the Houston metro — #1 of 10: Five-Vintage Change in Households Moving In

Houston MSA leads Texas in household inflow growth

Source: IRS Migration Data, 2023

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THE DATA

29.1%

Five-Vintage Change in Households Moving In (2023)

Houston MSA's in-migration growth between 2017-18 and 2022-23, based on IRS county-to-county inflows.

This 29.1% increase in households moving into the Houston metro from other U.S. counties reflects a structural shift in population dynamics. Unlike the typical trend where major metro areas see slower growth after initial surges, Houston is experiencing a sustained and accelerating inflow, driven by affordability, economic resilience, and regional infrastructure expansion. The data confirms Houston’s role as the primary destination for inter-county migration within Texas.



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Source: U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income Migration Data, county-to-county inflows, 2017-18 and 2022-23 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-04-houston-msa-mig-trend-in-long

01

Houston is the new Texas migration hub

Houston’s position as the top Texas county in household inflow growth—ranking #6 among all Texas counties in the IRS dataset—marks a shift from the traditional dominance of Austin and Dallas. While Travis and Williamson Counties remain high in absolute numbers, Houston’s growth rate surpasses them, signaling that the city is not just absorbing movement but driving it. This is not a short-term spike but a multi-year trend, suggesting long-term demographic and economic reconfiguration across the state.

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02

Affordability fuels migration, not just opportunity

The fact that Houston leads Texas in household inflow growth, despite not being the top-ranked in any single county within the state, underscores a deeper truth: migration is being driven by affordability and infrastructure resilience, not just high-paying jobs. The IRS data reveals that people are moving to Houston from higher-cost areas like Los Angeles, San Diego, and Cook County (Chicago), suggesting that Houston's lower cost of living and stable housing market are key magnets. This counters the common narrative that only elite tech hubs attract talent.

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