



ALASKA ECONOMIC
TRENDS

FEBRUARY 2024

The role of nonresident
workers in the recovery

ALSO INSIDE

What the newest worker
residency numbers show

FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Expanding our support for transitioning service members

By Catherine Muñoz, Commissioner Designee

Because transferring skills and experience into the civilian sector can be a challenge for retiring and transitioning service members, the U.S. Department of Defense created the [SkillBridge](#) program. The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development is proud to support the DOD SkillBridge program as a tool for Alaska businesses to hire highly trained and motivated professionals looking to start their next chapter.

With commander approval, service members can be granted up to 180 days to work full-time with approved industry partners, focusing solely on learning new skills and training while still on active duty. SkillBridge participants are still receiving military compensation and benefits, so they are prohibited from receiving any compensation from the industry partner.

The SkillBridge program is mutually beneficial for both service members and employers.

For service members, SkillBridge offers the ability to enhance their marketability and career prospects so they can transition easily into meaningful and gainful employment after their military service ends.

For employers, SkillBridge is an opportunity to access and leverage the world's most highly trained and motivated workforce at no cost. Approved industry partners provide participants with invaluable skills, abilities, and in-demand work experience while getting the opportunity to evaluate and potentially hire them when they leave the military.

We are excited to expand the SkillBridge program in two ways. First, last December, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development proudly became an authorized DOD SkillBridge industry partner. We are offering internships to transitioning service



members, starting in Employment Training Services and Wage and Hour.

Additionally, because the department recognizes the value of this program in growing Alaska's workforce, we will support Alaska businesses as they establish their own training programs and submit an ap-

plication to the Department of Defense to start their own SkillBridge program.

Employers interested in learning about SkillBridge and how the department can assist you can visit [our SkillBridge webpage](#) or contact the Business Connections team at (907) 269-4777. If you're a transitioning service member interested in applying for one of the department's internship positions, please visit the [SkillBridge job search page](#) and search for "State of Alaska."

We are also working to enroll in the U.S. Army's [Partnership for Your Success](#) program, which provides interviews and possible employment to qualified Army PaYS participants. These include transitioning active-duty soldiers, U.S. Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve soldiers, and ROTC Cadets. Work on a memorandum of understanding is ongoing, with the intention of holding a signing ceremony sometime this year.

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development is committed to supporting Alaska's retiring and transitioning service members in their efforts to find gainful employment opportunities in Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Muñoz".

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



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

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If you have questions or comments, contact the authors listed at the end of each article or the editor at sara.whitney@alaska.gov or (907) 465-6561. This material is public information, and with appropriate credit it may be reproduced without permission. To sign up for a free electronic subscription, read past issues, or purchase a print subscription, visit labor.alaska.gov/trends.

Nonresidents' role in the recovery

What residency, worker counts can say about the economy

By ROB KREIGER

Nonresident workers have played a large role in the state's recovery from the 2020 pandemic. The most recent data show that as of 2022, resident worker counts hadn't climbed back to pre-pandemic levels but nonresident worker counts had exceeded them.

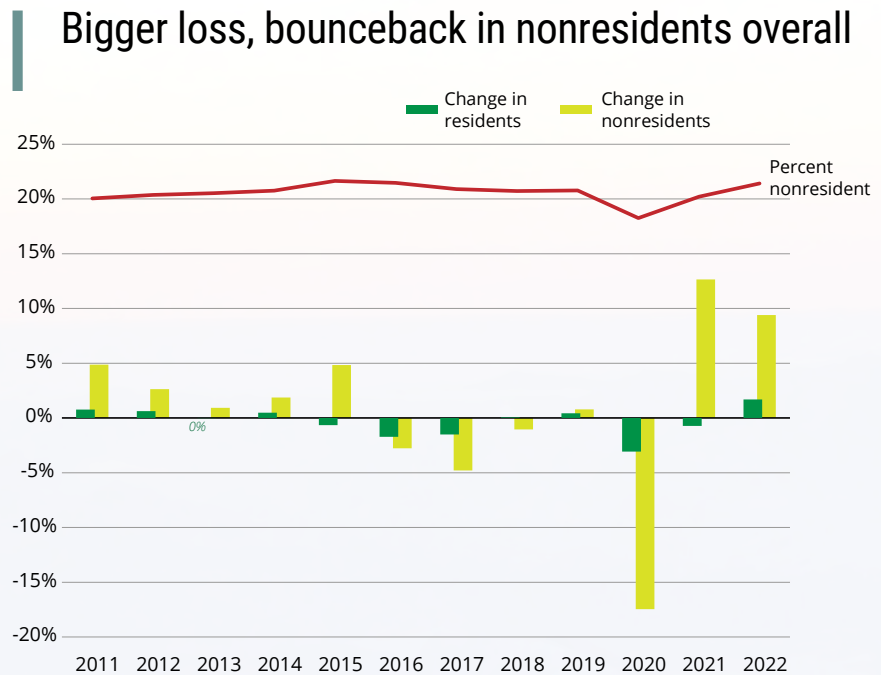
Overall, nonresidents have returned to Alaska's workforce at a far faster pace. In one sense, it's to be expected that nonresident numbers would come roaring back because the industries hardest hit by COVID were those with historically high nonresident numbers and percentages. However, some industries such as health care saw their resident workforces decline over the next couple of years and began to rely more on nonresidents to keep up with demand.

Why does this matter?

Nonresidents have always played a large role in Alaska's economy, and some industries can't function without them. Seafood processing is an example. But as more Alaskans leave the workforce, either through the current wave of retirements or by moving out of state, some sectors will increasingly depend on workers from outside. This includes sectors that haven't historically employed significant numbers of nonresidents, such as health care.

Heavier reliance on nonresidents to fill positions can signal an unmet training need, a loss of residents, or an industry in transition — growing or declining. That's the value of this type of data; it highlights changes in where workers are coming

Bigger loss, bounceback in nonresidents overall



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

from and shows where labor shortages exist or might be developing.

The next section will list a few common worker residency scenarios to show what different combinations suggest about the direction of the economy, then detail the paths three different industries took during the two years after COVID hit in 2020.

What several residency, worker count combinations can signal

The tendency to focus solely on how many or what percentage of workers are not residents can be useful when assessing some labor trends, but looking at nonresident rates in isolation doesn't show what's driving them or whether changes show economic strength or weakness. When interpreting nonresident worker percentages, it's important to factor in the underlying worker counts and movements.

The following scenarios show how similar nonresident rates and changes can mean very different things for an industry or the economy.

1. The numbers of resident and nonresident workers both increase and the nonresident percentage of workers decreases.

This scenario indicates economic growth, ample job opportunities, and a developing resident workforce that may be relying less on nonresidents to fill certain types of jobs.

