

Population Facts in Harris County, Texas

August 2011

Situated in southeast Texas, Harris County encompasses 1,777 square miles of a sprawling urban and suburban landscape. Sixty-five percent of the land area lies within unincorporated areas where 1.56 million people reside.¹ Most residents live within the County's 34 municipalities, with over 2 million residents living within the city of Houston.² Within these geographic boundaries, Harris County is made up of diverse communities, each with a unique sociodemographic and cultural fabric.



This profile includes a range of demographic, social and economic indicators that describe Harris County and discusses how these indicators influence our opportunities for good health.

Table 1: Harris County Municipalities and Population, 2010

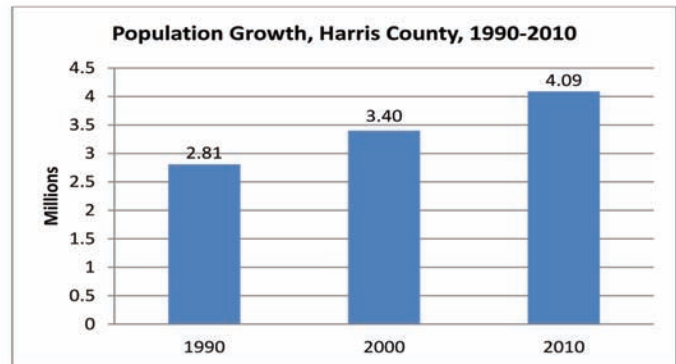
Municipality	2010 U.S. Census	Municipality	2010 U.S. Census
City of Baytown	71,802	City of Missouri City	67,358
City of Bellaire	16,855	City of Morgan's Point	339
City of Bunker Hill Village	3,633	City of Nassau Bay	4,002
City of Deer Park	32,010	City of Pasadena	149,043
City of El Lago	2,706	City of Pearland	91,252
City of Friendswood	35,805	City of Piney Point Village	3,125
City of Galena Park	10,887	City of Seabrook	11,952
City of Hedwig Village	2,557	City of Shoreacres	1,493
City of Hilshire Village	746	City of South Houston	16,983
City of Houston	2,099,451	City of Southside Place	1,715
City of Humble	15,133	City of Spring Valley	3,715
City of Hunters Creek Village	4,367	City of Stafford	17,693
City of Jacinto City	10,553	City of Taylor Lake Village	3,544
City of Jersey Village	7,620	City of Tomball	10,753
City of Katy	14,102	City of Waller	2,326
City of La Porte	33,800	City of Webster	10,400
City of League City	83,560	City of West University Place	14,787

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

Demographics

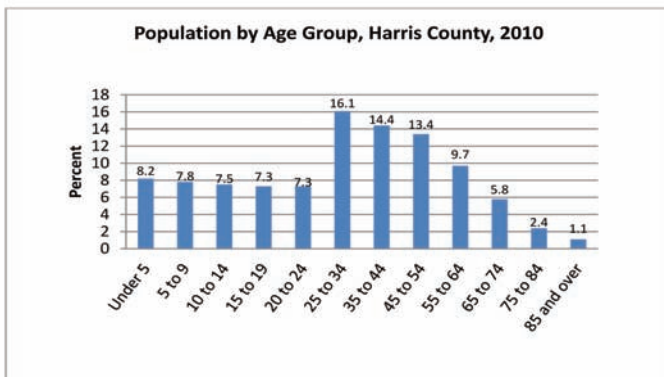
According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Harris County is the third most populous county in the United States, with an estimated 4.09 million residents.²

The population continues to grow rapidly having increased by 44% since 1990 and 20% since 2000. Further, the State Demographer project's that Harris County's population will reach 4.51 million by 2015 and 6.78 million by 2040.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census

Between 2000 and 2010, 75% of population growth was in unincorporated areas of Harris County.¹

