



ALASKA ECONOMIC *TRENDS*

DECEMBER 2024

Population
projections
through 2050

ALSO INSIDE

Total and average wages, jobs rise
What occupations pay per hour

FROM THE COMMISSIONER



From left, first row: Ginger Howard-Powelson, Executive Secretary; Nicole Thibodeau, Alaska Labor Relations Agency; Kim Kolvig, Special Assistant and Legislative Liaison; Catherine Muñoz, Commissioner; Dee Ford, Alaska Workers Compensation Appeals Commission; Paloma Harbour, Employment and Training Services; and Nelson San Juan, Deputy Commissioner. From left, back row: Adam Weinert, Special Assistant; Eric Hotchkiss, Human Resources; Dan DeBartolo, Administrative Services; Tanya Keith, Labor Standards and Safety; Charles Collins, Workers Compensation; Dirk Craft, Alaska Workforce Investment Board; Kathryn Duder, Vocational Rehabilitation; and Johnny Provost, Alaska Vocational and Technical Center.

Our focus and commitments as we head into 2025

By Catherine Muñoz, Commissioner

Like many Alaskans, I am glad the election season has passed and we can focus on moving a positive agenda forward.

On the national level, President Trump's reelection is good news for Alaska's resource-rich economy. From oil and gas and mining to federal lands management, Alaska is poised to play a critical role in the new administration's focus on strengthening domestic energy production.

In addition to population projections, this issue of *Trends* focuses on the growth in jobs and wages. Wages went up considerably last year, more than offsetting inflation, with total wages and average wages both increasing. One article looks at wages by industry and area, and the other briefly examines wages by occupation as well as hourly pay by education level and what other states pay on average. Alaska's hourly wage ranks high among states, at 11th in 2023.

Alaska's economy continues to show signs of improvement. October's statewide job count was up by 7,000 jobs, or 2.1 percent, from October 2023, with

North Slope oil and gas and construction contributing to the growth. The state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remains low at 4.6 percent.

At a recent Department of Labor and Workforce Development leadership meeting, division directors adopted a mission statement to guide our work in the new year: *Create a DOLWD workforce where people want to work, with whom other departments want to partner, which industry champions and the public appreciates.*

To this end, our department leadership is focused on policies that support a diversified economy and a trained workforce, internal process improvements, and most importantly, excellent customer service.

As we approach this most special time of year, I wish you and your loved ones many blessings and share the hope that 2025 will bring good health and happiness throughout our Great Land.

Sincerely,

Contact Commissioner Catherine Muñoz at (907) 465-2700 or commissioner.labor@alaska.gov.



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ON THE COVER:

Railroad tracks at sunset along Turnagain Arm, just south of Anchorage at Mile 110.5 of the Seward Highway. Photo by Flickr user [Dan Logan](#)

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ALASKA
DEPARTMENT of LABOR
and WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

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ALASKA ECONOMIC TRENDS

4 LONG-TERM DECLINE
FOR POPULATION

8 TOTAL AND AVERAGE
WAGES, JOBS ALL RISE

12 HOURLY WAGES
AND OCCUPATIONS

14 GAUGING
THE ECONOMY

Trends is a nonpartisan, data-driven magazine that covers
a variety of economic topics in Alaska.

ON THIS SPREAD: The background watermark for 2024 is an aerial view of the mountains around Anchorage.
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Long-term population decline

Projections show a 2% statewide loss from 2023 to 2050

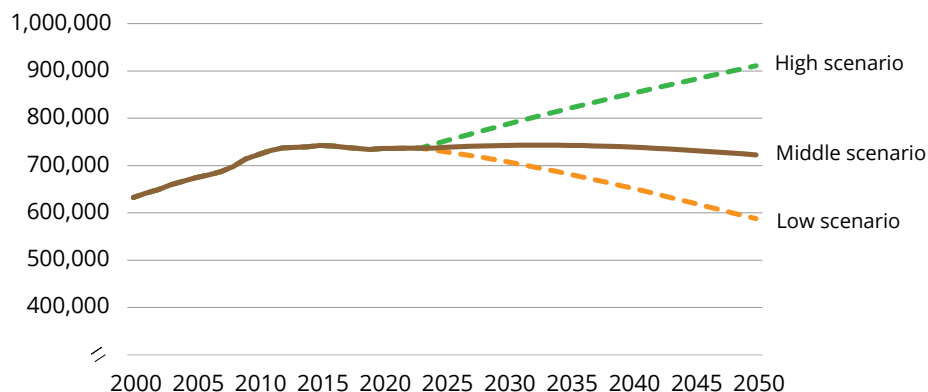
By DAVID HOWELL

Our latest long-term population projections for Alaska show the state declining from about 737,000 people in 2023 to 723,000 in 2050, a 2 percent decrease.

This is the first time we have projected statewide decline in the long term. Previous releases showed Alaska losing population in the latter part of the projected decades but still growing overall.

The projected decrease stems from prolonged net migration losses and the number of births losing ground to the number of deaths.

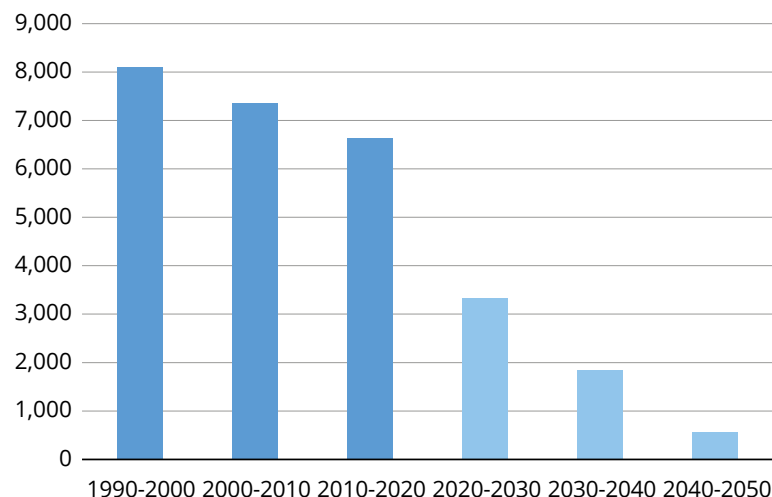
Three possible trajectories for state's population



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

While the size of Alaska's population is not projected to change much over the next 27 years, its makeup will shift to a considerably older state with a much smaller number of children.

Average yearly natural increase* by decade



*Natural increase is births minus deaths.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Different migration scenarios and results

For the projections, we use long-term averages to show what the population will look like if current trends continue.

For net migration, or in-movers minus out-movers, we use a 30-year average — and the now-11-year streak of net migration losses has turned the long-term average rate increasingly negative. This round of projections uses a net migration rate of -0.3 percent; for comparison, the previous release used -0.2 percent.

We apply the same long-term average each year over the coming decades. That's not to say we won't see spikes and dips in migration, but if

the next 30 years resemble the previous 30, that rate is the average amount we expect to lose to migration each year between 2023 and 2050.

Migration is uncertain, however, and especially over such a long span. For that reason, we also produce high and low scenarios to show what might happen if trends change. (See the graph on the previous page.)

The high scenario uses a net migration rate of 0.5 percent a year. Alaska has seen higher in-flow rates over the last 30 years, but not for sustained periods.

The low scenario uses -1.0 percent, similar to the loss rate between 2016 and 2020 when Alaska's population declined overall.

Under the high scenario, Alaska would gain between 3,700 and 4,500 people annually from migration, leading to rapid population growth. If Alaska were to average a 0.5 percent inflow each year over the next 27, the population would reach 911,100.

On the other hand, the -1.0 percent low scenario would reduce the population to 587,600 by 2050: a loss of between 5,900 to 7,300 people to net migration each year.

