



ALASKA ECONOMIC  
**TRENDS**

APRIL 2026

**MINING:** High value  
industry for Alaska

**ALSO INSIDE**

So far, the 2020s have been milder  
for population change than the 2010s

# FROM THE COMMISSIONER



*The maritime simulator at the Alaska Vocational Technical Center in Seward, photo by AVTEC*

## Alaska maritime industry training charts course forward

**By Catherine Muñoz, Commissioner**

I attended the Alaska Maritime Workforce Summit last month and had the opportunity to participate in a maritime workforce panel. The event highlighted current maritime training in the state and encouraged interest in careers in this industry.

The Alaska Vocational Technical Center, or AVTEC, and the University of Alaska collaborate in a unique maritime training partnership, the Alaska Maritime Education Consortium. AMEC offers Alaskans dozens of Coast Guard-approved courses leading to maritime certifications at the UA Southeast Ketchikan and AVTEC Seward campuses.

In 2019, the U.S. Department of Transportation recognized AMEC as a Center of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training. Just 27 training programs in the country have received this prestigious designation, setting AVTEC and UA apart.

Also offered through AMEC, the Yamaha Outboard Engine Maintenance Certification Program ([info@maritimeworks.org](mailto:info@maritimeworks.org)) provides engine maintenance training and includes a “train the trainer” component. The program has issued 482 certifications to Alaskans since its inception in 2022.

With Center of Excellence recognition, UA and AVTEC, through the AMEC partnership, are positioned to garner new federal support. President

Donald Trump has prioritized growing our ship building and maritime industries through capacity and skills capability by incentivizing investment in U.S. shipyards and expanding mariner training.

[America's Maritime Action Plan](#), released in February, highlights the federal focus on the maritime industry. The plan calls for increased funding for Centers of Excellence and expanded support of registered apprenticeships and accelerated trade programs to produce more credentialed mariners.

Job numbers are strong in 2026, but we face the challenge of fewer working-age adults to fill those jobs. Since 2020, approximately 30,000 Alaskans have retired. As our population ages and more Alaskans approach retirement age, young Alaskans need to understand the myriad opportunities and career and training pathways available to them.

Workforce development is a strategic investment. This includes investing in training, apprenticeships, and postsecondary programs. [Senate Bill 217](#) and [House Bill 267](#) would make industry-recognized training a strategic priority.

Sincerely,

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



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**ON THE COVER:**

The interior of the Kennecott Mines Concentration Mill shows massive pulleys and belts in the plant where freshly mined copper used to undergo initial refining steps. From 1911 to 1938, the Kennecott Corporation, with support from J.P. Morgan, Guggenheim, and other New York financiers, produced \$200 million to \$300 million in copper and silver from this complex. At the operation's peak, it employed 200 to 300 people at Kennecott. The Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark preserves some of the remaining buildings, including this one. Photo by Flickr user [Arthur T. LaBar](#) under [Creative Commons license](#)

# ALASKA ECONOMIC TRENDS

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MINING IN ALASKA

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'20s HAVE BEEN CALM

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THE ECONOMY

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

ON THIS SPREAD: The background image for 2026 is by [Erik Cooper](#) under [Creative Commons license](#).

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# A high-value resource in Alaska

## The state mines and exports a range of precious metals

By **KARINNE WIEBOLD**

**G**round zero for gold fever in the late 1800s, Alaska has been shaped in many ways by mining. Nome, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Skagway all formed around gold mining, and in the modern era, the Northwest Arctic Borough was incorporated in tandem with the development of Red Dog, one of the world's largest zinc mines.

Today, Alaska has six large operating metal mines that produce massive amounts of gold, silver, zinc, and lead while recovering small amounts of copper

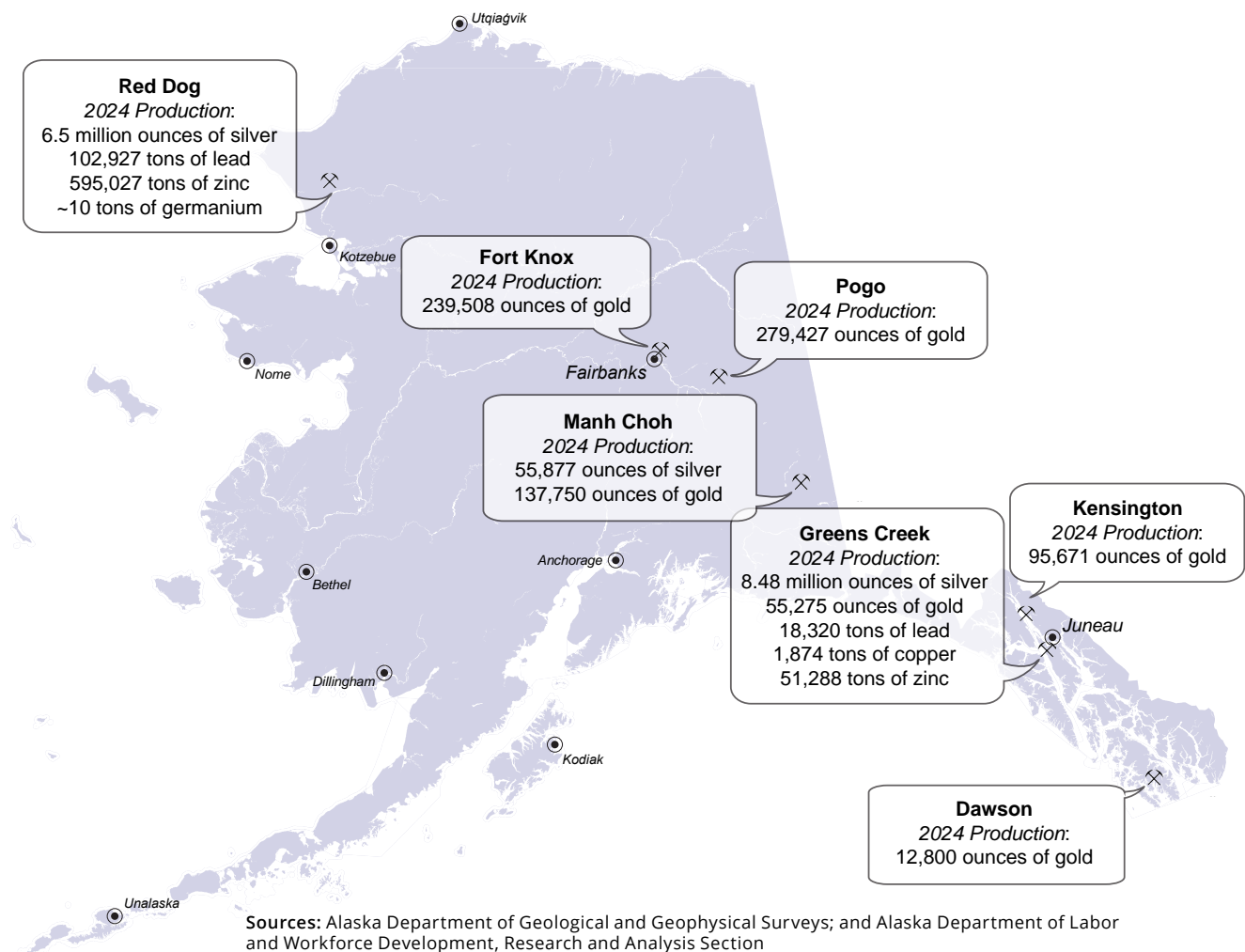
and germanium. Alaska also has hundreds of small placer mines operating across the state.

