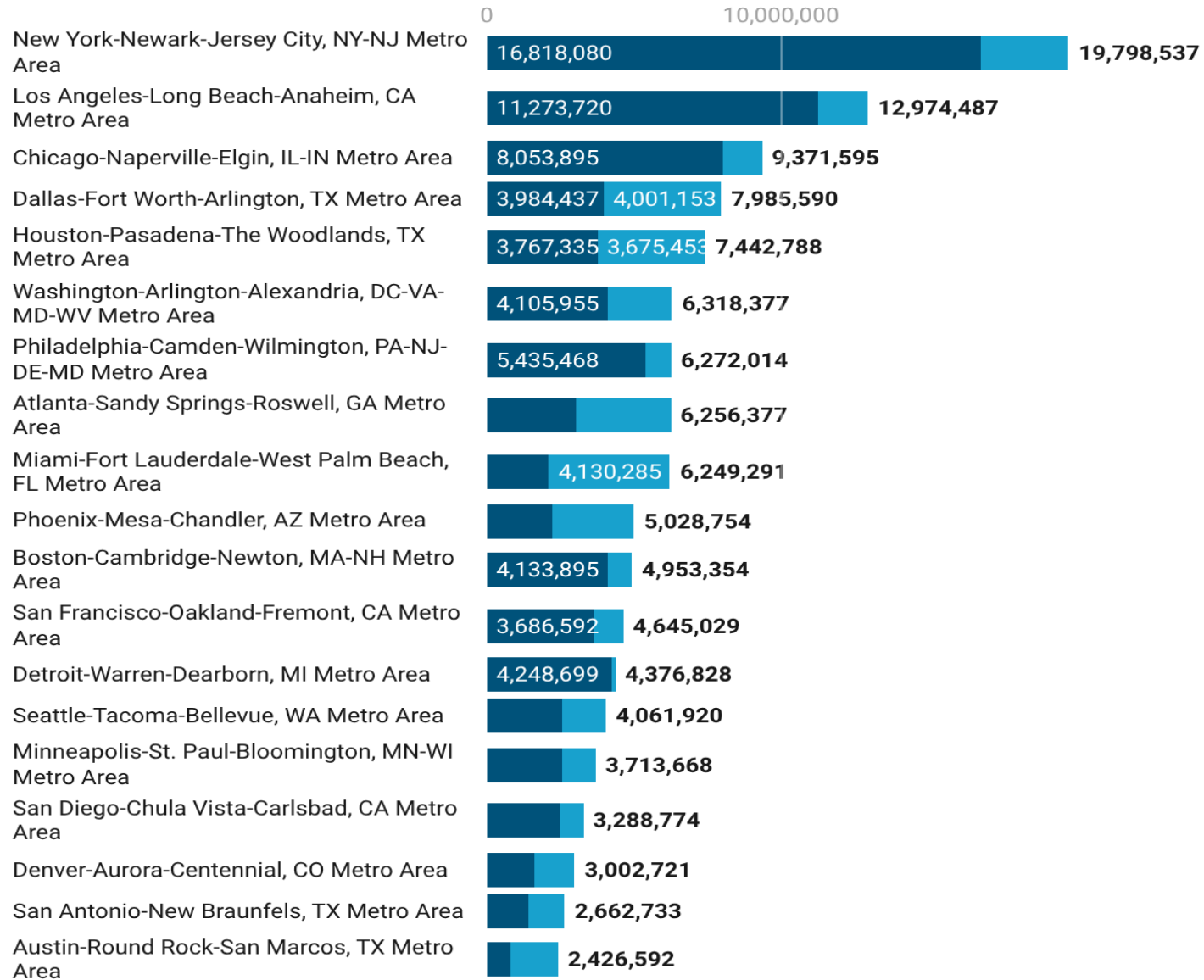
■ Employment 2004-2014 ■ Employment 2014-2024



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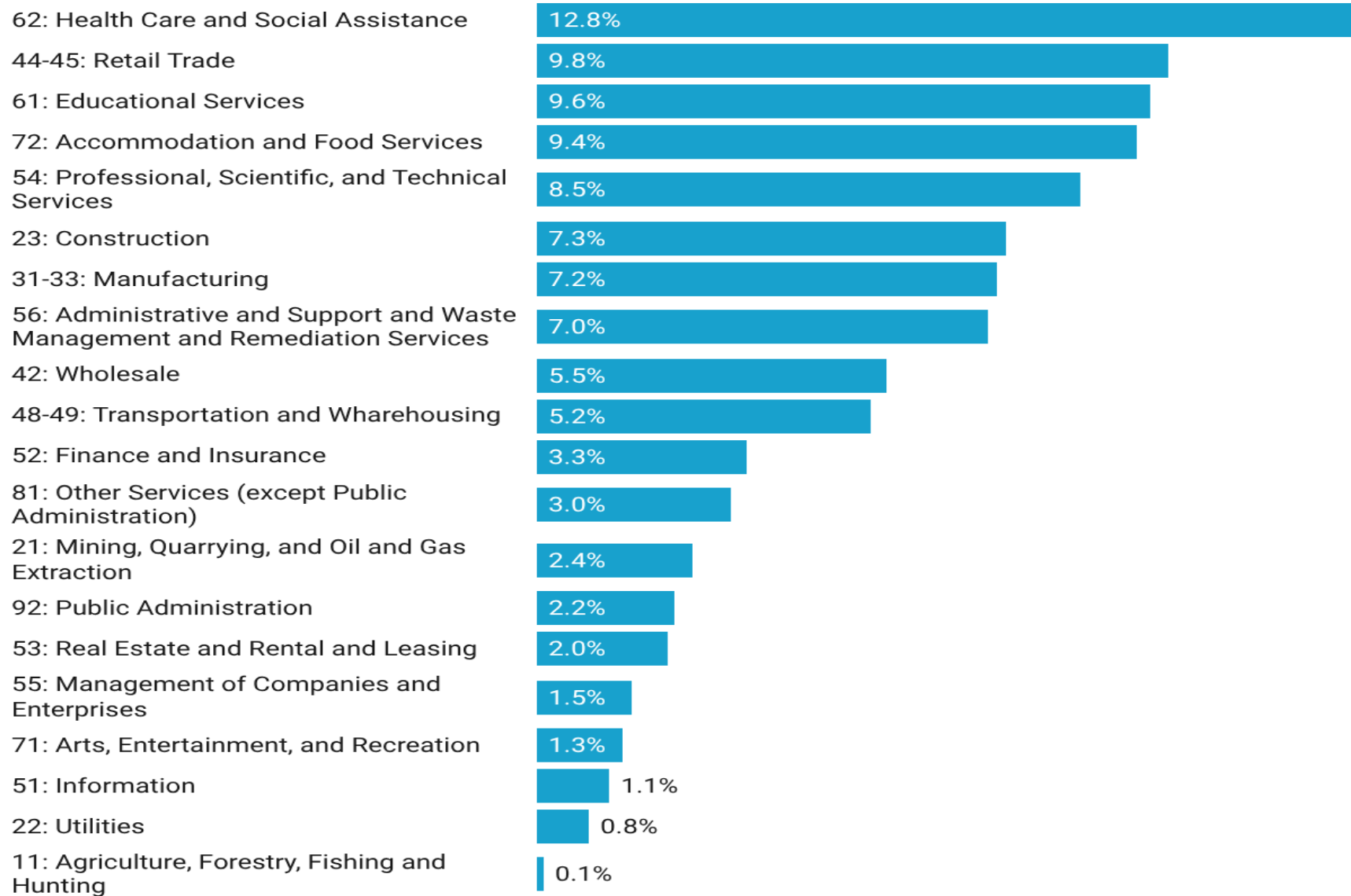
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI), 2024

1990 Population Change 1990-2024



U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019–2024  
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# Employment Share by Sector



**Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI), 2024**

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## Unemployment Rates by MSA (2016–2024)

#	MSA	2016	2020	2024
1	Los Angeles–Long Beach–Anaheim, CA	5.2%	11.4%	5.4%
2	Chicago–Naperville–Elgin, IL-IN	5.8%	9.8%	5.1%
3	Detroit–Warren–Dearborn, MI	5.2%	11.6%	4.5%
4	New York–Newark–Jersey City, NY-NJ	4.8%	10.3%	4.5%
5	Houston–Pasadena–The Woodlands, TX	5.3%	8.5%	4.4%
6	San Diego–Chula Vista–Carlsbad, CA	4.7%	9.2%	4.3%
7	Denver–Aurora–Centennial, CO	3.1%	6.9%	4.2%
8	San Francisco–Oakland–Fremont, CA	4.0%	8.3%	4.2%
9	Seattle–Tacoma–Bellevue, WA	4.7%	8.8%	4.2%
10	Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington, TX	3.9%	7.1%	3.9%
11	Philadelphia–Camden–Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	5.1%	8.9%	3.8%
12	San Antonio–New Braunfels, TX	3.8%	7.3%	3.8%
13	Boston–Cambridge–Newton, MA-NH	3.3%	8.7%	3.7%
14	Austin–Round Rock–San Marcos, TX	3.2%	6.3%	3.5%
15	Atlanta–Sandy Springs–Roswell, GA	5.1%	6.8%	3.4%
16	Phoenix–Mesa–Chandler, AZ	4.6%	7.3%	3.2%
17	Washington–Arlington–Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	4.0%	6.4%	3.0%
18	Miami–Fort Lauderdale–West Palm Beach, FL	5.0%	8.4%	2.9%
19	Minneapolis–St. Paul–Bloomington, MN-WI	3.6%	6.4%	2.9%