Changes in deaths and births

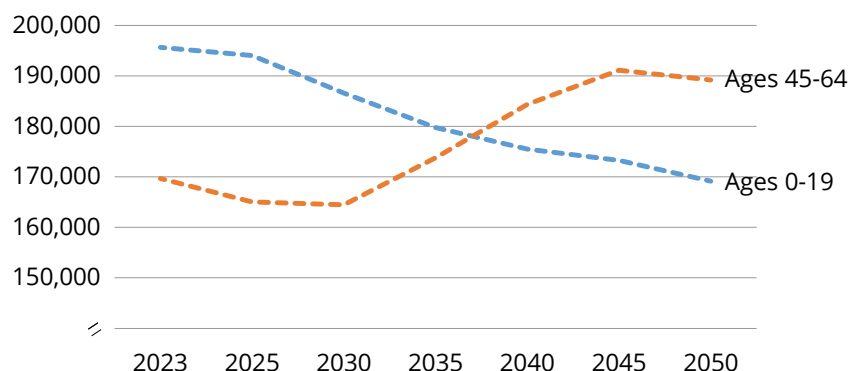
Natural increase, or births minus deaths, has trended downward since the late 2000s with the decline accelerating in the middle of the last decade. During the past two years, natural increase hit its lowest level since the early 1950s, when Alaska had fewer than 200,000 people.

Natural increase will continue to dwindle over the next few decades. Alaska gained 3,550 residents through natural increase over the past year, and we project that will fall to just 300 in 2049-2050.¹

As births have decreased, deaths have increased more. Alaska recorded 5,580 deaths last year. We project deaths will rise 37 percent by 2050, peaking at 7,740 in 2045-2046, the year the oldest baby boomers would turn 100.

¹Natural increase and net migration are calculated from July 1 of one year to June 30 of the next.

Youngest, older population numbers to reverse



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

An increasingly older population is the reason deaths are projected to climb; in other words, the overall mortality rate in Alaska hasn't gone up.

Deaths are sure to increase unless a massive number of older people leave the state, but births are far less certain.

We expect births to decline by 13 percent between 2023 and 2050. Similar to deaths, fewer births will result from an older population; that is, the population will have fewer women of child-bearing age.

Alaska's total fertility rate, the average number of children per woman in her lifetime, appears to have bottomed out in recent years. Alaska's fertility rate is 1.9, below the level needed to replace the existing population (2.1).

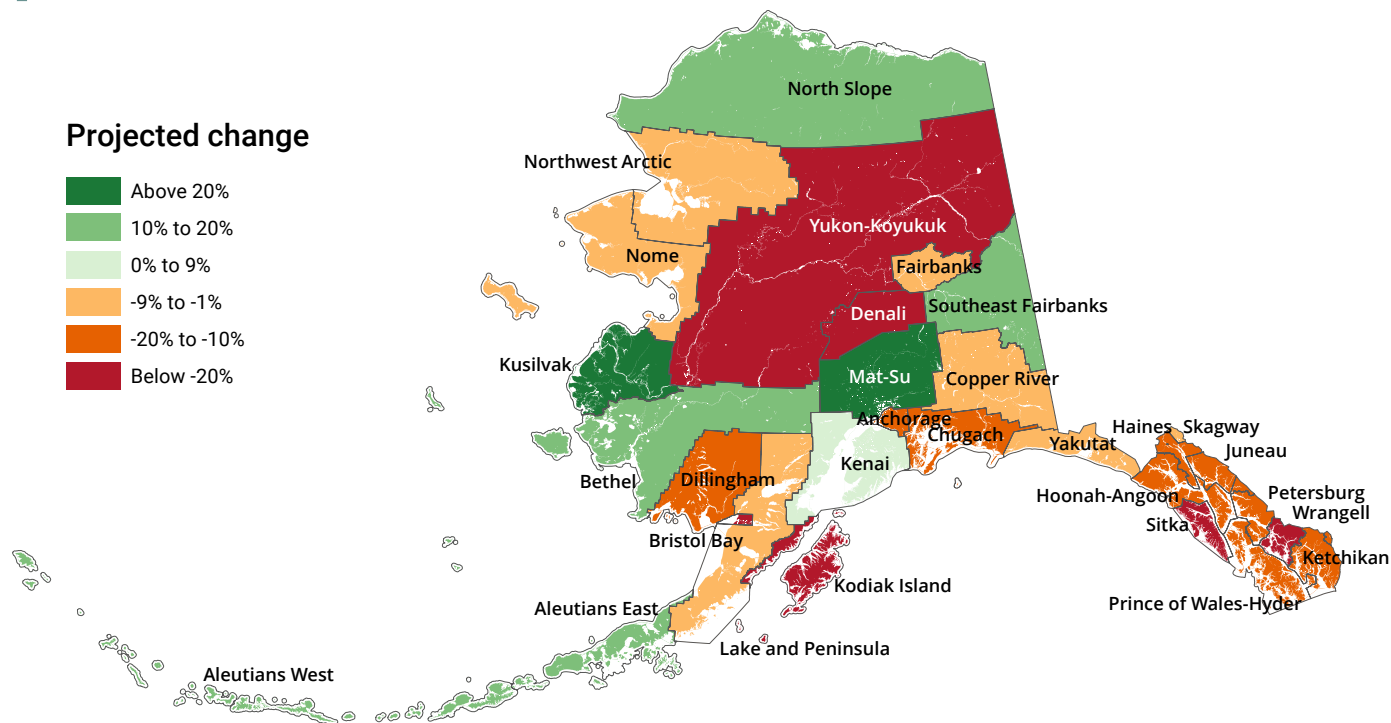
Despite being below replacement level, Alaska's fertility rate remains among the highest in the country. Only South Dakota and Nebraska had higher fertility rates in 2022, and no state's rate reached replacement level that year. At 2.0, South Dakota's rate came closest.

The growth trends are different for the Alaska Native population

Alaska Natives have long maintained a fertility rate above replacement level — currently 2.8 — which generates steady growth from natural increase. The Alaska Native population loses population to migration, but its growing youth population offsets those losses.

We project the Alaska Native population will grow

Projected population change by Alaska area from 2023 to 2050



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

13 percent between 2020² and 2050, from 160,300 to 181,900.

With the statewide population declining, Alaska Natives will make up a growing share of the state, rising from 22 percent of Alaskans in 2020 to 25 percent in 2050.

Senior population to peak in 2036, then temporarily decline

Alaska had 110,500 residents who were 65 or older in 2023, representing 15 percent of the population. The senior population will peak in 2036 at a projected 135,200 people before declining as baby boomers enter the highest mortality ages.

The 65-plus population will resume growing in 2045 as the oldest millennials, another large generation, begin to turn 65. During the latter part of this projection horizon, seniors will make up between 17 and 18 percent of the population. Beyond 2050, millennials' aging will rapidly increase the senior population.

²We use decennial census data to project for the Native population, so this section's projections begin with 2020 rather than 2023.

Among Alaska Natives, the senior population will also grow considerably over the next few decades, by a projected 131 percent, to reach 32,300 in 2050.

Fewer working-age people and youth and the resulting challenges

We project a long-term decline in the working-age population, ages 20 to 64. The decrease will be steady between now and 2030 as all baby boomers surpass 65, reducing the working-age number from 430,700 to 423,700.

The working-age population will then rebound to its current size by 2040 before dropping again as millennials start to reach retirement age.

Working-age declines won't be evenly distributed by age group over the next 27 years. With millennials aging, the population aged 20 to 39 will decline by a projected 29,000 while the 40-to-64 group will rise by 21,400.

Once millennials begin to turn 65, the working-age population will decline rapidly because the younger generations aren't large enough to replace them.

The number of young Alaskans from birth to age 19 is the smallest it's been since 1991, at 195,700. Through 2050, this group will decline by an estimated 14 percent, to 169,100 kids and teens.

As the number of young people falls, so will their share of the total population, from 27 percent in 2023 to 23 percent in 2050. The decline will come from a combination of lower birth rates and fewer young workers moving to Alaska than we've seen in the past.

A falling youth population will likely mean future labor shortages. As the graph on page 5 shows, Alaska currently has 25,000 more people aged 0-19 than 45-64, but by 2050 that will flip to 20,000 more in the older group.

Regional population projections

See the job growth map on page 16, which shows Alaska's regions and which boroughs and census areas they include.