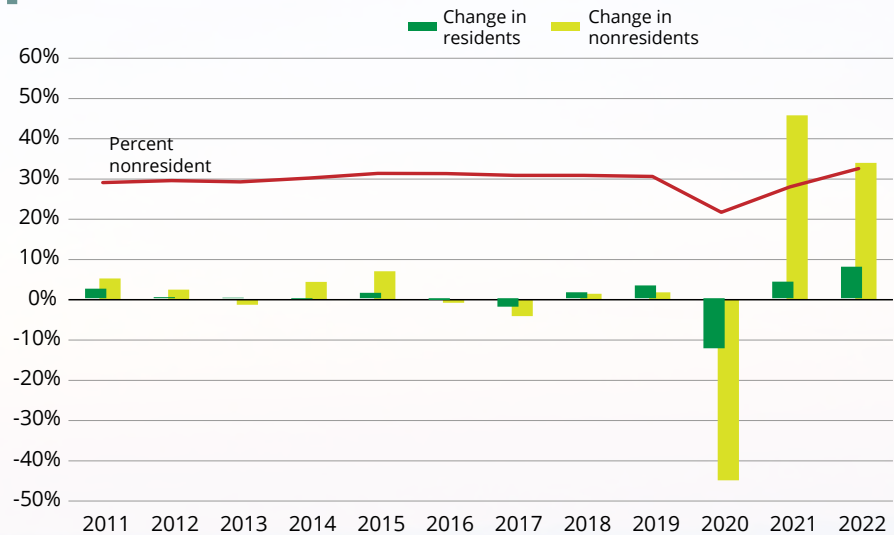
2. The numbers of resident and nonresident workers both increase but the nonresident percentage increases.

This also indicates growth but suggests the resident labor pool doesn't meet the demand for workers. More nonresidents being hired suggests a shortage of residents. This scenario is common when large projects begin and require a significant staffing increase in a short period.

3. The number of resident workers decreases while the number and percentage of nonresident workers increase.

This could signal a workforce in transition, where some event is causing residents to leave the workforce but the demand for labor remains. Unable to hire residents, employers in this scenario are increasingly relying on

Visitor industries' nonresident share rebounds



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

workers from outside the state. Residents retiring or leaving Alaska could put this scenario in motion.

4. Resident workers increase, the number and percentage of nonresident workers decrease, but the total number of workers declines.

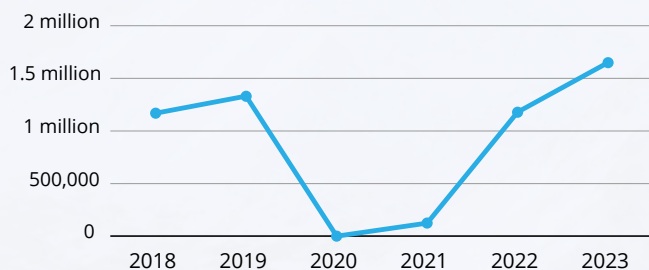
This scenario is difficult to interpret and can be positive or negative. Rising resident worker counts with declining numbers of nonresidents could indicate nonresident hiring is becoming less necessary amid an abundance of residents. However, if the number of nonresident workers drops significantly, it can also mean an industry that relies on them is in decline or transition.

For example: A given industry struggles to find enough workers, and while the industry can hire more residents, it can't operate without some outside labor. Nonresidents in short supply — for example, due to a national labor shortage — could stifle this industry's growth.

5. The numbers of resident and nonresident workers both fall.

This is the clearest sign of economic weakness. The nonresident percentage is less important in this case and can be misleading if viewed without considering the underlying worker movements. This type of scenario occurs during recessions or other economic shocks, such as the 2020 pandemic.

Bust-boom in cruise passengers



Source: Cruise Lines International Association Alaska

A look at three industries' paths

Visitor-related industries

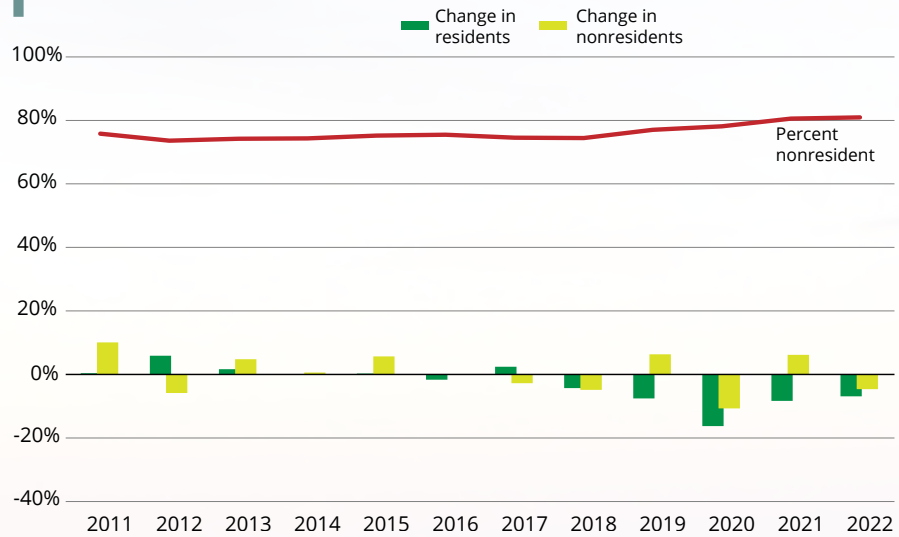
Visitor-related industries¹ absorbed the biggest blow in 2020. As the cruise ship season was canceled, air travel was restricted, and bars and restaurants shut down, these industries lost about 22 percent of their usual workers.

Resident and nonresident worker counts both rose in the two years that followed, but the number of nonresidents working in these industries rose much faster. This suggests tourism is growing but the pool of residents isn't sufficient to fill the jobs.

While residency data are only available through 2022, visitor-related industries have continued to grow since. The number of cruise ship passengers in Alaska hit another record in 2023, and 2024 is projected to reach the same peak.

¹Visitor-related industries are accommodation; bars and restaurants; air transportation; scenic and sightseeing transportation; transportation support; amusement, gambling, and recreation; and performing arts, spectator sports, and related.

Seafood processing loses workers again in 2022

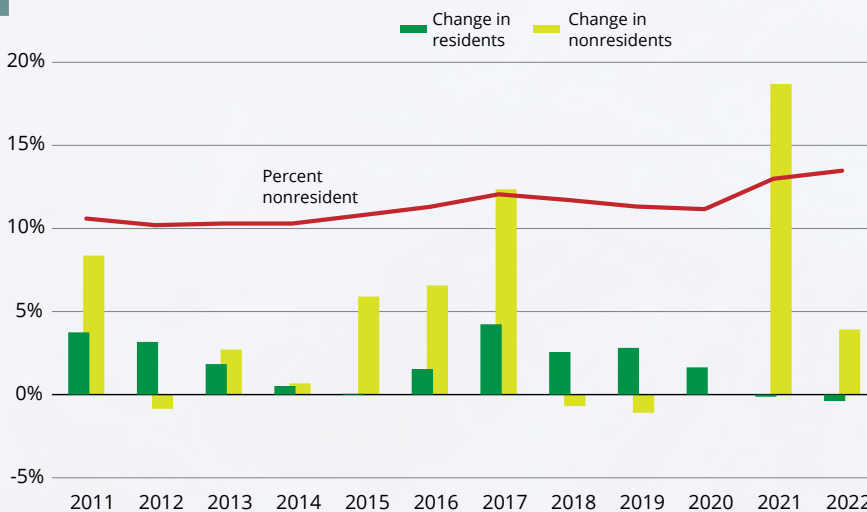


Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

More workers will be necessary, but Alaska and the nation are both fighting a labor shortage and it will be challenging for these industries to find enough workers of either type. Alaska's tourism-linked industries will have to compete with other states for nonresident workers as well as attract and keep residents.