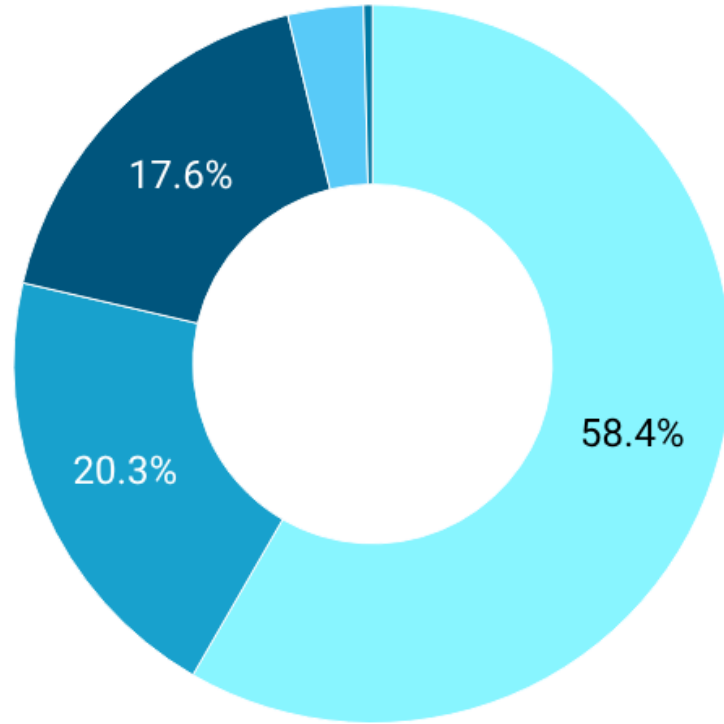
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

- **The Key Number:** +1.6 Million Jobs added since 1990.
- **The Data:** Houston's unemployment has normalized below pre-pandemic levels, driven by a resilient and diversified industry base (Energy, Healthcare, Logistics).
- **The Insight from QWI:**
- QWI data can show us the source of this job growth. We can track quarterly net employment change to see *which industries* are the true engines of growth right now. This turns a historical fact into actionable, current intelligence

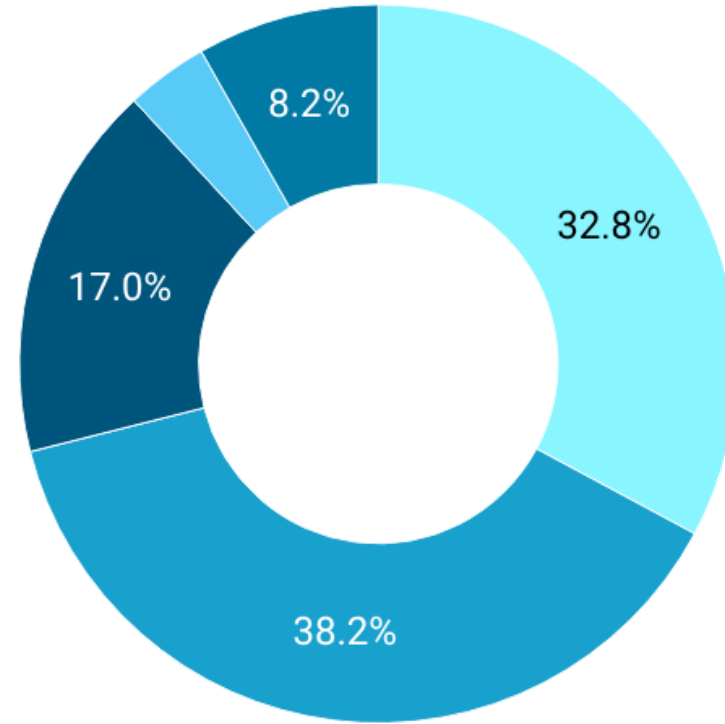
# The Numbers: A Diverse, In-Migrating Talent Pool

# Houston Race Composition (1990 and 2024)

white hispanic black other asian



1990



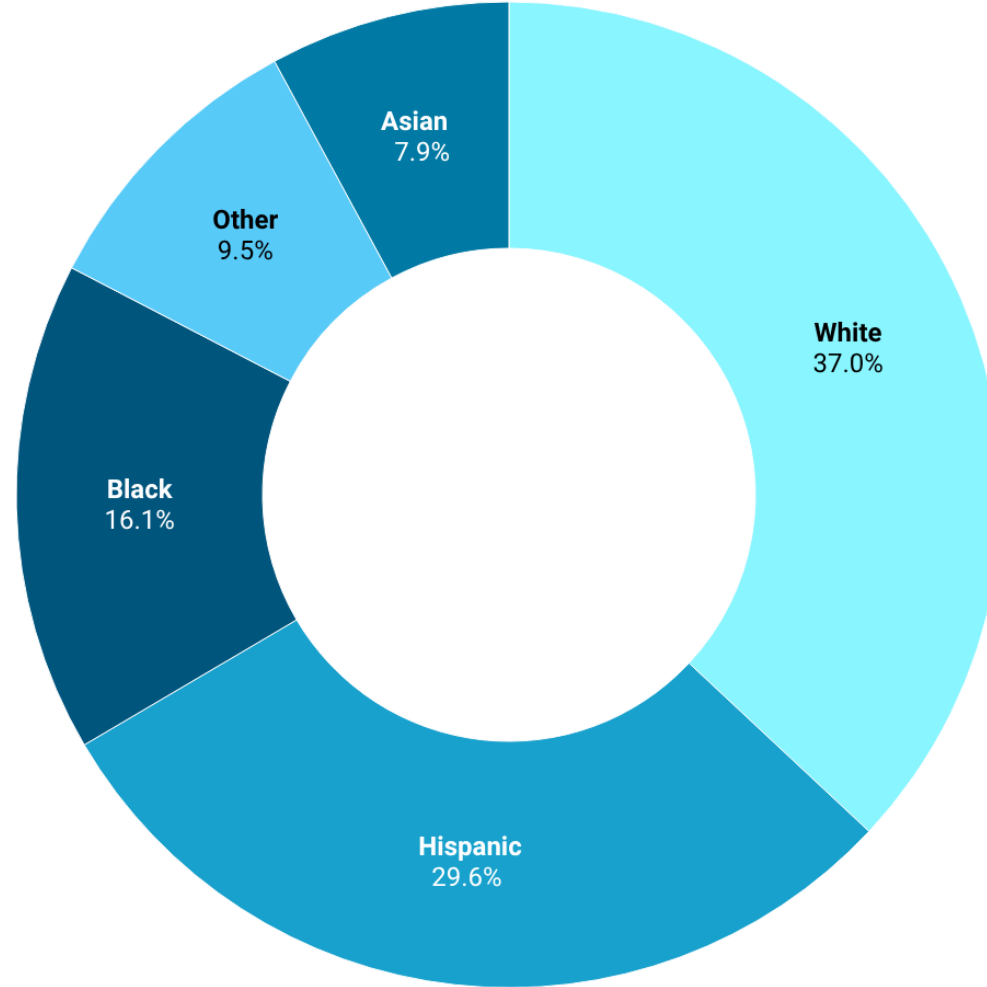
2024

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U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019–2023