### The six major mines

Juneau is home to two of these mines, Kensington and Greens Creek, the latter of which is the largest silver producer in the United States. Both are off the road system but are large private local employers and major property tax contributors to Juneau.

The Red Dog Mine, located near Kotzebue, produces

## Major metal mines in Alaska and their production in 2024



## Alaska export value for select commodities over time, in 2025 dollars

Export	2014 (mil)	2015 (mil)	2016 (mil)	2017 (mil)	2018 (mil)	2019 (mil)	2020 (mil)	2021 (mil)	2022 (mil)	2023 (mil)	2024 (mil)	2025 (mil)
Zinc Ores/Concentrates	\$1,345	\$1,112	\$1,056	\$1,529	\$1,463	\$1,232	\$875	\$1,525	\$1,540	\$956	\$1,300	\$1,336
Lead Ores/Concentrates	\$462	\$410	\$478	\$535	\$449	\$490	\$458	\$586	\$383	\$437	\$463	\$376
Precious Metals exc Silver	\$176	\$193	\$185	\$163	\$174	\$185	\$221	\$236	\$199	\$175	\$236	\$364
Silver Ores/Concentrates	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$255
Gold (incl Plat Plated)	\$6	\$4	\$10	\$9	\$7	\$321	\$434	\$620	\$674	\$809	\$1,004	\$1,129

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S.A. trade statistics

germanium as a byproduct of its massive zinc operation. As of 2024, it was the only mine in the country to produce germanium, which is used as a semiconductor in electronics, solar panels, and electric vehicles. Germanium became an unexpected focus in 2024 when China, the world's largest producer, banned exports to the U.S.

In the Interior, Fairbanks benefits from the Manh Choh mine 240 miles away, as the gold is milled near Fairbanks at Fort Knox. Several times a year, Fort Knox stops production and switches to milling Manh Choh's ore, deposited by special transport trucks that operate around the clock and average 60 trips per day, seven days a week.

This business model is under consideration for other mines, as it simplifies a complex, time-consuming, and expensive component of mine development by milling and storing tailings at a preexisting location.

### Export, total values have climbed

Mining's contribution to Alaska's gross domestic product has been strong in recent years, exceeding

## Top Alaska global exports, 2025

Export	Value in 2025
Fish, Frozen (no Fish Fillets or Other Fish Meat)	\$1,631,821,778
<b>Zinc Ores And Concentrates</b>	<b>\$1,335,586,554</b>
<b>Gold (incl Plat Plated)</b>	<b>\$1,128,851,015</b>
Fish Fillets, Other Fish Meat, Fresh, Chill Or Froz	\$816,744,079
<b>Precious Metal Ores And Concentrates</b>	<b>\$619,301,552</b>
<b>Lead Ores And Concentrates</b>	<b>\$375,793,340</b>
Civilian Aircraft, Engines, And Parts	\$167,480,604
Crude Oil From Petroleum/Bituminous Minerals	\$150,398,472
Flour, Meal Etc. of Meat, Not For Humans	\$98,025,027
Oil (Not Crude) From Petrol and Bitum Mineral Etc.	\$95,907,824

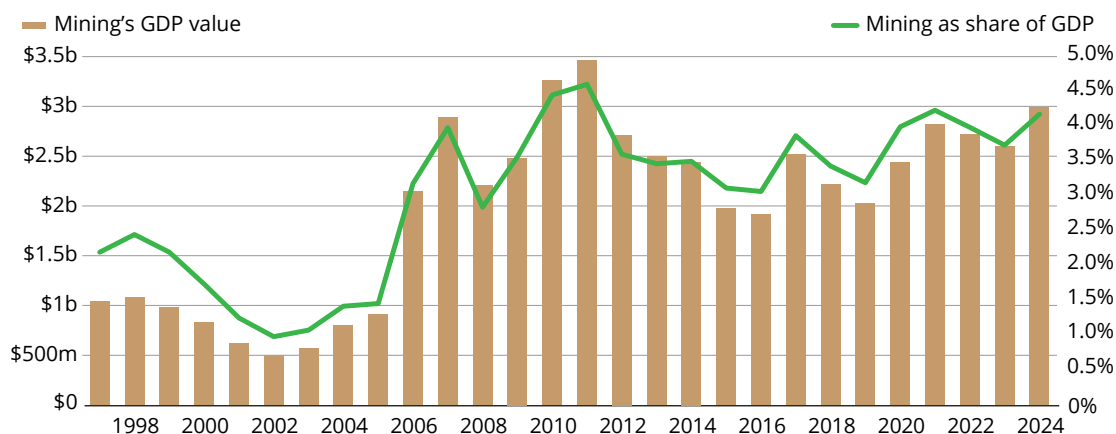
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S.A. trade statistics

\$2 billion each of the last five years and approaching \$3 billion in 2024, adjusted for inflation.

Mining's value peaked in 2010 and 2011 as the U.S. was recovering from the Great Recession. Commodity prices soared, including gold and silver, and the Kensington gold mine opened.