Visitor-related industries fit into scenario #2 detailed in the previous section: an industry is growing and relying more on nonresidents as it's able to hire both residents and nonresidents, but residents are in shorter supply.

Health care increasingly relies on nonresidents



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

Seafood processing

Seafood processing has historically filled the largest percentage of its seasonal and often remote jobs with nonresidents. In 2020, the industry shed 12 percent of its total workers. The industry recovered some workers in 2021, and all were nonresidents.

The post-pandemic period has been unusual for seafood processing compared to other industries because, although residents only represent about 20 percent of the processing workforce in a typical year, resident numbers have continued to drop.

In addition, the number of nonresidents dipped back down in 2022, resulting in the lowest total worker count for seafood processing in at least 10 years — even lower than in 2020.

So far, seafood processing's situation doesn't fit squarely into any of the scenarios detailed in the previous section, so what it means for the industry is murky.

The rise in nonresidents hired in 2021 suggests elevated demand for workers with fewer residents available. But the resident and nonresident counts both falling over the next year resembles the economic weakness in scenario #5. Whether the decline repeats in subsequent years will shed more light on the industry's direction.

Before the number of nonresidents dropped in 2022 along with residents, the industry's pattern resembled scenario #3, where some event causes residents to leave an industry but the labor demand remains and the industry relies increasingly on outside labor.

Residents retiring or leaving Alaska can spur this scenario, but it's also possible that more residents are transitioning out of seafood processing and into higher-paying jobs in other industries. Poor salmon runs and low prices for fish in recent years also mean fewer workers are necessary; similarly, plant automation and other efficiencies have lowered the demand for workers.

Health care

Health care had been on a long upward trend for many years before COVID. The number of health care workers rose steadily during the last decade, and that growth was skewed toward residents. At the same time, health care's nonresident worker percentage fell.

The year after the pandemic began, however, the trend reversed. While health care had begun to rely less on nonresidents, starting in 2021, residents began to leave the industry and the number of nonresidents climbed.

While the overall number of residents in

Denali and Skagway: Another way to look at nonresident patterns

Nowhere were the effects of the pandemic on nonresident workers in Alaska more obvious than in the Denali Borough and Skagway, two areas whose seasonal economies rely heavily on outside labor.

Denali and Skagway stand out because the majority of their workers are nonresidents — usually about two-thirds — and summer tourism is their dominant industry.

In 2020, these two areas lost higher percentages of their workers than anywhere else, and most of the lost workers were nonresidents. Since then, both have seen a corresponding jump in workers, also mostly nonresidents, although their recoveries have differed. Skagway has recovered both visitors and workers much slower.

In 2020, the Denali Borough shed more than 64 percent of its usual workforce (a loss of about 2,850 workers, more than 2,500 of whom were nonresidents). That year, Denali National Park only received about 55,000 visitors when it typically gets close to 600,000. In 2021 and 2022, visitor and worker numbers both grew but didn't reach pre-pandemic levels. In 2022, though, Denali's nonresident worker percentage came within its typical range.

Skagway also lost 64 percent of its workers in 2020, with nonresidents accounting for more than 1,000 of the 1,175 drop. Similar to the Denali Borough, Skagway's worker count and cruise ship visitors climbed back up in 2021 but by far fewer. Skagway bounced back stronger in 2022 and its nonresident percentage moved much closer to its usual level.

The biggest difference lies in the types of visitors each place receives. Skagway's visitors are almost all cruise ship passengers, and in 2020, that number was zero after hitting close to 1 million the year before. The ships that returned in 2021 were mostly small, and the visitor count was less than a tenth of what the community would usually anticipate. The relative lack of tourists two years in a row meant far less need for seasonal workers in Skagway. In 2022, the cruise season was closer to normal but still muted.

Denali's visitor numbers, which are usually more than half of Skagway's, didn't fall quite as hard. Denali received some visitors in 2020 because the park sees independent travelers as well as cruise ship passengers who make their way into the interior. Independent travelers made a relatively strong showing in 2021, bringing Denali up to about a third of its usual tourists, and therefore requiring more workers sooner than Skagway.

In 2022, Skagway's visitor count finally surged with the return of large cruise ships. While passenger numbers remained almost 300,000 below 2019, the more-than-tenfold increase over the previous year finally spurred a rebound in Skagway's workforce, mostly in nonresidents.

About the residency data

A person is considered a resident for our annual **report on [Nonresidents Working in Alaska](#)**, on which the articles in this issue are based, if they applied for an Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend in either of the two most recent years. To be eligible for a dividend, someone must live in the state for the full calendar year — a more rigorous criterion for residency than what's required to register to vote or obtain a license to drive, hunt, or fish.

To calculate nonresident employment and wages, we match PFD applicants with quarterly reports Alaska employers file as required by state unemployment insurance laws. They include the employer's industry and the workers' occupations, wages, and place of work. Federal workers, the military, and the self-employed are not part of those wage records because they are not covered by state unemployment insurance laws.

People who are Alaska residents by other definitions — those who have recently moved to Alaska, bought or rented a home, registered to vote, and obtained an Alaska driver's license — will initially be identified as nonresidents in this data set. Nonresident workers in this article are, in other words, a combination of new residents and nonresidents who work in the state but primarily live in another state.

Some of new arrivals won't stay long enough to meet the PFD criteria for residency, but many will. The chart at the top of page 10 shows the percentage of nonresidents in each major industry who became residents the following year, and more detail is available in the full report.

Because the PFD is unique among states and so popular — nearly every eligible person in Alaska applies — Alaska is the only state that can publish such a comprehensive report on working nonresidents. Other states could use driver's licenses or voter registration information to get a partial accounting of nonresidents working in their state, but neither of those sources would be nearly as complete as PFD applications.

health care remains historically high and the total worker count is at a record level, all of the growth since 2020 has come from nonresidents. The demand for health services continues to grow even as the pool of residents shrinks, especially as the needs of an aging population increase.

While something has clearly changed for the health care industry, it's too early to tell whether there's a new trend and if so, what's driving it.

The pandemic shifted hiring patterns in 2020 and 2021 as traveling nurses became a nationwide phenomenon, and federal money ensured hospitals could find and pay outside staff. Wages also went up as providers struggled to fill enough positions, especially as existing staff faced burnout.

What happened to resident health care workers (for example, whether they left the state or simply switched industries) and whether they'll return is a topic we will return to as more years of data become available, especially because the most recent data year was still during the pandemic. Data for 2023 onward will shed light on health care's trajectory after temporary hires and federal pandemic money dwindled.

Complete numbers are available for 2022

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We publish a report each year on worker residency in Alaska, and the most recent edition is available [here](#).

The sidebar on the left explains how we determine residency and arrive at these numbers, and the article that follows will summarize the worker residency findings for 2022.

Rob Kreiger is an economist in Juneau. Reach him at (907) 465-6031 or rob.kreiger@alaska.gov.

More nonresident workers in 2022

A look at the major findings in our yearly residency report

By DAN ROBINSON

More than 400,000 people worked a wage or salary job in Alaska in 2022, not including federal workers. Of that total, about 86,000 — 21.4 percent — were not Alaska residents.

