

KNOW YOUR
HARRIS COUNTY
GOVERNMENT

PRESENTED BY





Harris County Precinct One

El Franco Lee, COMMISSIONER

1001 Preston Ave., Suite 950
Houston, Texas 77002
713/755-6111



Greetings:

County government impacts our daily lives more than any other political entity. The judicial system is at work when we serve on a jury, have a will probated, or file a small claim. We also use county services when we purchase auto license tags, apply for a marriage license, register to vote, and many other services as we strive to provide accessible, quality service with a 'user friendly' methodology.

*Harris County is the largest county in population in the State of Texas and it is important to understand how its operations impact us personally as well as its impact on our families and neighbors. Although Harris County Precinct One is highlighted, this booklet, '**Know Your County Government**' has been prepared to give you a general overview of Harris County and its various operations. The purpose of this booklet is designed to fulfill a twofold mission of increasing your knowledge of the regulations and services provided through the Harris County system and to prepare you to meet the frequent challenges faced by citizens residing and working in a large mostly urban county.*

The members of the Harris County Commissioners Court, along with its staff and departmental personnel are in a constant mode of evaluating its services and restructuring, where appropriate, for the purpose of making county services more accessible and efficient. In an effort to keep abreast of new technologies and implement new concepts based on the demands of an ever-growing city and county constituency, Harris County, by necessity, serves as the pivotal component in a vast metropolitan area. Within Harris County there exist some 34 municipalities, with the City of Houston being the most populated city in Harris County as well as the State of Texas. Harris County collaborates with some 5 or more contiguous counties in providing services from the offices of medical examiner, homeland security and emergency management, and hospital systems management, etc.

Your interest and support are very much appreciated and I look forward to your continued participation in the Harris County governmental process.

Sincerely,

***El Franco Lee, Commissioner
Harris County Precinct One***

For centuries, units of land have been subdivided for purposes of governing. The word ‘county’ dates back to the 1400s, to units of land in England, called ‘Shires’. English colonists brought the idea of ‘a county’ to North America.

County government was important to the growth and development of the United States. Historically, counties were created to carry out the administrative responsibilities of the states when there were few large cities, and small towns were scattered.

Today, the ‘county’ remains the most traditional form of government throughout the nation. Yet, as our cities grow to sizes approximating whole counties, the ‘county form of government’ is emerging as a leading and often necessary method to deal efficiently with large metropolitan areas.

Harris County, established in 1837 during the period when Texas was still a Republic, was recognized by the Texas Constitution in 1876 along with other subdivisions within the State of Texas. The State Constitution gave the Texas Legislature the authority to create subdivisions, which resulted in the State of Texas being divided into 254 counties.

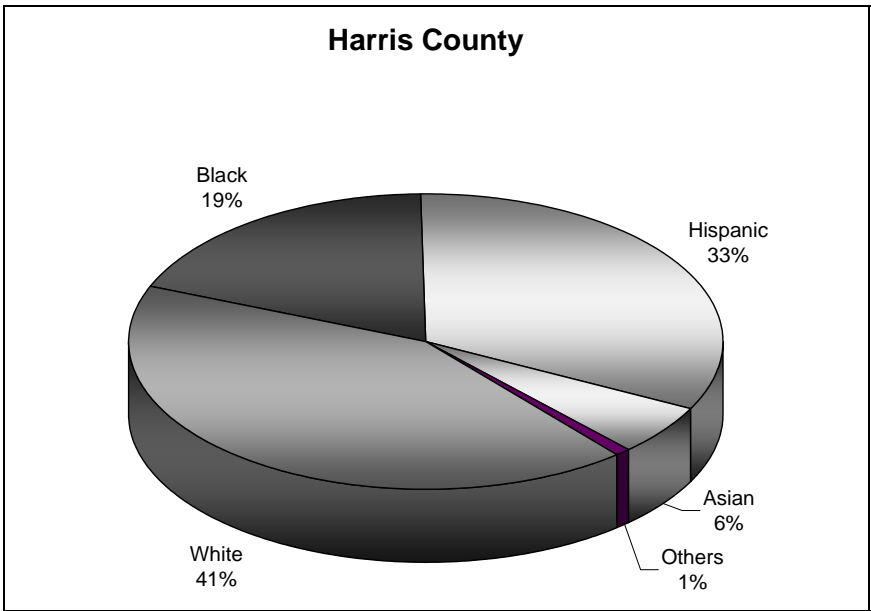
The State Constitution defines the divisions and organizational structure of every county. Each county is divided into four Commissioners’ precincts and can have up to eight Justice of the Peace precincts. Each county has the following elected officials: County Judge, four Commissioners, Constables, Justices of the Peace, Tax Assessor-Collector, Surveyor, Attorney, Treasurer, and Sheriff, who are elected officials with four-year terms of office.

A ‘county’ does not have the authority to establish its own laws. The legislature must enact special laws and ordinances for the county to enforce. County officials work closely with state lawmakers to develop legislation that supports the efficient operation of county government.

Harris County was created in 1837, covering some 1788 square miles with a Year 2004 population of 3.6 million. Harris County is the largest populous county in the State of Texas and the third most populous county in the United States. The City of Houston is the County seat.

According to the 2002 American Community Survey, authorized by the U.S. Census Bureau:

- the population was almost evenly divided between males and females;
- the median age was 31.8 years;
- 29% of the population were under 18 years and 7% were 65 years and older;
- 24% of the people living in Harris County in 2002 were foreign born; 76% were native including 70% who were born in Texas;
- Among people at least 5 years old living in Harris County in 2002, 38% spoke a language, in the home, other than English. Of those speaking a language in the home, other than English, 81% spoke Spanish and 19% spoke some other language; 50% reported that they did not speak English “very well”.



Commissioners Court 1-5
County Judge
Commissioners

Harris County Departments 6-12
Public Infrastructure Department
 Office of Public Infrastructure
 Flood Control District
 Engineering
 Toll Road Authority
Management Services
Information Technology Center (ITC)
Facilities & Property Management (FPM)
Public Health & Environmental Service
Community & Economic Development
Library Services
 County Library
 Law Library
Youth & Family Services
 Children and Adult Protective Services
 Children’s Assessment Center
 Community & Juvenile Justice Education
 Domestic Relations
 Juvenile Probation
 Mental Health & Mental Retardation Authority
 (MHMRA)
 Texas Cooperative Extension

Administration of Justice 13-16
Constables
Sheriff
Sheriff’s Civil Service
Fire & Emergency Services
Medical Examiner
County Clerk
District Clerk

County Attorney
District Attorney
Community Supervision & Corrections
Pretrial Services
Justices of the Peace
County Courts
Probate Courts
District Courts
Courts of Appeals

Fiscal Services & Purchasing 17

County Auditor
County Treasurer
Tax Assessor-Collector
Purchasing Agent

Harris County Commissioner
 Precinct One 18-27

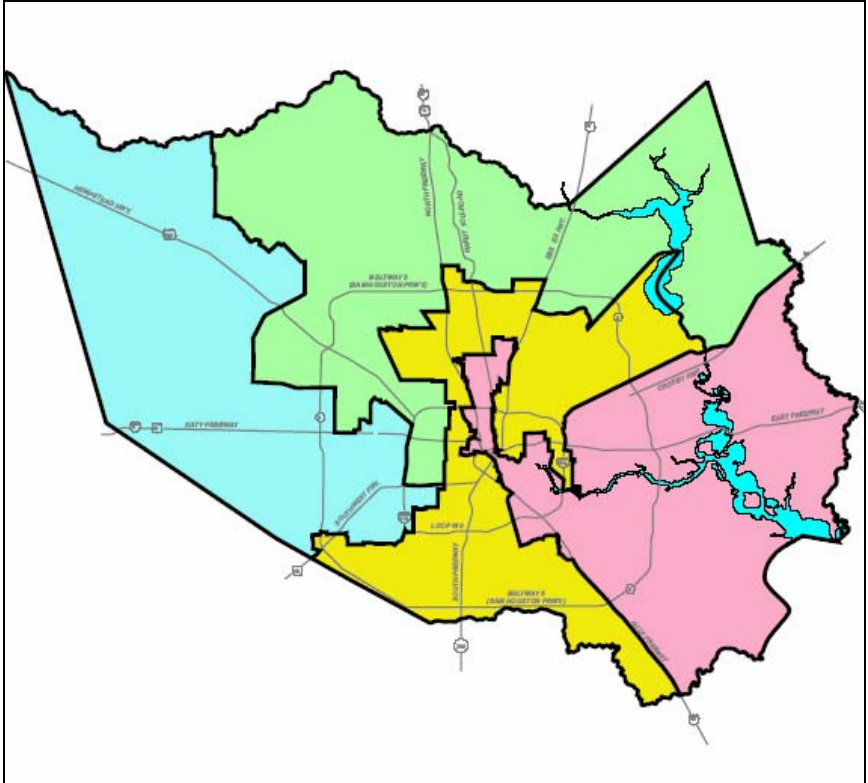
Frequently Asked Questions 28-42

Boards and Commissions 43-44

Harris County Population Statistics 45

Municipalities in Harris County 46

Frequently Dialed Harris County
 Telephone Numbers 47



2002 Harris County Commissioners Precinct Lines

- Precinct 1* **Yellow**
- Precinct 2* **Pink**
- Precinct 3* **Aqua**
- Precinct 4* **Green**

Structure and Functions of Harris County Commissioners Court:

The administrative body of county government is the Commissioners' Court. It is comprised of the County Judge (elected countywide) and four Commissioners (elected by precinct). Each Commissioner's precinct represents one-fourth of the county's population. Harris County Commissioners Court meets as a body on prescheduled Tuesdays (at least two sessions per month) at 10:00 a.m. on the ninth floor of the County Administration Building, 1001 Preston Street. The Court must have a quorum of three members to conduct business, except for levying taxes, when four Court members must be present.