Gold prices continued to climb in recent years, starting in 2020 and gathering momentum in 2025 and early 2026. Another major gold mine, Manh Choh,

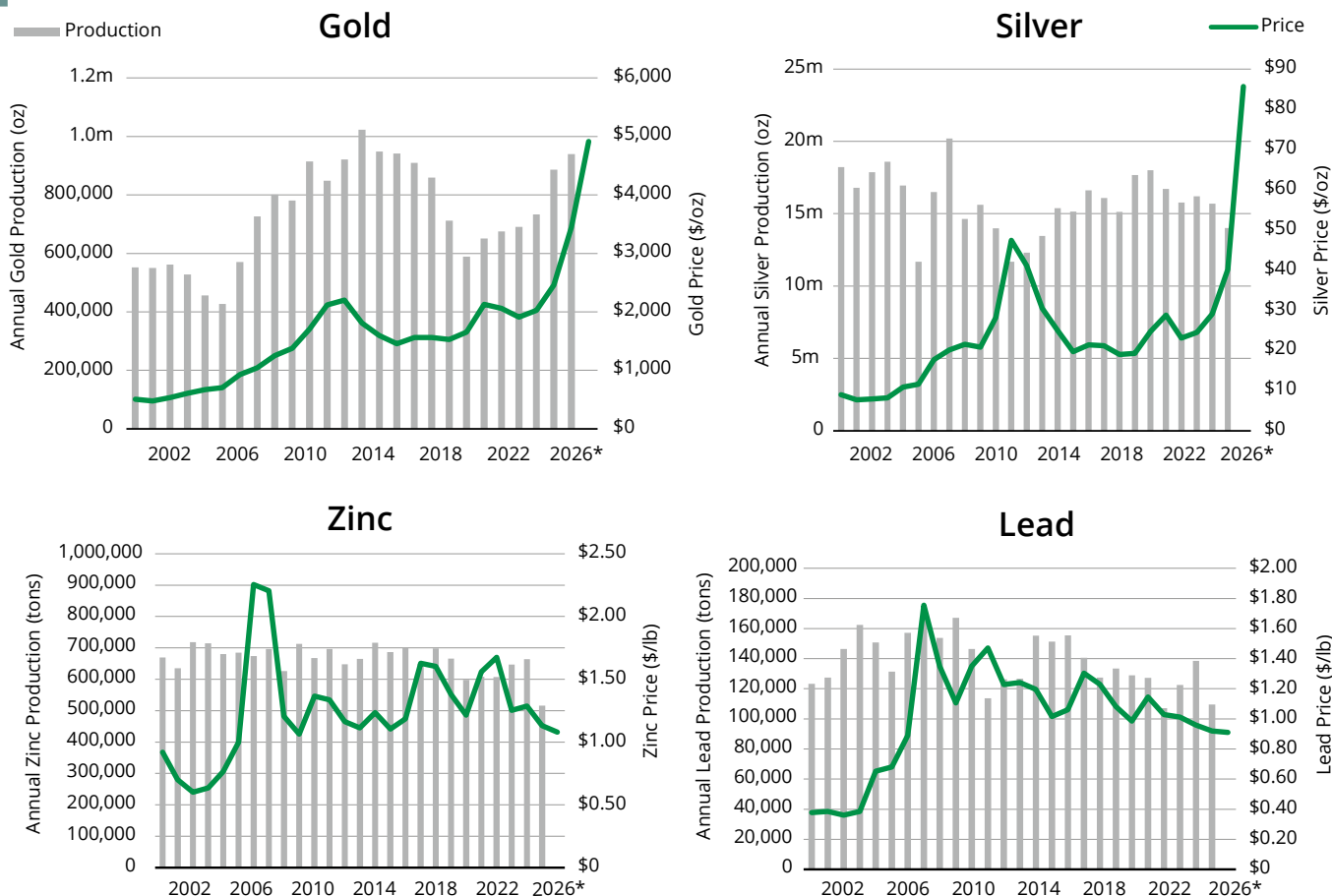
## Mining's value, share of Alaska GDP have grown considerably



Note: Inflation-adjusted to 2024 dollars. Excludes oil and gas. Includes coal, sand, and gravel.

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

# Production and prices for Alaska's main mined metals



\*2026 price is an early average. Prices are inflation-adjusted to 2025 dollars. Values for 2025 are DGGs preliminary estimates. Sources: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; and Alaska Department of Geological and Geophysical Surveys

opened earlier this decade.

Zinc and lead prices spiked in 2007, driving up mining's contribution to GDP that year. But for most of the last two decades, mining has generated between 3 and 4.5 percent of Alaska's GDP.

The global *export* value of Alaska's minerals is also significant. In 2025, Alaska zinc exports were valued at \$1.3 billion, second only to frozen fish. Gold was a close third at \$1.1 billion. Precious metals and lead also ranked among the state's top exports.

Metal mining export values have grown substantially over the last two years, driven by zinc, gold, and silver. (See the tables on this page.)

GDP value and export value both rely on a combination of price and production, but not everything that's produced is exported — some goes to domestic users — and exports can vary year to year depending on who buys the commodities. On top of

that, GDP and export values for metals and minerals are calculated differently.

## The number of jobs has grown by 37 percent in a decade

Alaska had 3,533 metal mining and support jobs in 2024, the most recent year available, and the industry has grown much faster in Alaska than it has nationwide. (See the exhibit on the next page.) It has also grown much faster than jobs in Alaska overall. Metal mining employment rose 37 percent over the last decade. The total job count increased by just 0.3 percent over the same period.

The industry also pays high wages, at an average of \$135,000 in 2024. That was second only to the oil and gas industry and significantly more than the average Alaska job, which paid \$71,000 that year.

Another way to look at the industry's impact is the number of *people* who work in metal mining in a given year, the difference being that more than one worker can occupy a single job over the course of a year.

In 2024, 4,600 people worked in the metal mining industry at some point, representing about 1 percent of the state's workers. Fifty-six percent were Alaska residents, mostly men in their 20s to 40s. Nearly 500 were women (about 17 percent).

The number of mining workers has been on the rise for eight years, with an increasing share coming from out of state.

## Current projects and challenges

Growth prospects appear strong. Multiple mines are in the exploration phases, and the political climate favors development. The Department of Geological and Geophysical Surveys estimates Alaska had about 60 active exploration projects last year.

The federal government has also taken an active role in Alaska's resource development future, committing \$37.5 million in 2023 to Graphite One's feasibility study through a Department of Defense grant.

The current administration has also fast-tracked permitting during the second Trump term and reversed some of the development-restricting decisions and executive orders of the previous administration.

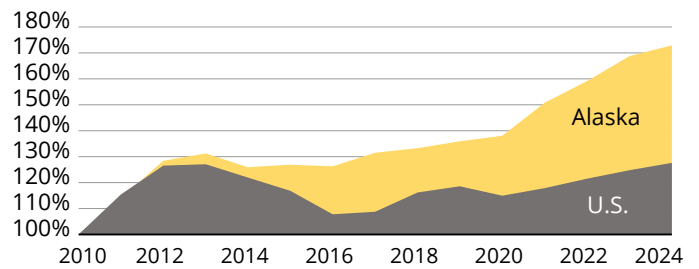
In 2025, the federal government reinstated key permits for the Ambler Access project for mining exploration and announced plans to invest \$35.6 million this year in mining exploration, taking an equity stake in Trilogy Metals.