Southwest Region: +11%

The Southwest Region has a younger population than the rest of the state, with high fertility rates that mean steady growth through natural increase. Southwest does lose population to net migration, but natural increase easily makes up for it.

Strong natural increase makes Southwest the fastest-growing region, and we project it will grow 11 percent by 2050 (4,700 more people).

Northern Region: +4%

Like Southwest, the Northern Region is young and its natural increase offsets net migration losses. The Northern Region will be the second-fastest-growing in the long term, at a projected 4 percent (a 1,200 gain by 2050).

Anchorage/Mat-Su: +1%

The Anchorage/Matanuska-Susitna Region is the only other region we expect to grow over the next few decades. As has been the case since 2016,

For detailed population projections, see:
live.laborstats.alaska.gov/article/alaska-population-projections

though, only Mat-Su will grow. Anchorage's population is projected to shrink.

Like the Southwest and Northern regions, Anchorage/Mat-Su is projected to gain residents through natural increase and lose them to net migration.

Gulf Coast: -4%

The Gulf Coast Region will grow initially but start to decline in 2030. The Gulf Coast is currently the oldest region in Alaska, and by 2030, its deaths will start to outnumber births (natural decrease).

Combined with small net migration losses, natural decrease points to an overall population decline of 4 percent by 2050.

Interior Region: -7%

Military transfers boosted the Interior between 2020 and 2021 but the region has lost people since. Based on longer-term trends, these losses will continue as natural increase won't offset future migration outflows.

Unlike the other regions we project will shrink, the Interior is young and likely to maintain natural increase gains throughout the projected period. However, its projected annual natural increase will decline from nearly 800 per year to under 300 by 2040.

Southeast Region: -17%

We project the Southeast Region's population will decline the most, by 17 percent between 2023 and 2050 (-12,000).

Southeast is older than most of the state and its birth rates are lower, leading to natural decrease. Deaths outnumbering births throughout the projected period and net migration losses point to a steady population decline in Southeast.

David Howell is the statewide demographer. Reach him in Juneau at (907) 465-6029 or david.howell@alaska.gov.

Jobs, total and average wages rise

Pay increased considerably in 2023 as inflation dropped

By KARINNE WIEBOLD

Jobs and total wages have been rising for the last three years, following the widespread pandemic disruptions that hit in 2020.

Wages rose the most in 2023, when employers paid an additional \$1.7 billion. The industries that contributed the most to the larger payout were construction, health care, and professional and business services.

Alaska also added 8,612 jobs in 2023. Nearly all industries grew, but leisure and hospitality employment rose the most numerically, followed by health care and construction.

Total wages are important as a measure of the size of a national, state, or local economy. Average wages are a way to measure whether workers are making more per job. At times, total wages grow even as average wages decline — when an economy adds a large number of low-wage jobs, for example. At other times, average wages grow despite declines in total wages. That happened in some industries during the pandemic when low-wage jobs were disproportionately cut.

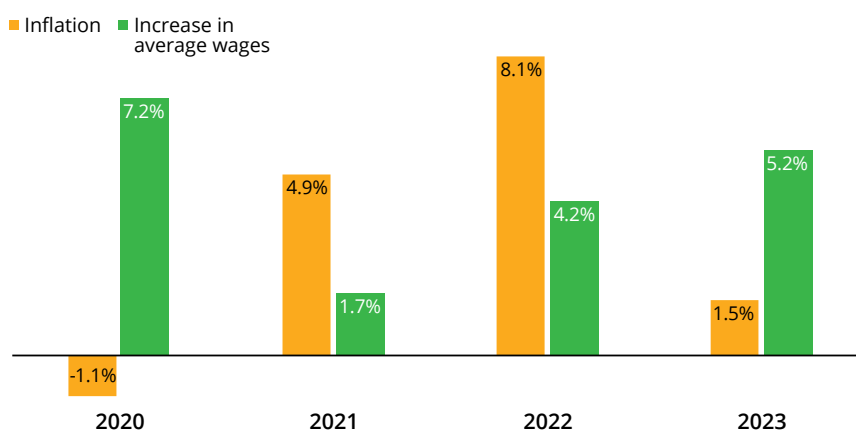
In 2023, however, total and average wages both increased, and average pay went up across the board, even in the two industries that didn't add jobs.

See the tables on page 11 for complete employment and total and average wage numbers by industry and area.

Tourism, health care, and big projects push growth

Visitor numbers have more than rebounded after

Average wages rose more than prices in 2023



Sources: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index for Urban Alaska

pandemic lows, hitting a record high in 2023 when 1.6 million-plus cruise ship passengers traveled to Alaska. Tourists and locals alike traveled within the state, stayed in hotels, and ate out, raising the demand for workers.

Restaurants and bars represented more than half of the job and wage growth in the leisure and hospitality sector last year, and the accommodations and arts, entertainment, and recreation categories also grew.

Total wages in leisure and hospitality, which includes all those industries, increased 10 percent over the year, pushing average wages up 5 percent, to \$32,369. These jobs pay the least among Alaska's major industries. Only retail comes close.

Health care has been on a long-term upward trajectory, adding 1,232 jobs in 2023. Hospital, outpatient services, and nursing home employment each rose 3 to 4 percent. Nursing homes grew the most in percent terms, but as the smallest category, the gain amounted to just 167 jobs. Outpatient services such as doctors and dentists added 570 jobs and hospitals added 495.

The health care industry paid \$199 million more

in wages over the year, a 7 percent increase, and its average annual pay rose to \$76,796.

Oil and gas projects and the beginnings of federal infrastructure projects drove growth in construction, oil, and professional and business services.

Construction added 937 jobs (6 percent) and paid \$227 million more in wages. All three types of construction grew, but heavy construction was strongest by far, adding 517 jobs and representing nearly half the construction industry's wage increase despite being the smallest category.

Building construction employment rose 5 percent (271 jobs), and specialty trade contractors added 2 percent (149).

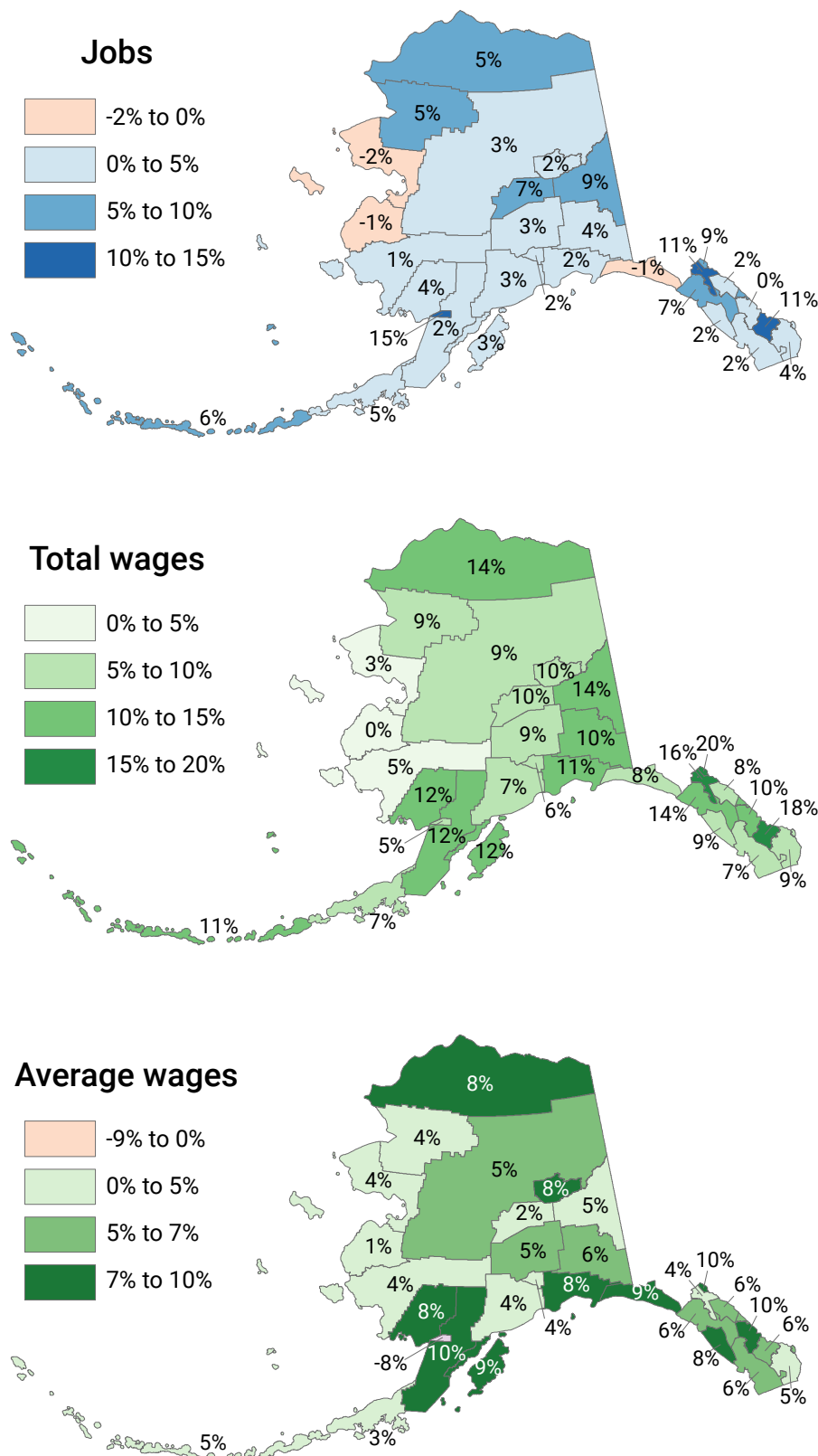
The oil and gas industry lost jobs for several years before it resumed growing in 2022. The industry added nearly 500 jobs in 2023 and its total wages rose 12 percent.

