

# Alaskans Who Live Alone

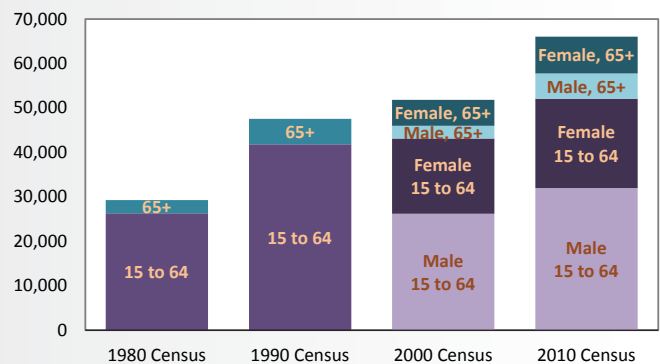
## Demographics of single-person households

**M**ore than 65,000 Alaskans live alone, representing 10 percent of the overall population and a quarter of households. Though for some this might conjure images of a cabin-dwelling sourdough or a researcher at a remote outpost, most who live on their own are a diverse group living mainly in the state's population centers.

Still, some demographic characteristics stand out, including that more men live alone and that the rate of living alone increases with age.

Since 1980, the share of Alaskans living alone has grown by just 2 percent, but the composition of the group has shifted, with an increasing percentage age 65 or older. (See Exhibit 1.)

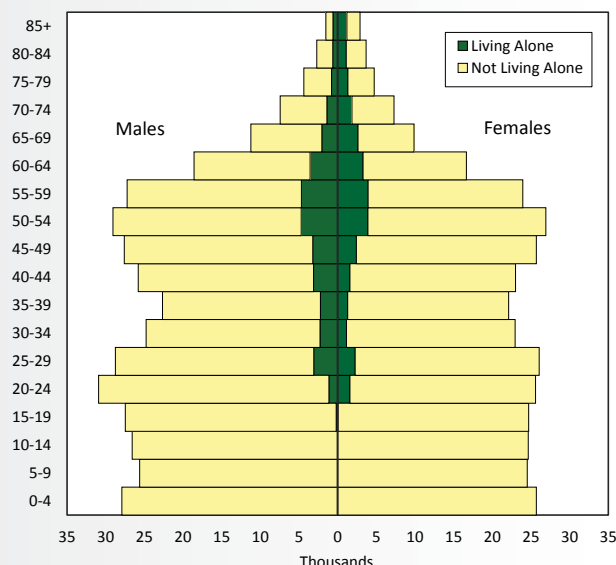
### 1 More People Live By Themselves Alaska, 1980 to 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

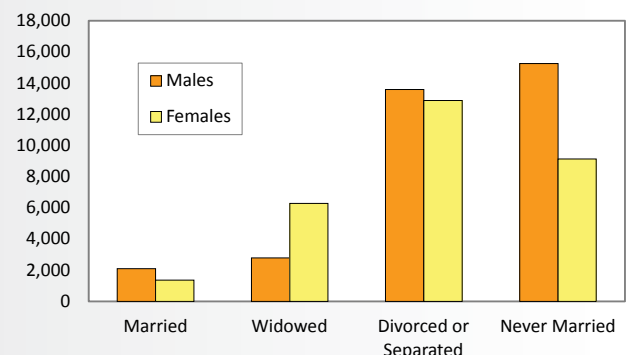
About 25 percent of seniors live alone compared to just 11 percent of the population as a whole — and because Alaska's 65-plus population is on a rapid rise, the state will likely have more single-person households in the future.

### 2 Living Alone, by Age and Sex Alaska, 2008 to 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 to 2012 American Community Survey

### 3 Mainly Divorced, Never Married Alaskans living alone, 2008 to 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 to 2012 American Community Survey

## 4 Living Alone Around the State

### Boroughs and census areas, 2010

Area Name	Total Population 2010 Census	Total Households 2010 Census	Population Living Alone (1-Person Households) 2010 Census	Population % Living Alone* 2010 Census	% One-Person Households* 2010 Census
Alaska	710,231	258,058	66,073	9%	26%
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	380,821	139,156	33,867	9%	24%
Anchorage, Municipality	291,826	107,332	26,761	9%	25%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	88,995	31,824	7,106	8%	22%
Gulf Coast Region	78,628	30,757	8,627	11%	28%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	55,400	22,161	6,336	11%	29%
Kodiak Island Borough	13,592	4,630	1,023	8%	22%
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	9,636	3,966	1,268	13%	32%
Interior Region	112,024	42,031	11,494	10%	27%
Denali Borough	1,826	806	283	15%	35%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	97,581	36,441	9,728	10%	27%
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	7,029	2,567	704	10%	27%
Yukon Koyukuk Census Area	5,588	2,217	779	14%	35%
Northern Region	26,445	6,763	1,543	6%	23%
Nome Census Area	9,492	2,815	662	7%	24%
North Slope Borough	9,430	2,029	478	5%	24%
Northwest Arctic Borough	7,523	1,919	403	5%	21%
Southeast Region	71,664	28,651	8,136	11%	28%
Haines Borough	2,508	1,149	364	15%	32%
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	2,150	913	283	13%	31%
Juneau, City and Borough	31,275	12,187	3,280	10%	27%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	13,477	5,305	1,478	11%	28%
Petersburg Census Area	3,815	1,599	467	12%	29%
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	5,559	2,194	655	12%	30%
Sitka, City and Borough	8,881	3,545	1,028	12%	29%
Skagway Borough, Municipality	968	436	146	15%	33%
Wrangell, City and Borough	2,369	1,053	343	14%	33%
Yakutat, City and Borough	662	270	92	14%	34%
Southwest Region	40,649	10,700	2,406	6%	22%
Aleutians East Borough	3,141	553	147	5%	27%
Aleutians West Census Area	5,561	1,212	393	7%	32%
Bethel Census Area	17,013	4,651	939	6%	20%
Bristol Bay Borough	997	423	137	14%	32%
Dillingham Census Area	4,847	1,563	400	8%	26%
Lake and Peninsula Borough	1,631	553	127	8%	23%
Wade Hampton Census Area	7,459	1,745	263	4%	15%