The federal FAST-41 program streamlines federal permitting for large projects and aims to fast-track development. Donlin (gold), Graphite Creek (graphite), and the Johnson Tract (gold, silver, zinc, copper, and lead) are all on the list, as are other nonmetal projects such as the liquefied natural gas pipeline and two broadband/fiber optic projects.

Mines take years to come to fruition — exploration, feasibility studies, environmental reviews, and permitting are expensive, and all have the potential to derail a project. Public concerns and controversy can also slow or stop development.

The proposed Pebble Mine in Southwest Alaska's Bristol Bay watershed was blocked twice by the feds: first in 2020 by the Army Corps of Engineers and again in 2023 by the Environmental Protection

## Growth in metal mining jobs



**Note:** Annual jobs are indexed to 2010, so the Y axis shows the year's job count as a percentage of 2010.

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

## About the data

Alaska's metal mining industry includes mostly gold, silver, zinc, and lead, but not coal, gravel, or rock (however, those three are included in the GDP data on page 5). This article also includes support services directly related to metal mining.

State-level gross domestic product is not available at the same level of detail as national figures. It includes all mining, excluding oil and gas extraction. We allocated mining support services between oil and gas and all other mining according to each industry's contribution to GDP.

Agency over critical salmon habitat concerns. The EPA determination is under appeal.

The Donlin gold mine in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Census Area near Crooked Creek is now on the FAST-41 list but still faces multiple regulatory steps.

The Palmer project outside Haines is in advanced exploration and includes federal, state, and Mental Health Trust land. It has also faced environmental litigation and changed hands several times (including last year), which is common in mine development.

The New Amalga project in Juneau remains on the prospective list but has spurred local controversy around the use of the proposed Cascade Point ferry terminal. Critics assert the proposed public infrastructure would primarily benefit the mine.

The Johnson Tract, also on FAST-41, is on Alaska Native land surrounded by Lake Clark National Park, which complicates but doesn't preclude development.

Karinne Wiebold is the statewide economist. Reach her in Juneau at (907) 465-6039 or [karinne.wiebold@alaska.gov](mailto:karinne.wiebold@alaska.gov).

# Population change so far in the 2020s

## Relative to the decade before, change has been muted

By DAVID HOWELL

Our latest population estimates show Alaska grew by about 0.2 percent from 2024 to 2025, reaching 738,737. That slow growth was in line with the very minor population changes we've seen each year so far this decade.

When it comes to population change, the 2020s in Alaska have been much calmer so far than the 2010s.

### Migration and two very different decades

When the previous decade began, the U.S. was still recovering from the Great Recession of the late 2000s, and Alaska saw large migration flows both into and out of the state.

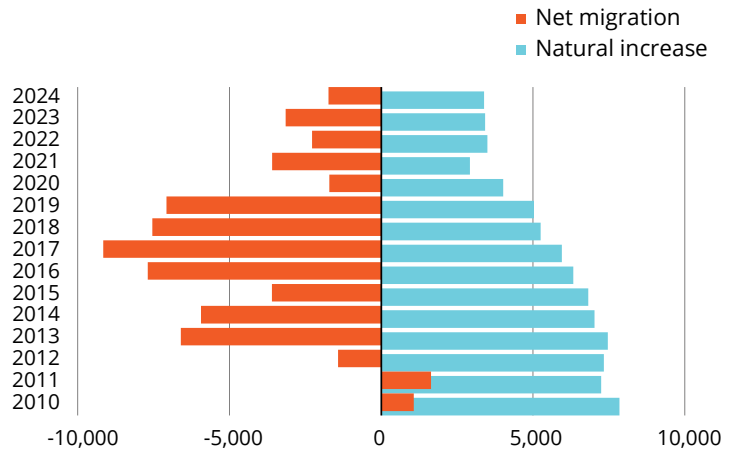
Historically, it's been typical for tens of thousands of people to move into and out of Alaska each year. But for a short period, as the national economy struggled more than the state, Alaska got a net migration bump as additional people from the Lower 48 sought opportunities north. (See the exhibit on the right.)

As the national economy improved, the number of people moving to Alaska each year began to decline while the number who left remained relatively high. That marked the start of our current 13-year negative net migration streak — more people leaving the state each year than arriving.

By 2016, Alaska was losing around 1 percent of its population to net migration each year, leading to overall population declines for the first time since the 1980s.

While net migration has remained negative for 13 straight years, the losses have eased in the 2020s, with only one of those years (2022) causing population decrease. Unlike the 2010s, though, that year appears to have been a one-off linked to the jump

### Natural increase has mostly offset losses from net migration this decade



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

in deaths during the pandemic.

The year before was also an outlier for migration because pandemic restrictions stifled most moves in either direction, plus Alaska received an influx of military personnel to Eielson Air Force Base near Fairbanks with the new F-35s.

The net outflows have continued during the 2020s, but at much lower levels — below half a percent a year. Last year, net migration losses were the smallest they've been since the first year of the loss streak. These milder net losses have allowed Alaska's population to start growing again this decade, albeit slowly.

### Recent trends in births and deaths

Natural increase, or births minus deaths, has offset the losses and allowed Alaska's population to keep growing over the last five years. (Last month's issue of *Trends* covered historical and global natural increase extensively.)

Since the 2020 Census, Alaska has added just over

5,000 more residents from natural increase than it has lost to net migration.

While natural increase will remain a source of population growth for a while, it has decreased considerably over the last 10 years and will continue to shrink. Last year, natural increase added just 3,400 people to the state, less than half of the annual gain 10 years ago.

The reason is twofold. First, deaths have increased as Alaska has gotten older. Ten years ago, Alaska recorded about 4,300 yearly deaths, and it's now 5,500.

The decline in births, however, is the bigger reason natural increase has slowed. A decade ago, more than 11,000 babies were born in Alaska every year, and now it's fewer than 9,000.

Although Alaska's rate of natural increase has slowed considerably, it's still high among states, ranking second this decade after Utah. Seventeen states recorded natural *decrease* last year, with more deaths than births, and 20 have had natural decrease since 2020.

## The effects of population aging

One driver of less natural increase is the size of Alaska's senior population, which has grown by thousands since 2010, when the first baby boomers turned 65. Alaska's over-65 group increased by about 3,600 last year and has risen by 23,100 people since the 2020 Census.

Rapid growth among seniors will continue through 2029, when the youngest baby boomers turn 65.