Duties and Responsibilities of Commissioners Court:

- Hold annual budget hearings and adopt county budget.
- Set the county tax rate.
- Appoint department heads, hire employees and fill vacancies of elected county officials.
- Establish voting precincts and appoint precinct judges.
- Supervise construction and maintenance of county roads, bridges, parks, courthouses, jails, libraries, and other county facilities and amenities.
- Let contracts in the name of Harris County.
- Appoint board members to the Hospital District, Children & Adult Protective Services, Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority, Housing Authority, Port of Houston Authority, Metropolitan Transit Authority, and others.

County Judge

The County Judge is the presiding officer of the county's governing body, Commissioners Court, and judge of the county constitutional court. The judge's office administers applications for beer and wine licenses and applications for delayed birth certificates and death records. The *Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*, and the *Planning Council for the*

Ryan White HIV Services are all part of the judge's office. The judge is also chairman of the Harris County Juvenile Board. **The County Judge is elected by the qualified voters of the county for a four-year term.**

Commissioners

Each commissioner is a member of Commissioners Court, which is the administrative head of county government. Although each commissioner is in charge of the administration of parks, and road and bridge projects in his/her precinct, as a member of the court, a commissioner is often the liaison for certain county activities. **Each of the four county commissioners is elected as a member of Commissioners Court by the qualified voters of a commissioner's precinct to a four-year term.**

<u>Official</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
County Judge		
Robert Eckels <i>www.co.harris.tx.us/judge_eckels</i>	713.755.4000	2006
Commissioners		
El Franco Lee <i>www.co.harris.tx.us/comm_lee</i>	713.755.6111	2008
Sylvia Garcia <i>www.co.harris.tx.us/comm_garcia</i>	713.755.6220	2006
Steve Radack <i>www.co.harris.tx.us/comm_pct.3</i>	713.755.6300	2008
Jerry Eversole <i>www.co.harris.tx.us/comm_eversole</i>	713.755.6444	2006

To Write Your County Official:

Mailing Address: *Harris County Administration Building
1001 Preston Street
Houston, Texas 77002*

County Judge: *The Honorable _____
Dear Judge _____*

Commissioners: *The Honorable _____
Dear Commissioner _____*



HARRIS COUNTY ORGANIZATION CHART

MARCH 2004

HARRIS COUNTY VOTERS

COMMISSIONERS COURT	
COUNTY JUDGE	COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (4)

COUNTY SERVICES

- PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE
- MANAGEMENT SERVICES
- INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
- FACILITIES & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
- PUBLIC HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
- COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- LIBRARY SERVICES
- YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

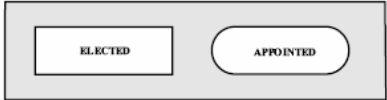
FISCAL SERVICES & PURCHASING

- AUDITOR
- TREASURER
- TAX ASSESSOR-COLLECTOR
- PURCHASING

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

- CONSTABLES (8)
- SHERIFF
- SHERIFF'S CIVIL SERVICE
- FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES
- MEDICAL EXAMINER
- COUNTY CLERK
- DISTRICT CLERK
- COUNTY ATTORNEY
- DISTRICT ATTORNEY
- COMMUNITY SUPERVISION & CORRECTIONS
- COURT SERVICES

- JUSTICES OF THE PEACE (16)
- COUNTY COURTS (19)
- PROBATE COURTS (4)
- DISTRICT COURTS (59)
- COURTS OF APPEALS (2)



Public Infrastructure

Office of Public Infrastructure

The Public Infrastructure Department has the responsibility to develop budgets, plans, and studies for an integrated County infrastructure program that includes roads, parks, buildings, and flood control. This department includes an Office of Public Infrastructure, the Flood Control District, an Engineering Division, Toll Road Authority, and a Research & Operations Division, which includes the Right of Way Section. The executive director and Research & Operations are part of the Office of Public Infrastructure for budget accounting purposes. **The Executive Director of Public Infrastructure is appointed by Commissioners Court.**

Flood Control District

The 'district' has the responsibility to devise and implement a storm water management plan for the county and to construct and maintain projects to reduce flooding. It designs flood control improvements, carries out capital improvement projects, maintains drainage facilities, approves subdivision drainage plans, and in cooperation with the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, provides flood watch and flood alert programs. The district encompasses over 1700 square miles, 22 major watersheds, and 2500 miles of watercourses. **The Flood Control District Director is appointed by the Executive Director of the Public Infrastructure Department.**

Engineering

The Engineering Division of Public Infrastructure is responsible for all phases of engineering and construction for county facilities, including buildings, parks, roadways, and traffic signalization. The Engineer also reviews subdivision development and planning, issuance of development permits, operation of flood plain management program, and coordination of road bond programs. **The Engineering Director is appointed by Commissioners Court.**

Toll Road Authority

The main objective for the authority is to complete, operate and maintain the Toll Road system, which currently includes the Hardy Toll Road, Sam Houston Toll Road, and Westpark Toll Road. **The Director of the Toll Road Authority is appointed by Commissioners Court, which is the governing board for the Toll Road Authority.**

Management Services

The Management Services Office is divided into six sections:

1. *Office of Coordination & Budget:* prepares the annual County and Flood Control budgets, special studies, and the regular agenda for Commissioners Court.
2. *Human Resources & Risk Management Division:* provides employment and training services and handles claims, loss control, insurance, benefits administration, and compensation analyses.
3. *Financial Management Division:* encompasses the Offices of Financial Services & Financial Planning and is responsible for analysis, research and development of long-range financial business plans for county entities, bank relations, cash management, investment of funds, and coordination and monitoring of bond issues and debts.
4. *Budget Management:* monitors the budget and provides analyses and reports regarding county operations and management information.
5. *Office of Legislative Relations:* coordinates and tracks legislation, and provides other legislative services.
6. *Office of Fleet Services:* maintains the county's fleet of vehicles.

The Director of Management Services & County Budget Officer is appointed by Commissioners Court in accordance with the Local Government Code.

Information Technology Center

The ITC is responsible for providing planning and assistance for county departments in the distribution of data processing, and network services and applications. The telecommunications division purchases, installs and maintains telephones, radios, other related devices in the county, and provides services and training for communication systems and functions. The Justice Information Management System Division (JIMS) provides an integrated system for the courts and law enforcement. **The Director of ITC is appointed by Commissioners Court.**

Facilities & Property Management

The Facilities & Property Management Department plans, operates and maintains county buildings and leased facilities; has oversight responsibility of construction and remodeling projects, and building security services. **The Director of Facilities & Property Management is appointed by Commissioners Court.**

Public Health & Environmental Services

This department's chief purpose is that of prevention of disease and maintenance of health standards in the county, with personal preventive services aimed primarily at the indigent and working poor to reduce unnecessary morbidity and mortality in that segment of the population. The department also provides preventive health care, child health and immunization programs, nursing, communicable and environmental disease control, dental health, health education, nutrition, sanitation, mosquito and animal control, and rabies control programs. **The Director of Public Health & Environmental Services is appointed by Commissioners Court.**

Office of Community & Economic Development

The Office of Community and Economic Development plans and implements the Community Development Grant program outside of Houston for smaller cities and the unincorporated areas of Harris County to benefit low and moderate income people, prevent or eliminate slums and blight, encourage economic development, and increase job opportunities. The program is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Community Development

Services include Housing Rehabilitation, Assisted Housing and The Lead Base Paint Program. **The Director of the Office of Community and Economic Development is appointed by Commissioners Court.**

Library Services

County Library

The County Library is a network of some 26 branches, created for the main purpose of providing books and materials to aid individuals in educational pursuits, and in service as an informational resource for research and assistance in the areas of education, civic and cultural activities of groups and organizations. **The Director/County Librarian is appointed by Commissioners Court.**

Law Library

The Law Library provides legal reference materials for use by judges, litigants, and attorneys. **The Director/Law Librarian is recommended by a committee of the Houston Bar Association for appointment by Commissioners Court.**

Youth and Family Services

Children and Adult Protective Services

This department's services are provided by the Texas Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS) and Harris County Children and Adult Protective Services (HCCAPS). The program's aim is to protect children from abuse and child neglect. Some of the services are medical and dental; psychological and developmental assessments; permanency planning team services; emergency shelter care; case management services for status offenders and children in need of supervision; school-based services for at-risk youth and their families; and prevention services for youth in justice of the peace courts.

