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Rusk County Economic Overview 2026

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*Note This report was originally produced by Chmura Economics & Analytics Economics, an economic consulting company contracted by the Hibbs Institute.

Demographic Profile

The population in Rusk County, Texas was 52,613 per American Community Survey data for 2019-2023. The region has a civilian labor force of 22,305 with a participation rate of 52.9%. Of individuals 25 to 64 in Rusk County, Texas, 17.3% have a bachelor's degree or higher which compares with 36.5% in the nation. The median household income in Rusk County, Texas is \$67,506 and the median house value is \$166,900.

Summary¹

	Percent			Value		
	Rusk County, Texas	Texas	USA	Rusk County, Texas	Texas	USA
Demographics						
Population (ACS)	—	—	—	52,613	29,640,343	332,387,540
Male	53.1%	49.9%	49.5%	27,957	14,789,987	164,545,087
Female	46.9%	50.1%	50.5%	24,656	14,850,356	167,842,453
Median Age ²	—	—	—	38.8	35.5	38.7
Under 18 Years	22.7%	25.2%	22.2%	11,932	7,482,530	73,645,238
18 to 24 Years	8.4%	9.7%	9.1%	4,433	2,863,182	30,307,641
25 to 34 Years	13.4%	14.4%	13.7%	7,039	4,278,912	45,497,632
35 to 44 Years	13.4%	14.0%	13.1%	7,029	4,141,445	43,492,887
45 to 54 Years	12.3%	12.3%	12.3%	6,491	3,645,897	40,847,713
55 to 64 Years	12.7%	11.2%	12.8%	6,682	3,322,832	42,626,382
65 to 74 Years	10.5%	8.1%	10.0%	5,527	2,399,654	33,293,127
75 Years and Over	6.6%	5.1%	6.8%	3,480	1,505,891	22,676,920
Race: White	67.6%	53.9%	63.4%	35,558	15,984,990	210,875,446
Race: Black or African American	13.2%	12.2%	12.4%	6,920	3,626,137	41,070,890
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	0.2%	0.6%	0.9%	91	190,706	2,924,996
Race: Asian	0.4%	5.3%	5.8%	189	1,581,798	19,352,659
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	45	29,841	629,292
Race: Some Other Race	2.4%	8.6%	6.6%	1,270	2,540,808	21,940,536
Race: Two or More Races	16.2%	19.2%	10.7%	8,540	5,686,063	35,593,721
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	18.7%	39.5%	19.0%	9,839	11,697,134	63,131,589
Population Growth						
Population (Pop Estimates) ⁴	—	—	—	53,391	31,290,831	340,110,988
Population Annual Average Growth ⁴	0.0%	1.5%	0.7%	25	432,774	2,172,466
People per Square Mile ⁴	—	—	—	57.8	119.8	96.3
Economic						
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 16 years and over)	52.9%	65.1%	63.3%	22,305	14,906,660	168,567,852
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 25-54)	66.4%	81.8%	83.0%	13,661	9,805,842	107,055,165
Work from Home	4.6%	12.8%	13.5%	973	1,796,441	21,267,373
Armed Forces Labor Force	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	0	118,359	1,287,774
Veterans, Age 18-64	4.8%	4.6%	4.2%	1,526	832,188	8,410,268
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64	71.3%	78.8%	77.0%	1,088	655,396	6,478,181
Median Household Income ²	—	—	—	\$67,506	\$76,292	\$78,538
Per Capita Income	—	—	—	\$33,420	\$39,446	\$43,289
Mean Commute Time (minutes)	—	—	—	26.1	26.7	26.6
Commute via Public Transportation	0.1%	1.0%	3.5%	28	133,038	5,528,841
Educational Attainment, Age 25-64						
No High School Diploma	14.6%	13.5%	10.0%	3,975	2,072,973	17,176,172
High School Graduate	33.9%	24.0%	25.0%	9,231	3,691,942	43,057,491