Oil and gas pays the most among industries at an average of \$181,143, which is more than two-and-a-half times the average for all Alaska jobs.

Professional and business services, which often support the previous two industries, added 661 jobs and \$187 million in wages, resulting in a 7 percent boost in average pay.

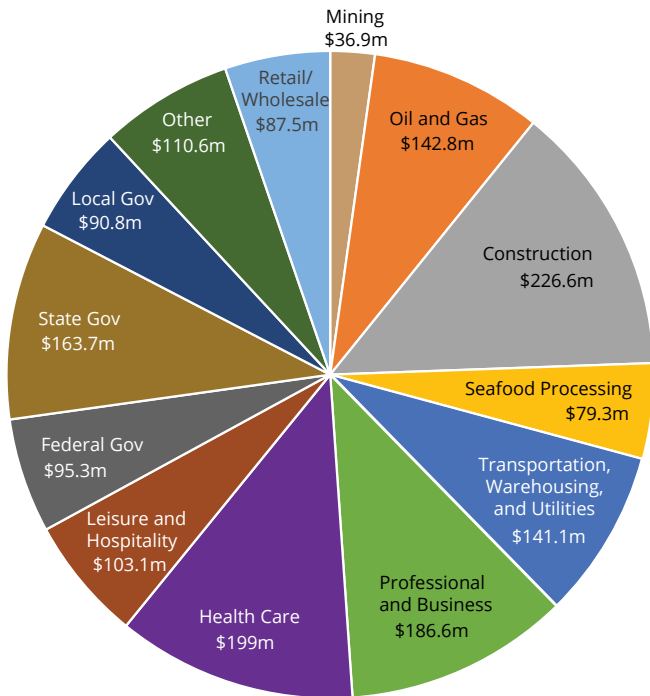
Construction topped total wage growth, however, paying 17 percent more over the year overall and 10

Growth in jobs and wages by area, 2022-2023



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Amounts industries contributed to total wage growth, 2022-23



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

percent more on average. Seafood processing was second at 15 percent for total wages and oil and gas was third at 12 percent. These employers paid more to compete for a smaller pool of workers, and these industries also saw the most rapid job growth.

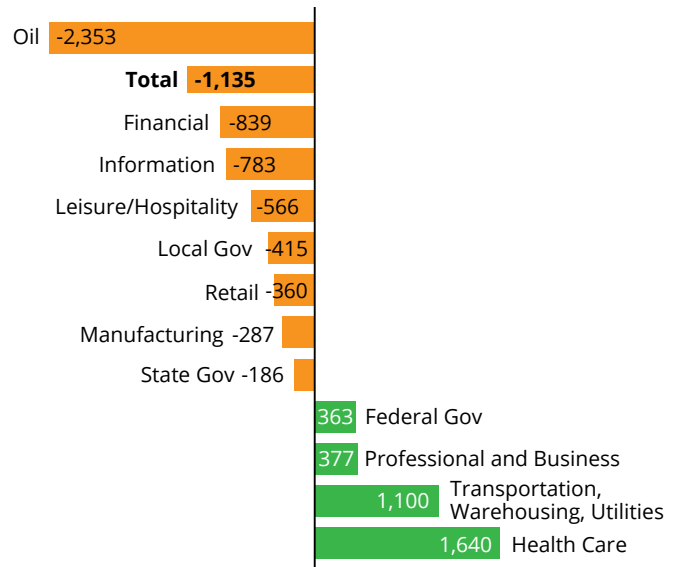
Only the information sector lost total wages, although coupling that with fewer jobs shows its average wage also increased. In other words, the jobs cut were lower-wage, on average.

The information sector includes traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television as well as telephone and internet providers. Employers in this category have been on a long-term decline as technological advances continue to change how these services are delivered.

Regionally, tourism and fishing areas stand out

Southeast communities' wages rose the most in 2023 — specifically Skagway, Wrangell, Haines, and

Few industries had recovered pandemic job losses by 2023*



*Difference between the industry's 2023 job count and its 2019 pre-pandemic level

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Hoonah-Angoon — during a banner tourism year.

The North Slope and the Southeast Fairbanks Census Area were fifth and sixth, with extraction projects boosting their total wages. (See the maps on the previous page and the table on the next page.)

Wage growth also topped the average in fishing areas such as Kodiak, the Aleutians West and Copper River census areas, and Petersburg.

Rural areas also drove the state's job growth in percentage terms, with Bristol Bay, Haines, and Wrangell job counts each jumping over 10 percent.

The largest areas added the most jobs numerically, but for Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kenai, and Juneau, that represented less than the statewide average growth rate of 3 percent. Among the large areas, only the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's employment grew faster than that.

Three areas lost jobs: the Kusilvak Census Area in western Alaska, Yakutat, and Nome (each by -1 to -2 percent).

Karinne Wiebold is an economist in Juneau. Reach her at (907) 465-6039 or karinne.wiebold@alaska.gov.