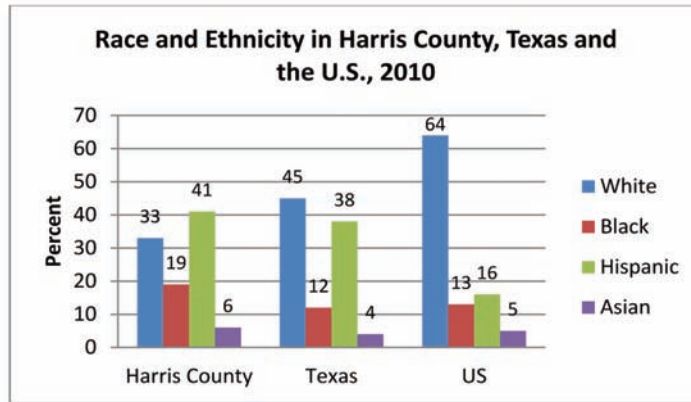


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

The population in Harris County is younger than both the Texas and U.S. population. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the median age in Harris County was 32.2 in 2010. This compares to a median age of 33.6 in Texas and 37.2 in the U.S. Eight percent of the Harris County population is older than 65 compared to 10.3% of the Texas population and 13% of the U.S. population.

Race and Ethnicity

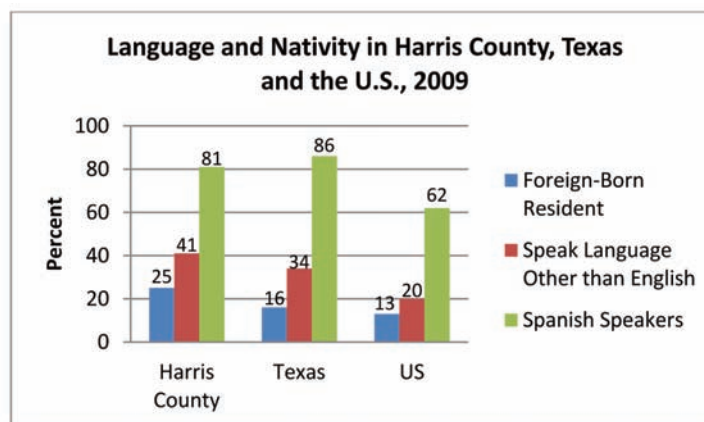
Harris County’s population is diverse, more so than that of Texas or the U.S. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Harris County has a greater proportion of African American and Asian residents than Texas or the nation, and a substantially higher proportion of Hispanic residents than the U.S. population.²



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

Language and Nativity

As in previous years, in 2009 Harris County had a greater proportion of foreign-born residents, as well as residents who do not speak English at home, than that of Texas or the nation.³ The majority of Harris County residents who speak a language other than English are Spanish speakers.



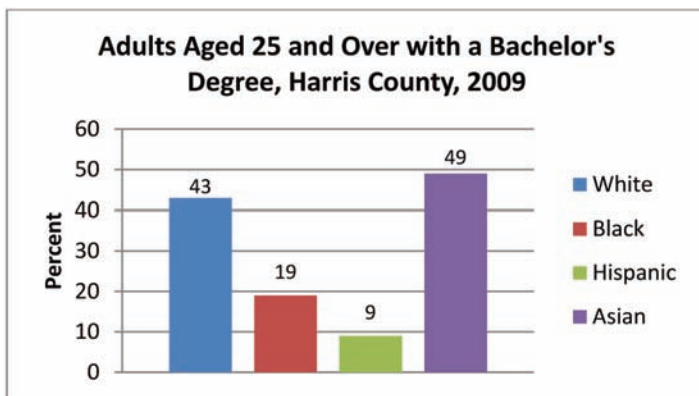
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009

Where We Live, Work, Learn and Play

Our health is impacted by the circumstances in which we live, work, learn and play as well as health care systems in place to prevent and manage illness.⁴ Poor social and economic circumstances such as low educational attainment, unemployment, inadequate income, sub-standard housing and access to health services affect our health.