About This Report

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Summary¹

	Percent			Value		
	Rusk County, Texas	Texas	USA	Rusk County, Texas	Texas	USA
Some College, No Degree	24.3%	20.4%	19.3%	6,630	3,139,587	33,315,654
Associate's Degree	9.9%	8.1%	9.2%	2,703	1,242,119	15,894,085
Bachelor's Degree	12.0%	22.1%	22.8%	3,279	3,405,293	39,256,774
Postgraduate Degree	5.2%	11.9%	13.8%	1,423	1,837,172	23,764,438
Housing						
Total Housing Units	—	—	—	21,258	11,890,808	142,332,876
Median House Value (of owner-occupied units) ^{2,5}	—	—	—	\$166,900	\$260,400	\$303,400
Homeowner Vacancy	1.0%	1.1%	1.0%	153	75,671	850,724
Rental Vacancy	8.9%	7.4%	5.5%	359	326,361	2,605,688
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	20.0%	37.4%	35.0%	3,590	4,023,511	44,590,828
Owner-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	80.0%	62.6%	65.0%	14,373	6,723,729	82,892,037
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units)	3.9%	5.3%	8.3%	708	571,578	10,602,826
Social						
Poverty Level (of all people)	14.3%	13.8%	12.4%	6,795	4,005,417	40,390,045
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	12.3%	11.4%	11.8%	2,203	1,227,194	15,004,950
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	728	428,613	4,405,676
Disconnected Youth ³	7.3%	2.9%	2.4%	195	49,544	420,352
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children)	34.6%	33.9%	34.0%	3,872	2,416,209	23,701,745
Uninsured	14.0%	17.4%	8.6%	6,665	5,061,251	28,000,876
With a Disability, Age 18-64	11.4%	10.0%	10.7%	3,079	1,783,307	21,269,700
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	44.2%	51.7%	47.0%	1,362	921,178	10,001,264
Foreign Born	6.4%	17.2%	13.9%	3,371	5,095,888	46,108,901
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over)	4.2%	12.8%	8.4%	2,085	3,559,545	26,299,012

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

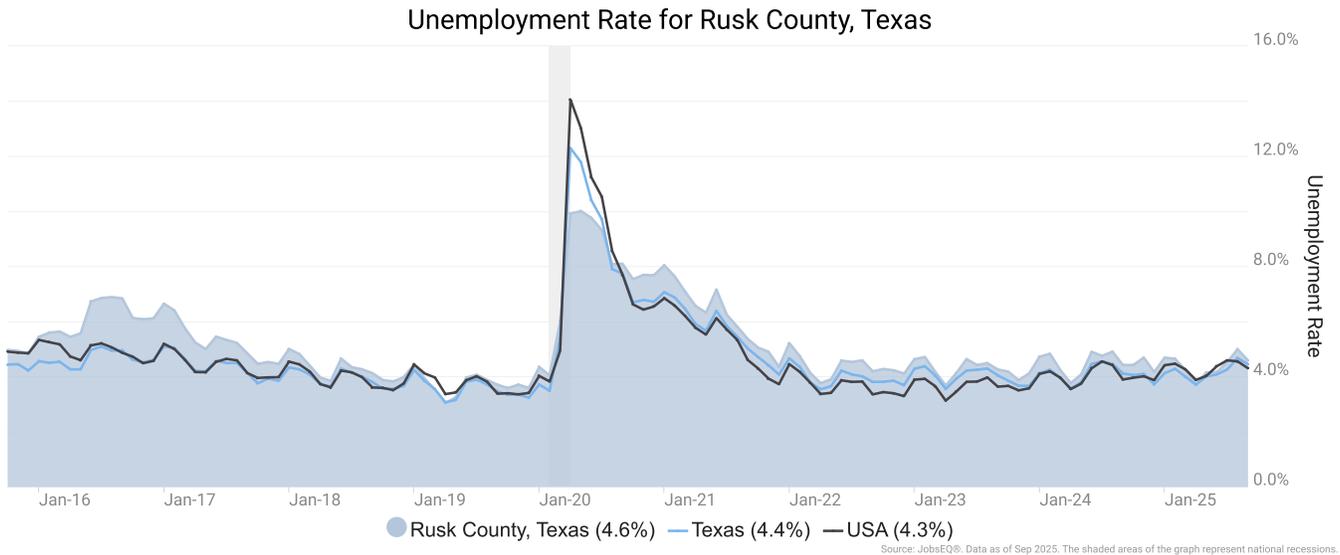
- American Community Survey 2019-2023, unless noted otherwise
- Median values for certain aggregate regions (such as MSAs) may be estimated as the weighted averages of the median values from the composing counties.
- Disconnected Youth are 16-19 year olds who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force.
- Census Population Estimate for 2024, annual average growth rate since 2014.
- The Census's method for calculating median house values changed with the 2022 data set, so pre-2022 values are not directly comparable with later data.