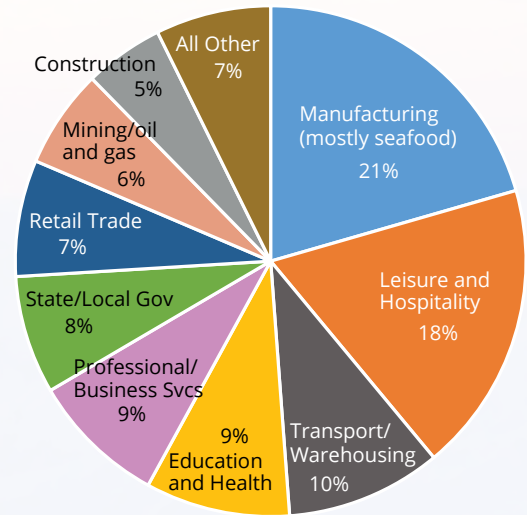
That percentage was up from the previous two years as the state continued to recover from the pandemic, but it was roughly in line with pre-pandemic percentages.

As required by state statute, we produce [a report](#) every year on nonresidents working in Alaska. The broad objective is to help the state use, develop, and conserve its natural resources “for the maximum benefit of its people,” which is a state constitutional directive. (See the sidebar on the previous page for more about the data.)

Most nonresident workers fall into two broad categories

Nonresident workers in Alaska mostly fall into two

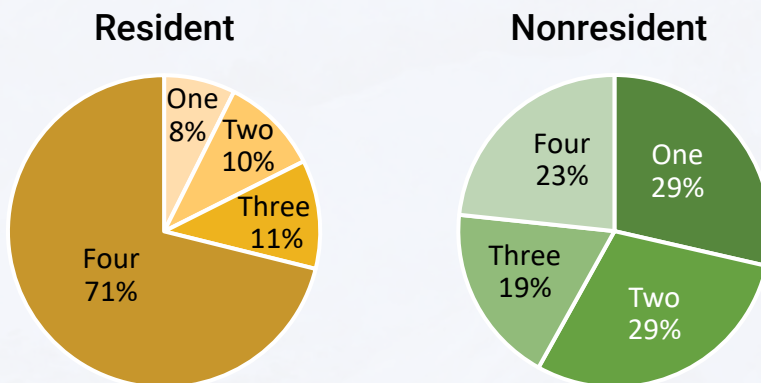
Nonresidents by industry in 2022



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

categories: people who come to Alaska to work part of the year in one of the state’s seasonal industries and people who hold high-paying, year-round jobs in one of Alaska’s resource extraction industries where remote work sites are typical.

Nonresidents don’t typically work here all year



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

Seasonal seafood processing and tourism

The most obvious example of an industry that depends on seasonal nonresidents is seafood processing. In 2022, 81 percent of all seafood processing workers were nonresidents, easily the highest among major industries.

The 16,700 nonresident seafood processing workers made up about 20 percent of the 86,400 total nonresidents who worked in Alaska that year.

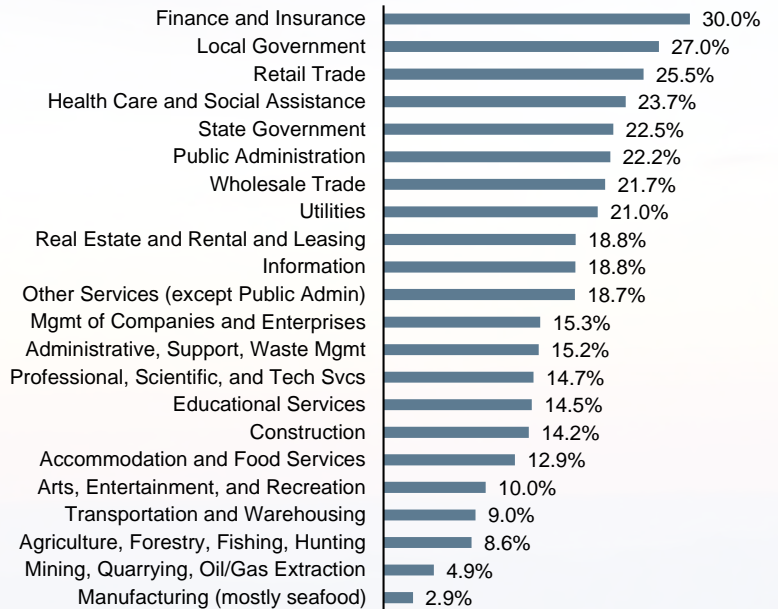
The other major Alaska industry with such a high seasonal worker demand is tourism. These workers are scattered in a variety of categories — retail, restaurants and bars, hotels, transportation, and others — because the nature of the work rather than the residency status of the customer defines those categories.

Many of Alaska’s summer tourism-related jobs are counted under leisure and hospitality, in which 18 percent of all nonresident workers were found in 2022. The full report also provides a custom “visitor-related industries” category made up of many of the employers whose business is closely tied to tourism. (See the first article in this issue for more on visitor-related industries’ trajectory after the pandemic and a list of the categories included.)

Nearly 66,000 people worked in a visitor-related industry in 2022 and more than 21,000 of them, or about 33 percent, were nonresidents. The percentages were especially high in scenic and sightseeing transportation (whale watching, for example) at 60 percent and the accommodation industry (mostly hotels) at 50 percent.

Most nonresidents work just one or two quarters of the year. Those in tourism would typically work in both the second and third quarters, starting their seasonal jobs sometime before June 30 and ending before Sept. 30. Seafood processing employees work mainly during the third quarter when Alaska’s massive salmon runs reach their peak.

Nonresidents in some industries are more likely to become residents the next year



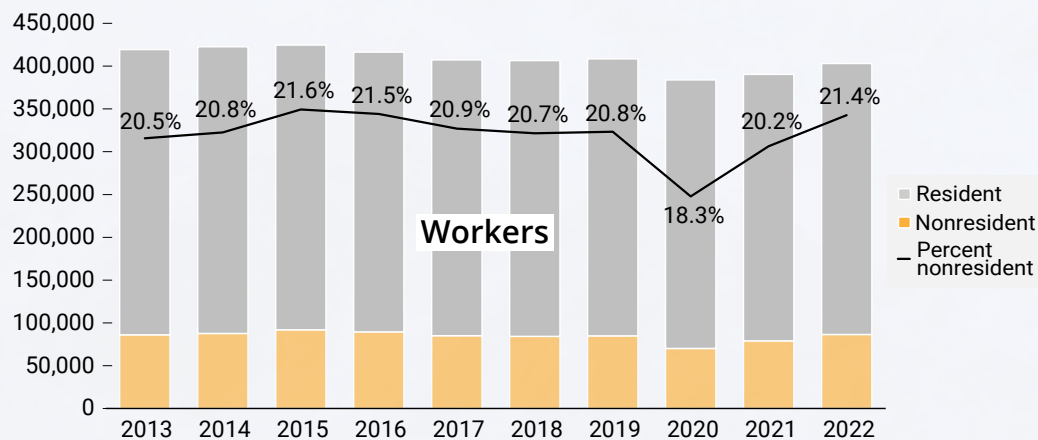
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Remote work sites and atypical schedules

Another type of job that entices nonresidents is resource extraction at remote sites on atypical schedules. This is generally year-round, although the nature of the work can change as snow and ice come and go.