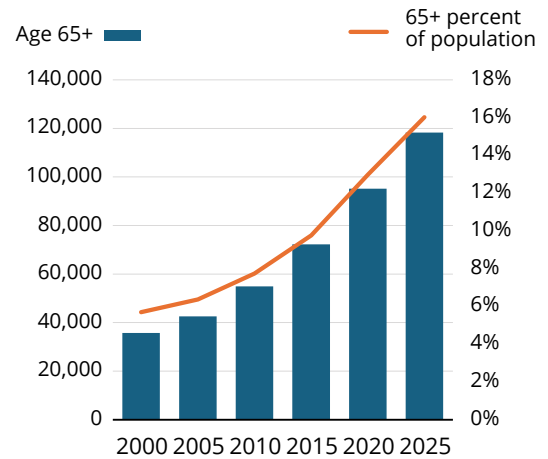
A compounding factor is the youth population decreasing steadily over the past decade in tandem with the growth in seniors. The number of Alaskans under 18 fell by 5,000 over the first five years of the 2020s, primarily in the youngest age groups. Since 2020, the number of kids in Alaska from birth to age 4 has decreased from 48,100 to 43,300.

Although the school-age population grew in the early years of this decade, since 2022, it has also been declining. With fewer births over the years, Alaska now has 1,400 more 17-year-olds than 4-year-olds. Without a shift in migration patterns, the school-age population will continue to get smaller.

## Patterns in Alaska in the 2020s

Recent growth around the state has been concentrated in just a few areas. Matanuska-Susitna is the fastest-growing borough by far, accounting for all the

## Alaska's 65-plus population has risen sharply this century



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

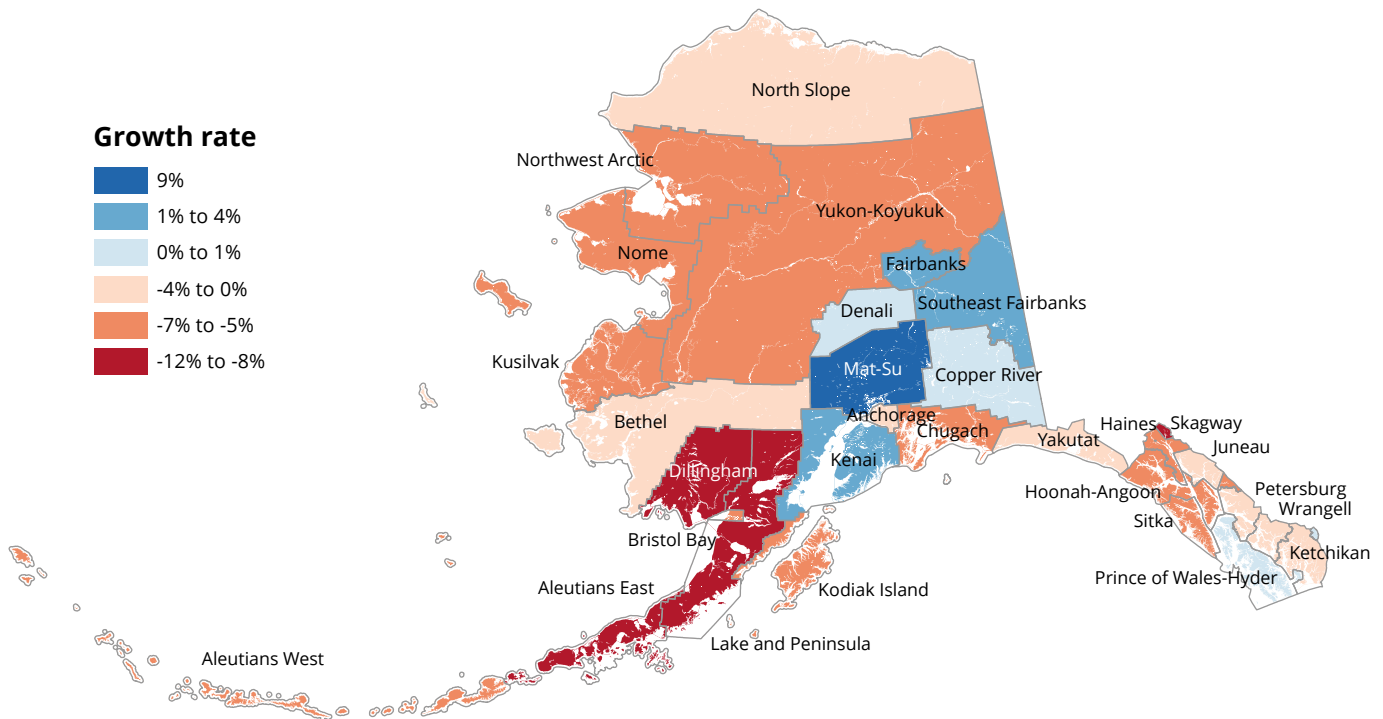
## Growth by Alaska area, 2020-25

Area	Growth rate, 24-25	Total growth rate 20-25
Alaska	0.22%	0.73%
Aleutians East Borough	-1.25%	-12.32%
Aleutians West Census Area	0.65%	-5.28%
Anchorage Municipality	-0.04%	-0.70%
Bethel Census Area	0.08%	-2.59%
Bristol Bay Borough	1.67%	-6.99%
Chugach Census Area	-2.07%	-7.42%
Copper River Census Area	-0.57%	0.42%
Denali Borough	1.54%	0.74%
Dillingham Census Area	-0.29%	-8.32%
Fairbanks N Star Borough	0.18%	1.48%
Haines Borough	-3.10%	-6.87%
Hoonah-Angoon CA	-0.31%	-5.97%
Juneau City and Borough	-0.32%	-3.38%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	0.47%	4.21%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	0.20%	-4.18%
Kodiak Island Borough	-0.66%	-5.26%
Kusilvak Census Area	-1.06%	-4.83%
Lake and Peninsula Borough	3.46%	-8.77%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	1.45%	9.20%
Nome Census Area	-0.03%	-4.56%
North Slope Borough	0.10%	-4.41%
Northwest Arctic Borough	-1.35%	-7.48%
Petersburg Borough	0.98%	-0.09%
Prince of Wales-Hyder CA	1.03%	0.26%
Sitka City and Borough	0.12%	-5.17%
Skagway Municipality	1.60%	-8.93%
Southeast Fairbanks CA	0.09%	3.51%
Wrangell City and Borough	0.89%	-4.32%
Yakutat City and Borough	-0.16%	-4.48%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	-0.76%	-6.87%

Note: Haines growth is for 2021 to 2025.

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

# Cumulative growth by Alaska area from 2020 to 2025



**Note:** Haines growth is for 2021 to 2025.  
**Source:** Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

growth in the Anchorage/Mat-Su Region.

Anchorage has lost population in recent years, although in very small amounts. (See the table on the previous page and the map above.)

Mat-Su’s expansion slowed during the 2010s but sped up again in the 2020s, adding 2,000 people a year on average, for a five-year growth rate of 9.2 percent.