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Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate for Rusk County, Texas was 4.6% as of September 2025. The regional unemployment rate was higher than the national rate of 4.3%. One year earlier, in September 2024, the unemployment rate in Rusk County, Texas was 4.4%.



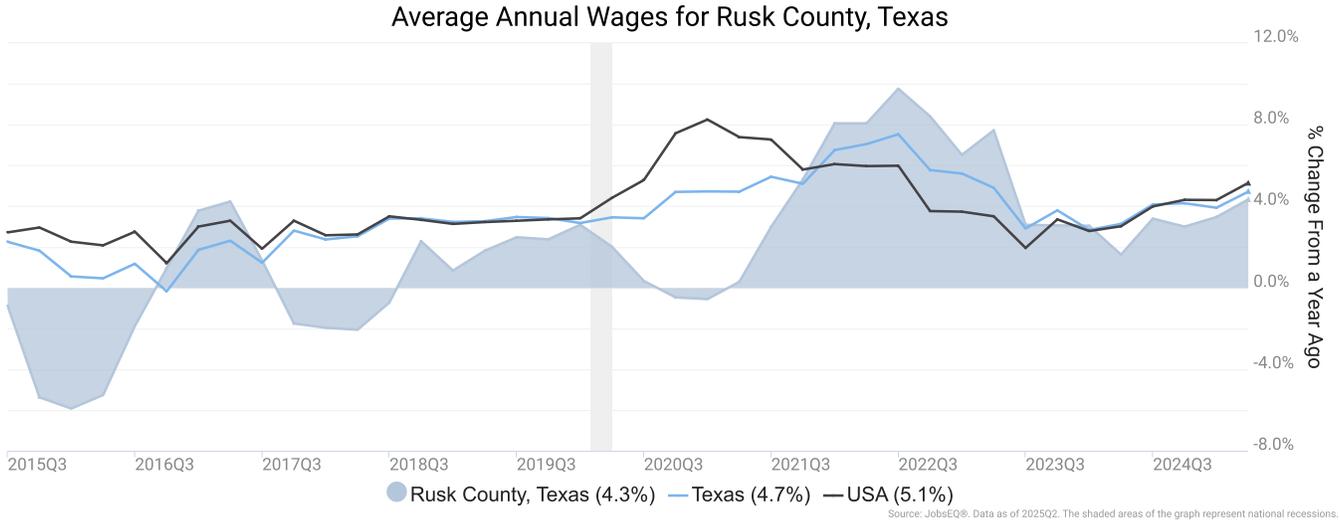
Unemployment rate data are from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and updated through September 2025.

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Wage Trends

The average worker in Rusk County, Texas earned annual wages of \$52,707 as of 2025Q2. Average annual wages per worker increased 4.3% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$75,686 in the nation as of 2025Q2.



Annual average wages per worker data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2025Q1 with preliminary estimates updated to 2025Q2.

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Cost of Living Index

The Cost of Living Index estimates the relative price levels for consumer goods and services. When applied to wages and salaries, the result is a measure of relative purchasing power. The cost of living is 7.8% lower in Rusk County, Texas than the U.S. average.

Cost of Living Information

	Annual Average Salary	Cost of Living Index (Base US)	US Purchasing Power
Rusk County, Texas	\$52,707	92.2	\$57,147
Texas	\$74,720	93.1	\$80,256
USA	\$75,686	100.0	\$75,686

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Data as of 2025Q2

Cost of Living per [COLI](#), data as of 2025Q2, imputed by Chmura where necessary.

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Occupation Snapshot

The largest major occupation group in Rusk County, Texas is Management Occupations, employing 1,556 workers. The next-largest occupation groups in the region are Office and Administrative Support Occupations (1,470 workers) and Construction and Extraction Occupations (1,441). High location quotients (LQs) indicate occupation groups in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The major groups with the largest LQs in the region are Construction and Extraction Occupations (LQ = 2.08), Educational Instruction and Library Occupations (1.55), and Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations (1.43).

Occupation groups in Rusk County, Texas with the highest average wages per worker are Legal Occupations (\$108,100), Management Occupations (\$104,800), and Computer and Mathematical Occupations (\$92,700). The unemployment rate in the region varied among the major groups from 1.5% among Legal Occupations to 8.3% among Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations.