The *Adult Guardianship Program*, a division of the Children and Adult Protective Services Department provides services for adults such as indigent wards of the program. The state employees work in

cooperation with and are supported by staff of HCCAPS. **The Executive Director of Children and Adult Protective Services is responsible to its board, which is appointed by Commissioners Court.**

Children's Assessment Center

The mission of Children's Assessment Center (CAC) is to protect children by providing on-site agency cooperation and use of a multi-disciplinary team approach in prevention, investigation, assessment, referral for prosecution, and treatment of child sexual abuse. **The Executive Director is appointed by Commissioners Court in cooperation with the Board of the CAC Foundation.**

Community & Juvenile Justice Education

Community & Juvenile Justice Education (CJJE) is administered through the Harris County Juvenile Board. A Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program is mandated by Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code to provide education for certain expelled and adjudicated youth based on standards of academic accountability and performance as approved by the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC). The TJPC and local school districts provide funds to the Juvenile Board for the services. In addition, CJJE administers a state open enrollment charter school for juveniles placed in a Harris County Juvenile Probation Department detention or residential facility. **The Director is appointed by Commissioners Court upon recommendation by the Juvenile Board.**

Domestic Relations

The Domestic Relations Office main purpose is to provide service to families of Harris County by focusing on the needs of children involved in family litigations. The Office is comprised of three divisions: (1) *The Legal Enforcement Division* provides legal representation to establish parentage, establish/enforce child support and visitation, and terminate wage-withholding orders. This division also conducts attorney consultations, provides information to employers regarding court orders for child support and visitation,

and maintains the Friend of the Court and Probation Programs; (2) *The Family Court Services Division* provides the family district courts with social study investigations in adoptions and contested child custody/access litigation pursuant to Texas Family Code, and in partnership with local agencies. This division also provides drug & alcohol intervention/testing and high conflict parenting classes; and (3) *The Alternative Dispute Resolution Division* performs family mediations, access facilitation, and parenting conferences. **The Director is appointed by Commissioners Court.**

Juvenile Probation

The Juvenile Probation Department provides support and assistance to the district courts for juvenile offenders who come within authority of the Texas Family Code. Responsibilities include screening of all juveniles referred to the department, provision of court-mandated services and placements, and operation of institutions and programs for youths in custody. **The Chief Juvenile Probation Officer is appointed by the Juvenile Board pursuant to provisions of the Human Resources Code.**

Mental Health & Mental Retardation Authority

The Mental Health & Mental Retardation Authority (MHMRA) is responsible for making comprehensive mental health and mental retardation services available to county residents and for screening operations at the Psychiatric Hospital where decisions are made concerning treatment of mental illness and hospital commitments for county patients. **The director is appointed by the Harris County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority Board of Trustees, and the board trustees are appointed by Commissioners Court.**

Texas Cooperative Extension

The Agricultural Extension Department is a part of the Texas Cooperative Extension, which is a cooperative educational agency that seeks to disseminate to citizens of Harris County, information in connection with agriculture, natural resources, nutrition, horticulture, community development, 4-H Club activities, and

related matters. **The County Director is appointed by Commissioners Court upon recommendation by the District Agent at Texas A&M University in accordance with the Texas Agriculture Code.**



Constables

The eight constables serve civil process issued by courts in the county, such as suits for debts, divorce suits, eviction writs, foreclosure documents and summons. They also serve criminal warrants issued through justice of the peace courts and provide bailiffs for those courts. The Constable of Precinct One has the added responsibility of handling mental warrants and juvenile court process. The Constables also have patrol personnel. **Each Constable is elected within a constable precinct for a four-year term.**

Sheriff

The department is divided into the following bureaus: Executive, Human Resources, Detention, Detective, Patrol, and Technical Services. Jurisdiction includes the entire county for the prevention of criminal actions and arrest of offenders. Responsibilities include furnishing bailiffs in all state courts and warrant officers for criminal courts; supervision of the jail system; patrol of unincorporated areas; detective and investigative services; return of prisoners from other jurisdictions; collection of bond forfeitures; and administration of a peace officer training academy. **The Sheriff is elected county-wide for a four-year term.**

Sheriff's Civil Service

The Sheriff's Civil Service Office promotes professionalism and rights of appeal for employees of the Sheriff's Department as set forth in rules and regulations formulated, adopted, and administered by a seven-member Civil Service Commission. **The Director is appointed by the Civil Service Commission.**

Fire & Emergency Services

The Fire Marshal plans and coordinates fire prevention and fire control services in the unincorporated areas of the county in accordance with Chapter 352, Subchapter B, of the Local Government Code. Duties include keeping reports and records of fires, inspecting fire and life safety hazards in unincorporated areas, and assisting volunteer fire departments and fire districts. Whenever arson is suspected in serious

cases, an investigation is conducted. The Fire Marshal is the Director of Fire & Emergency Services. **The Fire Marshal is appointed by Commissioners Court.**

Medical Examiner

This department seeks to determine the cause and manner of unattended or unusual deaths in the county. The Examiner performs postmortem investigations and examinations, provides medical testimony in murder cases, instructs law enforcement agencies in accident, suicide and homicide investigations, conducts pretrial conferences for assistant district attorneys, presents seminars for grand jurors, alerts city and county health departments of potential communicable or contagious disease, and maintains vital statistics. **The Medical Examiner is appointed by Commissioners Court.**

County Clerk

Duties of this department involve keeping the public records of the county, including those filed by the general public with the County Clerk and all records of actions of Commissioners Court, the probate courts, and county civil courts-at-law. The clerk handles all special and general elections called by the county and provides for assignment of voting equipment supplies to polling places, trains and coordinates election officials, and tabulates election returns. **The County Clerk is elected county-wide for a four-year term.**

District Clerk

Responsibilities of the District Clerk include custodial care and safekeeping of all court records for the 59 district courts and 15 county criminal courts, and accounting for all monies paid in as deposits on civil cases awaiting disposition and all monies awarded to minors in court actions that are paid into the registry of the court. The department accounts for and processes child support payments and also coordinates the jury system for the courts. **The District Clerk is elected county-wide for a four-year term.**

County Attorney

The County Attorney's Office *provides legal representation in civil matters* as specified by state law for county agencies, the Flood Control

District, and Hospital District in county, state, and federal courts. Legal assistance is provided in areas of tort claims, condemnations, delinquent taxes, title examinations, contracts, agreements, legal opinions, employee claims, and suits. **The County Attorney is elected county-wide for a four-year term.**

District Attorney

The District Attorney's Office *represents the state in all criminal cases* in district, county and justice courts. Responsibilities include screening of cases, representing the state in cases before grand juries, prosecuting cases in all criminal courts in the county, investigating special white collar and economic crimes, advising police and citizens on criminal matters, and performing special services in matters such as non-support, worthless check, welfare fraud, and consumer fraud cases. **The District Attorney is elected county-wide for a four-year term.**

Community Supervision & Corrections

The Community Supervision & Corrections Department serves 22 district criminal courts and 15 county criminal courts with supervision and services for felony and misdemeanor offenders. The department provides pre-sentence investigations and special restitution programs for the courts. Staff is paid through a separate state judicial district trust fund. The judges contract with the county for payroll and purchasing services, and the county by statute provides facilities, equipment and utilities. **The Director of Community Supervision and Corrections is appointed by the judges presiding over criminal cases.**

Pretrial Services

Pretrial Services gathers information concerning the criminal and social history of defendants for use by the county and district criminal courts in considering bond. Defendants released on personal bond may be required to pay the agency a fee based on judicial determination and state law. **The Director is appointed by Commissioners Court.**