\*For living alone percentages, the denominator is the population. For one-person household percentages, the denominator is households.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

## Half are in their 50s

Alaskans in their 50s make up roughly half of those who live by themselves. They are part of the large cohort of baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, who also make up a large share of Alaska's total population. (See Exhibit 2.)

With the increasing tendency to live alone with age, the baby boomers' children — another large cohort — will also someday make up a much larger share of the living-alone population.

There's also a smaller, temporary living-alone peak among those in their mid-to-late 20s. This age group lives alone at a rate of 10 percent, often as

## 5 Income and Poverty Levels by Household Type

### Alaska, 2008 to 2012

	Alaska		United States	
	All Household Types	Living Alone	All Household Types	Living Alone
<b>All ages</b>				
Population	711,139	64,130	309,138,716	31,625,793
Households	252,991	64,130	115,226,802	31,625,793
Median household income	\$69,917	\$37,553	\$53,046	\$27,992
Average ratio of rent to household income (renters)	9%	17%	11%	19%
Average ratio of owner costs to household income (owners)	13%	17%	15%	18%
Population below poverty level	10%	11%	15%	19%
<b>Age 65 and older</b>				
Population	54,443	13,622	39,358,913	10,967,142
Households with householder age 65 or more	33,843	13,622	25,172,128	10,967,142
Median household income	\$47,979	\$27,031*	\$36,181	\$21,173*
Average ratio of rent to household income (renters)	5%	12%	7%	14%
Average ratio of owner costs to household income (owners)	19%	23%	20%	22%
Population below poverty level	5%	10%	9%	18%

Notes: All income figures are estimates and are in 2012 inflation-adjusted dollars.

\*Weighted average of median household income by sex

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 to 2012 American Community Survey

they're beginning their careers, compared to more than 20 percent at high ages. For people in their 30s, the rate drops a couple of percentage points.

Between 2000 and 2010, more 25-to-34-year-olds in Alaska and nationwide lived with their parents, which likely muted that temporary peak.

### Differences between men and women

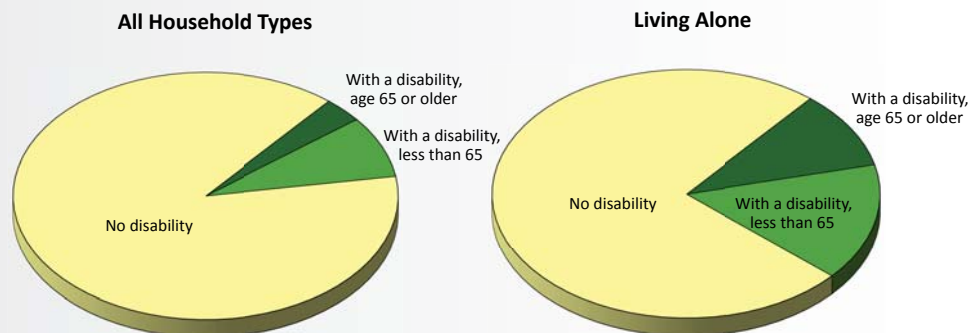
From ages 15 to 25, men and women live alone

at roughly equivalent rates. In the next age group, 25 to 49, men live alone at a higher rate — 3 to 5 percent higher — largely because women are more likely to be single parents.

People who have never married or who are divorced or separated make up the lion's share of Alaskans living by themselves (see Exhibit 3). And because women are more likely to live with children, Alaskans living alone who have never married or are divorced/separated are more likely to be male.

## 6 Age and Disability by Household Type

### Alaska, 2008 to 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 to 2012 American Community Survey

Widowed women are also a substantial share of one-person households, due in part to women's longer life expectancies and the fact that husbands tend to be a bit older than their wives.

As Alaska ages, we will no doubt have more widows and widowers, though widowers are more likely to remarry. By age 65, women live alone at a 5 to 10 percent higher rate than men.