# Houston Workforce by Race

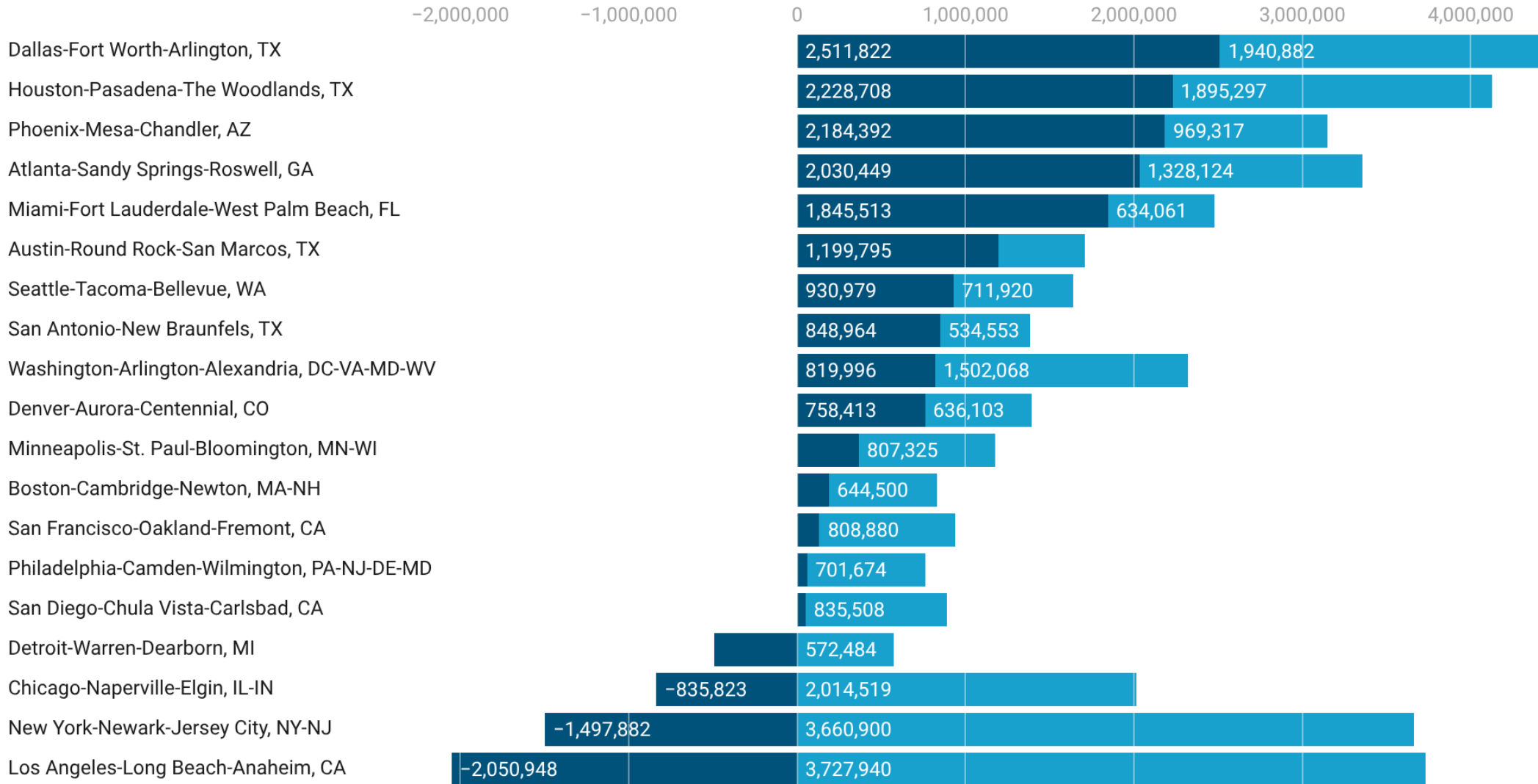
White Hispanic Black Other Asian



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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI), 2024

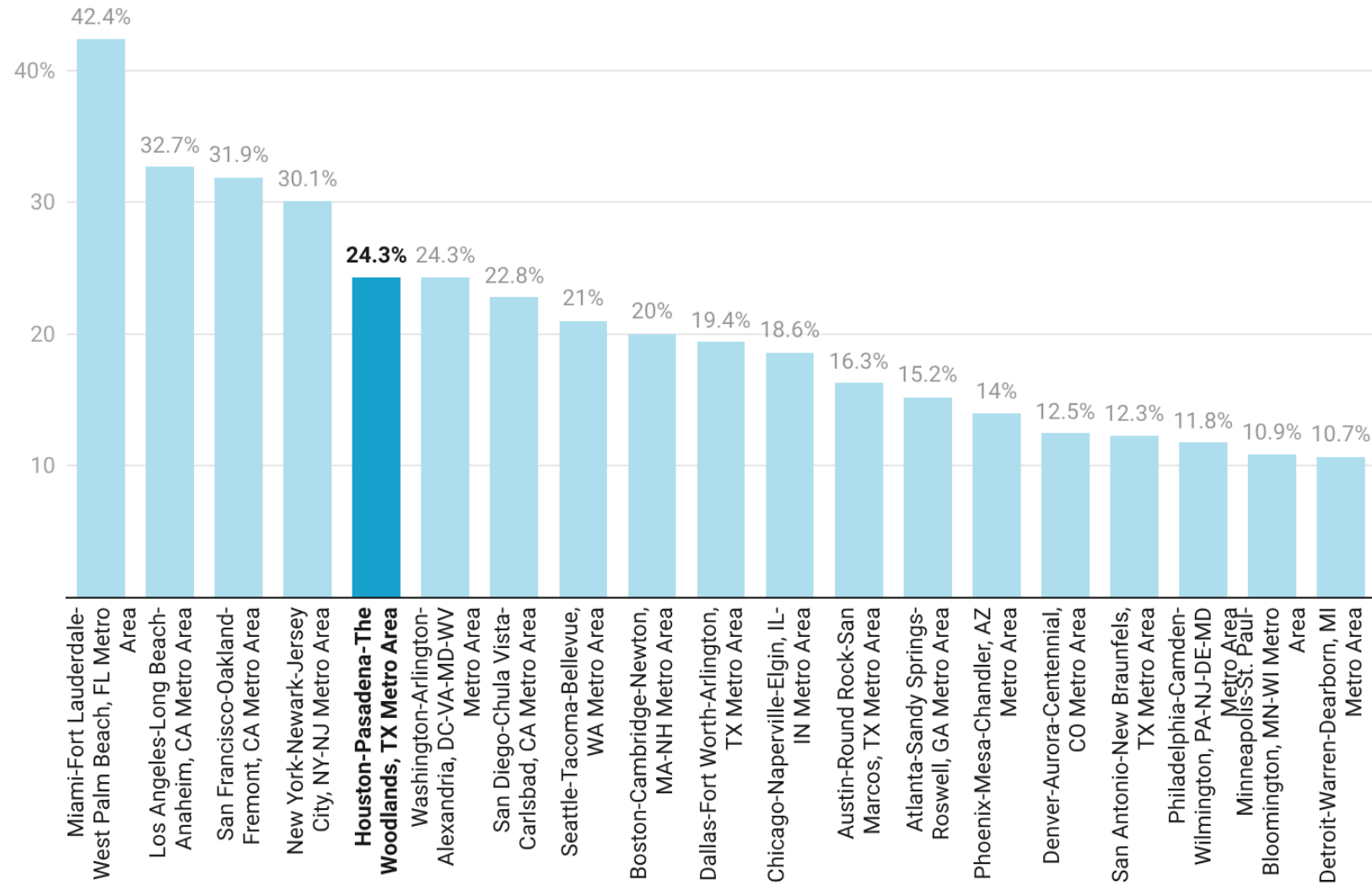
Net Migration Natural Increase



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U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019–2024