Justices of the Peace

There are 16 Justices of the Peace in Harris County. Each is responsible for preparing his/her docket for small claims, civil suits, and class "C"

misdeemeanors. The JPs also issue warrants, handle miscellaneous complaints, and perform marriages. **Each Justice of the Peace is elected within one of eight JP precincts for a four-year term.**

County Courts

There are 15 county criminal courts and four county civil courts. A central administrative office provides technical, legal, and support staff and coordinators for the courts. The administrative staff also provides support for the Justices of the Peace. **Each Judge is elected county-wide for a four-year term.**

Probate Courts

There are four probate courts in Harris County. They have jurisdiction over the probation of wills, appointment of guardians, and the settlement, partition and distribution of estates. Probate Courts Nos. 3 and 4 share in processing the mental illness dockets with staff support by Court 3. **Each Judge is elected county-wide for a four-year term.**

District Courts

There are 59 district courts in Harris County. They are divided into four trial divisions with 25 courts in the civil division, 22 in criminal, nine in family law, and three in juvenile. The district courts have a central office of administration, which includes research and support staff and coordinators for the courts. The family law courts have a separate associate judge and bailiff system and the juvenile courts have associate judges. **Each Judge is elected county-wide for a four-year term.**

Courts of Appeals

The First and Fourteenth Courts of Appeals are located in Houston. The courts hear cases from the following thirteen counties: Austin, Brazoria, Burleson, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Grimes, Harris, Trinity, Walker, Waller and Washington counties. The courts have intermediate appellate jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases from trial courts in the district. Each appellate court is composed of a chief justice and eight associate justices. **Each Justice is elected by all the counties in the district for a six-year term.**

County Auditor

The County Auditor is the chief financial officer of the county and is substantially responsible for all county finance and accounting control functions, including payroll services. In addition, the County Auditor is the internal auditor for the county, Hospital District and Port Authority. **The Auditor is appointed by the district judges for a two-year period.**

County Treasurer

The Treasurer is chief custodian of county funds and receives all monies belonging to the county from whatever source. The Treasurer keeps and accounts for the funds in designated depositories and disburses the funds as Commissioners Court may require or direct, not inconsistent with constituted law. The Treasurer also serves the Flood Control District and the Port of Houston Authority. **The Treasurer is elected county-wide for a four-year term.**

Tax Assessor-Collector

Responsibilities of this department include assessing and collecting taxes for the county and countywide districts and collection of certain state taxes and fees. The office registers and prepares lists of eligible voters, registers vehicles, processes vehicle titles, collects sales tax on all automobile transfers, and collects license fees for wine and beer licenses. **The Tax Assessor-Collector is elected county-wide for a four-year term.**

Purchasing Agent

The Purchasing Agent supervises the competitive bid process and provides for the purchase of items not subject to the competitive bid process. Such duties include purchase of supplies, materials and equipment used by the county, Flood Control District, Hospital District, 911 Emergency Network, and Community Supervision & Corrections. The Purchasing Department also maintains an inventory of property owned by the county and Flood Control District. **The Purchasing Agent is appointed by a board composed of three district judges and two members of Commissioners Court in accordance with the Local Government Code, for a term of two-years.**

The qualified voters of Harris County every four years elect four Commissioners for terms of four years to serve as commissioners of the county's four commissioner-precincts. The Commissioners serve as members of Harris County Commissioners Court, the administrative head of our county government. As Commissioner of Harris County Precinct One, **it's a pleasure to acquaint you with *Precinct One's Mission Statement and Precinct One's Vision Statement.***

MISSION STATEMENT

The primary charge to all commissioners is to maintain the administration and operations of parks, and road & bridge projects. To this end, the daily Mission of Harris County Precinct One is to efficiently and effectively develop, maintain and enhance precinct parks, and road & bridge programs with the added component and provisions of community county-services/referrals and educational-recreational programming within the boundaries of Precinct One.

In addition to Precinct One's primary charge, the precinct's mission also includes the provision of activities, transportation and services for senior citizens and youth, including a division dedicated to delivery of social services and referrals on behalf of the indigent populations of the county.

VISION STATEMENT

The Vision of Harris County Precinct One is multifaceted. Precinct One's vision is that of providing quality and accessible county services to those within Precinct One. The vision includes not only services and referrals, it also includes the provision and usage of environmentally safe and appropriate equipment and facilities. ***In total, the vision is designed to capture the reality of area senior citizens, young adults, youth and their family's exposure to opportunities regarding quality and accessible health, educational and recreational services, and structured activities, all designed to inform and empower communities in the development and enhancement of their quality of life.***

As a result of the 2002 Census and Redistricting, the geographical configuration conducted by Commissioners Court has changed boundaries of Precinct One with the inclusion of additional miles of roads & bridges, public schools and residents. Precinct One is the most heavily urban populated of all Harris County Commissioners' precincts.

Commissioner El Franco Lee, the elected head of Harris County Precinct One, has the responsibility to administer the precinct program divisions of Road & Bridge, Parks, and the general administration of the Precinct. Commissioner Lee has responsibility of the charge involving the planning, design and implementation of capital improvements on behalf of Road & Bridge and Parks development, and construction and maintenance of projects.

Commissioner El Franco Lee and his staff also work closely with other Harris County departments, constituents and various public and private agencies/organizations to provide quality and accessible services to Precinct One residents. In addition, Commissioner Lee has created a number of focused non-profit organizations to benefit senior citizens and youth/young adults, and to better serve and assist in solving human issues among the many diverse communities of Precinct One.



Precinct One Facts and Figures

Population: 827,341

Square miles: 323.0181

Road miles: 629.04

Bridges: 7,175 feet

Voting Precincts: 272

Congressional Districts: 7, 9, 18, 22, 29

State Senate Districts: 6, 11, 13, 15, 17

State Representative Districts: 127, 129, 131, 134, 135, 139, 140,
141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149

Justice of the Peace and Constable Precincts: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7

Colleges and Universities:

Baylor College of Medicine; Houston Community College: Northeast, Central campuses; Houston Graduate School of Theology; North Harris College; Prairie View A&M University Nursing School; Rice University; San Jacinto College District, San Jacinto College South; Texas A&M University, Institute of Biosciences and Technology; South Texas College of Law; Texas Southern University; Texas Woman's University; University of Houston Central; University of Houston Downtown; University of St. Thomas; UT-Health Science Center.

The **Downtown Harris County Courthouse Complex** is situated in Precinct One.

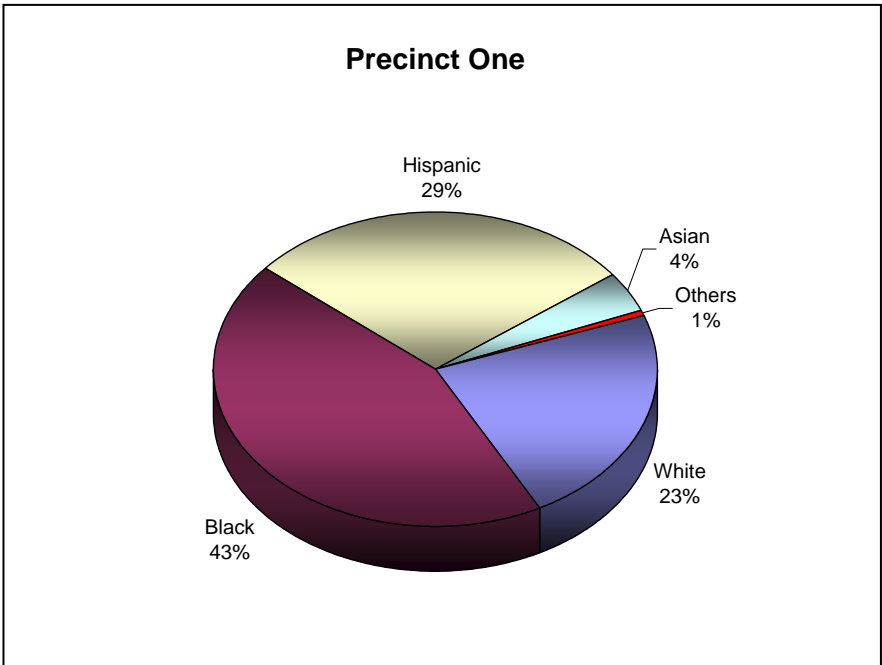
The **Domed Stadium Reliant Park Complex**, located at 610 Loop and Kirby Drive, consisting of 263 acres and operated by the Harris County Sports & Convention Corporation (HCSCC), is situated within Precinct One, as well as the Toyota Center, Minute Maid Park and Harris County-Houston Sports Authority (HCHSA).