Changes in jobs and wages by industry and area from 2022 to 2023

Industry	2023			2022			Percent change		
	Jobs	Total wages	Avg wage	Jobs	Total wages	Avg wage	Jobs	Total wages	Avg wage
Total, All Industries	327,957	\$22,341,324,248	\$68,123	319,345	\$20,678,025,862	\$64,751	3%	8%	5%
Total, Private Sector	250,999	\$17,044,894,981	\$67,908	243,676	\$15,731,446,519	\$64,559	3%	8%	5%
Natural Resources and Mining	13,047	\$1,934,624,836	\$148,281	12,416	\$1,754,933,285	\$141,344	5%	10%	5%
Oil and Gas	7,532	\$1,364,365,509	\$181,143	7,039	\$1,221,586,575	\$173,545	7%	12%	4%
Construction	17,103	\$1,598,643,470	\$93,472	16,166	\$1,372,003,204	\$84,870	6%	17%	10%
Manufacturing	12,769	\$888,548,967	\$69,586	12,126	\$794,946,730	\$65,557	5%	12%	6%
Seafood Processing	8,495	\$626,181,157	\$73,712	7,992	\$546,879,810	\$68,428	6%	15%	8%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	65,234	\$3,989,038,152	\$61,150	63,907	\$3,760,515,523	\$58,844	2%	6%	4%
Wholesale	6,385	\$453,870,439	\$71,084	6,218	\$425,015,764	\$68,352	3%	7%	4%
Retail	35,214	\$1,419,629,112	\$40,314	34,967	\$1,361,021,201	\$38,923	1%	4%	4%
Trans, Warehousing, and Utilities	23,634	\$2,115,538,601	\$89,513	22,723	\$1,974,478,558	\$86,893	4%	7%	3%
Information	4,560	\$375,896,760	\$82,434	4,769	\$384,567,465	\$80,639	-4%	-2%	2%
Financial Activities	11,704	\$814,878,806	\$69,624	11,854	\$812,029,698	\$68,503	-1%	0%	2%
Professional and Business Services	28,087	\$2,192,822,639	\$78,073	27,426	\$2,006,183,866	\$73,149	2%	9%	7%
Education and Health	50,862	\$3,523,397,981	\$69,274	49,463	\$3,293,463,446	\$66,584	3%	7%	4%
Health Care	40,179	\$3,085,602,988	\$76,796	38,947	\$2,886,600,731	\$74,116	3%	7%	4%
Leisure and Hospitality	35,684	\$1,155,042,490	\$32,369	34,269	\$1,052,014,232	\$30,699	4%	10%	5%
Other Services	11,657	\$552,346,804	\$47,383	11,118	\$490,384,135	\$44,107	5%	13%	7%
Total Government	76,959	\$5,296,429,267	\$68,821	75,670	\$4,946,579,343	\$65,370	2%	7%	5%
Federal	15,203	\$1,440,981,434	\$94,783	15,003	\$1,345,700,178	\$89,695	1%	7%	6%
State	23,071	\$1,634,588,666	\$70,850	22,513	\$1,470,860,666	\$65,334	2%	11%	8%
Local, incl tribal and public schools	38,685	\$2,220,859,167	\$57,409	38,154	\$2,130,018,499	\$55,827	1%	4%	3%

Borough or census area	2023			2022			Percent change		
	Jobs	Total wages	Avg wage	Jobs	Total wages	Avg wage	Jobs	Total wages	Avg wage
Alaska	327,957	\$22,341,324,248	\$68,123	319,345	\$20,678,025,862	\$64,751	3%	8%	5%
Aleutians East Borough	2,324	\$165,958,509	\$71,411	2,223	\$154,585,885	\$69,539	5%	7%	3%
Aleutians West Census Area	3,252	\$265,399,189	\$81,611	3,082	\$240,053,867	\$77,889	6%	11%	5%
Anchorage, Municipality	146,520	\$10,369,464,908	\$70,772	143,536	\$9,758,252,588	\$67,985	2%	6%	4%
Bethel Census Area	6,543	\$343,032,588	\$52,427	6,492	\$327,332,448	\$50,421	1%	5%	4%
Bristol Bay Borough	1,362	\$91,137,132	\$66,914	1,186	\$86,609,559	\$73,027	15%	5%	-8%
Chugach Census Area	3,766	\$274,472,059	\$72,882	3,690	\$248,152,734	\$67,250	2%	11%	8%
Copper River Census Area	1,128	\$60,571,764	\$53,698	1,080	\$54,936,622	\$50,867	4%	10%	6%
Denali Borough	1,985	\$125,108,805	\$63,027	1,847	\$114,042,488	\$61,745	7%	10%	2%
Dillingham Census Area	2,153	\$135,192,434	\$62,793	2,064	\$120,188,182	\$58,231	4%	12%	8%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	37,115	\$2,425,848,816	\$65,360	36,352	\$2,209,806,955	\$60,789	2%	10%	8%
Haines Borough	1,017	\$46,933,091	\$46,149	913	\$40,488,561	\$44,347	11%	16%	4%
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	983	\$47,145,222	\$47,961	918	\$41,351,038	\$45,045	7%	14%	6%
Juneau, City and Borough	17,722	\$1,170,512,391	\$66,049	17,349	\$1,082,863,218	\$62,416	2%	8%	6%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	21,330	\$1,266,329,037	\$59,368	20,791	\$1,182,360,441	\$56,869	3%	7%	4%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	7,281	\$432,561,442	\$59,410	6,983	\$396,480,699	\$56,778	4%	9%	5%
Kodiak Island Borough	5,759	\$352,777,481	\$61,257	5,618	\$315,635,236	\$56,183	3%	12%	9%
Kusilvak Census Area	2,073	\$76,187,107	\$36,752	2,088	\$76,195,394	\$36,492	-1%	0%	1%
Lake and Peninsula Borough	892	\$43,762,338	\$49,061	872	\$39,034,094	\$44,764	2%	12%	10%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	28,871	\$1,586,663,339	\$54,957	27,923	\$1,456,645,082	\$52,166	3%	9%	5%
Nome Census Area	3,871	\$265,450,128	\$68,574	3,941	\$258,927,883	\$65,701	-2%	3%	4%
North Slope Borough	10,689	\$1,332,219,864	\$124,635	10,140	\$1,172,263,013	\$115,608	5%	14%	8%
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,869	\$239,781,118	\$83,577	2,729	\$219,726,708	\$80,515	5%	9%	4%
Petersburg Borough	1,253	\$67,429,609	\$53,815	1,248	\$61,186,715	\$49,028	0%	10%	10%
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	2,134	\$109,359,458	\$51,246	2,101	\$102,001,859	\$48,549	2%	7%	6%
Sitka, City and Borough	4,341	\$265,086,245	\$61,066	4,272	\$242,467,614	\$56,757	2%	9%	8%
Skagway, Municipality	1,017	\$54,886,563	\$53,969	932	\$45,706,113	\$49,041	9%	20%	10%
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	3,018	\$257,107,573	\$85,191	2,780	\$226,377,951	\$81,431	9%	14%	5%
Wrangell, City and Borough	749	\$41,304,206	\$55,146	673	\$34,919,149	\$51,886	11%	18%	6%
Yakutat, City and Borough	340	\$21,868,152	\$64,318	344	\$20,236,779	\$58,828	-1%	8%	9%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	2,284	\$110,943,368	\$48,574	2,214	\$102,020,073	\$46,080	3%	9%	5%

Note: Columns may not sum because of rounding and the exclusion of unknown categories and areas.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

A look at Alaska's hourly wages

Pay for specific occupations in 2023 and how we compare

Average wages in 2023

State/territory	Hourly	Yearly
District of Columbia	\$51.07	\$106,230
Massachusetts	\$38.62	\$80,330
New York	\$37.80	\$78,620
Washington	\$37.56	\$78,130
California	\$37.00	\$76,960
New Jersey	\$35.57	\$73,980
Connecticut	\$35.45	\$73,740
Maryland	\$35.40	\$73,620
Colorado	\$34.60	\$71,960
Virginia	\$33.68	\$70,050
Alaska	\$33.60	\$69,880
Illinois	\$32.27	\$67,130
Minnesota	\$32.07	\$66,700
Oregon	\$32.07	\$66,710
Rhode Island	\$32.02	\$66,610
New Hampshire	\$31.78	\$66,110
Delaware	\$31.73	\$65,990
U.S.	\$31.48	\$65,470
Hawaii	\$31.27	\$65,030
Arizona	\$30.31	\$63,040
Vermont	\$30.18	\$62,780
Pennsylvania	\$29.77	\$61,920
Georgia	\$29.45	\$61,250
Texas	\$29.44	\$61,240
Utah	\$29.36	\$61,070
Michigan	\$29.13	\$60,600
Florida	\$28.95	\$60,210
Maine	\$28.85	\$60,000
Ohio	\$28.79	\$59,890
North Carolina	\$28.71	\$59,730
Wisconsin	\$28.61	\$59,500
North Dakota	\$28.39	\$59,050
Nevada	\$28.32	\$58,900
Nebraska	\$27.92	\$58,080
Wyoming	\$27.85	\$57,930
Missouri	\$27.68	\$57,580
New Mexico	\$27.65	\$57,520
Indiana	\$27.12	\$56,420
Iowa	\$27.12	\$56,400
Kansas	\$27.05	\$56,270
Tennessee	\$26.94	\$56,030
Montana	\$26.88	\$55,920
Idaho	\$26.75	\$55,640
South Carolina	\$26.08	\$54,250
Kentucky	\$25.97	\$54,030
Oklahoma	\$25.70	\$53,450
Louisiana	\$25.69	\$53,440
Alabama	\$25.67	\$53,400
South Dakota	\$25.59	\$53,230
West Virginia	\$25.10	\$52,200
Arkansas	\$24.64	\$51,250
Virgin Islands	\$24.34	\$50,620
Mississippi	\$22.87	\$47,570
Guam	\$20.29	\$42,210
Puerto Rico	\$16.40	\$34,120

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Occupational Employment Statistics and Wages Program

By SAMANTHA JENKINS

While the previous article looked extensively at jobs and wages from an industry perspective, adding a second data set allows us to narrow the focus to specific occupations and what they pay per hour in Alaska.