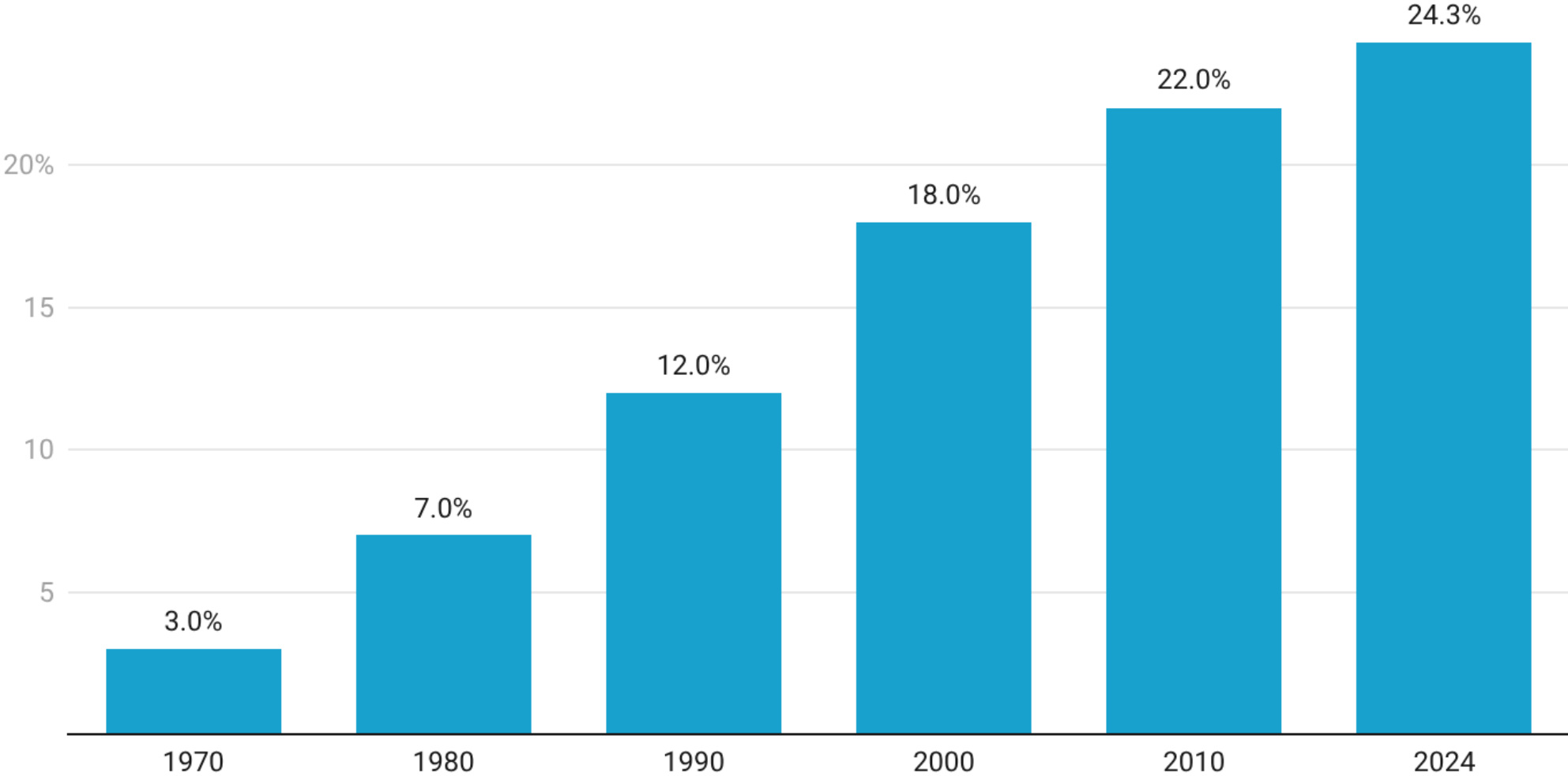
# Foreign Born Population



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U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019–2023

# Percentage of Foreign-Born Population in Houston (1980-2024)

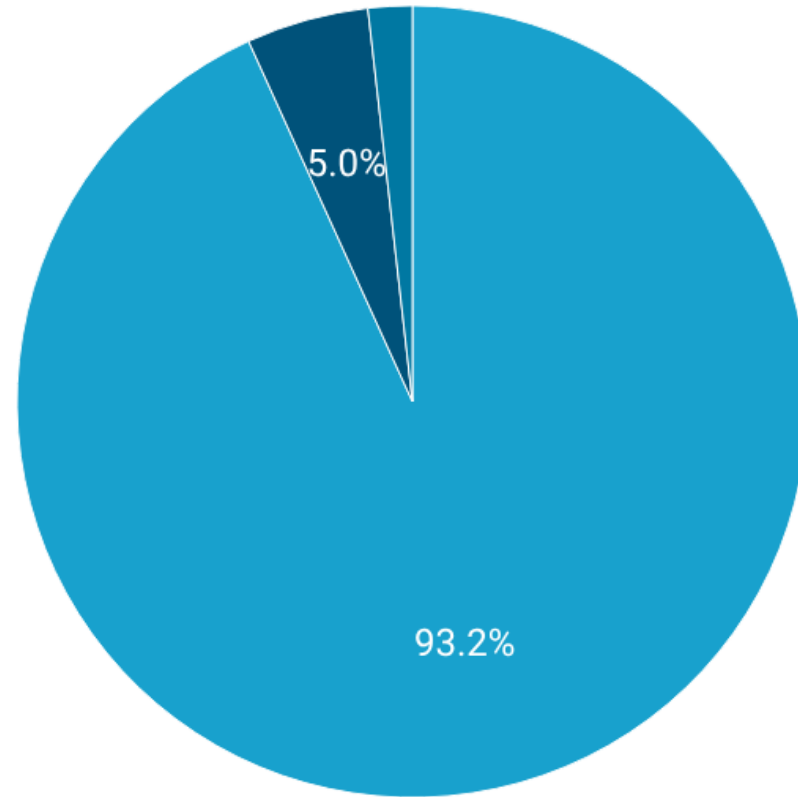


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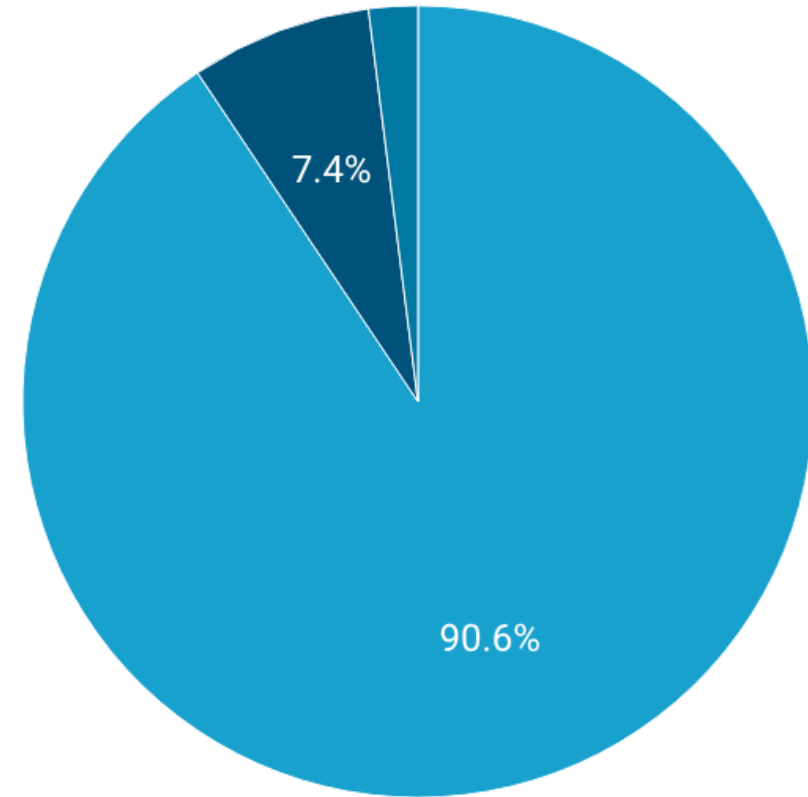
U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019–2024

# Houston Workforce Age Composition

- Age 19-64
- Age 65+
- Under 18



2014



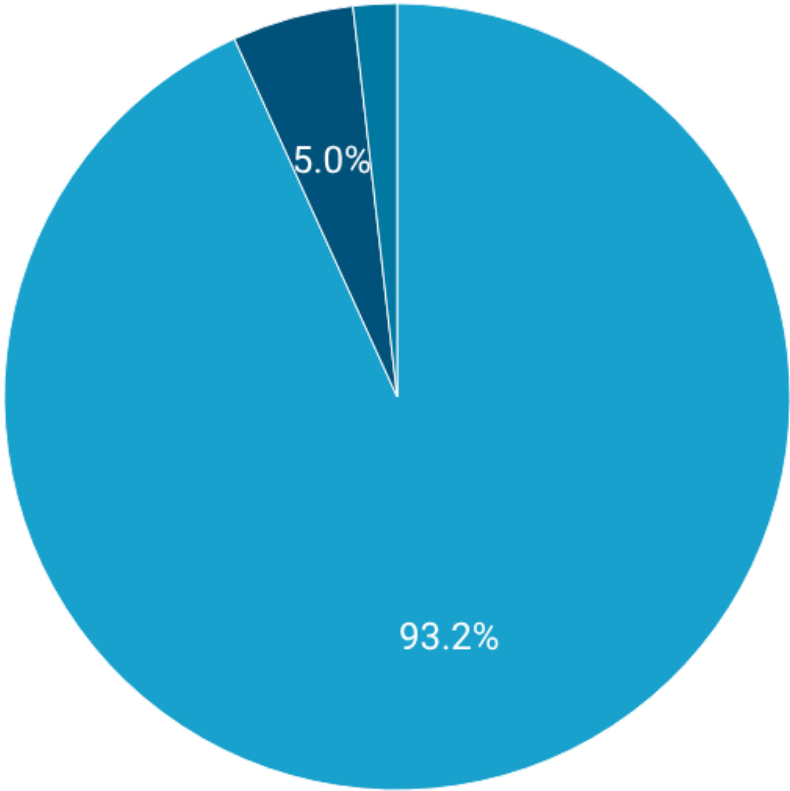
2024

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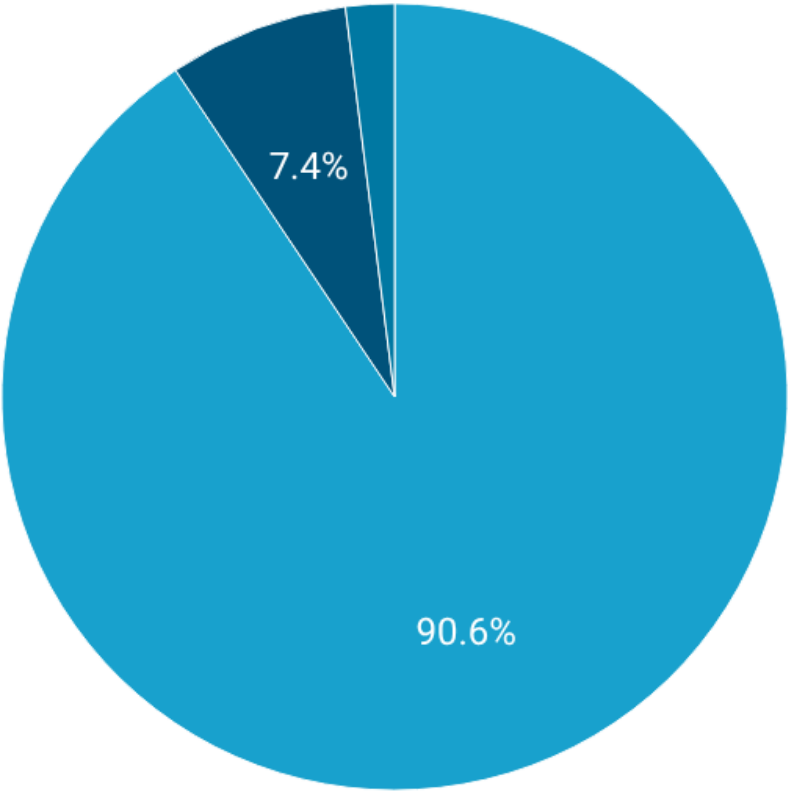
U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5 -Year Estimates, 2019 -2024