Zip Codes in Precinct One:

77001	77009	77025	77037	77051	77078	77098
77002	77010	77026	77038	77053	77085	77477
77003	77016	77028	77039	77054	77087	77546
77004	77018	77029	77044	77060	77088	77581
77005	77019	77030	77045	77061	77089	77598
77006	77020	77031	77047	77071	77091	
77007	77021	77033	77048	77075	77093	
77008	77022	77035	77050	77076	77096	

Precinct One Population: 827,341

- White 188,270
- Black 363,515
- Hispanic 236,792
- Asian 33,529
- Others 5,235



Precinct One Road and Bridge Division

The Road and Bridge Division is responsible for road and bridge construction and maintenance in the unincorporated areas of Harris County Precinct One. Interlocal agreements with the City of Houston allow Precinct One to maintain certain thoroughfares within the Houston City Limits. This department also constructs roads within Precinct One parks and assists with the development of hike & bike and jogging trails, and special projects such as the SPARK (School Parks) Playgrounds Program, a collaborative between the Houston Independent School District (HISD) and the Precinct.

Precinct One Parks Division

The Parks division is responsible for development and maintenance of some 28 parks, the largest number of all Harris County precinct parks. Precinct One Parks are second to none in the quality of maintenance of park facilities. Under the leadership of Commissioner Lee, Precinct One has led the way in the development of flood plain land for public recreations, such as the Clear Creek chain of parks in the southern part of the county. Commissioner Lee also leads in developing hike & bike and jogging trails with approximately 30 miles of trails located in Precinct One.

The Parks division clears land for recreational development, assists with the design and construction of parks and facilities, installs playground equipment, landscapes hike & bike and jogging trails, maintains lake and creek property, and handles constituent reservations for use of park facilities.

During the past three years, Commissioner Lee has, through the creation of successful collaboratives, designed and developed the 'Finnigan Park Project', a parks development program whereby some nine Precinct One parks have been renovated to include minor to substantial expansions, and several totally new park and community center construction projects.

The Parks division also manages the Horticulture section in the daily maintenance of all landscaping and annual color at Precinct One parks, service/community centers and annexes, and the entire downtown courthouse complex, including interior plants in each Commissioners'

downtown office. Other public areas maintained in the downtown complex include courthouse exteriors and Quebedeaux Park. Our Horticulture staff does its own growing of annuals and perennials, of which approximately 29,000 bedding plants are grown each season; the department also grows some of its own trees and shrubs.

Precinct One General Administration

The division of Precinct One's Administrative Services is responsible for Payroll and Personnel Services, Budget and Financial Management, Purchasing, Inventory Control and Information Systems. Since the most recent restructuring of community development services, *the divisions of Social Services and Veterans Services have come under the oversight of Precinct One Administrative Services division*, designed to serve the needs of disadvantaged, disabled and elderly citizens of Harris County by providing emergency financial assistance and non-emergency medical transportation, to include assistance with claims of the Department of Veterans Affairs and other veteran services, etc. With the support from the county's Information Technology Center (ITC), Precinct One's staff operates the Public Information Program and other system-support computer functions. All precinct neighborhood area offices are staffed by precinct community aides for the specific purpose of assisting area residents with Harris County services, and other referral services. Other sites are housed by staff consisting of Social Services and Veteran Services personnel.

The Precinct's Senior Management Group (SMG), consists of four directors, appointed to make recommendations on policy issues to Commissioner Lee, and to assist with oversight responsibilities of management and operations of all precinct divisions.

Maintenance Service Centers

South

El Rio South Service Center
7901 El Rio
Houston, TX 77054
713.991.6881

North

Hardy North Service Center
11801 West Hardy Road
Houston, TX 77076
281.820.5151

Area Offices

North

Kashmere, Annex 36
3815 Cavalcade Street
Houston, TX 77026
713.675.0004

North Service Center Office
11801 West Hardy Road
Houston, TX 77076
713.820.5151

Northwest

Mickey Leland, Annex 31
7300 North Shepherd
Houston, TX 77091
713.697.1104

Nearatown

Westheimer, Annex 1
1413 Westheimer
Houston, TX 77006
713.755.9300

South

El Camino Office
2727 El Camino
Houston, TX 77054
713.741.1096

Central Service Center Office
7901 El Rio
Houston, TX 77054
713.991.6881

Downtown

County Administration Bldg.
1001 Preston, Suite 950
Houston, TX 77002
713.755.6111

Pursuant to our continuing efforts to fulfill Precinct One's Mission objectives to provide efficient and effective services, we are also committed to providing quality-functional and environmentally safe facilities. For this reason, we have found it observably necessary to administer and operate many of our activities in multipurpose program-service facilities. Many of our facilities serve as a combination of Regional Offices/Service and Community Centers, as well as Park and Program/Activity sites. We have effectively devised user friendly means to accomplish optimal usage for the benefit of our constituents.

North Parks Reservations and Information

281.591.6951 or www.co.harris.tx.us/comm_lee

Alexander Deussen Park
12303 Sonnier Drive

Barbara Jordan Park
6400 Winfield Road

Bill Crowley Park
5700 Lauder Road

Dow I Park
15401 Greendale Drive

Dow II Park
200 West Nellis Road

Dwight D. Eisenhower Park
13400 Aqueduct Road

Finnigan Park
4900 Providence Street

Gerber Park
4735 Gaston Street

Hutcheson Park
5400 Lockwood Drive

Lincoln Park
979 Greshaw Street

Mickey Leland Memorial Park
3701 Cavalcade Street

Quebedeaux Park
Congress @ Fannin

“Pep” Mueller Park
14750 Henry Road

Sheldon Sports Complex
8815 Pineland Road

South Parks Reservations and Information

713.440.1587 or www.co.harris.tx.us/comm_lee

Christia V. Adair Park
15107 Cullen Boulevard

Challenger Seven Park
2301 West NASA Boulevard

El Franco Lee Park
9400 Hall Road

Frankie Carter Randolph Park
5150 FM 2351

Kirkwood South Park
10175 Sagetrail Drive

Oxnard Park
16702 Oxnard Lane

Sagemeadow Park
11219 Sage York

Tom Bass Section I
3452 Fellows Road

Tom Bass Section II
3602 Fellows Road

Tom Bass Section III
15108 Cullen Boulevard

Harris County Precinct One operates and maintains ten community centers: **Alexander Deussen Senior Center • Barbara Jordan Community Center • Cavalcade Community Center • Challenger Seven Memorial Learning Center • Christia V. Adair Community Center • Finnigan Community Center • Hardy Community Center • Lincoln Community Center • “Pep” Mueller Community Center • Tom Bass Community Center.** The centers are freestanding buildings located within the parks.

Precinct One Youth & Senior Programs (www.co.harris.tx.us/comm_lee)

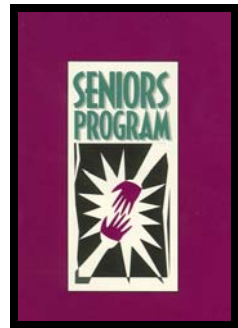
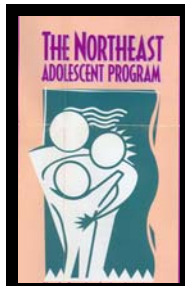
Precinct One Youth Programming had its beginning in 1986 with the establishment of the **Harris County Precinct One Street Olympics Youth Program** that eventually grew into a 5-point program initiative consisting of:

- 1) The Street Olympics ‘Summer Games’ and ‘Finals’
 - Year Round Youth Program
 - 713.741.0851
- 2) Harris County Aquatics Program (HCAP) and Summer ‘Splashdown’
 - 713.748.7333
- 3) Bright Futures
 - Health and Career Development
 - 713.741.1096
- 4) Discovery Camp & Traveling Naturalist
 - Summer Environmental Day Camp & Nature in the Classroom
 - 281.332.5157
- 5) Northeast Adolescents Program
 - 281.820.6341

Senior Programs: 713.733.3717

- 1) Seniors Gardening and Arts & Crafts Programs
- 2) Seniors Drama and Writing Programs
- 3) Seniors Tour Groups
- 4) Seniors Freeform & Organized Exercise/Aerobic Program

The two main highlights of the year have centered on the Annual Seniors Holiday Program Celebration and the Annual Precinct One Street Olympics 'Summer Games' Finals & Splashdown.



Q. Why and who collects taxes?

A. The main revenue source for the general operating budget for Harris County is derived through taxes. Tax categories for the general fund consists of property taxes (current and delinquent taxes) and occupational taxes on permits for coin-operated vending machines and state-regulated alcohol beverage permits. The Tax Assessor-Collector collects property taxes and occupational taxes.