Education

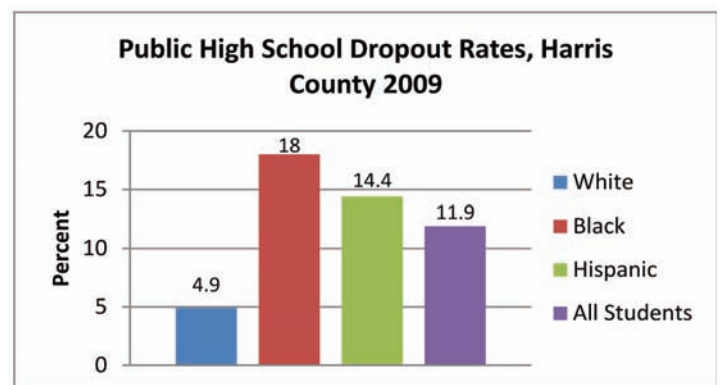
There is a well-established relationship between education and health. In general, those with the highest levels of education often experience less disability and death than those with the lowest levels of education. According to the World Health Organization, "Life expectancy is shorter and most diseases are more common the further down the social ladder in each society."⁵



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009

Compared to the U.S. and Texas, fewer Harris County residents aged 25 and over are high school graduates or the equivalent. According to the 2009 American Community Survey (ACS), 78% of Harris County residents aged 25 and over are high school graduates or the equivalent. This compares to a high school completion rate of 80% in Texas and 85% in the U.S.³

There are apparent differences in educational attainment among racial/ethnic groups in Harris County. White and Asian residents aged 25 and over obtain a Bachelor's degree or higher at more than twice the rate of Black and Hispanic residents. Further, the high school dropout rate among Black high school students in Harris County public school districts is more than three times the rate of white students.⁶

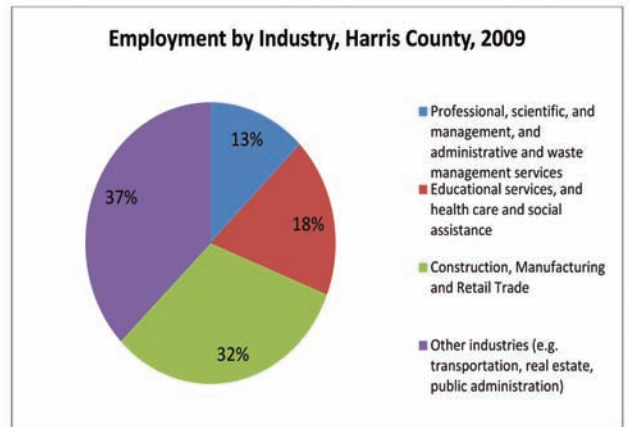


Source: Texas Education Agency

Employment and Income

Employment opportunities and the ability to earn adequate income influences health. Premature death is more than twice as likely for middle income Americans as for those at the top of the income ladder, and more than three times as likely for those at the bottom than those at the top.⁵

The 2010 unemployment rate reported by the Texas Workforce Commission for Harris County and Texas civilian labor force was 8.5% and 8.2%, respectively—compared to the U.S. rate of 9.6%.⁸



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009

In 2009, median household income decreased by 3.5% from 2008 in Harris County, Texas and the U.S. The median household income in Harris County was \$50,571, down from \$52,377 in 2008.³ In comparison, the median income in Texas households in 2009 was \$48,283 and \$50,224 in U.S. households. Year 2009 ACS data indicate that 17% of residents in Harris County lived below the poverty level, which in 2009 was \$11,161 for an individual and \$22,128 for a family of four.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps low-income individuals and families buy the food they need. According to the 2009 ACS, 143,724 Harris County households received SNAP benefits, a 41% increase from 2008.

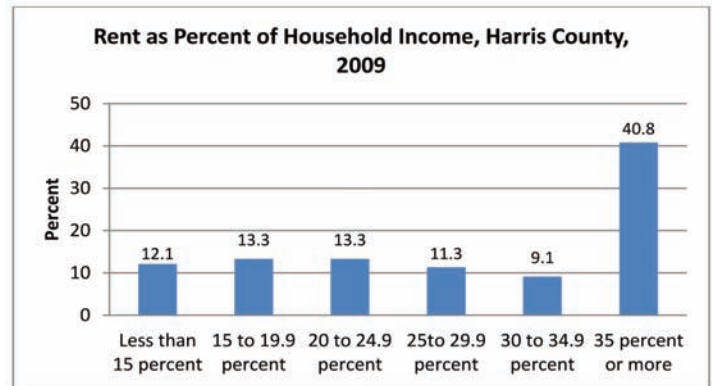
Table 2: Median Household Income and Percent of Households Receiving SNAP Benefits by Race/Ethnicity, Harris County, 2009