# Houston Workforce Age Composition

- Age 19-64
- Age 65+
- Under 18



2014



2024

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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI), 2024

- **The Key Number:** 1 in 4 residents is foreign-born.
- **The Data:** Houston is a magnet for talent, fueled by strong in-migration. Its demographic profile has transformed, with Hispanics now the largest group and a dynamic mix of young and experienced workers.
- **The Insight from QWI:**
  - QWI allows us to see the economic integration of this diverse population. We can analyze employment and earnings patterns by age, sex, race, and ethnicity. This data turns a demographic trend into an economic equity analysis.

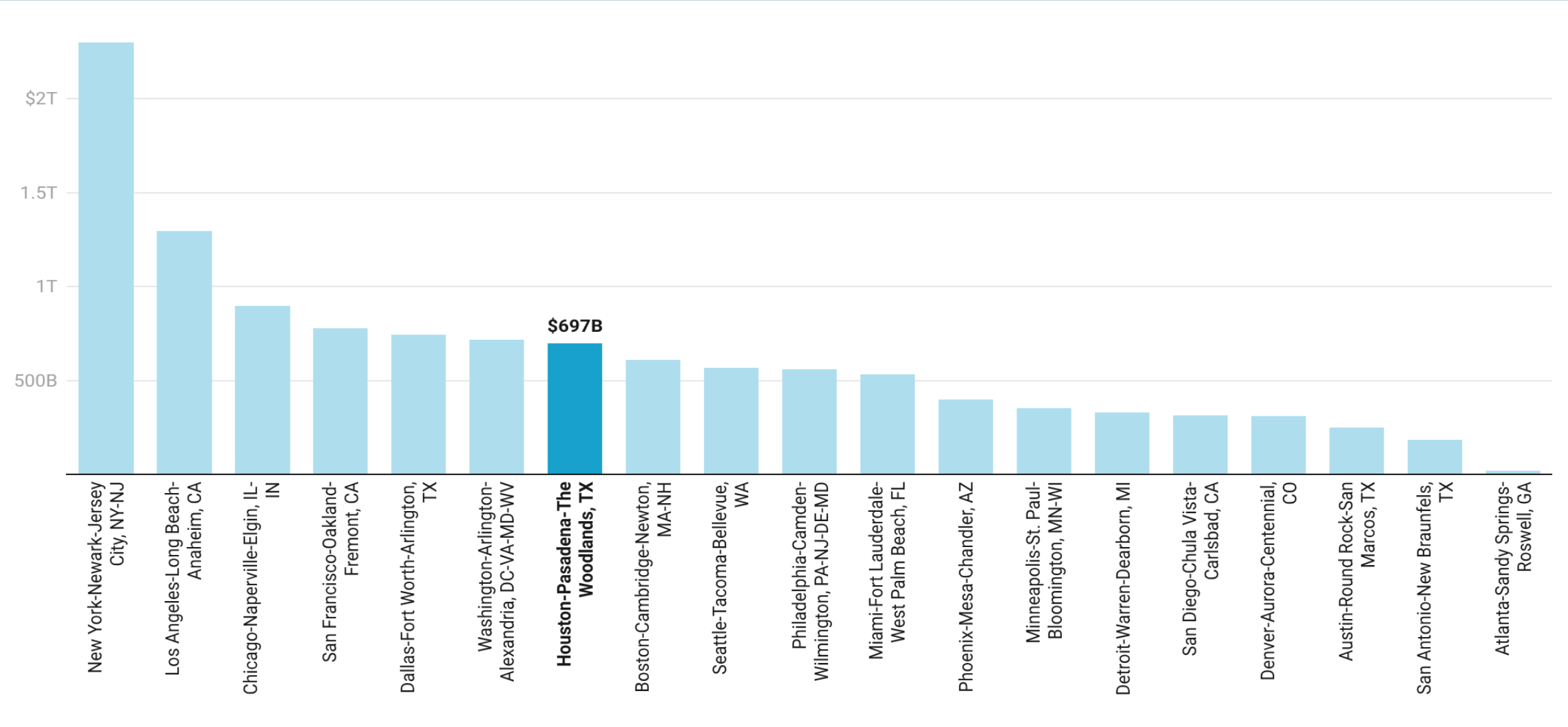
# The Numbers: High Inequality Despite Strong Economic and Demographic Base

## Houston Occupational Employment

Occupation	Total Employment	Average Wage (\$)	Percentage Share
Office and Administrative Support	379,670	48,100	11.9%
Transportation and Material Moving	308,770	50,700	9.7%
Food Preparation and Serving	303,760	31,020	9.5%
Management	285,150	139,420	8.9%
Sales and Related	271,400	50,700	8.5%
Educational Instruction and Library	195,590	64,760	6.1%
Business and Financial Operations	191,510	89,550	6.0%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	190,000	104,020	5.9%
Construction and Extraction	175,890	55,380	5.5%
Production	173,490	52,050	5.4%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	150,030	61,620	4.7%
Healthcare Support	121,060	34,080	3.8%
Computer and Mathematical	84,860	105,840	2.7%
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	87,410	33,960	2.7%
Architecture and Engineering	76,530	109,400	2.4%
Protective Service	73,740	55,120	2.3%
Life, Physical, and Social Science	35,190	86,840	1.1%
Community and Social Service	31,090	61,200	1.0%
Legal	27,200	131,390	0.9%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, Media	29,050	60,700	0.9%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	2,190	38,910	0.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), 2024