The only other tax collected is the hotel occupancy tax, which goes into a special revenue fund. This tax is derived from taxes imposed on a person who pays for use of a hotel or motel, and car rental.

Q. What are some other Harris County revenue sources?

A. State revenues are generated for the general fund through the collection of a percentage of the state mixed beverage tax, a portion of the fees assessed by the state for hazardous waste management, a portion of civil case filing fees returned by the state, and commissions from the state for bingo tax.

Q. Who sets property values, and who sets the rates?

A. Property Tax Appraisals and Taxable Values are set by the Harris County Appraisal District. Commissioners Court sets the tax rates for Harris County, Harris County Flood Control District, Port of Houston, and the Hospital District.

Q. In addition to assessing and collecting taxes for the county, what are some of the other services provided by the Office of the Tax Assessor-Collector?

A. This office registers and prepares list of eligible voters, and other such services as:

- Registers vehicles
- Collects payments of property tax
- Processes vehicle titles, including transfer of auto titles; renewals
- Collects sales tax on auto transfers
- Collects license fees for wine and beer licenses.

Q. What is the purpose of the Harris County Appraisal District (HCAD)?

A. The Appraisal District is a countywide agency created under the Texas Property Code for the purpose of appraising taxable property for the taxing entities in the county. The Appraisal District is governed by a six-member board of directors, which is appointed by the various taxing entities.

Q. Where can information be obtained regarding the filing of a residential homestead exemption?

A. Inquiries or forms regarding homestead exemptions may be obtained from the Real Property section of the County Clerk's office and the Harris County Appraisal District at www.hcad.org.

Q. What steps can be taken by a property owner in disagreement of appraised tax property values?

A. The property owner has the right to file a 'protest' with the Harris County Appraisal Review Board. The right to appear before the Appraisal Review Board (ARB) is the most important remedy available to property owners. The property owner's right to protest the appraisal of his/her property is more thoroughly explained in the pamphlet titled *Taxpayers' Rights, Remedies and Responsibilities* available at the Appraisal District's office, 2800 North Loop West, Houston, TX 77092-8837.

Q. What is the Appraisal Review Board (ARB)?

A. The Appraisal Review Board serves as a neutral body to resolve disputes between the Appraisal District and property owners. Its members are private citizens appointed for two-year terms. In addition to the ARB's primary duty to hear and decide disputes between property owners and the Appraisal District, the ARB is also charged with ensuring that the chief appraiser has granted exemptions and special-use appraisals properly. Taxing units and taxpayers may come before the ARB and challenge appraisals, exemptions, inclusion of property on the rolls, situs, and other matters. The Appraisal Review Board's duties are

more thoroughly explained in a pamphlet titled *The Appraisal Review Board*, available at the appraisal district's office.

The Harris County ARB meets throughout the year on a monthly basis to carry out its duties, and panels of board members are present to conduct hearings on most days throughout the year.

The ARB is funded by the Harris County Appraisal District and appointed by its board of directors, but it is a separate governmental body. No employees or officials of the Appraisal District or the taxing units its serves may sit on the ARB.

Q. Is there a physical site, e-mail or mailing address for the Harris County Appraisal District?

A. The HCAD's Information and Assistance Center is located at 2800 North Loop West, Houston, Texas 77092-8837; mailing address: P. O. Box 920975, Houston, TX 77292-0975; Telephone information center: 713.757.7800; Switchboard: 713.812.5800; internet website: www.hcad.org.

Q. What are some of the services provided by the Office of the District Clerk?

A. Some of the services include:

- Processing child support payments;
- Providing child support customer service;
- Managing the court registry, related to items held in trust by the courts;
- Administrative support to the Civil District Courts, Family District Courts, Juvenile District Courts, IV-D Courts hearing paternity matters, County Criminal Courts at Law, Criminal District Courts, and Probable Cause Court;
- Summoning jurors for all District Courts, Probate Courts, and County Courts at Law; providing data to assist Justices of Peace in juror summons;
- Processing civil, family, juvenile and criminal cases;
- Processing and selling copies of records; *e.g.*, lawsuits, judgments, etc.

Q. What department should be contacted regarding child support information/issues?

A. The Accounting and Finance division of the District Clerk's Office may be contacted for Child Support Customer Service and Child Support Public Information.

Q. What department assists in understanding court orders regarding child support and rights of visitation?

A. The Office of Domestic Relations provides services to establish and enforce court orders as well as assist parties in understanding and complying with court orders in support of and/or visitation rights to a child.

Q. What are some of the services handled through the County Clerk's office?

A. Some of the services include:

- Filing property deeds and other legal instruments relating to real estate, and other matters regarding public records;
- Birth/Death Certificates;
- All special and general elections, election supplies, and tabulation of election returns;
- Marriage License Records;
- Assumed Names Certificates;
- Probate and other civil lawsuit filings.

Q. Is there a county service to access county departments telephone numbers and/or mail/e-mail addresses?

A. Yes, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses may be accessed through the county's online directory on the county's website (www.itc.co.harris.tx.us/hc_phone_dir) or acquired through the county's public information section and emergency support services: 713.755.5000.

Q. Can anyone attend sessions of Commissioners Court?

A. Yes, Commissioners Court regular sessions are open to the public. However, executive sessions are closed to the public; executive sessions are utilized for discussion of agenda items, no actions are taken in executive sessions.

Q. How can the public obtain information regarding the EZ Tag System?

A. The public may obtain EZ tag information from the Toll Road Authority's Public Information Officer and from its website: www.eztagstore.com.

Q. What department has the charge to design, manage and maintain Flood Control Improvements?

A. The Harris County Flood Control District.

Q. What is a watershed and what county entity has oversight?

A. A watershed is the land area that ultimately drains to a specific body of water – mostly creeks and bayous in Harris County, according to the Harris County Flood Control District who is charged with the oversight of the 22 major watersheds that drain to each of the county's 22 waterways.

Q. What department provides flood watch and flood alert programs?

A. In cooperation with the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the Flood Control District provides flood watch and flood alert programs.

Q. Where can I learn more about flooding, flood preparedness and related information?

A. You may contact several entities, such as:

- Harris County Flood Control District at 713.684.4000

- Houston Red Cross at www.houstonredcross.org
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at www.fema.gov/reg-vi/index.htm.

Q. Does the Harris County Housing Agency’s Section 8 program own or operate any housing units?

A. No, the Harris County Housing Agency does not own or operate housing units of any kind; however, the agency provides and monitors the program whereby recipients of Section 8 Housing vouchers obtain safe and secure housing.

Q. Where within the county may additional information be found regarding housing rehabilitation/repair and other housing opportunities?

A. Additional housing opportunities may be found by visiting the Office of Harris County Community & Economic Development at www.cedd.hctx.net.

Q. Where in the county can ‘Crime Victims’ Compensation Fund information be obtained?

A. You may obtain information regarding innocent crime victims from several county sources such as the County Attorney’s office, District Attorney’s office, and the Harris County Sheriff’s office.

Q. What county department is responsible for providing services for mental health and mental retardation?

A. The Mental Health & Mental Retardation Authority (MHMRA) is responsible for making comprehensive services available to residents needing screening and determinations regarding treatment of mental illness and hospital commitment for county patients.

Q. What is the chief service provided by the Children’s Assessment Center (CAC)?

A. The Center provides services and treatment of child sexual abuse.

Q. What services are provided by the Children & Adult Protective Services (CAPS)?

A. CAPS is responsible for accepting all child abuse and neglect referrals, working with families to provide appropriate substitute care, and medical care, when necessary. The county guardianship program, a division of CAPS, receives services provided through a collaboration of Harris County and the Texas Department of Protective & Regulatory Services.

Q. What is the make-up and primary mission of the Joint City/County Commission on Children?

A. The joint membership consists of 25 individuals: 10 standing positions for representatives of Houston City Council, Harris County Commissioners Court, the Harris County Legislative Delegation, Houston Independent School District, Harris County Department of Education, Harris County's Youth Services Division, Mental Health & Mental Retardation Authority, United Way, the medical community, and the foundation community; 14 positions for community representatives: seven appointed by the Mayor of Houston and seven appointed by the County Judge; the Chair is appointed jointly by the County Judge and Mayor.

The Joint Commission's mission is to serve as an advocate in the promotion of issues and interests on behalf of the general welfare affecting children below the age of eighteen. The Joint Commission monitors and makes recommendations to state and federal youth prevention and intervention initiatives.

Q. Why was the department of Community & Juvenile Justice Education (CJJE) created and who benefits from the services?

A. The main purpose for the creation of this department is to provide education for expelled and adjudicated youth. A Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program mandated by Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code, is administered through the Harris County Juvenile Board. In addition, CJJE administers a state open-enrollment charter

school for juveniles placed in a Harris County Juvenile Probation department detention or residential facility.