Most of the data we provide on jobs are by industry, but a program we conduct with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates hourly wages for 550 to 600 specific job titles each year in the state. Alaska publishes numbers for four areas: statewide, Anchorage/Mat-Su, Fairbanks, and “balance of state.” This federal-state program also covers the nation, states, and some cities, allowing for broad comparisons. (See the sidebar on the next page for more.)

Alaska’s average hourly wage, \$33.60 in 2023, equals \$69,880 a year. The median, which uses the middle value to reduce the influence of very high and low pay, was about \$26.99 an hour or \$56,140 a year.

Alaska’s average wage ranked 11th among states. The national average was \$31.48 per hour, or \$65,470 annually. (See the table on the left.)

What the largest occupations in Alaska pay

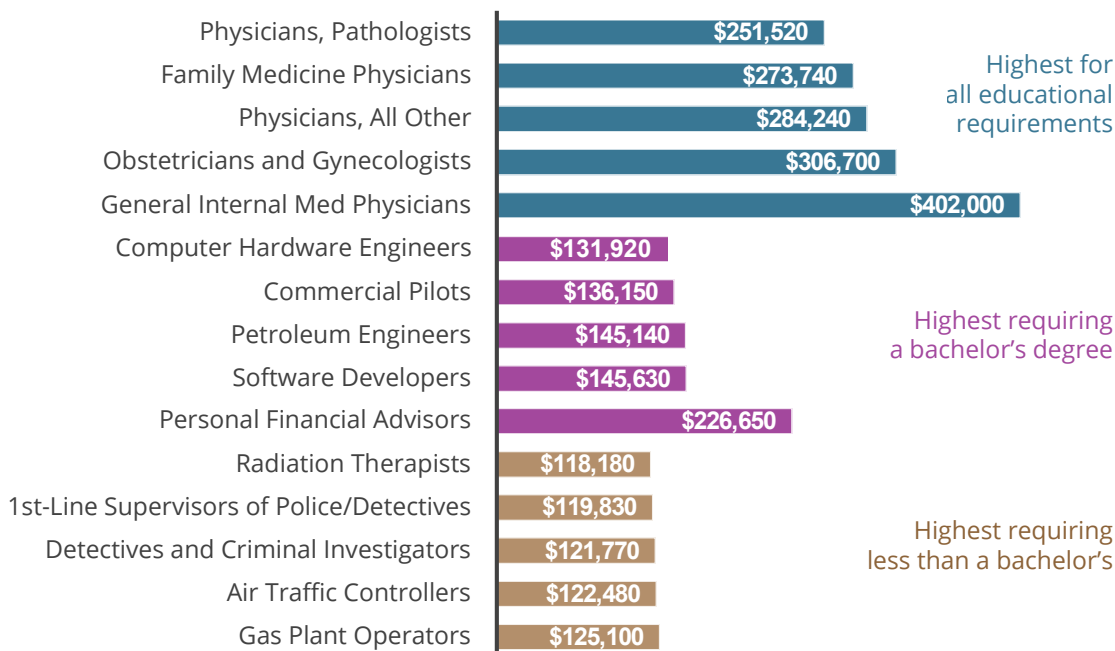
The 10 largest occupations in Alaska represented roughly a fifth of all jobs in 2023. See the table below for the list and their hourly wages.

Wages for the largest occupations in 2023

Occupation	Hourly
Retail Salespersons	\$18.95
Stockers and Order Fillers	\$19.89
Registered Nurses	\$52.51
General and Operations Managers	\$58.09
Fast Food and Counter Workers	\$14.91
Cashiers	\$17.04
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	\$18.53
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeepers	\$18.50
1st-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	\$32.73
Office Clerks, General	\$23.41

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Occupational Employment Statistics and Wages Program

Highest-paying Alaska occupations by education required in 2023



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Occupational Employment Statistics and Wages Program

Eight of the 10 paid lower-than-average wages, as they are service jobs with low educational requirements. The two largest were retail salespeople and stockers/order fillers.

Registered nurses, however, made 56 percent more than the average statewide wage, and general and operations managers earned about 73 percent more.

Pay, education, and how they compare

The exhibit above shows Alaska's highest-wage occupations in a few different ways.

The bottom grouping shows the highest wages for nonmanagement jobs that require less than a bachelor's degree. All of these have low job counts in Alaska.

The middle grouping shows those that do require a bachelor's degree. Two of the top five in this category are STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) positions, showing the earning potential of many jobs in the STEM fields.

The top grouping shows the highest-wage occupations in Alaska regardless of education requirements. It's dominated by medical occupations that require a graduate degree, with general internal medicine physicians topping the list at about \$402,000 a year.

Samantha Jenkins is a research analyst in Juneau. Reach her at (907) 465-6015 or samantha.jenkins@alaska.gov.

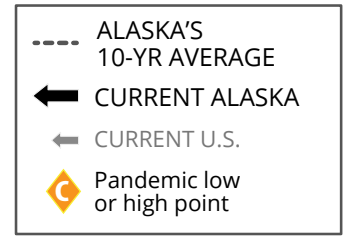
About hourly wage data by occupation

The Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics Program, or OEWS, produces occupation, employment, and wage data for more than 800 occupations in 600-plus metropolitan areas, every state, and the nation.

OEWS estimates wages and jobs through a survey and statistical analysis, so because these are estimates, they should be treated as approximations rather than actual counts.

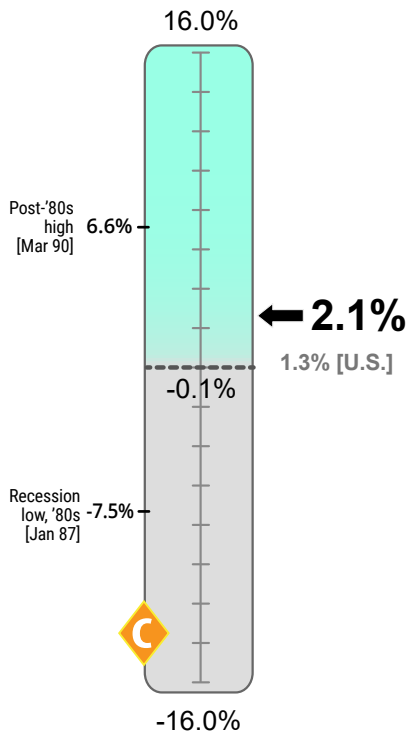
More data and program information are available on the [Bureau of Labor statistics website for OEWS](#) or [our website](#). For a complete listing of occupations and wages in Alaska and its areas on our OEWS site, click that link and select "download CSV file."

Gauging The Economy



Job Growth

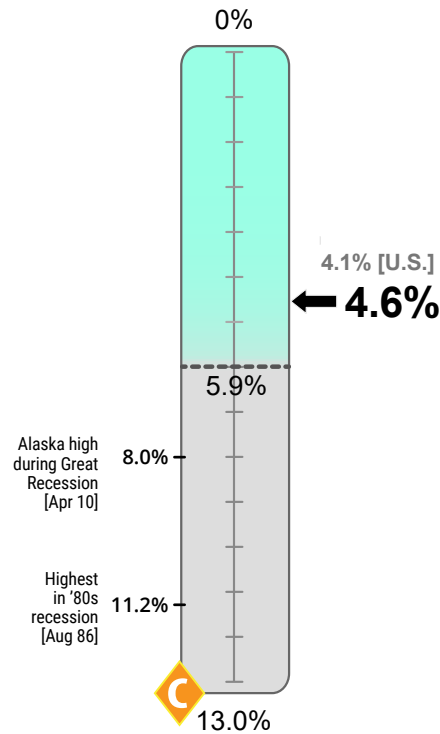
October 2024
Over-the-year percent change



Alaska's October employment was 2.2 percent above last October while national employment was up 1.3 percent over the same period.

