#1 of 10: Change in the Income Gap Between Arriving and Departing Households

Houston MSA leads Texas in income gap growth

2.0% change in earnings between arrivals and leavers

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THE DATA

2.0%

Change in the Income Gap Between Arriving and Departing Households (2023)

Houston MSA leads Texas in the widening gap between incoming and outgoing household incomes.

This 2.0% increase reflects a growing divergence in economic profiles between those moving into the MSA and those leaving. The data suggests that new arrivals are not only more numerous but also bringing higher average incomes than those departing, a sign of selective migration toward higher-earning demographics.

Source: U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income Migration Data, county-to-county inflows, 2021-22 and 2022-23 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-16-houston-msa-mig-trend-agi



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Houston is attracting high-earning talent

This trend reinforces Houston’s role as a regional hub for innovation and career advancement, even as other cities face stagnation. The shift in income dynamics may signal a long-term repositioning of the MSA’s economic identity from a low-cost refuge to a high-value talent destination.

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Leavers are not leaving for better pay

This dynamic may also signal a growing affordability challenge for long-term residents. As the city attracts higher-earning newcomers, the pressure on housing and services increases, potentially pricing out existing communities even as wages rise overall. This is not a net gain for all—only for those who can access the new economic tier.

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