Q. What are some of the current ongoing grants administered by Harris County departments?

A. There are usually more than one-hundred grants administered yearly, such as:

- OFFICE OF THE COUNTY JUDGE:

- ◇ *Ryan White Formula*

- The Ryan White Title 1-HIV Project provides funding for comprehensive care for HIV/AIDS affected individuals.

- ◇ *Automated Victim Notification*

- Provides an automated crime victim notification system to victims of crime in Harris County. The system is designed to notify crime victims when a criminal defendant's status changes. Such notification includes arrest, bonding, court dates and other important procedural events.

- MEDICAL EXAMINER:

- ◇ *DNA Lab Analysis*

- This program is for the purchase of state-of-the-art DNA analysis equipment, supplies and training.

- ◇ *Enhancement of Trace Evidence*

- This grant provides law enforcement community improved tools that will give quicker and more accurate answers to the questions at crime scenes, and makes it possible to document physical evidence for the courts and provide testimony of much higher confidence.

- PUBLIC HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES:

- ◇ *Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS*

- This grant creates and expands community residences, provides supervised housing for persons with HIV related neurocognitive impairment and/or provides rental and utility assistance.

◇ *Tuberculosis Prevention and Control*

Provides funds to prevent tuberculosis and prevent the disease from spreading.

◇ *Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP)*

An outreach plan for Medicaid expansion to teens, ages 15-18, below 100% of the poverty level.

◇ *Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention*

This grant establishes a statewide surveillance system to collect, analyze, and disseminate data on screening, sources of exposure and follow-up for children.

◇ *State Legalization Impact Assistance*

Provides public health services to eligible legalized aliens within the general population.

◇ *Women, Infants, and Children*

This grant provides funding for special supplemental foods to qualified women, infants, and children in Harris County. Funding also provides for immunization and related information to qualified pregnant and post-partum women in Harris County.

• COUNTY LIBRARY

◇ *Library Technology Advancement*

This grant allows the library to purchase the necessary equipment to upgrade and extend its existing internet services.

◇ *Bilingual Job Assist*

This grant provides area (Aldine & South Belt) residents who have limited English proficiency with two ‘one stop’ job, bilingual assistance centers. Librarians at each branch will sponsor a series of free bilingual job assistance programs on a quarterly basis.

• OFFICE OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

◇ *Lead Base Paint Program*

This grant is to control lead-based hazards in eligible housing units constructed before 1978.

◇ *Supportive Housing*

Assists low income individuals in making rental payments.

◇ *Home Program*

This program seeks to expand the supply of affordable and low income housing through programs such as Family Self Sufficient.

◇ *HUD Community Development*

This HUD grant provides funds for community development projects including neighborhood centers, parks, and neighborhood improvements.

◇ *Shelter Plus Care Grant*

This grant provides tenant based rental assistance to homeless individuals suffering from disabilities.

◇ *WIA (Workforce Investment Act) Workforce Program*

A grant providing workforce programs services through ‘One Stop Career Centers’, with programs for adults, youths, and Dislocated-Workers Programs.

● OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

◇ *JJAEP (Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program)*

This grant provides funds for investigators to work with the Harris County Juvenile Board to provide services in connection with attendance, truancy and discipline issues.

◇ *Local Law Enforcement Block Grant*

Grant provides funds for hiring, training, and employing additional deputies on a continuing basis, overtime payment to currently employed personnel, or purchase of equipment, technology or other material directly related to basic law enforcement functions.

◇ *COPS/Domestic Violence*

Grant provides ways to solve domestic violence cases where the victim is unwilling to participate.

Q. Does Harris County have a Public Library System?

A. Yes. Information regarding the County's Public Libraries and their locations may be obtained through the County's Public Library Information System, 713.749.9000 or www.co.harris.tx.us. The County also maintains a Law Library located at 1019 Congress, 17th Floor.

Q. What services are provided by county libraries other than books and other printed, visual, or audio materials?

A. Throughout its 26 branches, the County Library department assists individuals in the pursuit of education and information research as well as assist the education, civic, and cultural activities of groups and organizations.

Q. What services are provided through the Public Health & Environmental Services and who can receive these services?

A. The public in general has the benefit of public health care services such as nursing, nutrition, sanitation, mosquito control and animal control programs. Services are aimed at preventing public disease and maintenance of health standards in the county; however, personal preventive services (from nurses' visits to child health, family planning, maternity, tuberculosis, and immunizations services) are aimed primarily at the indigent and working poor to reduce unnecessary miseries and mortality.

Q. What is the Harris County Hospital District?

A. The Harris County Hospital District (HCHD) is a legal entity providing patient care to the indigent residents of the county. Established by a countywide election in 1965, whereby Commissioners Court appoints a nine-member Board of Managers and approves its annual budget, and levies ad valorem taxes to assist in the support of the operation and maintenance of the district programs and facilities.

Q. Where can indigent citizens of Harris County receive medical care?

A. Indigent citizens and the working poor can receive health and medical services through the Harris County Hospital District's medical facilities of Ben Taub General Hospital, Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ), Quentin Mease Community Hospital, Thomas Street HIV/AIDS Clinic, and Community Health Program sites.

Q. How many Trauma Centers are located in this region?

A. The Houston-Galveston area maintains three-Level 1 Centers: Ben Taub, Memorial Hermann, and UTMB in Galveston.

Q. What is the Port of Houston Authority?

A. The Port of Houston is the primary catalyst for the industrial and commercial strength and development of Harris County and Southeast Texas. The Port of Houston Authority manages the operations of public facilities along the Houston Ship Channel. Its Board is appointed by Commissioners Court and Houston City Council. The 'Port' is the leading port in foreign cargo and the world's eighth largest port of total cargo tonnage. It is also one of three ports in the United States bearing the status of 'Coffee Exchange Port' and allowed to accept coffee imports.

Q. What is the Harris County-Houston Sports Authority?

A. In 1997, the Harris County-Houston Sports Authority (HCHSA) was created by Harris County Commissioners Court and Houston's City Council to finance the construction of the 42,000 seat Minute Maid (retractable roof) baseball park in downtown Houston. Its thirteen member Board consists of six city appointees and six county appointees with the Chair jointly appointed by the County and the City.

Q. What is the Harris County Sports & Convention Corporation?

A. In 1999, Commissioners Court authorized the creation of the Harris

County Sports & Convention Corporation (HCSCC) with a charge to manage and develop the property and facilities of the Astrodomain/Reliant Park Complex. The Complex situated within Houston-Harris County Precinct One consists of the following facilities: Reliant Park, Reliant Stadium, Reliant Center, Reliant Astrodome, Reliant Hall, and Reliant Arena. Commissioners Court appointed a five member board, including the chair, with an agreement with HCSCC to lease the property and facilities through 2015.

Q. What are Small Claims Courts and where do I file a Small Claims suit?

A. The Small Claims Court in Texas is a simple and inexpensive forum in which the ordinary citizen can attempt to resolve a dispute without the necessity of hiring a lawyer or complying with technical procedural rules.

The Small Claims Court in Texas is created under Chapter 28 of the Texas Government Code. The Justice of the Peace sits as the judge of the Small Claims Court. Claims for the recovery of money in which the amount involved, exclusive of costs, does not exceed \$5,000 may be brought in Small Claims Court.

Generally, a claim is filed in the Justice of the Peace precinct in which the defendant resides. The appropriate court collects the fee for the filing of a claim.

Q. Where can I get a voter registration application?

A. Voter Registration Applications are available at the Tax Assessor-Collector's downtown Houston office, 1001 Preston, 2nd Floor, Room 200 or at other branch locations throughout Harris County. They are also available at many libraries, post offices, Texas Department of Public Safety offices and Texas Department of Human Services offices in Harris County. Applications can also be obtained by telephoning the Tax Assessor-Collector's office, 713.368.2200; sending your request by mail to Tax Assessor-Collector, P. O. Box 3527, Houston, TX 77253-3527; or requesting an application online, www.tax.co.harris.tx.us.

Q. Who is eligible to register to vote in Harris County elections?

A. To be eligible to register to vote you must:

- be a United States citizen;
- be a resident of Harris County;
- be 18 years old (you may register at 17 years and 10 months of age);
- not be declared mentally incompetent by a final judgment of a court.
- not be finally convicted of a felony or, if so convicted:
 - fully discharged your sentence, including any term of incarceration, parole or supervision, or completed a period of probation ordered by the court; or
 - been pardoned.

Q. My name has changed. Can I still vote?

A. Yes, you may continue to vote. Vote by affidavit during this time if you used your certificate as your notice of name change.