Thirty-six percent of the state’s oil and gas workers are nonresidents, and most work on the North Slope.

Alaska’s overall worker residency in 2022



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

Those jobs require a commute by air and the shifts are often two weeks of 12-hour days followed by two weeks off. It's a long trip to and from work wherever you choose to live, but you make that trip 10 times less often than a Monday through Friday worker.

Consequently, North Slope oil workers have an unusual amount of freedom when it comes to where they live. Someone from Palmer, Soldotna, or Anchorage will have a long day of travel at the beginning and end of their two-week shift that won't differ dramatically from someone's commute home to another state.

That freedom is boosted by high wages. Oil and gas wages are more than twice Alaska's overall average wage of about \$65,000.

Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula Borough have smaller numbers of oil and gas workers, but while 43 percent of North Slope oil workers were nonresidents, the percentages were just 18 and 12, respectively, in those two locations where the work is either in offices or Cook Inlet, close to population centers.

A similar pattern shows up in the metal mining industry, where 41 percent of 2022 workers were nonresidents. The mines vary in remoteness, types of shifts, and the degree to which they hire nonresidents.

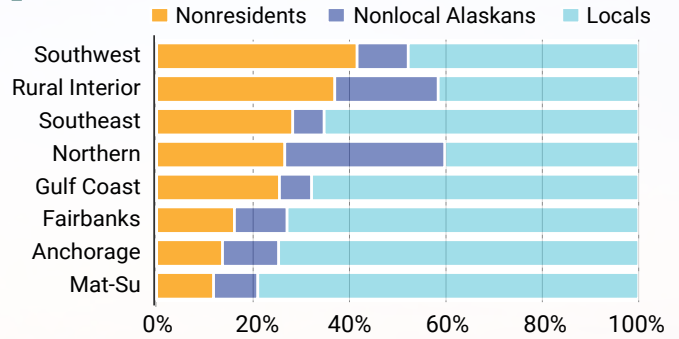
Mat-Su has lowest concentration of nonresident workers by area

Different parts of the state rely on nonresident workers to significantly different degrees. Because of their dependence on seafood processing, the Bristol Bay and Aleutians East boroughs have more than three times as many nonresident workers as Alaskans. Both of those boroughs also employ a significant number of "nonlocals," or Alaska residents who work there but live elsewhere in the state.

Next-highest in dependence terms were the Denali Borough and Skagway, two parts of the state with economies that rely almost exclusively on summer tourism and have small populations. (See page 7 for more on these two areas' post-pandemic recoveries.)

Regionally, Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna

Worker residency by area in 2022



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

Borough had the smallest percentages of their workforces made up of nonresidents, with Mat-Su slightly lower than Anchorage and Fairbanks. The Southwest and Rural Interior regions had the largest percentages of nonresidents in their workforces, and the Northern Region, which includes most of the state's oil and gas workers, had large shares of both nonresidents and Alaskans who commuted from within the state.

Nonresidents by occupation

In addition to residency by industry and area, the annual report sorts nonresidents by occupation in several ways, as the tables on the next two pages show.

One table gives the nonresident percentages for occupations with especially high wages. Petroleum engineers, 28 percent of whom were nonresidents in 2022, top that list and physicians are next-highest. Some high-wage occupations are noteworthy for their relatively small percentages of nonresidents. Only 10 percent of lawyers and 7 percent of financial managers, for example, were not residents.

In sheer numbers, two occupations specific to seafood processing had the most nonresidents, followed by retail salespeople and airline pilots. Like people who work extended shifts at remote locations, some pilots have more freedom to live where they want, and many choose to live outside of Alaska.

For complete nonresident worker data and analysis, see the full [Nonresidents Working in Alaska report](#).

Dan Robinson is chief of Research and Analysis. Reach him in Juneau at (907) 465-6040 or dan.robinson@alaska.gov.

Jobs where nonresidents make more than the median private-sector wage

	Total workers	Nonresidents	Percent nonresident	Avg nonres wages/qtr
Petroleum Engineers	462	130	28.1	\$66,143
Physicians, All Other	401	133	33.2	\$58,605
Family Medicine Physicians	508	126	24.8	\$51,055
Petroleum Pump System Operators, Refinery Operators, and Gaugers	533	124	23.3	\$48,868
Airline Pilots, Copilots, and Flight Engineers	2,940	1,791	60.9	\$47,001
Ramp Agents	1,081	196	18.1	\$44,309
Financial Specialists, All Other	619	29	4.7	\$40,226
Nurse Anesthetists	102	26	25.5	\$40,089
Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment	173	52	30.1	\$38,893
General Internal Medicine Physicians	143	55	38.5	\$38,536
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	136	8	5.9	\$37,979
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	1,095	316	28.9	\$37,016
Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas	1,498	635	42.4	\$36,533
Architectural and Engineering Managers	271	38	14.0	\$36,379
Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians	200	51	25.5	\$36,308
Extraction Workers, All Other	300	152	50.7	\$34,715
Dentists, General	258	61	23.6	\$34,072
Financial Managers	914	62	6.8	\$33,724
Health and Safety Engineers, Except Mining Safety Engineers and Inspectors	150	37	24.7	\$33,121
Construction and Building Inspectors	178	52	29.2	\$31,969
Rotary Drill Operators, Oil and Gas	123	55	44.7	\$31,952
Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators	188	17	9.0	\$31,874
Plant and System Operators, All Other	276	56	20.3	\$30,679
Physician Assistants	603	139	23.1	\$30,651
First Line Supervisors of Transportation Workers, All Other	169	42	24.9	\$30,383
Engineers, All Other	958	194	20.3	\$30,318
Management Analysts	217	30	13.8	\$30,299
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	533	242	45.4	\$29,684
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	513	77	15.0	\$29,457
Mechanical Engineers	314	101	32.2	\$29,020
Construction Managers	1,060	195	18.4	\$28,930
Engineering Technologists and Technicians, Except Drafters, All Other	373	74	19.8	\$28,855
Managers, All Other	2,480	382	15.4	\$28,821
Training and Development Managers	154	21	13.6	\$28,731
Underground Mining Machine Operators, All Other	788	201	25.5	\$28,435
Transportation Workers, All Other	1,412	260	18.4	\$28,006
Pharmacists	427	89	20.8	\$27,971
Chief Executives	5,107	867	17.0	\$27,881
General and Operations Managers	3,623	483	13.3	\$27,730
Millwrights	231	76	32.9	\$27,713
Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators	267	50	18.7	\$27,604
Power Plant Operators	375	58	15.5	\$27,570
Electricians	1,858	379	20.4	\$27,535
Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	367	76	20.7	\$27,517
Occupational Health and Safety Specialists	305	91	29.8	\$27,127
Lawyers	471	49	10.4	\$27,103
Geological Technicians, Except Hydrologic Technicians	176	37	21.0	\$26,755
Nurse Practitioners	524	102	19.5	\$26,646
Project Management Specialists	329	53	16.1	\$26,623

Note: The median wage for all private-sector occupations in 2022 was \$9,501 per quarter. This table only includes occupations with at least 100 workers and is private-sector only.