## Higher rates in Denali, Haines, and Skagway

Though in terms of numbers most people who live alone are in the state's more populated areas — mainly Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough — small communities in the Denali, Haines, and Skagway boroughs have the highest rates of living alone in the state as of 2010, at 15 percent each. It's also notable that areas with the lowest rates of one-person households are small as well, including the remote regions of Southwest and Northern Alaska. (See Exhibit 4.)

The key difference between these areas' extremes is age structure — the Denali, Haines, and Skagway boroughs have many people age 50 or more and the Southwest and Northern regions have a lot of children.

Among the broader economic regions, the Southeast, Gulf Coast, and Interior led with the highest shares of one-person households.

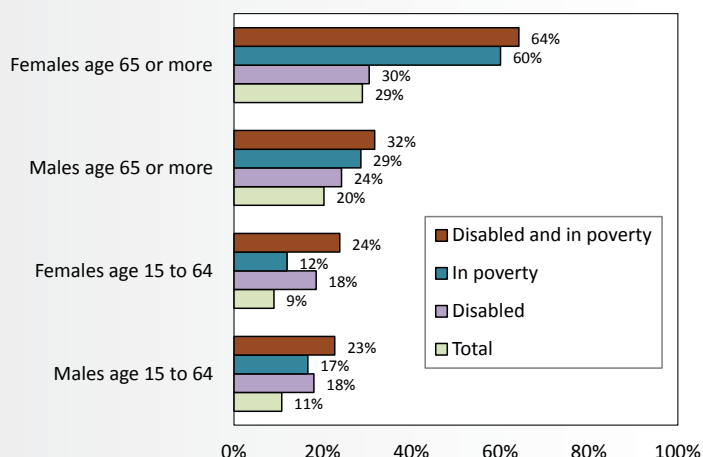
## Income and poverty levels

The median household income for Alaskans who lived alone was less than \$38,000 per year, compared to nearly \$70,000 per year for all households. (See Exhibit 5.) One-person households support fewer people, though — the average number of people per household in Alaska is 2.7, and without counting single-person homes it's more than 3.5 — so per capita incomes for those who live alone are higher than for the overall population.

Because they don't share living costs, those who live alone in Alaska tend to spend more of their income on rent, at 17 percent compared to just 9 percent for all renters. Among homeowners, the average ratio of owner costs to income was 17 percent and 13 percent, respectively.

## 7 Most Poor, Senior Women Live Alone

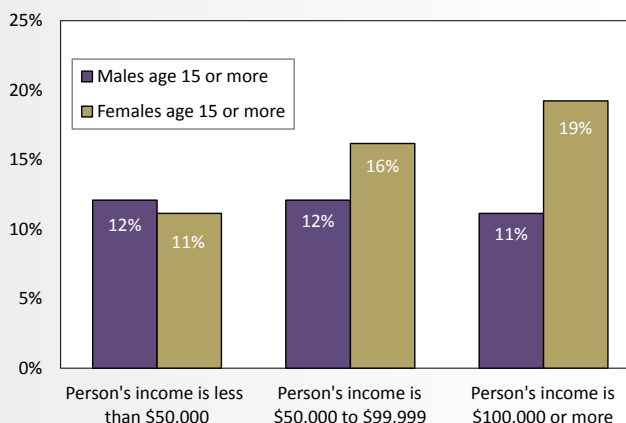
### Alaskans living alone, 2008 to 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 to 2012 American Community Survey

## 8 Income and Living Alone

### Alaska, by gender, 2008 to 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 to 2012 American Community Survey

As of 2008 to 2012, single-person households had a poverty rate just 1 percent higher than the Alaska average, at 11 percent versus 10 percent. The difference is more pronounced among seniors, however. For those 65 and older, 10 percent who live alone were in poverty versus 5 percent for all seniors.

Living alone is particularly common among poor women. Sixty percent of women age 65 or more who were in poverty lived alone between 2008

and 2012 (see Exhibit 7), which is in line with national estimates. This is more than double the rate for male seniors in poverty, more than double the rate for all women 65 or older, and six times the rate of the overall population — also trends that hold nationally.

On the other end of the spectrum, among the higher income brackets shown in Exhibit 8, the rate of living alone increases for women but remains about the same for men. This also follows the nation's pattern.

## **Many who live alone have a disability**

Based on the 2008-2012 data, 13 percent of Alaskans have a disability, and 34 percent of people who live alone have a disability. (See Exhibit 6.) More than 70 percent of the disabled population was age 65 or older, so the disparity is at least partly attributable to single-person households being older overall — no one younger than 15 was counted as living alone, and well over half of Alaskans who live alone are 50 or older.

Conversely, people with disabilities are more likely than average to live alone, particularly those between 15 and 64. Eighteen percent in this age group who have disabilities lived alone compared to around 10 percent of that entire age group.

## **Employment doesn't differ much**

People who live alone participate in the labor force at about the same rate as the overall population. According to the 2008 to 2012 data, roughly one-third were outside the labor force, meaning they were neither working nor looking for work.

The reasons for people being out of the labor force were likely quite different, though. People living alone, by definition, don't have roommates, spouses, or parents with whom they live to help cover household expenses. Because a larger share of people living alone are past traditional working ages, however, they are more likely to be retired and living on savings, Social Security, or other benefits.