	White	Black	Hispanic	Total
Median Household Income (2009 inflation-adjusted dollars)	\$57,642	\$36,280	\$37,520	\$50,571
Percent of households that received SNAP benefits (formerly the Federal Food Stamp Program)	14%	39%	43%	10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009

Housing

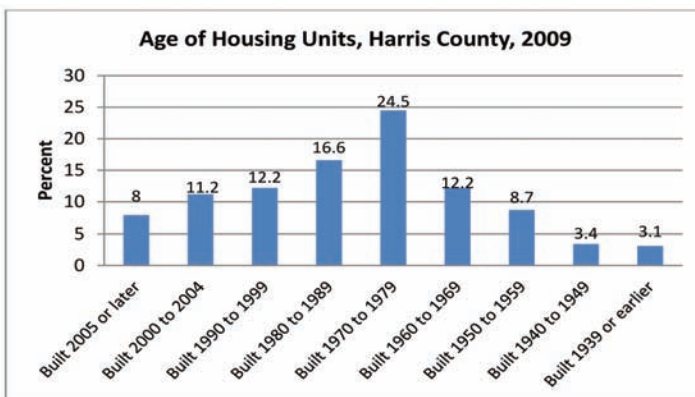
The ability to afford safe and adequate housing influences a person's health by limiting families' choices about where they live and whether they are able to purchase nutritious food and health care.⁹ Housing is considered "affordable" when a family spends less than 30% of its income on housing. Fifty percent of renters in Harris County and Texas spent more than 30% of their household income on housing compared with 52% of renters in the U.S.³



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009



Between July 2005 and June 2006, Texas led the nation in the total number of foreclosures.¹⁰



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009

The age of housing units also influences health through exposure to hazards such as lead. High levels of lead in the bloodstream can lead to learning disabilities, behavioral problems, seizures and death.

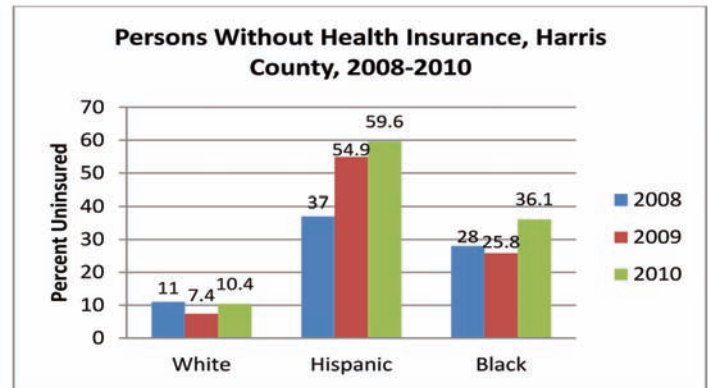
The risk of lead poisoning is greater among individuals residing in homes built prior to 1978 before the use of lead-based paint was banned. Further, although lead-based paint was banned, millions of housing units and buildings still contain lead-based paint or paint debris. According to the 2009 ACS, 52% of housing units in Harris County were built before 1980.

Access to Care

Health insurance status influences a person's ability to prevent major illness and to access health care before health problems become serious. People without insurance or without adequate coverage often delay care and are more likely to be hospitalized for conditions which could be treated in a primary care setting.¹¹

Texas continues to have the highest rate of uninsured persons in the nation. According to the 2010 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data, persons with

no health insurance coverage were 15.1% in the U.S. and 23.1% in both Texas and Harris County. During this time, the uninsured rate among Hispanics increased 48% between 2008 and 2009.¹²



Source: Texas Department of State Health Services, BRFSS

*Among the estimated 6.1 million uninsured U.S. citizens in Texas, 1 million will newly qualify for Medicaid as a result of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 according to the Center for Public Policy Priorities.*¹³

Data Sources:

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