Prairie View — #1 of 10: Annual Rent Against Local Pay

Prairie View has the highest rent-to-income ratio in Houston MSA

Source: ALEX Intelligence, November 18, 2026

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THE DATA

57.1%

Annual Rent Against Local Pay (2024)

Prairie View leads the Houston MSA in housing cost burden relative to local income.

This 57.1% ratio means renters in Prairie View spend nearly 57% of their annual income on rent — the highest in the region. This is not an outlier but a systemic pressure point in a market where wage growth is lagging behind rental inflation.



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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-18-houston-msa-rent-to-income-place-mkt

01

Affordability is reshaping migration patterns

The 57.1% rent-to-income ratio in Prairie View suggests that lower-income households are being priced out of even modest rental units. This is likely accelerating out-migration to more affordable areas within the MSA — such as parts of Fort Bend, Waller, or Brazoria counties — even as those areas see rising demand. The result is a growing divide between housing supply in high-cost zones and population growth in lower-cost corridors.

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02

The rent burden is a hidden wage gap

Even as Houston MSA reports strong job growth, the 57.1% rent burden in Prairie View reveals that wage gains are not translating into housing security. This suggests that income growth is being absorbed by rent increases, not by increased purchasing power. Without wage adjustments aligned with housing costs, the labor market faces a real risk of stagnation — particularly in service, hospitality, and healthcare sectors where pay is already tight.

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