

Houston Historical Employment Data

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<http://theworksource.org/employer/historicemploymentdata.html>



Around 50 years ago, the Houston Standard Metropolitan Area (SMA) had an estimated labor force of 392,200. The area included one county, Harris, which incorporated 1,774 square miles of land. The metropolitan area has added a lot of jobs and more counties since then. Today, the new Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) has 10 counties: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto and Waller, with a labor force of 2,652,963 and an area that covers 9,190 square miles of land.

When Houston was a one-county metropolitan area back in the 1940s, the then-Texas Employment Commission (TEC) published a monthly report called Houston Labor Market. The TEC recorded the monthly job statistics for the Houston SMA and published its findings in this local area newsletter through the late 1960s. It stopped when the state office started publishing a statewide newsletter.

Now all of these reports are available exclusively in their original format on The WorkSource Web site.

The Web pages include data from 1952 on individual counties. Reports contain employment data for each of the 13 counties and for the Gulf Coast workforce region by quarter. The data was compiled from quarterly contribution and wage reports submitted by employers subject to the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act. Excluded from coverage is employment covered by the Railroad Retirement Act, self-employed, unpaid family workers, those employed by churches and some nonprofit organizations. The employment that is reported has several methodology breaks, causing data for certain time intervals to not be comparable with each other. Quarterly average employment data have been tabulated by industry group under the Standard Industrial Classification Manual on a county basis. Additional details are provided in notes and definitions.

The scanned data is presented in its original PDF format with numbers keyed into an Excel worksheet. Pages include typing errors, found in some of the totals and noted in the comments. Most of the data would have been revised and not published again in this publication, since the benchmark and revision process takes two years to complete. Anyone interested in seeing what the employment structure was like in the Houston area from 1949 to 1965, needs to recognize the information as "un-revised estimates."

A FEW MILESTONES

- **October 1961** – "The area non-farm wage and salary total dropped to mid-September, largely because of the late unlamented hurricane Carla." "Sharpstown Center's opening, plus Jubilee City and others, contributed to a gain estimated at 1,250 in retail trade."
- **June 1962** – "The effect of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration is not important concerning numbers employed; however, long-range predictions of what NASA will bring to this area seem almost fantastic. Among other things, Houston is expected to become an important electronics industry center."
- **August 1962** – "Employment in government is expected to rise almost 1,000 in September as NASA builds up its personnel."
- **April 1963** – "Contract construction pushed upward by 500. Current major projects include schools, apartment houses, a domed sports stadium and manned spacecraft center facilities."
- **May 1963** – "Agricultural employers added 1000 workers in the current period. Ideal weather conditions prevailed during the harvest of greens, green onions, radishes and cabbage. Tomato tying and pruning and cultivation of okra, cotton and corn were under way."
- **August 1963** – "Employment by NASA, local health institutions and city and county administrations boosted government by 500 during the month." "An increase in chemicals and petroleum refining, the results of settlement on August 6 of the 353-day labor dispute in these industries..." "Labor supply in the Houston area has been ample except for chronically short technical skills."
- **October 1963** – "A major shift from educational services employment to state and local government occurred the first of September when the University of Houston became a state institution."
- **February 1964** – "The expanding electronics industry supporting the manned spacecraft center augmented by increases by other instrument manufacturers were the primary factors in the rise of other durables."
- **January 1965** – "Nurses are always in short supply."
- **May 1965** – "Unemployment dropped to a record low at mid-April. The estimate of 15,200 unemployed was only 2.5 percent of the total labor force of 611,800."