Similarly, the Kenai Peninsula Borough has kept the Gulf Coast Region’s population from declining. Kenai is the second-fastest-growing borough, gaining nearly 500 people a year on average since the 2020 Census for a 4.2 percent growth rate.

In the Interior Region, the Fairbanks North Star Borough and the adjacent Southeast Fairbanks Census Area have grown steadily. Other than Mat-Su and Kenai, these two were the only borough equivalents to add more than 1 percent to their population totals this decade, at 1.5 percent and 3.6 percent, respectively.

The more remote and rural parts of the state have seen steady population losses during the 2020s. While the Northern and Southwest regions have historically grown slowly, natural increase during the first half of this decade hasn’t been high enough to make up for net migration losses.

Southeast, one of the oldest parts of the state, has also lost population over the last five years through low natural increase and negative net migration. Seven of its 10 boroughs and census areas had no natural increase last year or showed natural decrease.

Thirteen areas’ populations have fallen by at least 5 percent since 2020, and ten of those are in the Northern, Southwest, or Southeast regions. Some declines are linked to specific events; for example, the Aleutians East Borough has been hit especially hard by seafood processing closures, and Skagway is still recovering from population losses caused by the pandemic’s damper on cruise ship tourism.

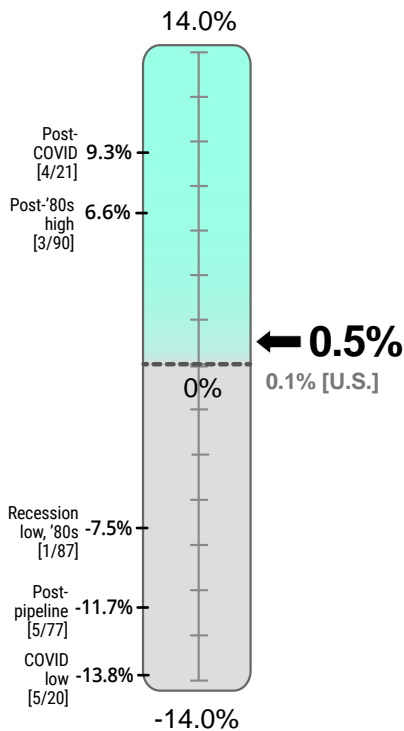
David Howell is the state demographer. Reach him in Juneau at (907) 465-6029 or david.howell@alaska.gov.

# Gauging The Economy



## Job Growth

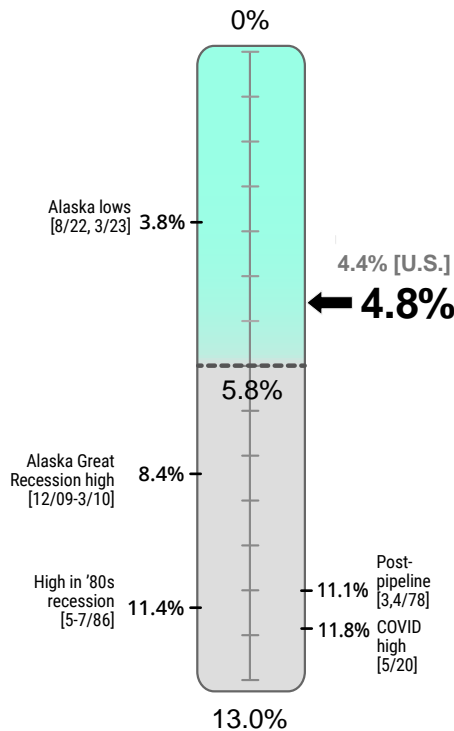
December 2025  
Over-the-year percent change



Alaska's December employment was 0.5 percent above last December. U.S. employment was up by a tenth of a percentage point.

## Unemployment Rate

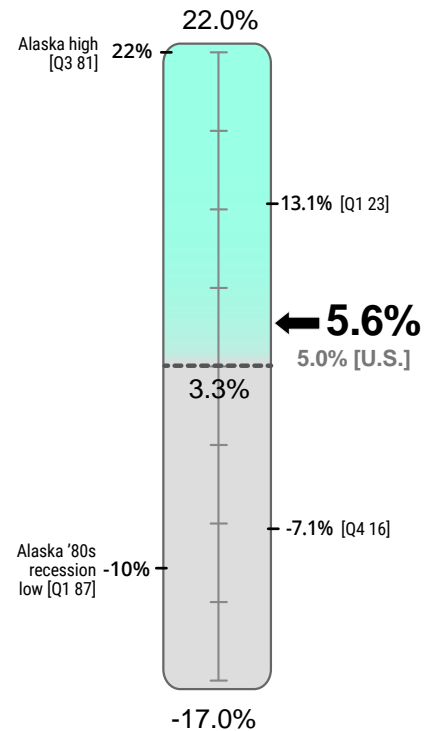
December 2025  
Seasonally adjusted



Alaska's unemployment rate has climbed about one percentage point since mid-2022 but remains well below its 10-year average.

## Wage Growth

3rd Quarter 2025  
Over-the-year percent change



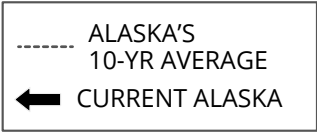
Total wages paid by Alaska employers have shown strong growth in recent quarters.

Wages were up 5.6 percent from year-ago levels in the third quarter of 2025 and 33.8 percent above the third quarter of 2019, before the pandemic.

### Where are the new numbers?

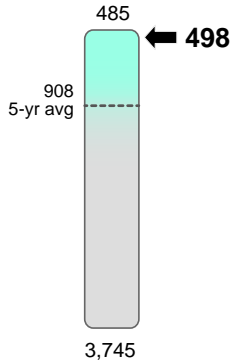
We produce job, wage, and unemployment data in cooperation with the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. The lengthy federal shutdown in late 2025 and the brief shutdown in early 2026, combined with our annual spring data benchmarking, has significantly delayed data production. Release dates have changed as a result. We plan to release two sets of data in both April and May, then return to the regular schedule, [which is available here](#).

# Gauging The Economy



## Initial Claims

Unemployment, week ending March 7, 2026\*

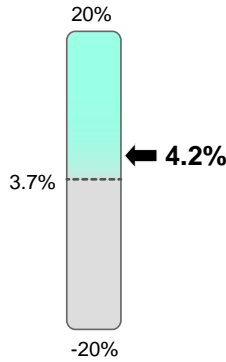


Pandemic-driven high claims loads have fallen, and new claims for benefits are well below their long-term average.