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

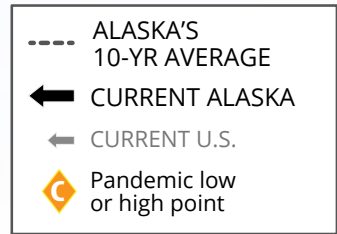
Alaska occupations with large numbers of nonresidents in 2022

	Nonresidents	Residents	Percent nonres	Resident wages (mil)	Nonres wages (mil)	Percent nonresident
Seafood Processing Workers, Except Surimi and Fish Roe	9,116	1,626	84.9%	\$47.4	\$145.6	75.4%
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	3,580	568	86.3%	\$16.9	\$71.8	81.0%
Retail Salespersons	2,417	12,842	15.8%	\$332.1	\$32.4	8.9%
Airline Pilots, Copilots, and Flight Engineers	1,801	1,156	60.9%	\$204.0	\$240.4	54.1%
Waiters and Waitresses	1,718	3,552	32.6%	\$95.3	\$27.8	22.6%
Fast Food and Counter Workers	1,677	8,389	16.7%	\$131.8	\$18.3	12.2%
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,637	3,180	34.0%	\$87.3	\$32.6	27.2%
Registered Nurses	1,522	6,056	20.1%	\$496.8	\$78.4	13.6%
Tour Guides and Escorts	1,292	682	65.5%	\$12.5	\$17.6	58.4%
Cashiers	1,261	7,482	14.4%	\$155.2	\$14.8	8.7%
Fishing and Hunting Workers	1,257	575	68.6%	\$14.4	\$35.0	70.9%
Cooks, Restaurant	1,243	2,018	38.1%	\$50.6	\$23.0	31.2%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,184	4,436	21.1%	\$123.7	\$20.4	14.2%
Construction Laborers	1,101	4,686	19.0%	\$184.7	\$30.5	14.2%
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,052	3,251	24.4%	\$179.5	\$56.7	24.0%
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	1,005	7,350	12.0%	\$269.8	\$22.3	7.6%
Chief Executives	896	4,540	16.5%	\$393.8	\$71.4	15.3%
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equip Operators	868	3,271	21.0%	\$240.3	\$56.9	19.2%
Food Preparation Workers	858	3,276	20.8%	\$61.4	\$14.5	19.1%
Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels	853	497	63.2%	\$30.5	\$48.1	61.2%
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	770	5,116	13.1%	\$132.2	\$13.2	9.1%
Sailors and Marine Oilers	690	492	58.4%	\$22.5	\$31.1	58.0%
Office Clerks, General	667	4,689	12.5%	\$168.1	\$18.2	9.8%
Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas	635	864	42.4%	\$124.3	\$75.2	37.7%
Teachers and Instructors, All Other	627	2,837	18.1%	\$113.4	\$14.8	11.5%
Dishwashers	625	1,228	33.7%	\$18.9	\$7.8	29.2%
Carpenters	606	2,558	19.2%	\$134.0	\$22.4	14.3%
Stockers and Order Fillers	549	3,441	13.8%	\$91.0	\$8.8	8.9%
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	526	2,511	17.3%	\$156.2	\$24.9	13.7%
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	523	994	34.5%	\$23.2	\$7.2	23.8%
General and Operations Managers	516	3,759	12.1%	\$385.4	\$41.2	9.7%
Material Moving Workers, All Other	495	1,385	26.3%	\$82.0	\$19.7	19.3%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers, All Other	493	1,156	29.9%	\$74.6	\$17.7	19.2%
Travel Guides	482	133	78.4%	\$2.8	\$6.1	68.8%
Recreation Workers	453	755	37.5%	\$16.4	\$5.3	24.5%
Bartenders	451	1,309	25.6%	\$33.7	\$7.8	18.7%
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	434	1,659	20.7%	\$33.6	\$5.6	14.2%
Managers, All Other	412	2,944	12.3%	\$245.0	\$31.3	11.3%
Secretaries and Admin Assts, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	412	3,654	10.1%	\$133.8	\$11.1	7.7%
Customer Service Representatives	407	2,925	12.2%	\$103.7	\$6.4	5.8%
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	405	2,941	12.1%	\$117.3	\$8.4	6.7%
Security Guards	401	2,113	16.0%	\$78.9	\$9.8	11.0%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers, All Other	398	1,818	18.0%	\$38.2	\$6.3	14.2%
Chefs and Head Cooks	392	362	52.0%	\$16.3	\$11.8	42.0%
Electricians	384	1,601	19.3%	\$119.1	\$31.1	20.7%
Commercial Pilots	379	452	45.6%	\$41.5	\$16.1	28.0%
Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	354	681	34.2%	\$65.6	\$28.1	30.0%
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	349	3,463	9.2%	\$155.1	\$9.7	5.9%
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	341	390	46.6%	\$39.8	\$22.5	36.1%
Personal Care Aides	327	3,270	9.1%	\$78.9	\$4.7	5.6%

Note: Includes government as well as private-sector occupations

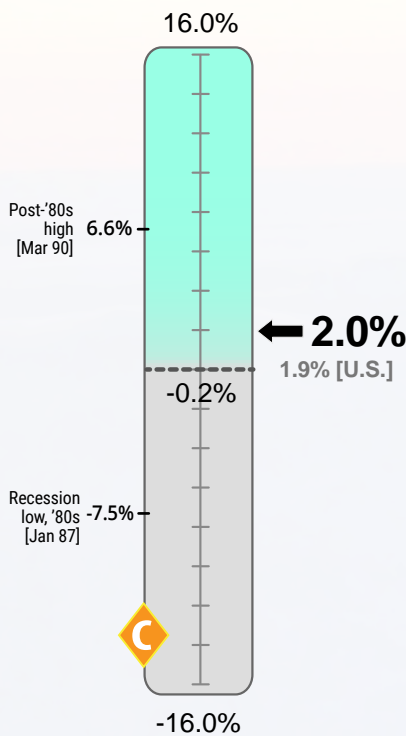
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Gauging The Economy



Job Growth

December 2023
Over-the-year percent change

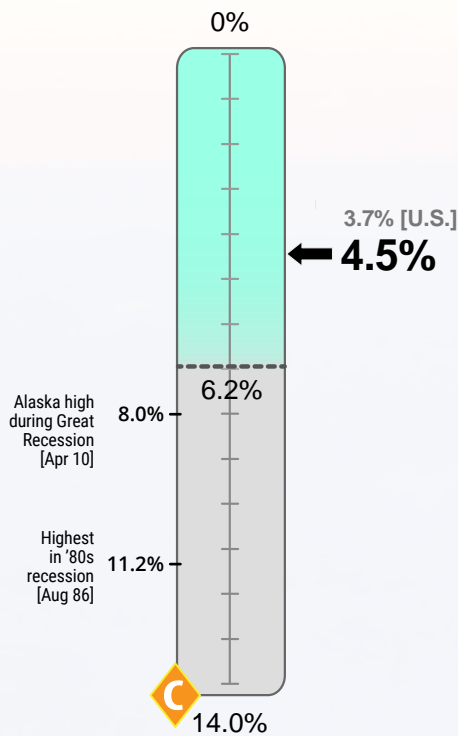


Alaska's December employment was 2.0 percent above last December but still 0.3 percent below 2019, an important reference point because that was a pre-pandemic employment level.