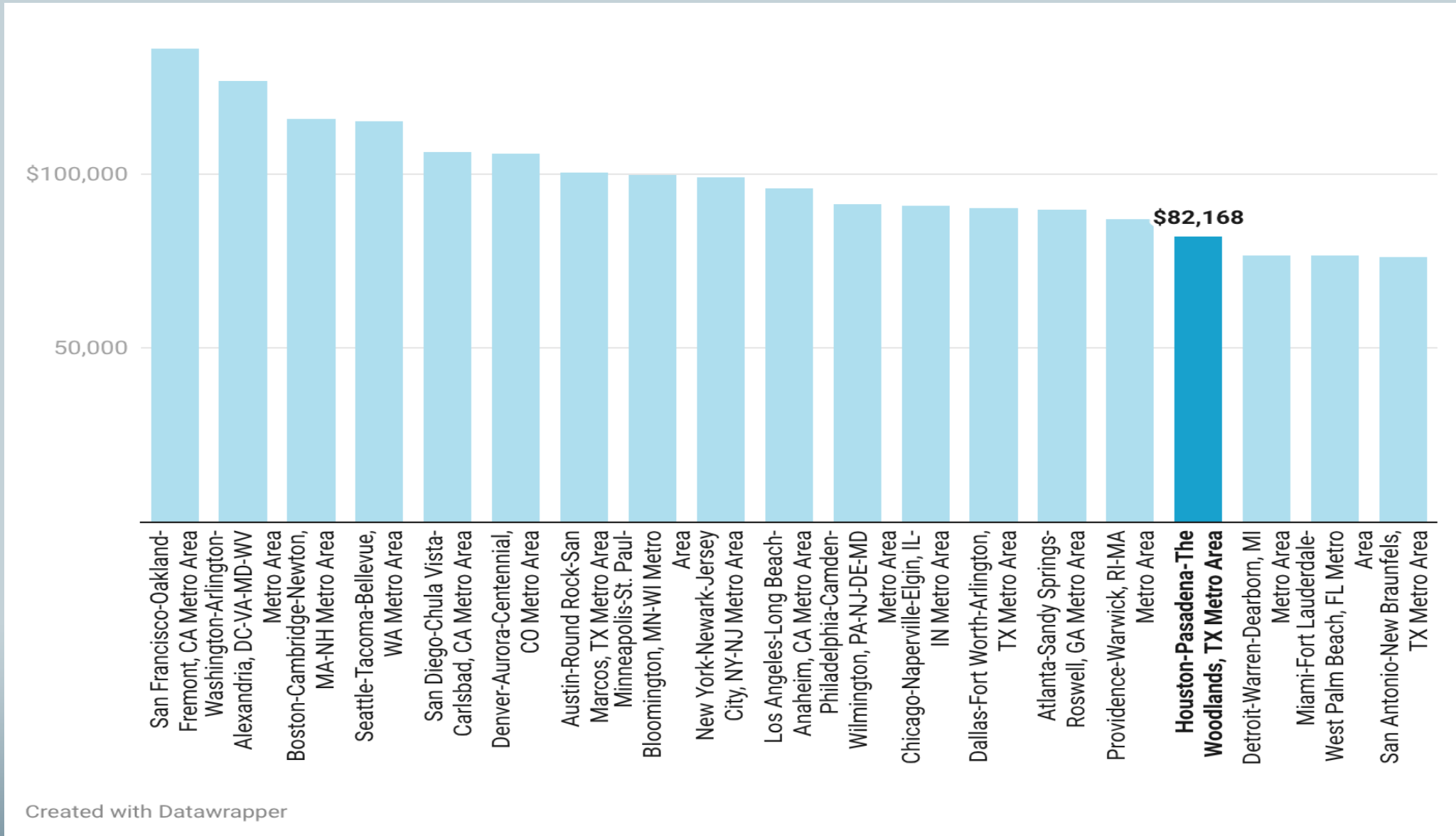
Gross Metropolitan Product



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U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019–2024

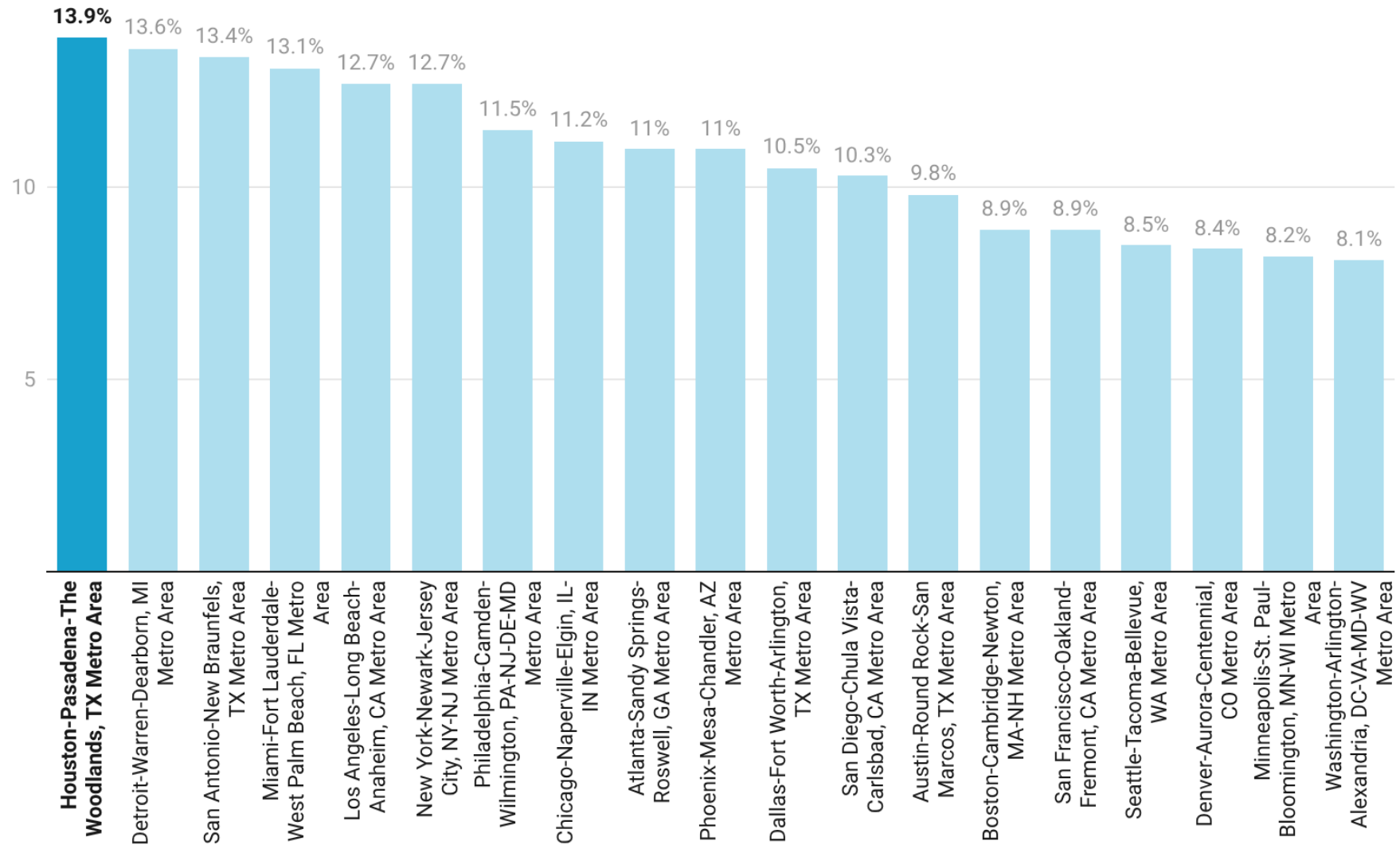
# Median Household Income



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U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019–2024

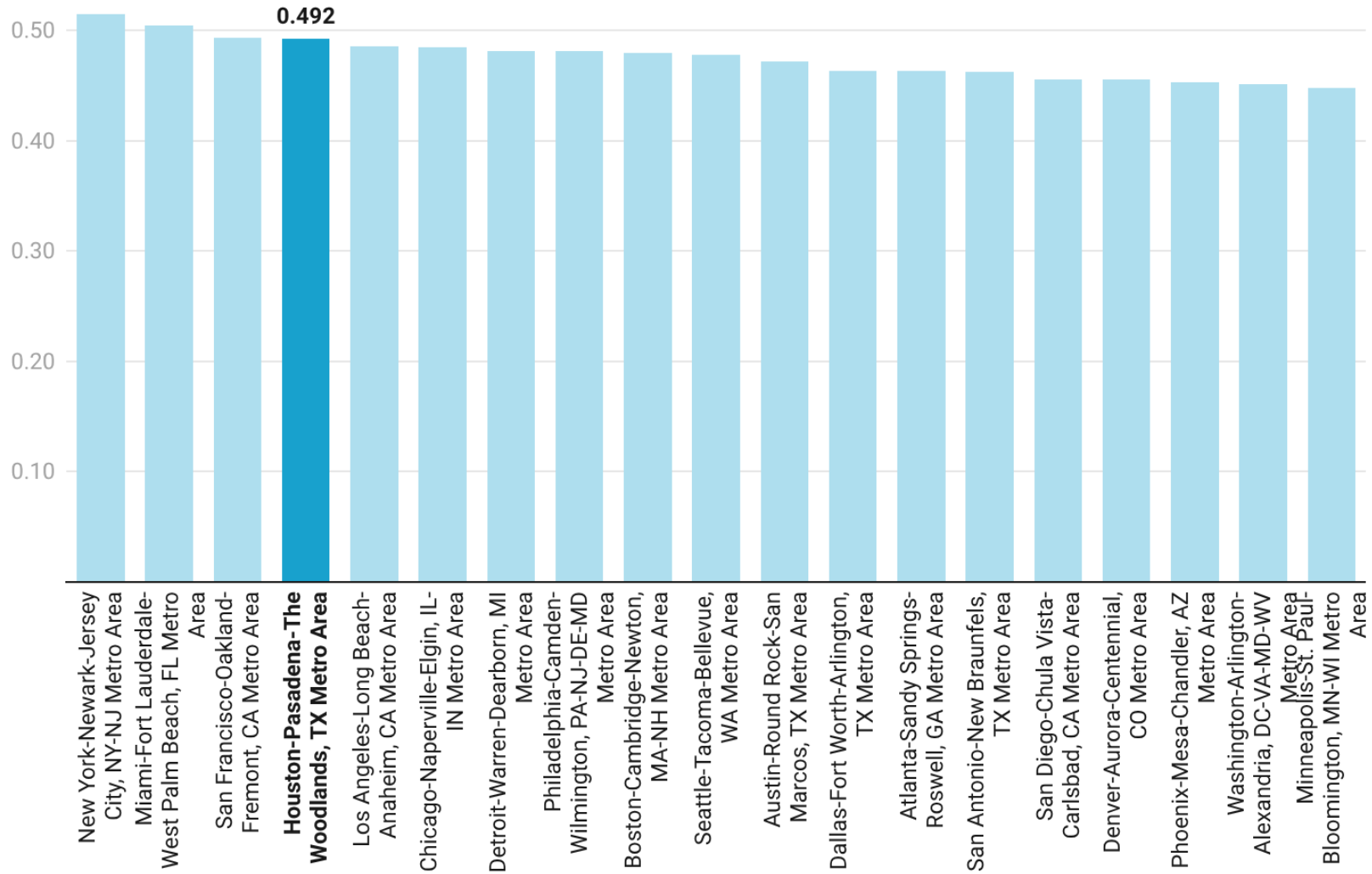
# Poverty Rate



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U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019–2024