\*Four-week moving average ending with specified week

## GDP Growth

3rd Quarter 2025  
Over-the-year percent change\*

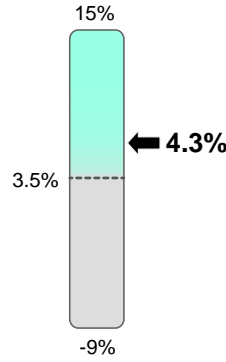


Gross domestic product is the value of the goods and services a state produces. It's an important economic measure but also a volatile one for Alaska because commodity prices influence the numbers so much — especially oil prices.

\*In current dollars

## Personal Income Growth

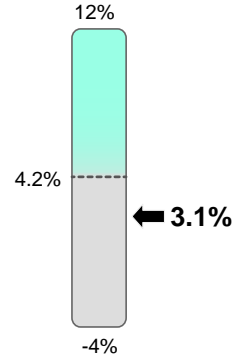
3rd Quarter 2025  
Over-the-year percent change



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

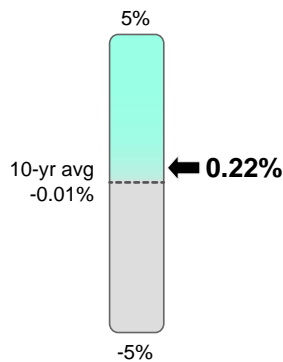
Single-family, percent change from prior year, Q2 2025



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

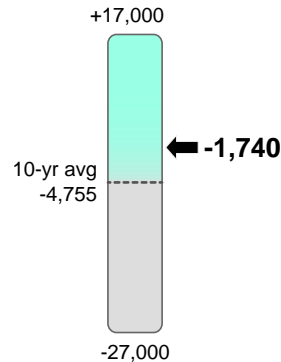
2024 to 2025



After an overall population loss from 2021 to 2022, Alaska's population has grown slightly over each of the last three years.

## Net Migration

2024 to 2025

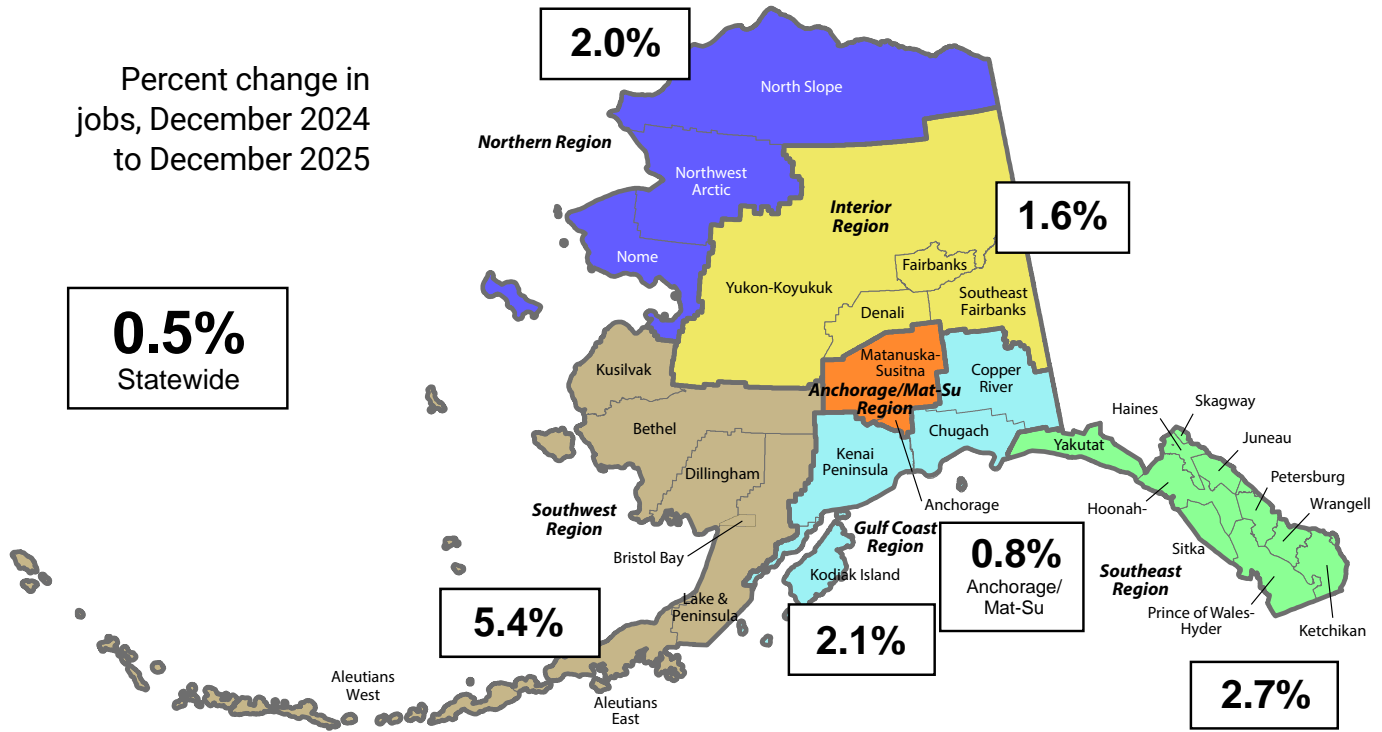


Net migration is the number who moved to Alaska minus the number who left.

# Employment Growth by Region

Percent change in jobs, December 2024 to December 2025

**0.5%**  
Statewide



## Unemployment Rates

Seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.	Revised	
	12/25	11/25	12/24
United States	4.4	4.5	4.1
Alaska	4.8	4.7	4.7

Not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.	Revised	
	12/25	11/25	12/24
United States	4.1	4.3	3.8
Alaska	5.0	5.0	4.7