Q. How soon before an election can I register and be able to vote?

A. You may register to vote at any time, but your application must be submitted 30 days before the election date for you to be eligible to vote in that election. Your spouse, parent or child (acting as an agent) may complete and sign a voter's registration application for you, provided that this person is a registered voter, or has applied for voter registration. If any of the information on the application is incomplete, you will be notified and required to send a second application. The second application must be received by the Harris County Voter Registrar within 10 days.

Q. After I have registered, when will I receive my Voter Registration Certificate?

A. You will receive a Voter Registration Certificate within 30 days. If there is a mistake, immediately make corrections and return the

certificate to the registrar. Present your certificate at the polling place on election date.

Q. What do I do if I have changed my address, but still live in Harris County?

A. Notify the Harris County Voter Registrar, who is the Tax Assessor-Collector in Harris County, in writing of your new address by correcting the information on your current voter registration certificate and returning it to the voter registrar; or completing a voter registration change form. You will be able to vote in your new precinct 30 days after your notice has been received. *Meanwhile*, you may vote a full ballot in your former precinct if your registration has not become effective in your new precinct.

If you move to another county, you must re-register in the county of your new residence.



9-1-1 Board of Managers

Aldine Improvement District's Nominating Committee
Area Planning Advisory Council on Aging
Children's Assessment Center Foundation
Children's Assessment Center Partner Council
Children's Protective Services Board
City of Houston Planning and Zoning Commission
Corporation for Economic Development Board
Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County
Cultural Education Facilities Finance Corporation
Emergency Services Districts 1-14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 24, 25, 28, 29,
46-48, 50, 60, 80
Flood Control Task Force
Flood Control Task Force Advisors
Flood Control Task Force Advisory Group
Grievance Committee
Gulf Coast Community Services Association
Gulf Coast Waste Disposal Authority
Gulf Coast Workforce Development Board
Harris County Adult Detention Zone Corporation
Harris County Animal Shelter Advisory Committee
Harris County Appraisal District Board
Harris County Bail Bond Board
Harris County Cemetery Corporation
Harris County Health Facilities Development Corporation Board
Harris County Historical Commission
Harris County Hospital District Board of Managers
Harris County Housing Finance Corporation
Harris County-Houston Housing Authority
Harris County-Houston Sports Authority
Harris County Industrial Development Corporation Board
Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults
Harris County Public Facilities Corporation
Harris County Sports & Convention Corporation
Harris-Galveston Coastal Subsidence District
Homeland Security Task Force Committee
Houston Area Library Systems (HALS)
Houston-Galveston Area Council Board of Directors
Houston-Galveston Area Council Forecast Committee

Houston-Galveston Area Council Gulf Coast Economic Development District Board
Houston-Galveston Area Council Justice Advisory Committee
Houston-Galveston Area Council Natural Resources Advisory Committee
Houston-Galveston Area Council Regional Air Quality Planning Committee
Houston-Galveston Area Council Solid Waste Management Committee
Houston-Galveston Area Council Technical Advisory Committee
Houston-Galveston Area Council Transportation Policy Council
Houston/Harris County Area Agency on Aging
Houston-Harris County Regional Homeland Security
Joint City/County Commission on Children
Juvenile Curfew Review Committee
Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority
Mental Health & Mental Retardation Authority Board of Trustees
Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO)
Midtown Redevelopment Authority Board
Open Records Steering Committee
Port of Houston Authority
Purchasing Agent Committee
Regional CAD Committee
Ryan White Planning Council-Houston Area HIV Services Planning Council
Sheriff's Civil Service Board
Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones
 1 (Lamar Terrace)
 2 (Midtown Expansion)
 3 (Market Square)
 5 (Memorial-Heights)
 7 (OST/Almeda Expansion)
 8 (Gulfgate)
 9 (South Post Oak)
 10 (Lake Houston)
 11 (Greenspoint)
 13 (Old Sixth Ward)
 21 (La Porte No. 1)
Tobacco Settlement Permanent Account Investment Advisory Committee
Veterans Land Board
Youth & Family Services Coordinating Committee

Population*

Houston's population within Harris County is approximately 56%, according to the 2000 census. This percentage compares to 58% in 1990, 66% in 1980, 71% in 1970, and 75% in 1960.

There are 34 municipalities in Harris County. According to the chart prepared by Public Infrastructure, on the opposite page, the total population within those cities is 2.4 million, including 1.9 million in Houston. The county's total population is 3.4 million, with 2.4 million in municipalities and 1.0 million living in unincorporated areas.

The 34 municipalities, according to the census, cover 774 square miles within Harris County, including 586 in the City of Houston. The county has a total of 1,778 square miles, and with 774 square miles incorporated, there is 1,004 unincorporated, or 56% of the total.

Projections by the University of Houston's Center for Public Policy show that the county's total population should reach 4.3 million by 2020, and the City of Houston's portion of that number should be about 2.3 million, or 53%, with 2 million persons living in other municipalities and unincorporated areas. Growth in the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area, which includes Harris County and seven contiguous counties, is expected to increase from 4.7 million persons in 2000 to 6.7 million in 2020, with about 70% of that growth occurring in suburban portions of Harris County and adjacent counties that are to the south, southwest, northwest, and north of Harris County: Brazoria, Fort Bend, and Montgomery.

MUNICIPALITIES IN HARRIS COUNTY

	Municipality	Population within Harris County	Total Area within Harris County	
1.	Baytown	63,349	30.01	sq. mi.
2.	Bellaire	15,642	3.62	
3.	Bunker Hill	3,654	1.46	
4.	Deer Park	28,520	10.36	
5.	El Lago	3,075	0.71	
6.	Friendswood	7,800	4.44	
7.	Galena Park	10,592	4.99	
8.	Hedwig Village	2,334	0.86	
9.	Hilshire Village	720	0.27	
10.	Houston	1,919,789	585.98	
11.	Humble	14,579	9.88	
12.	Hunters Creek Village	4,374	1.94	
13.	Jacinto City	10,302	1.86	
14.	Jersey Village	6,880	3.45	
15.	Katy	10,082	5.10	
16.	LaPorte	31,880	19.97	
17.	League City	138	2.15	
18.	Missouri City	5,494	1.30	
19.	Morgan's Point	335	1.77	
20.	Nassau Bay	4,170	1.71	
21.	Pasadena	141,674	44.52	
22.	Pearland	1,944	2.36	
23.	Piney Point Village	3,380	2.14	
24.	Seabrook	9,443	6.49	
25.	Shoreacres	1,488	0.90	
26.	South Houston	15,833	3.03	
27.	Southside Place	1,546	0.25	
28.	Spring Valley	3,611	1.31	
29.	Stafford	310	0.07	
30.	Taylor Lake Village	3,694	1.39	
31.	Tomball	9,089	10.09	
32.	Waller	388	0.69	
33.	Webster	9,083	6.65	
<u>34.</u>	<u>West University</u>	<u>14,211</u>	<u>2.01</u>	
	Totals	2,359,404	773.73	sq. mi.

Percentage of Harris County population residing within incorporated limits: 69.36%

Percentage of Harris County total area within incorporated limits: 43.52%

**(All figures are from U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and were provided by the Harris County Public Infrastructure Dept., June 2003)*

FREQUENTLY DIALED HARRIS COUNTY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

24-Hour Switchboard	713.755.5000
Animal Control	281.999.3191
Appraisal District	713.957.7800
Child Support Office	713.755.6077
Children & Adult Protective Services	713.626.5701
Community & Economic Development	713.578.2000
County Clerk	713.755.6405
County Jail	713.755.5300
Domestic Relations Office	713.755.6757
District Attorney's Office	713.755.7114
Flood Control	713.684.4000
Hospital District's Medical Facilities:	
• Ben Taub	713.873.2000
• Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ)	713.566.5000
• Quentin Mease	713.873.3700
• Thomas Street Clinic	713.873.4000
Jury Assembly Room	713.755.6395
Mosquito Control	713.440.3036
Personnel Job Hotline	713.755.5044
Pollution Control	713.920.2831
Sheriff (Emergency)	713.755.6000 or 911
Social Services	713.696.7900
Tax Assessor & Collector	713.368.2000
Voter Registration	713.368.2000
Vehicle Registration	713.224.1919
Veterans Services	713.755.2243

2005

This guide of information and directions regarding services provided by the Harris County System was compiled by the Office of Harris County Commissioner Precinct One El Franco Lee for distribution to citizens and visitors of Precinct One.

This information was taken, in large part, from the comprehensive Harris County annual budget guide, which speaks to the status of operations and administrations of the county's business and finances.