

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.

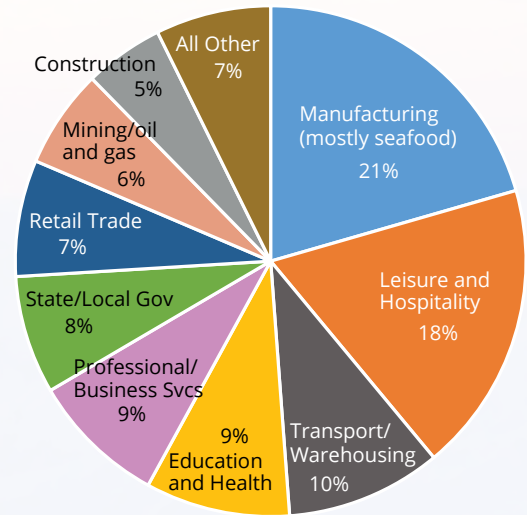
That percentage was up from the previous two years as the state continued to recover from the pandemic, but it was roughly in line with pre-pandemic percentages.

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

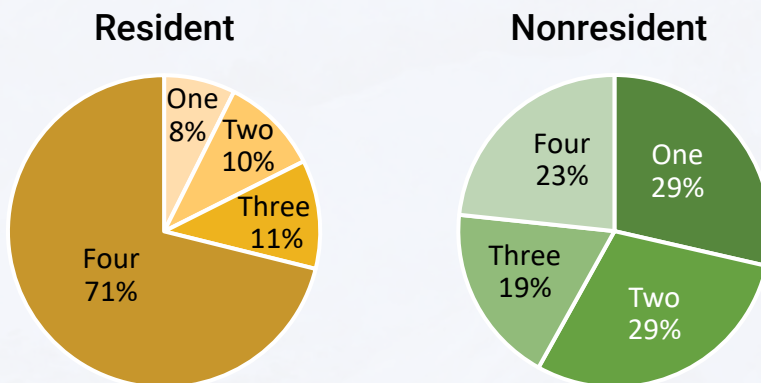
Nonresidents by industry in 2022



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.

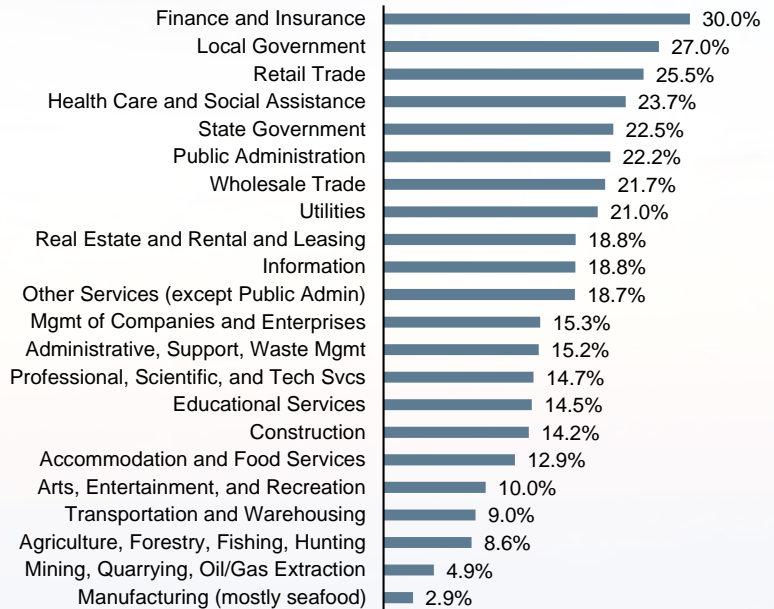
The other major Alaska industry with such a high seasonal worker demand is tourism. These workers are scattered in a variety of categories — retail, restaurants and bars, hotels, transportation, and others — because the nature of the work rather than the residency status of the customer defines those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



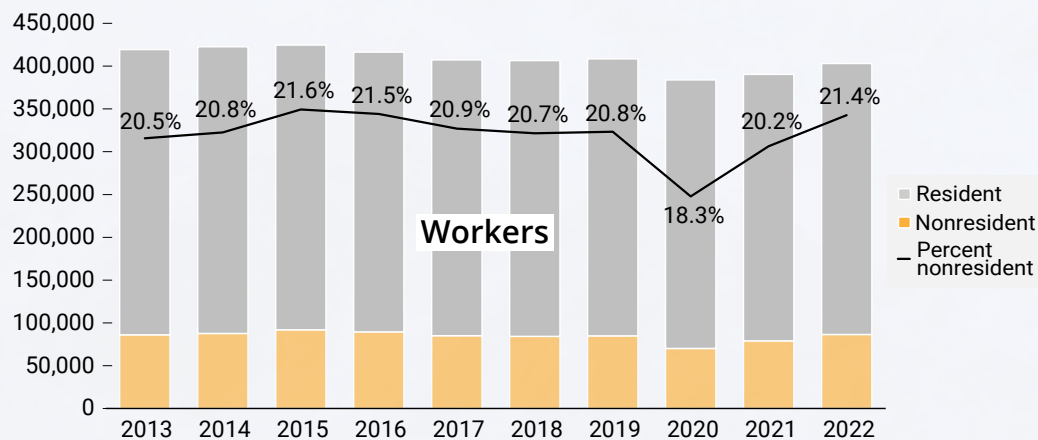
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

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 non-residents, 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 non-residents.

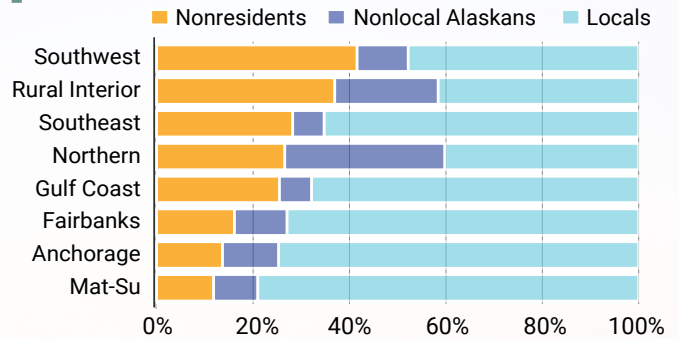
Mat-Su has lowest concentration of nonresident workers by area

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](#).

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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