Unemployment Rate

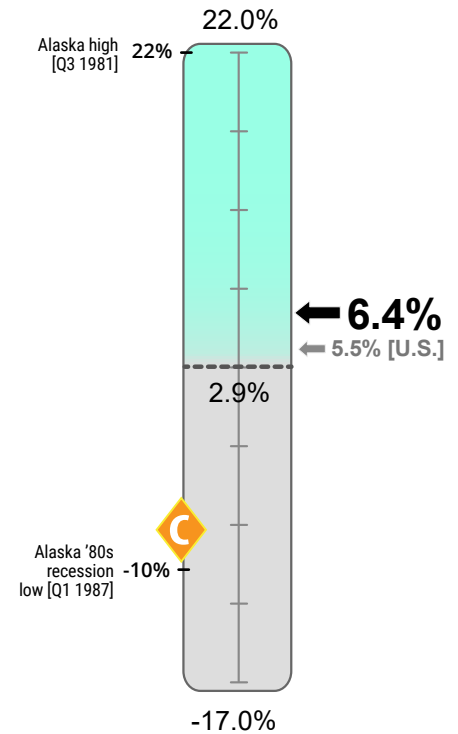
October 2024
Seasonally adjusted



Alaska's unemployment rate has climbed nearly a percentage point since early 2023 but remains well below its 10-year average.

Wage Growth

2nd Quarter 2024
Over-the-year percent change



Total wages paid by Alaska employers have shown strong growth in recent quarters.

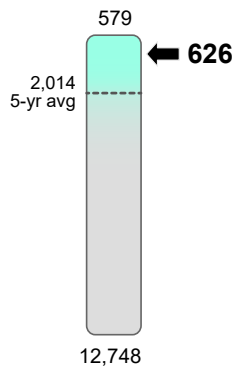
Wages were up 6.4 percent from year-ago levels in the second quarter of 2024 — well above the 5.5 percent growth for the U.S. — and 26.9 percent above second quarter 2019.

Gauging The Economy

----- ALASKA'S
10-YR AVERAGE
← CURRENT ALASKA

Initial Claims

Unemployment, week ending Nov. 9, 2024*

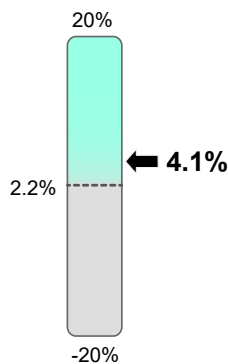


Pandemic-driven high claims loads have fallen, and new claims for benefits are well below their long-term average.

*Four-week moving average ending with specified week

GDP Growth

2nd Quarter 2024
Over-the-year percent change*

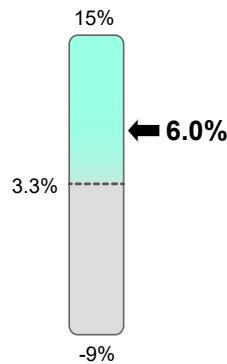


Gross domestic product is the value of the goods and services a state produces. It's an important economic measure but also a volatile one for Alaska because commodity prices influence the numbers so much — especially oil prices.

*In current dollars

Personal Income Growth

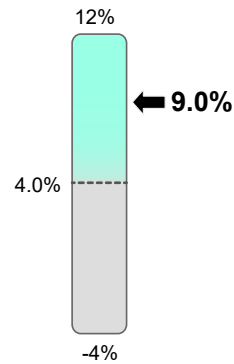
2nd Quarter 2024
Over-the-year percent change



Personal income consists of three main parts: 1) wages and salaries; 2) dividends, interest, and rents; and 3) transfer payments (payments from governments to individuals).

Change in Home Prices

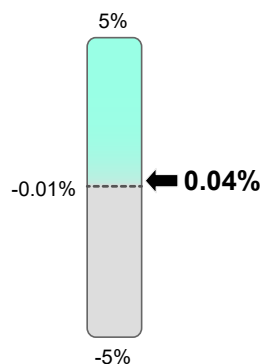
Single-family, percent change from prior year, Q2 2024



Home prices shown include only those for which a commercial loan was used. This indicator tends to be volatile from quarter to quarter.

Population Growth

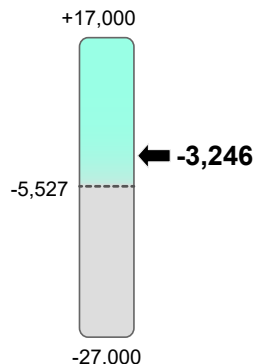
2022 to 2023



After four years of decline, Alaska's population has grown slightly in each of the last three years as natural increase (births minus deaths) has slightly exceeded migration losses.

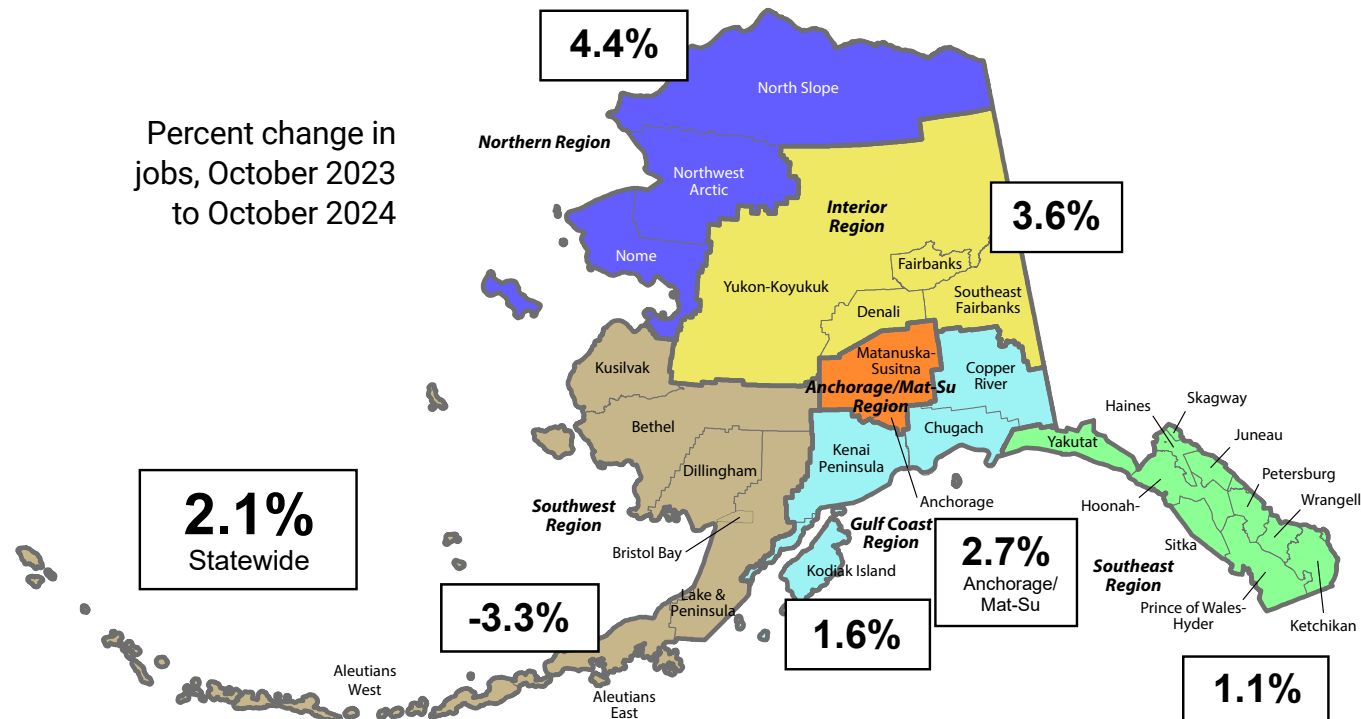
Net Migration

2022 to 2023



The state had net migration losses for the 11th consecutive year in 2023. Losses were larger than the previous two years but smaller than the late 2010s. Net migration is the number who moved to Alaska minus the number who left.