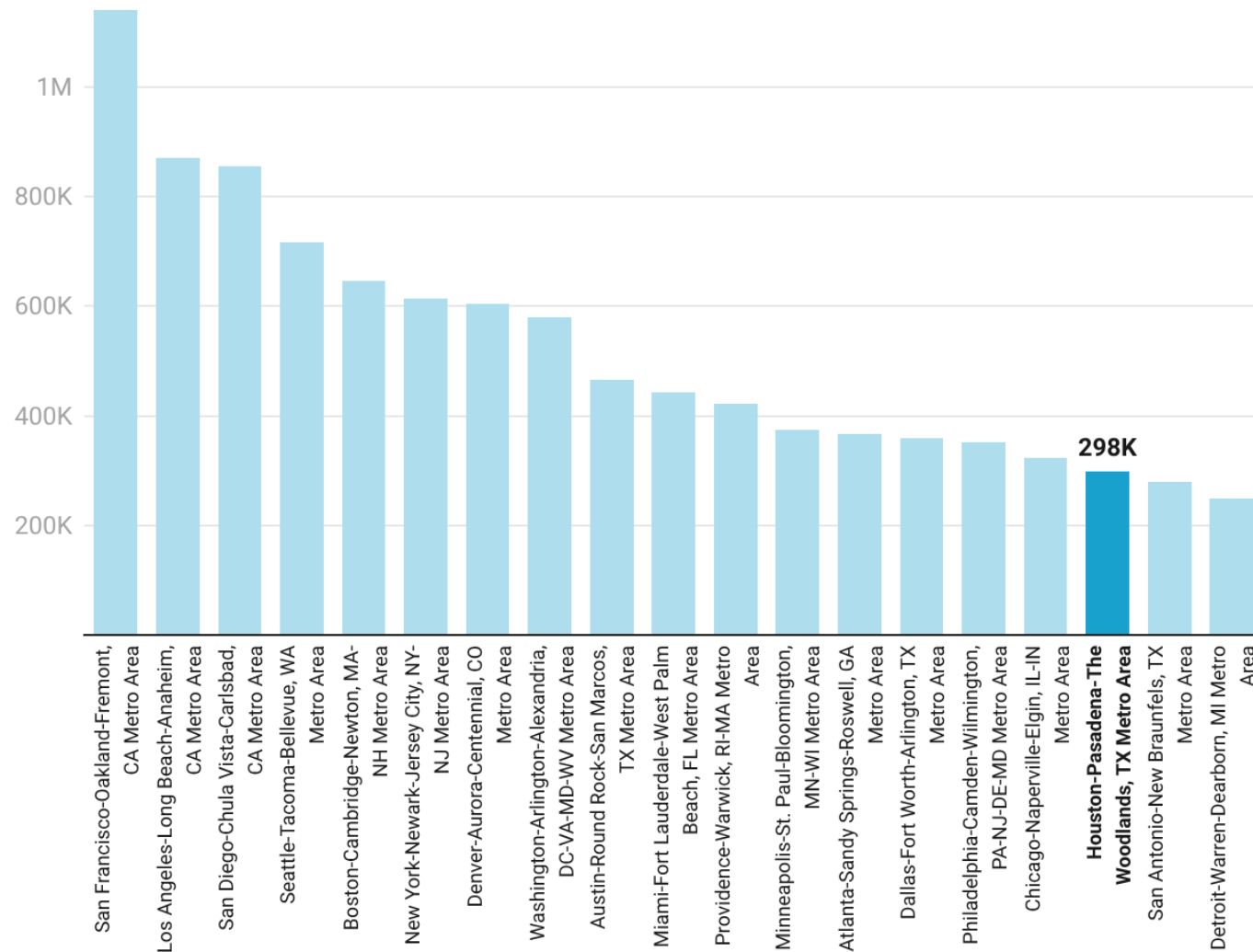
# Gini Index



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U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019–2024

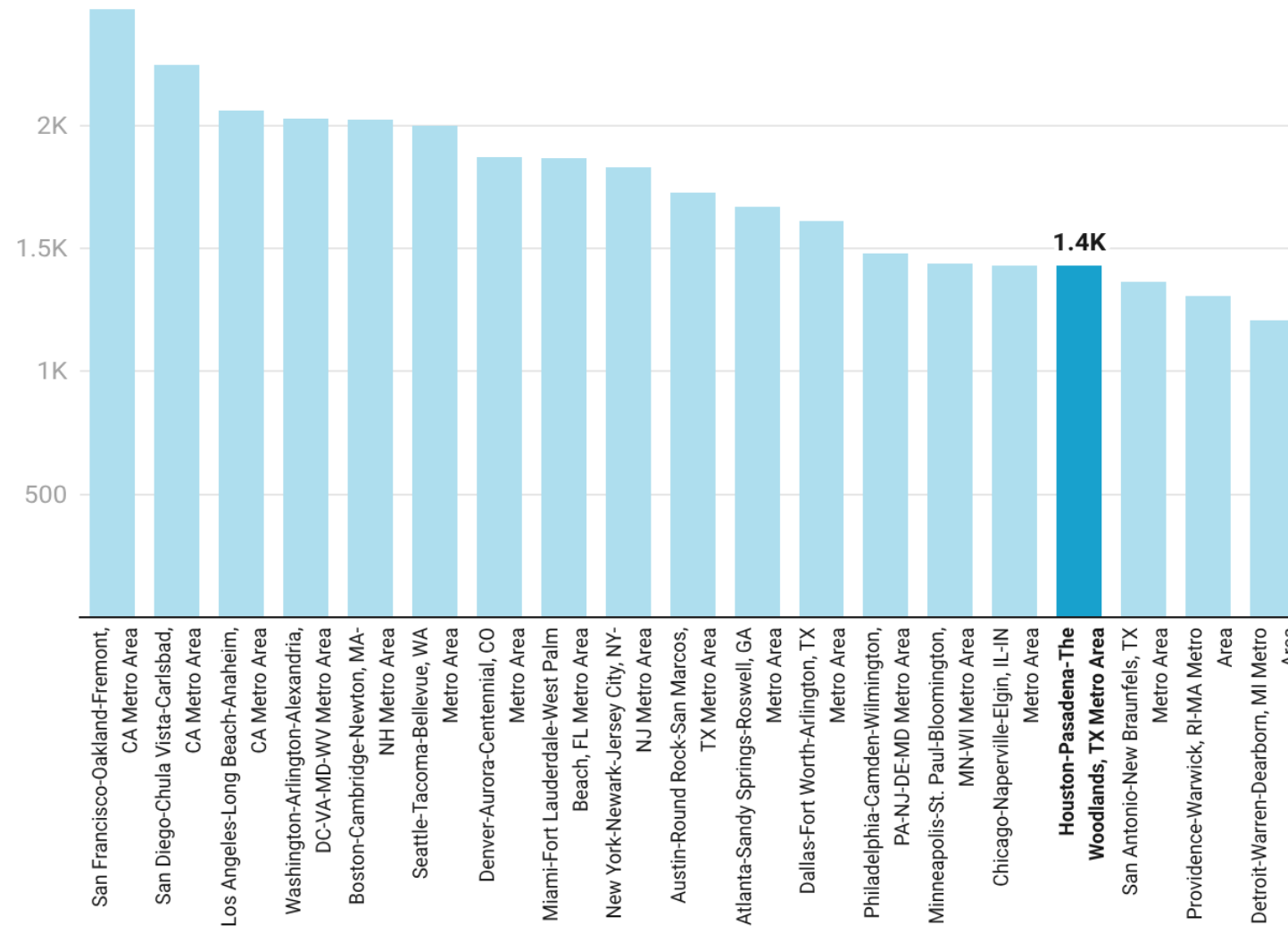
# Median House Value



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U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019–2024