National employment, which was up 1.9 percent from December 2022, was 3.5 percent above its 2019 level.

Unemployment Rate

December 2023
Seasonally adjusted

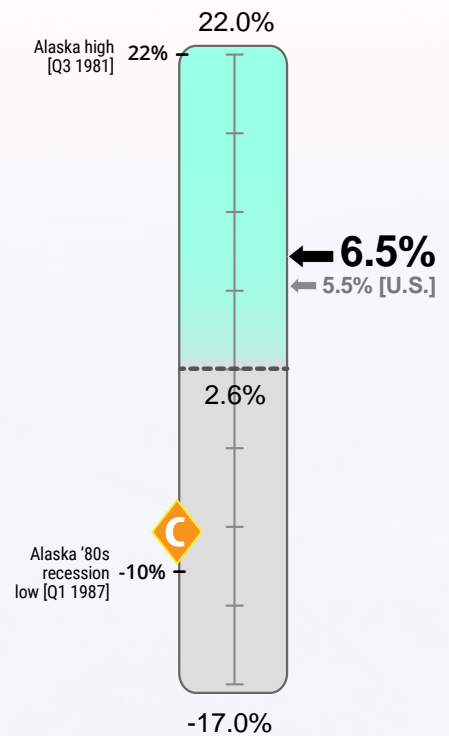


Alaska's unemployment rate has been less useful as an economic measure during the pandemic and its aftermath because of data collection difficulties.

It's clear, however, that unemployment rates in Alaska and the U.S. are historically low and that the shortage of workers is a bigger economic challenge than unemployment.

Wage Growth

2nd Quarter 2023
Over-the-year percent change



After falling hard during the pandemic, total wages paid by Alaska employers have bounced back and show strong growth.

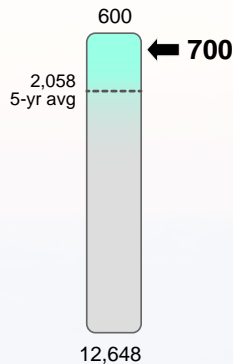
Wages were up 6.5 percent from year-ago levels in the second quarter of 2023 and 19.0 percent above first quarter 2019.

Gauging The Economy

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

Initial Claims

Unemployment, week ending Jan. 13, 2024*

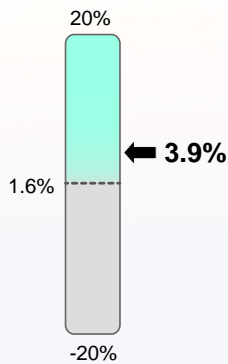


Unemployment claims jumped during the pandemic as many businesses shut down or limited services. Pandemic-driven claims loads have fallen, and new claims for benefits are well below their long-term average.

*Four-week moving average ending with specified week

GDP Growth

3rd Quarter 2023
Over-the-year percent change*

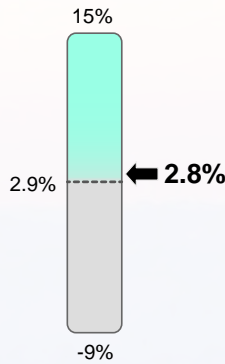


Gross domestic product is the value of the goods and services a state produces. It's an important economic measure but also a volatile one for Alaska because commodity prices influence the numbers so much — especially oil prices.

*In current dollars

Personal Income Growth

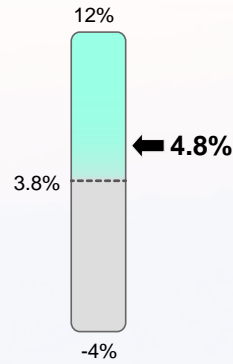
3rd Quarter 2023
Over-the-year percent change



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

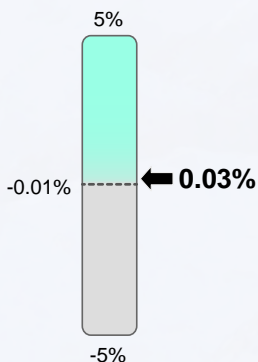
Single-family, percent change from prior year, Q3 2023



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

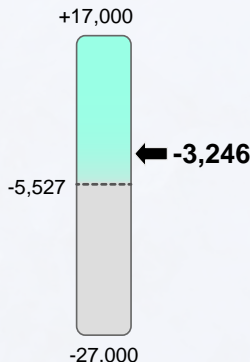
2022 to 2023



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

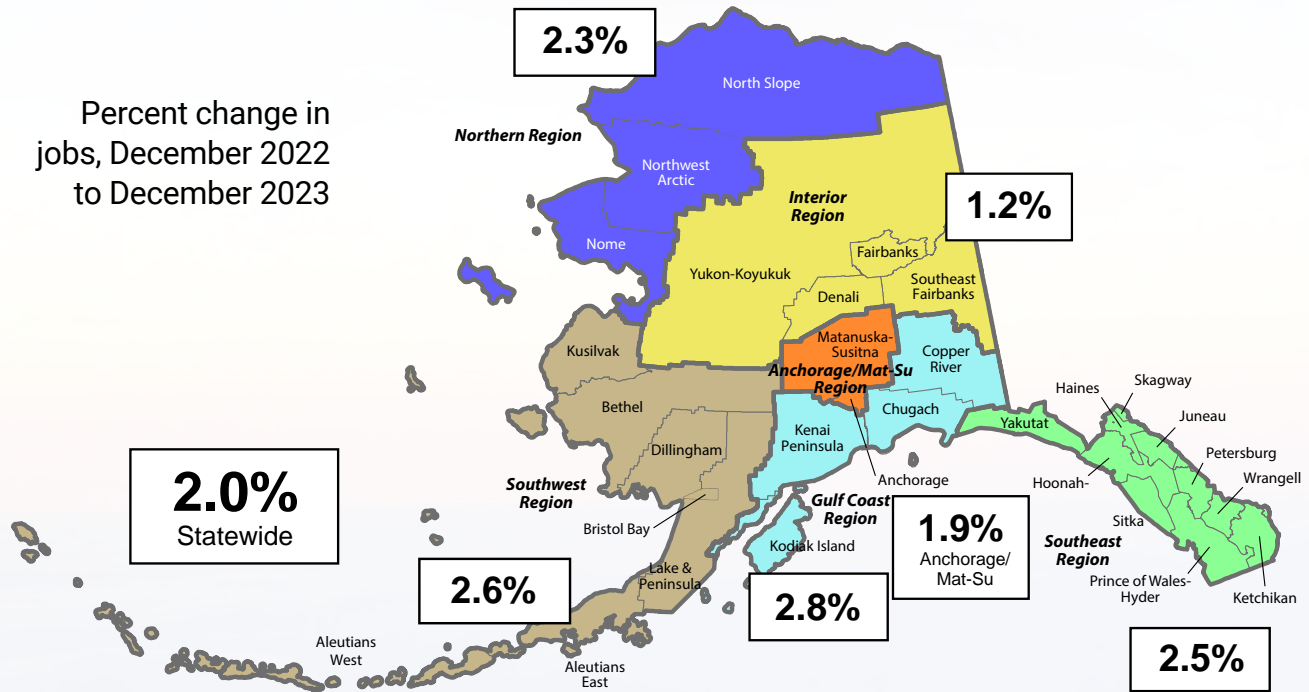
2022 to 2023



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 by Region

Percent change in jobs, December 2022 to December 2023



Unemployment Rates

Seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.		Revised
	12/23	11/23	12/22
United States	3.7	3.7	3.5
Alaska	4.5	4.4	3.7