Regional, not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim.			Revised				Prelim.			Revised		
	12/25	11/25	12/24	12/25	11/25	12/24		12/25	11/25	12/24	12/25	11/25	12/24
<b>Interior Region</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>Southwest Region</b>	<b>10.0</b>	9.6	<b>9.7</b>	<b>Southeast Region</b>	<b>5.1</b>	4.9	<b>4.9</b>		
Denali Borough	11.3	10.0	11.7	Aleutians East Borough	7.9	5.9	5.9	Haines Borough	12.1	11.8	10.9		
Fairbanks N Star Borough	4.4	4.5	4.0	Aleutians West Census Area	4.7	4.1	5.3	Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	10.3	9.0	9.2		
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	6.8	7.1	6.1	Bethel Census Area	10.4	10.6	10.5	Juneau, City and Borough	3.8	3.8	3.8		
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	10.4	9.8	10.4	Bristol Bay Borough	7.5	6.4	7.9	Ketchikan Gateway Borough	4.6	4.7	4.5		
<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>5.7</b>	Dillingham Census Area	8.3	8.1	8.3	Petersburg Borough	6.1	5.6	8.0		
Nome Census Area	9.4	9.4	7.9	Kusilvak Census Area	16.8	15.9	15.4	Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	9.5	9.0	8.2		
North Slope Borough	3.2	3.6	2.9	Lake and Peninsula Borough	7.1	7.7	6.9	Sitka, City and Borough	3.2	3.2	2.8		
Northwest Arctic Borough	10.2	11.1	7.9	<b>Gulf Coast Region</b>	<b>6.5</b>	5.9	<b>6.2</b>	Skagway, Municipality	18.4	16.5	18.4		
<b>Anchorage/Mat-Su Region</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.0</b>	Kenai Peninsula Borough	5.9	5.8	5.5	Wrangell, City and Borough	5.1	5.1	5.0		
Anchorage, Municipality	4.0	4.1	3.6	Kodiak Island Borough	7.6	4.7	8.4	Yakutat, City and Borough	7.0	5.8	6.3		
Mat-Su Borough	5.2	5.2	5.0	Chugach Census Area	8.4	7.8	6.8						
				Copper River Census Area	8.8	8.6	10.3						

# How Alaska Ranks

## Unemployment Rate<sup>1</sup>

1st  
Hawaii and  
S. Dakota  
2.2%

**43rd\***  
4.7%

50th  
California  
5.5%

\*Tied with Mass. and S. Carolina

## Job Growth<sup>2</sup>

1st  
Missouri  
1.7%

**25th**  
0.5%

50th  
New Hampshire  
-0.8%

## Job Growth, Private<sup>2</sup>

1st  
Hawaii  
1.8%

**11th\***  
1.2%

50th  
N. Hampshire  
-0.9%

\*Tied with Arizona

## Job Growth, Government<sup>2</sup>

1st  
Missouri  
7.0%

**46th**  
-1.8%

50th  
Washington  
-2.5%

## Job Growth, Leisure and Hospitality<sup>2</sup>

1st  
S. Carolina  
6.5%

**35th**  
-0.9%

50th  
New Hampshire  
-8.9%

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

<sup>1</sup>December seasonally adjusted unemployment rates

<sup>2</sup>December 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
<b>Urban Alaska Consumer Price Index</b> (CPI-U, base: 1982-84=100)	273.487	2nd half 2025	268.039	+2.0%
<b>Commodity prices</b>				
Crude oil, Alaska North Slope,* per barrel	\$69.48	Feb 2026	\$74.13	-6.3%
Natural gas, Henry Hub, per thousand cubic feet (mcf)	\$3.13	Feb 2026	\$3.70	-15.4%
Gold, per oz. COMEX	\$4,570.10	3/20/25	\$3,040.00	+50.3%
Silver, per oz. COMEX	\$69.56	3/20/25	\$33.79	+105.9%
Copper, per lb. COMEX	\$5.36	3/20/25	\$5.09	+5.3%
<b>Bankruptcies</b>				
	66	Q4 2025	37	+78.42%
Business	10	Q4 2025	2	+40035%
Personal	56	Q4 2025	35	+60%
<b>Unemployment insurance claims</b>				
Initial filings	2,217	Feb 2026	2,362	-6.1%
Continued filings	22,493	Feb 2026	22,575	-0.4%
Claimant count	5,848	Feb 2026	6,130	-4.6%

\*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; Bloomberg; U.S. Census Bureau; Yahoo Finance: COMEX; Alaska Department of Revenue; and U.S. Courts, 9th Circuit

## SAFETY MINUTE

### Our consultants can help with mining camp safety

Mining operations in Alaska are primarily regulated by the Mine Safety and Health Administration, under federal authority. Alaska Occupational Safety and Health does not have full jurisdiction over mining activities such as drilling, blasting, excavation, or any ground-disturbing mineral extraction. However, AKOSH plays a meaningful role in promoting mining camp safety, particularly where work resembles general industry operations.

Mining camps often function like small, remote communities that require maintenance, logistical support, and administrative operations. In these areas, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, or OSHA, standards can apply to many routine tasks that are not directly tied to extraction.

Examples include facility maintenance, warehouse operations, food service, housekeeping, administrative offices, equipment maintenance shops, and general material handling. Tasks such as ladder use, electrical maintenance, machine guarding in shops, forklift operation in warehouses, and proper storage of chemicals may fall under general industry safety practices that AKOSH consultants can help address.

Several hazards are common in mining camp support operations. Wet or icy walkways and cluttered workspaces can cause slips, trips, or falls, for example. Improper ladder use during maintenance is a fall risk. In maintenance shops, hazards can include unguarded rotating equipment, improper lockout or tagout procedures, and exposure to welding fumes or solvents. Warehousing tasks can present struck-by or caught-between hazards when moving materials or operating forklifts. Camp kitchens may also present burn hazards, knife injuries, and ergonomic strain from repetitive tasks.

AKOSH consultants can help employers identify these hazards, improve safety procedures, and strengthen workplace safety programs. Through training, hazard recognition, and program development, AKOSH can help mining employers maintain safer camps that support their broader operations.

*This Safety Minute was provided by Rod Bracken, assistant chief of the Health Consultation and Training Section of the Alaska Occupational Safety and Health Consultation and Training Section of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.*

## EMPLOYER RESOURCES

### Free fidelity bonds give some applicants a second chance

The Alaska Fidelity Bonding Program provides no cost, no deductible bonds that protect employers when hiring people who are recovering from substance abuse, have poor credit or limited work histories, or reentering society after incarceration.

As the only program that bonds former prisoners, fidelity bonds help reduce recidivism. They remove major employment barriers and encourage businesses to tap into a motivated, often overlooked talent pool. The program also helps applicants secure stable jobs and develop strong foundations to rebuild their lives.

Employers receive \$5,000 bonds, with up to five available per covered employee. Each bond lasts six months, with potential renewals. Employers may also continue coverage directly with the underwriter if no claims occur in the first six months.

These bonds insure employers against job related theft,

forgery, larceny, or embezzlement on or off the worksite. This gives employers peace of mind to focus on worker skills and productivity while mitigating risk.

The self employed are not eligible, but employers can bond any full or part time, permanent or temporary, new or returning worker who is of legal working age in Alaska. In some cases, no cost bonds may also support promotions or retention of at risk employees.

The process requires no signed forms and its takes Alaska Job Center staff only a few minutes to collect the needed information. Visit <https://labor.alaska.gov/bonding/> for more information, or contact your nearest Alaska Job Center at [jobs.alaska.gov/offices](https://jobs.alaska.gov/offices) to obtain bonds for your workers.

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