Over the next 1 year, the fastest growing occupation group in Rusk County, Texas is expected to be Healthcare Support Occupations with a +1.3% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Healthcare Support Occupations (+10 jobs) and Construction and Extraction Occupations (+6). Over the same period, the highest separation demand (occupation demand due to retirements and workers moving from one occupation to another) is expected in Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (191 jobs) and Office and Administrative Support Occupations (156).

Rusk County, Texas, 2025Q2¹

SOC	Occupation	Current					5-Year History			1-Year Forecast				
		Empl	Mean Ann Wages ²	LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads ³	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
11-0000	Management	1,556	\$104,800	1.29	38	2.0%	19	114	1.5%	133	57	71	5	0.3%
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	1,470	\$44,100	0.85	88	3.6%	20	-53	-0.7%	149	74	82	-7	-0.5%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	1,441	\$49,800	2.08	118	5.5%	13	-65	-0.9%	124	45	73	6	0.4%
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library	1,292	\$50,300	1.55	43	3.2%	11	67	1.1%	108	54	56	-2	-0.2%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	1,275	\$45,600	0.97	143	6.1%	44	-62	-0.9%	161	68	88	5	0.4%
41-0000	Sales and Related	1,076	\$46,100	0.81	105	5.7%	57	17	0.3%	132	62	73	-3	-0.3%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	1,016	\$29,100	0.81	131	6.8%	73	68	1.4%	194	86	105	3	0.3%
51-0000	Production	978	\$46,800	1.20	85	4.8%	18	-123	-2.3%	109	42	66	0	0.0%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	830	\$59,000	1.41	45	3.0%	17	-7	-0.2%	73	31	41	2	0.2%
31-0000	Healthcare Support	765	\$29,300	1.04	46	4.0%	30	27	0.7%	116	53	53	10	1.3%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	664	\$76,400	0.66	28	3.4%	10	86	2.8%	54	20	32	3	0.4%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	632	\$32,700	1.26	50	5.4%	16	-12	-0.4%	88	41	45	2	0.3%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	618	\$84,700	0.67	16	1.7%	85	7	0.2%	41	19	17	5	0.8%
33-0000	Protective Service	342	\$49,200	1.02	16	3.1%	13	-28	-1.5%	33	14	20	-1	-0.2%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	277	\$32,100	0.70	23	5.5%	11	8	0.6%	45	18	25	1	0.3%
21-0000	Community and Social Service	257	\$54,800	0.89	9	3.5%	13	16	1.3%	25	11	13	2	0.6%

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Rusk County, Texas, 2025Q2¹

SOC	Occupation	Current						5-Year History		1-Year Forecast				
		Empl	Mean Ann Wages ²	LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads ³	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	209	\$92,700	0.43	10	3.8%	2	22	2.2%	12	5	7	1	0.4%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	190	\$92,700	0.79	6	2.6%	5	2	0.2%	13	5	8	0	0.1%
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	139	\$55,300	0.52	5	4.7%	3	0	0.0%	13	6	7	0	0.2%
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	125	\$43,000	1.43	12	8.3%	0	0	0.1%	17	8	9	0	-0.3%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	102	\$73,600	0.72	3	3.9%	5	1	0.2%	10	2	7	0	0.4%
23-0000	Legal	53	\$108,100	0.42	1	1.5%	2	-14	-4.5%	3	1	2	0	0.3%
Total - All Occupations		15,308	\$55,300	1.00	1,024	4.4%	468	73	0.1%	1,653	721	899	33	0.2%

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Data as of 2025Q2 unless noted otherwise

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

1. Data based on a four-quarter moving average unless noted otherwise.

2. Wage data represent the average for all Covered Employment

3. Data represent found online ads active within the last thirty days in the selected region. Due to alternative county-assignment algorithms, ad counts in this analytic may not match that shown in RTI (nor in the popup window ad list). Ad counts for ZCTA-based regions are estimates.