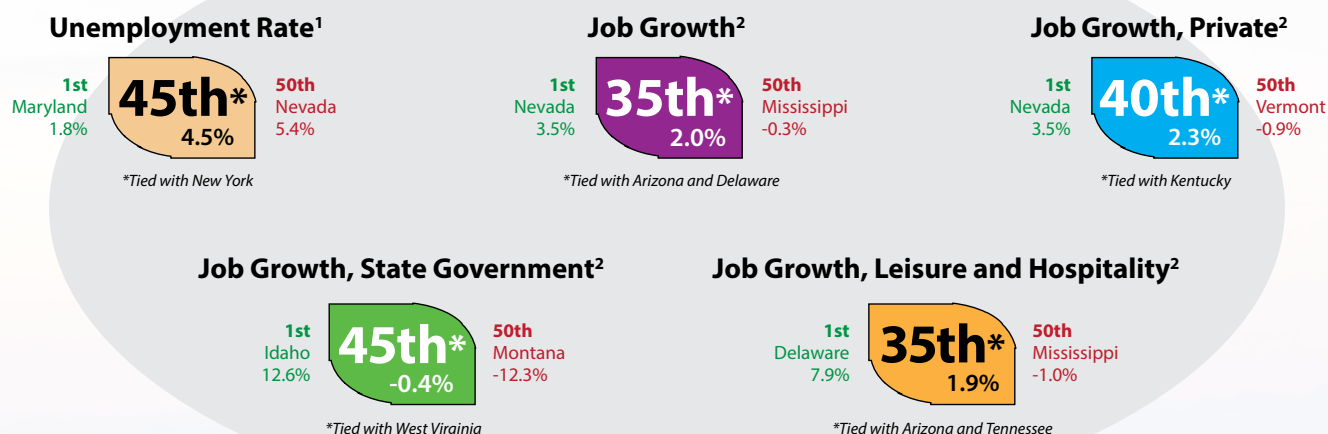
Not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.		Revised
	12/23	11/23	12/22
United States	3.5	3.5	3.3
Alaska	4.6	4.4	3.6

Regional, not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.			Revised				Prelim.			Revised		
	12/23	11/23	12/22	12/23	11/23	12/22		12/23	11/23	12/22	12/23	11/23	12/22
Interior Region	4.6	4.4	3.6	Southwest Region	9.0	8.7	6.9	Southeast Region	4.5	4.0	3.6		
Denali Borough	12.3	12.1	11.8	Aleutians East Borough	6.1	4.2	4.8	Haines Borough	9.8	8.0	8.1		
Fairbanks N Star Borough	4.2	4.0	3.2	Aleutians West Census Area	5.2	4.7	4.4	Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	8.2	6.0	8.6		
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	5.8	5.6	4.5	Bethel Census Area	9.8	9.5	7.2	Juneau, City and Borough	3.6	3.2	2.6		
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	8.8	9.4	7.2	Bristol Bay Borough	5.7	4.7	7.9	Ketchikan Gateway Borough	4.2	3.8	3.7		
Northern Region	7.2	7.3	5.8	Dillingham Census Area	6.6	7.8	4.7	Petersburg Borough	6.2	5.3	6.4		
Nome Census Area	7.4	7.5	5.4	Kusilvak Census Area	14.2	14.6	11.2	Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	6.2	6.1	4.9		
North Slope Borough	4.7	5.1	4.1	Lake and Peninsula Borough	7.3	7.2	6.6	Sitka, City and Borough	3.5	3.0	2.5		
Northwest Arctic Borough	9.7	9.5	8.2	Gulf Coast Region	6.0	5.5	4.8	Skagway, Municipality	12.7	11.1	11.2		
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	4.0	3.8	3.1	Kenai Peninsula Borough	5.3	5.0	4.4	Wrangell, City and Borough	5.8	5.8	4.8		
Anchorage, Municipality	3.6	3.5	2.7	Kodiak Island Borough	8.5	6.8	5.9	Yakutat, City and Borough	5.8	5.9	6.5		
Mat-Su Borough	5.1	4.7	4.0	Chugach Census Area	6.5	6.8	2.9						
				Copper River Census Area	9.4	9.0	11.8						

How Alaska Ranks



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

¹December seasonally adjusted unemployment rates

²December employment, over-the-year percent change

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 yr 1982=100)	262.806	2nd half 2023	260.576	+0.9%
Commodity prices				
Crude oil, Alaska North Slope,* per barrel	\$78.55	Dec 2023	\$79.32	-1.0%
Natural gas, Henry Hub, per thousand cubic feet (mcf)	\$2.54	Dec 2023	\$5.77	-56.0%
Gold, per oz. COMEX	\$2,022.20	1/22/2024	\$1,945.40	+3.9%
Silver, per oz. COMEX	\$22.30	1/22/2024	\$23.55	-5.3%
Copper, per lb. COMEX	\$3.76	1/22/2024	\$4.26	-11.6%
Bankruptcies				
Business	48	Q3 2023	54	-11.1%
Personal	7	Q3 2023	3	+133.3%
Personal	41	Q3 2023	51	-19.6%
Unemployment insurance claims				
Initial filings	4,065	Dec 2023	4,211	-3.5%
Continued filings	30,373	Dec 2023	27,297	11.3%
Claimant count	7,614	Dec 2023	7,678	-0.8%

*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; Kitco; U.S. Census Bureau; COMEX; NASDAQ; Alaska Department of Revenue; and U.S. Courts, 9th Circuit

EMPLOYER RESOURCES

Build your workforce with registered apprentices

Is your company trying to recruit and retain skilled employees? A registered apprenticeship program might be right for you.

Registered apprenticeships are popular in construction, and Alaska already has apprenticeships for more than 1,000 occupations across a range of industries including health care, hospitality, administration, information technology, automotive repair, and mining.

Apprenticeship is a proven, industry-driven career pathway that allows you to customize training to ensure workers develop the specific skills and experience you need. A highly skilled workforce increases productivity and reduces turnover, improving your bottom line.

Apprentices tend to be loyal to the company that provided training. In turn, when they become journey-level workers, they can share their knowledge by mentoring the next generation of apprentices, creating a steady pipeline of highly skilled workers for your business.

Apprenticeships are also popular with workers and prospective employees, who get paid experience on the job, classroom instruction, and a nationally recognized credential. They can also earn significantly more after completing an apprenticeship.

Registered apprenticeship is a combination of 2,000 hours a year of on-the-job training and at least 144 hours of classroom instruction. Supervised on-the-job training follows an approved plan that ensures the apprentice gains skills necessary to earn a credential. Classroom instruction focuses on technical subjects related to the occupation.

For more information about how your business can grow with apprenticeship, [click here](#) or contact your [nearest Alaska job center](#).

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