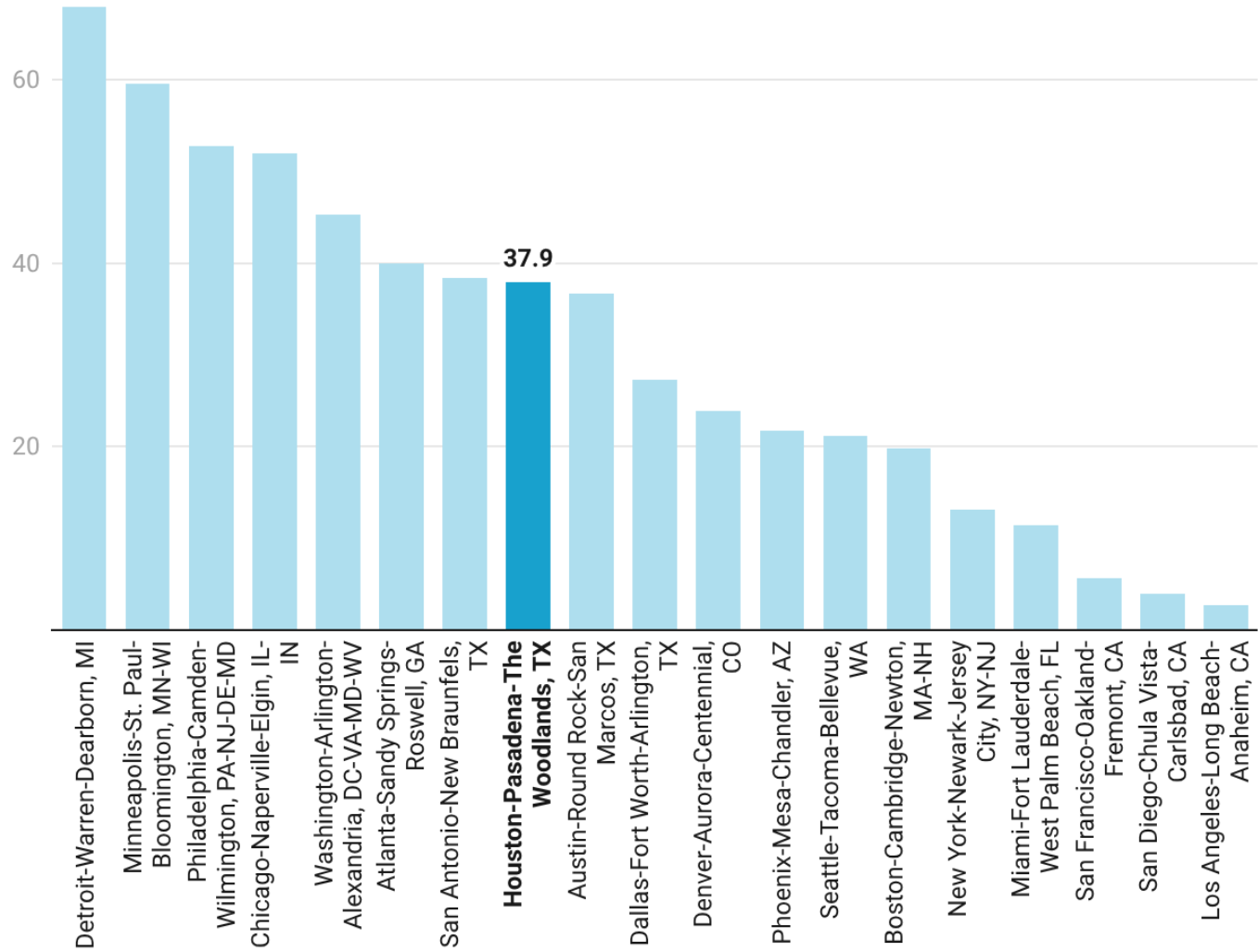
# Median Rent



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U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019–2024

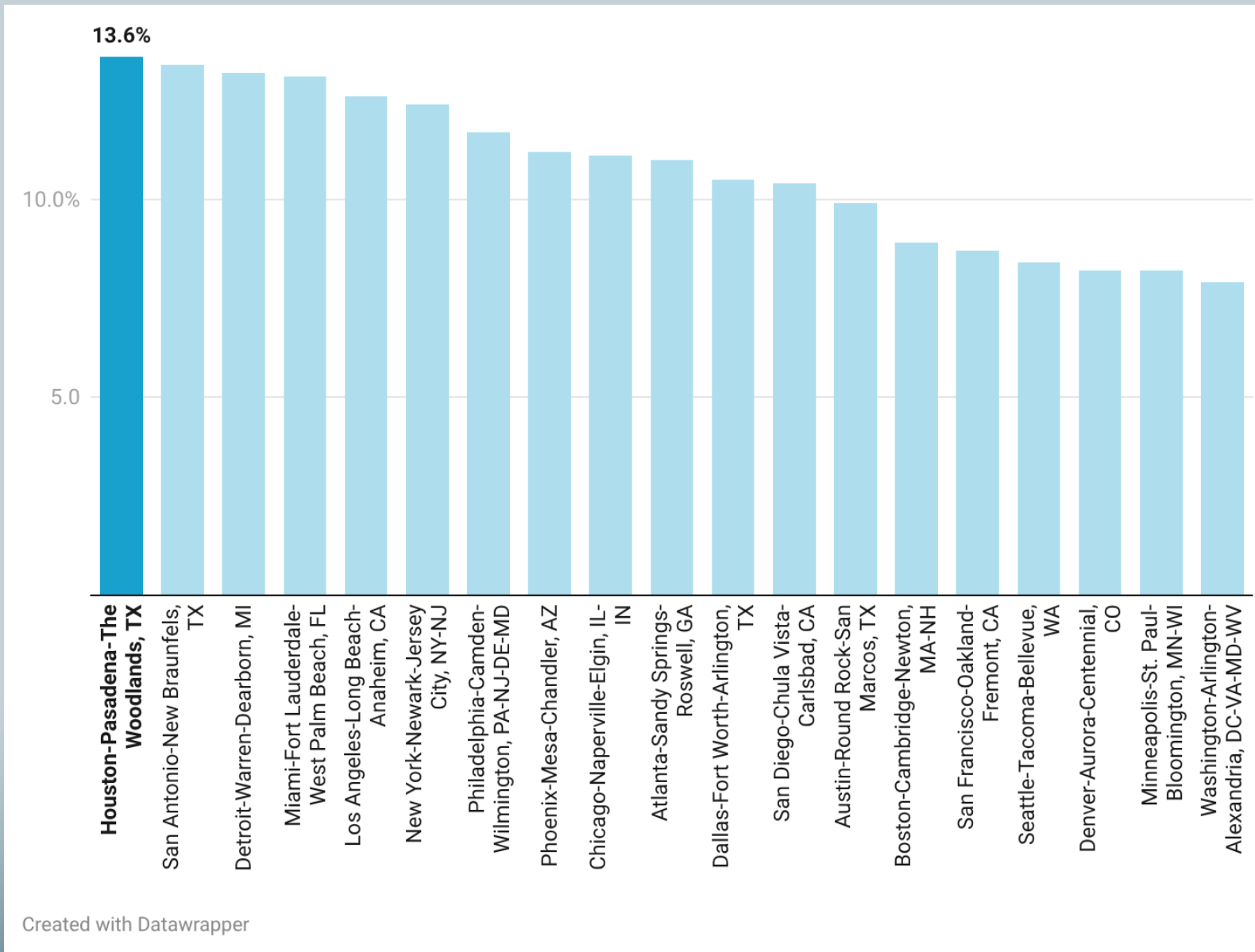
# Housing Opportunity Index



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National Association of Home Builders, 2023

Percentage of Population Without Health Care Coverage



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U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019–2024

- **The Key Number:** Highest poverty rate among its peer group.
- **The Data:** A low unemployment rate masks a significant challenge: Houston has one of the highest income inequality rates among major metros, reflecting a large "working poor" segment.
- **The Insight from QWI:**
  - QWI helps us look beyond the single unemployment number. By breaking down earnings by demographic and industry, we can quantify the inequality. This data reveals the large share of the workforce concentrated in low -wage jobs and helps identify the populations most affected, providing a clear target for policy and workforce programs.

# From Data to Strategy: A SWOT Analysis

- **Strengths (What the Numbers Confirm):**
  - Massive scale: large, diverse labor pool.
  - High job creation in key sectors.
  - Resilient, diversified economy.
- **Weaknesses (What the Numbers Reveal):**
  - Wage gaps.
  - Systemic income inequality and poverty.
  - Persistent educational attainment gap.
- **Opportunities (Where the Numbers Point):**
  - Leverage infrastructure to build high -skill, high -wage logistics and tech jobs.
  - Targeted upskilling programs informed by QWI data on low -wage sectors.
  - Promote industries that offer higher earnings potential to boost regional wages.
- **Threats (The Risk the Numbers Show):**
  - Losing skilled talent to cities with better wage growth.
  - Eroding affordability as incomes fail to keep pace with living costs.
  - Long-term economic drag from persistent inequality.

# Conclusion: From Insight to Action

- **The Core Insight:** The numbers show that Houston's primary challenge has shifted from **job quantity** to **job quality, wage growth, and equitable access**.
- Houston remains a major job creation engine.
- The region's workforce is increasingly diverse and shaped by migration.
- Strong employment numbers can mask wage, poverty, and inequality challenges.
- QWI helps move from broad trends targeted workforce and policy action.

A light blue map of the Houston-Galveston Area Council region, showing county boundaries. The text "Q & A" is centered over the map.

# Q & A