

REGIONAL Profile



Southeast Texas



Southeast Texas Counties

Angelina	Hardin	Houston	Jasper	Jefferson	Nacogdoches
Newton	Orange	Polk	Sabine	San Augustine	San Jacinto
Shelby	Trinity	Tyler			



About the Southeast Texas Region

Stretching along the Gulf of Mexico and running up to the Louisiana border, the Southeast Texas region covers over 12,000 square miles. Southeast Texas contains the Beaumont–Port Arthur metropolitan area and stretches up to the boundless forests that make up the Big Thicket. Home to many ports as well as much of the Intracoastal Waterway, Southeast Texas offers a variety of water transport options. Due to its proximity to Louisiana, parts of Southeast Texas have maintained aspects of Cajun culture that are unique within the state.

The Southeast Texas region is served by Stephen F. Austin State University and Lamar University, among other higher education institutions. The region is historically associated with the oil industry due to the vast oil fields discovered under Beaumont and the Golden Triangle region over a century ago; however, Southeast Texas has diversified its economy in subsequent years and now serves as a major commerce hub as a result of its access to ports and other transportation infrastructure.

Much like Upper East Texas, Southeast Texas has a growing forest products industry, which, along with tourism, has been a focus of recent economic development efforts in the region. As of late, the region has seen an influx of transportation-related jobs as well as jobs in the life, physical, and social sciences, and computer and mathematical fields.



Southeast Texas Fast Facts

	Population	Industry	Exports	Workforce
Magnitude	0.8M <i>Population (2021)</i>	\$40B <i>Contribution to GDP (2021)</i>	\$9B <i>Foreign Exports (2021)</i>	0.4M <i>Total Employment (2021)</i>
Share	3% <i>Share of Texas Population (2021)</i>	2% <i>Share of Texas GDP (2021)</i>	4% <i>Share of Texas Foreign Exports (2021)</i>	2% <i>Share of Texas Employment (2021)</i>
Other	50% <i>Population Ages 25-64 (2021)</i>	81K <i>Number of Establishments (2021)</i>	16% <i>Total Foreign Export Growth (2011 – 2021)</i>	67% <i>Labor Force Participation Rate Ages 25-64 (2021)</i>

Quantitative and qualitative research was performed May 2023 through May 2024; data cited reflects the then-most current and/or granular information for the time periods noted.

Data Sources: IMPLAN, Data Library, Texas, (2011-21); Guidehouse Analysis; US Census Bureau, County Business Patterns, 2021.

REGIONAL Detail



Southeast Texas



Business and Industry

Top Industry Clusters by LQ (2021)	LQ (2021)	Emp. (2021)	GDP (2021)	Top Industry Clusters by Emp. Growth (2015-21)	Emp. Growth (2015-21)	Emp. (2021)	GDP (2021)
Petroleum Refining	37.95	4,360	\$7,784M	Trailers, Motor Homes, and Appliances	364%	480	\$61M
Industrial Chemical Products	15.35	4,270	\$2,803M	Video Production and Distribution	62%	430	\$10M
Wood Products	6.96	4,660	\$765M	Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence	62%	2,840	\$196M
Chemical and Plastics Manufacturing	3.86	6,640	\$3,407M	AgTech	26%	11,640	\$614M
Livestock Processing	3.62	3,310	\$198M	Furniture	24%	580	\$52M

Note: Industry clusters consisting of less than 0.1% of total regional employment are not shown in tables.



Workforce

Top Occupations by LQ (2021)	LQ (2021)	Emp. (2021)	Top Occupations by Emp. Growth (2018-21)	Emp. Growth (2018-21)	Emp. (2021)
Plant and System Operators	3.23	1,960	Material Moving Workers	37%	13,070
Supervisors of Production Workers	1.55	1,820	Top Executives	26%	5,840
Supervisors of Construction and Extraction Workers	1.52	1,900	Business Operations Specialists	25%	8,650
Preschool, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, and Special Education Teachers	1.48	10,380	Operations Specialties Managers	11%	3,100
Construction Trades Workers	1.46	12,300	Financial Specialists	9%	3,950

Note: Occupations that predominately serve the local community and occupations consisting of less than 0.5% of total regional employment not shown in tables.



Regional Opportunities

Strengths

Capitalizing on Exports

Southeast Texas has seen growth in foreign exports in recent years, driven by growth in export-driven industries like petroleum, chemicals and plastics, and biotechnology.

Rich in Resources

Southeast Texas has strength in a variety of natural resource industries that support the statewide economy, including petroleum refining, chemicals, wood products, and livestock.

Affordable Cost of Living

Many areas in Southeast Texas offer a relatively low cost of living. Average home values in Port Arthur are 73% lower than the national average.

Opportunities

Southeast Texas can leverage its existing strengths as a trade hub and oil stronghold to target the growth of adjacent industries and diversify its economic base.

Southeast Texas can continue to cultivate strengths in natural resource industries while also targeting growth in emerging industries such as information technology, video production, and AgTech.

Communities in Southeast Texas can use their attractive cost of living to draw in new residents and businesses, which can help grow the regional population and GDP.

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Data Sources: IMPLAN, Data Library, Texas, (2011-21); Guidehouse Analysis.