Employment Growth by Region



Unemployment Rates

Seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.	Revised	
	10/24	9/24	10/23
United States	4.1	4.1	3.8
Alaska	4.6	4.5	4.6

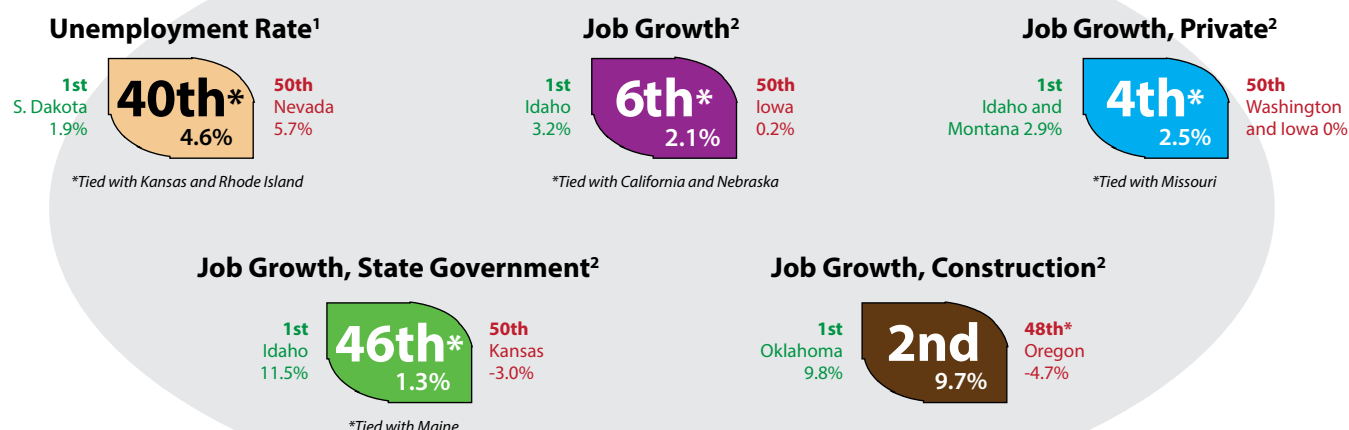
Not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.	Revised	
	10/24	9/24	10/23
United States	3.9	3.9	3.6
Alaska	4.4	3.9	4.2

Regional, not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.	Revised			Prelim.	Revised			Prelim.	Revised	
	10/24	9/24	10/23		10/24	9/24	10/23		10/24	9/24	10/23
Interior Region	4.4	3.7	4.1	Southwest Region	8.4	7.5	7.9	Southeast Region	4.1	3.3	3.6
Denali Borough	8.3	2.8	9.9	Aleutians East Borough	2.6	2.1	2.3	Haines Borough	6.3	4.1	6.4
Fairbanks N Star Borough	4.0	3.5	3.7	Aleutians West Census Area	4.6	2.9	3.9	Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	4.6	3.2	4.1
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	5.2	4.4	5.3	Bethel Census Area	10.1	10.1	9.5	Juneau, City and Borough	3.2	2.9	3.0
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	8.0	7.4	9.3	Bristol Bay Borough	6.2	2.9	4.7	Ketchikan Gateway Borough	4.3	3.3	3.3
				Dillingham Census Area	8.7	7.7	7.3	Petersburg Borough	5.7	4.7	4.9
Northern Region	7.2	7.0	7.1	Kusilvak Census Area	14.0	15.0	14.2	Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	7.0	6.2	6.3
Nome Census Area	7.2	7.1	7.3	Lake and Peninsula Borough	6.7	5.9	6.0	Sitka, City and Borough	3.2	2.6	3.0
North Slope Borough	5.7	5.4	5.1	Gulf Coast Region	5.0	4.1	4.8	Skagway, Municipality	5.4	1.8	4.6
Northwest Arctic Borough	8.8	8.7	9.1	Kenai Peninsula Borough	4.9	4.2	4.6	Wrangell, City and Borough	5.3	4.6	4.7
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	3.9	3.6	3.7	Kodiak Island Borough	4.3	3.6	4.4	Yakutat, City and Borough	5.4	4.4	5.3
Anchorage, Municipality	3.6	3.4	3.5	Chugach Census Area	6.6	3.8	6.3				
Mat-Su Borough	4.6	4.2	4.4	Copper River Census Area	7.4	5.2	7.7				

How Alaska Ranks



Note: Government employment includes federal, state, and local government plus public schools and universities.

¹October seasonally adjusted unemployment rates

²October employment, over-the-year percent change

*Two states don't produce construction job estimates.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; and Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Other Economic Indicators

	Current		Year ago	Change
Urban Alaska Consumer Price Index (CPI-U, base: 1982-84=100)	264.376	1st half 2024	257.938	+2.5%
Commodity prices				
Crude oil, Alaska North Slope, * per barrel	\$74.62	Oct 2024	\$90.48	-17.5%
Natural gas, Henry Hub, per thousand cubic feet (mcf)	\$2.58	Oct 2024	\$3.15	-18.2%
Gold, per oz. COMEX	\$2,759.80	10/22/2024	\$1,926.00	+43.3%
Silver, per oz. COMEX	\$35.04	10/22/2024	\$23.76	+47.5%
Copper, per lb. COMEX	\$4.38	10/22/2024	\$3.79	+15.6%
Bankruptcies				
Business	56	Q3 2024	48	+16.7%
Personal	14	Q3 2024	7	+100%
	42	Q3 2024	41	+2.4%
Unemployment insurance claims				
Initial filings	3,959	Oct 2024	4,923	-19.6%
Continued filings	17,565	Oct 2024	20,582	-14.7%
Claimant count	13,162	Oct 2024	13,408	-1.8%

*Department of Revenue estimate

Sources for this page and the preceding three pages include Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; U.S. Energy Information Administration; U.S. Census Bureau; COMEX; NASDAQ; Alaska Department of Revenue; and U.S. Courts, 9th Circuit

EMPLOYER RESOURCES

Changes to Alaska Foreign Labor Certification Program

Changes to Alaska's Foreign Labor Certification processes offer improved, streamlined service to H-2A and H-2B employers.

These programs allow U.S. employers to bring foreign nationals to the United States to fill temporary agricultural and nonagricultural jobs. The H-2A program serves agricultural employers, while most H-2B jobs in Alaska are in the seafood industry and seasonal retail and tourism. Both programs require Alaska employers to recruit for U.S. workers via their state workforce agency in AlaskaJobs for their positions to be certified for visa application.

Instead of emailing job order requests, employers now work directly with their local Alaska job center or Seafood Office staff for assistance setting up accounts in AlaskaJobs, entering their H-2A and H-2B job orders. They can also do both via self-service. Job center staff provide an array of services in addition to ensuring that job orders meet Alaska standards and are ready to open for recruitment.

FLC staff review job orders for program-specific

compliance, work in the FLAG system, arrange for timely H-2A housing inspections, and open H-2A/H-2B job orders at the appropriate time for the employer's application for certification. Employers can also check the status of their job orders, view applicants, and recruit via self-service.

See <https://labor.state.ak.us/alien/flcnonperm.htm> for new information, updated instructions, and links to all of the resources employers need for this process.

Employers with questions on Foreign Labor Certification may contact Alaska's Foreign Labor Certification program at dol.flc@alaska.gov or call (907) 465-6471.

For information about Foreign Labor Certification from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Foreign Labor Certification, see <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/foreign-labor> or contact the Chicago National Processing Center at tlc.chicago@dol.gov.

Employer Resources is written by the Employment and Training Services Division of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.