1.74x Income Gap Among Houston MSA Counties — ALEX Intelligence 2026

Houston’s Income Divide: 1.74x

Fort Bend vs. San Jacinto — A 2024 Income Chasm

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THE DATA

1.74x

Ratio of Highest to Lowest County Median Household Income in the Market (2024)

Houston's internal income disparity is not just a gap — it's a structural wedge shaping where people live, work, and invest.

The 1.74x ratio between Fort Bend County ($114,041) and San Jacinto County ($65,364) reflects a profound divergence in economic opportunity across the MSA. This is not a snapshot of a single city but a regional fault line — where one county's median income exceeds another's by more than 70%. The implications are not just financial, but spatial, affecting school funding, infrastructure investment, and real estate pricing power.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-09-19-houston-msa-within-county-median-income

01

Wealth Is Not Distributed — It's Anchored

This 1.74x gap is not random. It's anchored in historical land use, industrial legacy, and public investment patterns. Fort Bend's high income is tied to its proximity to the Energy Corridor, major employer hubs, and strong school districts. San Jacinto County, by contrast, has fewer high-wage employers, lower property tax bases, and less access to regional transportation corridors. The result is not just income inequality — it's spatial entrenchment. Real estate value in high-income counties is reinforced by stable tax revenue, while lower-income counties face a feedback loop of underinvestment.

02

The Future Is Where the Income Gap Is

The most consequential real estate trend in Houston is not about price or inventory — it's about where opportunity is concentrated. As AI and data infrastructure grow in the Energy Corridor and West Loop (per TRERC), they will follow the existing wealth clusters, not the under-resourced ones. This means new development, higher rents, and greater capitalization in high-income counties. For investors and policy makers, the real question isn't where to build — it's how to break the cycle. The 1.74x ratio isn't just a number — it's a signal of where the next wave of urban inequality will form.

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