

ONE COMPLETE HOUSTON:

UNDERSTANDING OUR
EQUITY OPPORTUNITIES AND
CHALLENGES OVERVIEW



Houston
Complete
Communities



RICE UNIVERSITY
Kinder Institute for
Urban Research



PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT



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HOUSTON'S UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY OUTCOMES

Houston is considered by many to be the land of opportunity and in many ways it is. Unfortunately, that opportunity flows differently to some Houstonians based on their zip code and their race and ethnicity group. This report measures data on 63 topical areas. The data coalesces into a score, called an Equity Indicator, that, when compared with scores in another Equity Indicator, provides a picture of whether opportunities are equally available to all Houstonians.

From an external perspective, Houston is a stunning and novel combination of cultures, languages, influences, business enterprises, learning, and traditions. Its present and future have been called the next great American experiment but as diversity increases in Houston, does equity keep pace? Do the services, opportunities, infrastructure, and leadership match the diversity of the fourth-largest city in the United States? This report hopes to shed light on these and other pressing questions.

Houston's overall Equity Score is 44.1 out of 100, delineating a dire need for improvements. Compared to other cities that have used the Equity Indicators methodology our score is higher than Dallas's 2021 score of 38 and Tulsa's 2022 score of 42.63. However, Houston follows behind St. Louis's 2018 score of 45.57 and Pittsburgh's 2018 score of 55.

This report, developed by the City of Houston, in collaboration with the Kinder Institute for Urban Research, uses methodology derived from the City University of New York's Institute for State and Local Governance in partnership with the Rockefeller Foundation and the Shell Foundation. This consistent methodology means that Houston's equity can be compared with other cities.

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KEY FINDINGS

Health and Public Safety had the greatest disparities across race and ethnic groups in Houston

29.2 HEALTH EQUITY SCORE 2022

24 PUBLIC SAFETY EQUITY SCORE 2022

- Black mothers are 3 times more likely than white mothers and nearly 6 times more likely than Hispanic mothers to die during pregnancy or within 42 days of giving birth
- Hispanic adults are twice as likely to be without health insurance as Black adults, and more than 4 times as likely to be without insurance as White adults
- Black residents are 6 times more likely to be a victim of homicide than white residents
- During traffic stops, Black drivers were 16 times more likely to have their cars searched than Asian drivers, 3.5 times more likely to have their cars searched than Hispanic drivers, and about 5 times more likely to have their car searched than white drivers

Some Environmental & Climate Risks are felt by all Houstonians, while others are disproportionately felt by people of color

56.1 ENVIRONMENTAL & CLIMATE RISKS EQUITY SCORE 2022

- Air pollution is a problem shared by all Houstonians as the number of air toxins with cancer risk being higher in Houston than 88% of the rest of the country
- Excessive heat islands exist all over Houston with summer temperatures over 98 degrees
- About 3 times as many homes were impacted by Hurricane Harvey and Winter Storm Uri in zip codes with majority Black and Hispanic residents compared to zip codes with majority white residents

Infrastructure had the most parity across race and ethnic groups, but this was sometimes because groups were all similarly exposed to substandard conditions

77.8 INFRASTRUCTURE EQUITY SCORE 2022

- There was about equal access to high-frequency public transportation; however, it was only about 50% of residents living within half a mile of a stop
- Commuting times were similar but translated to everyone spending 25-30 minutes each way getting to work
- Very high parity in the adequacy of the drainage system was seen across Houston, with only about 56% of drains being deemed adequate

Economic Opportunity points to very disparate conditions for families and households in Houston that if left unaddressed will perpetuate conditions of generational poverty and inequality

34.6 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY EQUITY SCORE 2022

- About 50% of white workers and Asian workers are in high-paying jobs (like, engineer, lawyer, architect, or doctor), compared to only 13% of Hispanic workers and 17% of Black workers
- Unemployment rates are 3 times higher for Black adults than Asian adults or white adults
- White households earn twice as much as either Black households or Hispanic households

These indicators are a starting point. They provide the data for stakeholders and policymakers to make the necessary decisions to move Houston forward and close the opportunity gap. Policies that address issues even across the population will not achieve this. Tough decisions must be made about how to move forward in a targeted way, instead of one-size-fit-all. And finally, continuous measurement, monitoring and updating will ensure that policies achieve the goal.