Occupation employment data are estimated via industry employment data and the estimated industry/occupation mix. Industry employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and currently updated through 2025Q1, imputed where necessary with preliminary estimates updated to 2025Q2. Wages by occupation are as of 2025 provided by the BLS and imputed where necessary. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

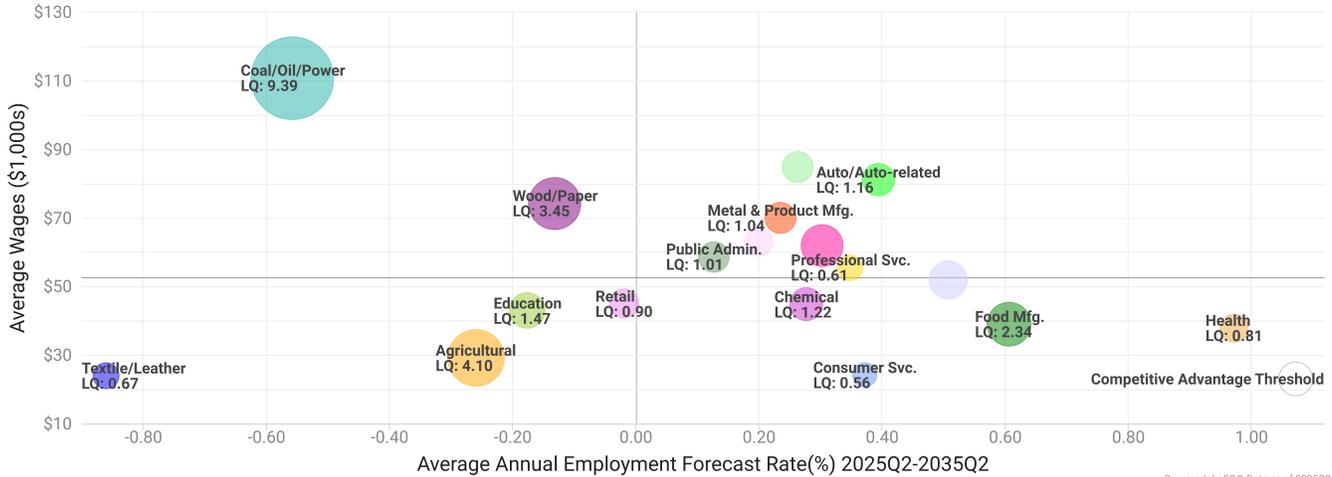
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Industry Clusters

A cluster is a geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations. The industry cluster in Rusk County, Texas with the highest relative concentration is Coal/Oil/Power with a location quotient of 9.39. This cluster employs 1,165 workers in the region with an average wage of \$110,760. Employment in the Coal/Oil/Power cluster is projected to contract in the region about 0.6% per year over the next ten years.

Industry Clusters for Rusk County, Texas as of 2025Q2



Source: JobsEQ® Data as of 2025Q2

Location quotient and average wage data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, imputed where necessary, and updated through 2025Q1 with preliminary estimates updated to 2025Q2. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

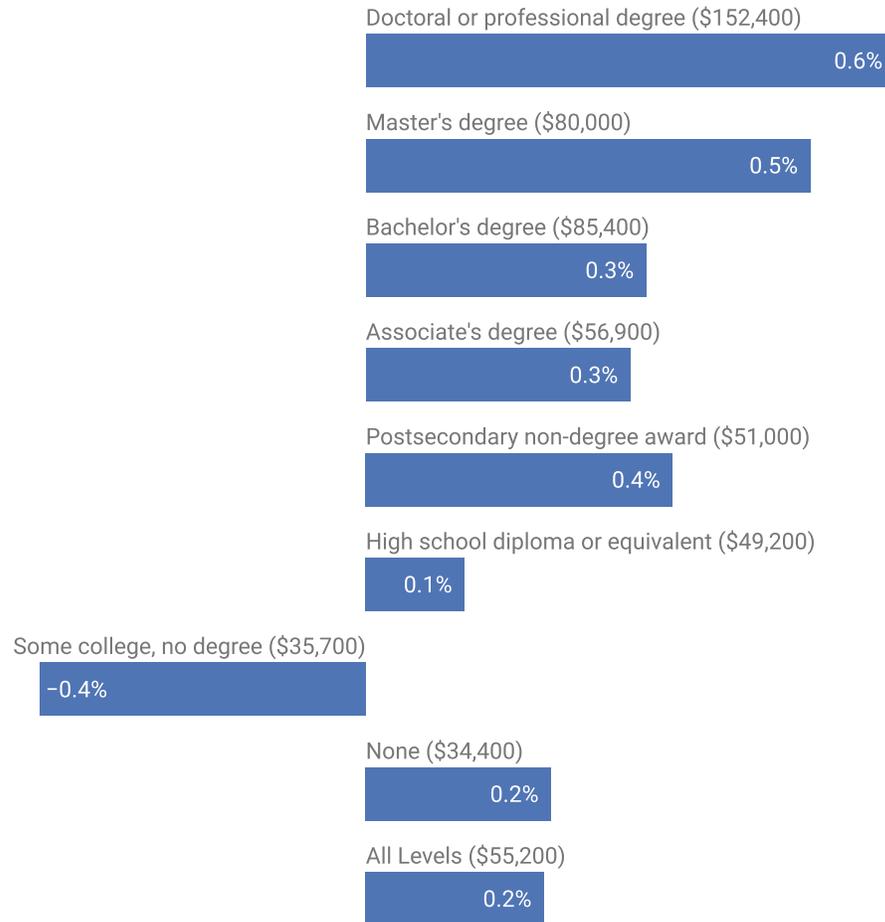
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Education Levels

Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in Rusk County, Texas is projected to grow 0.2% over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow 0.6% per year, those requiring a bachelor's degree are forecast to grow 0.3% per year, and occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate are expected to grow 0.3% per year.

Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Education Levels



Source: JobsEQ®
Data as of 2025Q2

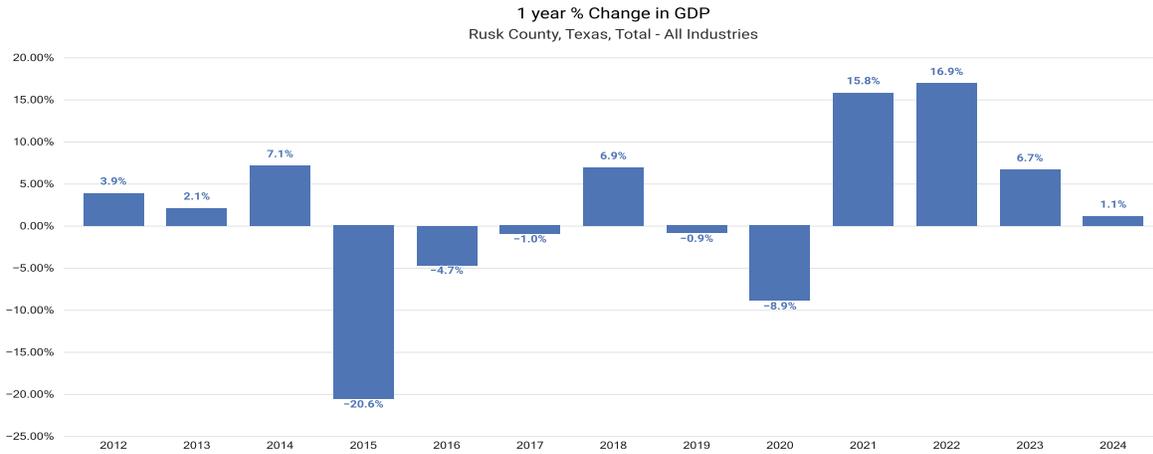
Employment by occupation data are estimates as of 2025Q2. Education levels of occupations are based on BLS assignments. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

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Gross Domestic Product

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of goods and services produced by a region. In 2024, nominal GDP in Rusk County, Texas expanded 1.1%. This follows growth of 6.7% in 2023. As of 2024, total GDP in Rusk County, Texas was \$2,052,040,000.



Gross Domestic Product data are provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, imputed by Chmura where necessary, updated through 2024.

Of the sectors in Rusk County, Texas, Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction contributed the largest portion of GDP in 2024, \$347,993,000. The next-largest contributions came from Utilities (\$252,693,000); Manufacturing (\$183,475,000); and Educational Services (\$149,779,000).

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GDP (in \$ millions)

Rusk County, Texas, 2024

Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (21)



Utilities (22)



Manufacturing (31)



Educational Services (61)



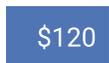
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (53)



Construction (23)



Retail Trade (44)



Health Care and Social Assistance (62)



Finance and Insurance (52)



Wholesale Trade (42)



Gross Domestic Product data are provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, imputed by Chmura where necessary, updated through 2024.

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