

ALASKA ECONOMIC
TRENDS
AUGUST 2026

How sweeping federal
job cuts affected Alaska

ALSO INSIDE

The Denali Borough's
eclectic economy

FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Regulatory updates keep Alaska's trades competitive

By Catherine Muñoz, Commissioner

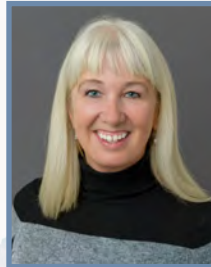
On Aug. 4 of last year, Governor Mike Dunleavy signed Administrative Order No. 360 to "improve the quality, transparency, and efficiency of the State's regulatory environment." The importance of a well-balanced regulatory environment can hardly be overstated.

Among the specified goals of AO 360 is one that closely aligns with a goal of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development: adjusting regulatory structures to protect consumers while eliminating unnecessary barriers to entry for new professionals.

Following the governor's directive, the department's Mechanical Inspection Section adopted amendments to the Alaska Administrative Code on certificates of fitness for electricians and plumbers. A COF verifies that the holder has met the legal and regulatory requirements to perform their duties in Alaska. However, this means skilled workers with licenses from other jurisdictions must be able to prove their technical knowledge and ability to adhere to Alaska standards, as established in AS 18.60.580 and AS 18.60.705.

Alaskans required to obtain a COF must complete an apprenticeship totaling 8,000 hours to qualify as a journeyman electrician or journeyman plumber and must also pass a classroom examination. Before the 2025 revisions, only the hours worked for a registered contractor counted toward the practical work experience requirements.

Provisions added to 8 AAC 90.890 now allow for up to 500 work hours per year in a qualifying military position to count toward hands-on experience in the trade. Time spent at select vocational schools such as AVTEC will now also count, recognizing that many of these programs provide valuable hands-on training comparable to work in



commercial industries.

Hours worked outside of Alaska may also count toward the required experience, although these hours may not translate directly, depending on the certification, because of regulatory differences between Alaska and other jurisdictions.

A revision to the jurisdictional reciprocity process under 8 AAC 90.111 now allows for the reciprocal recognition of a journeyman plumber or electrician COF from a jurisdiction that has "substantially similar requirements" to Alaska. Under these requirements, 32 electrician and 13 plumber jurisdictions have been approved for reciprocal licensing as of July 2026.

Prior to this revision, only the 13 states with a pre-existing reciprocal agreement with Alaska could benefit from this process. The creation of provisional certificates of fitness under 8 AAC 90.112 complements this new process, allowing nonrenewable one-year certificates to be issued for workers whose jurisdictions do not qualify for automatic reciprocity.

As stated in the administrative order, the public is best served when regulations are up to date, clearly written, and account for their impact on Alaskans and Alaska businesses. Improving transparency and efficiency while making it easier for new professionals to enter the trades represents the ideal level of regulatory review necessary to keep Alaska competitive in today's world.

Sincerely,

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

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



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SARA WHITNEY
Editor

DAN ROBINSON
Chief, Research
and Analysis

Design by Sara Whitney

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ALASKA
DEPARTMENT of LABOR
and WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

Governor
Mike Dunleavy

Commissioner
Catherine Muñoz

Trends is a nonpartisan, data-driven magazine that
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Alaska lost 4.5% of its federal jobs

Reductions were widespread across departments in 2025

By KARINNE WIEBOLD

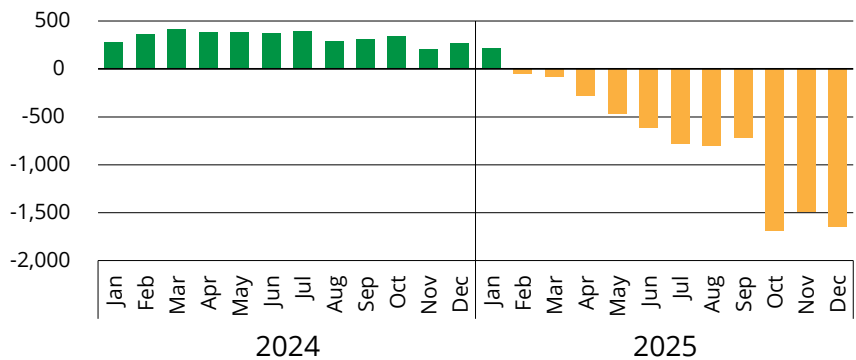
Soon after taking office for a second term in early 2025, President Donald Trump created the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, to drastically reduce the federal workforce.

Previous administrations have cut federal employment, but what made last year's sweeping job cuts unusual was how, and how fast, they were implemented.

The effects of the announced cuts were difficult to track. Thousands of employees remained on the payroll for months after resigning, an unusual benefit meant to encourage more federal workers to leave. Over that time, some were rehired and some who were fired were reinstated through court order. Other complicating factors included the federal hiring freeze, early and regular retirements, and a long federal shutdown.

After a year, however, enough data are available to see what was cut, where, and when, and assess how those reductions affected Alaska.

Federal job loss picked up in Alaska in late 2025



Note: Change is from the same month in the previous year

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

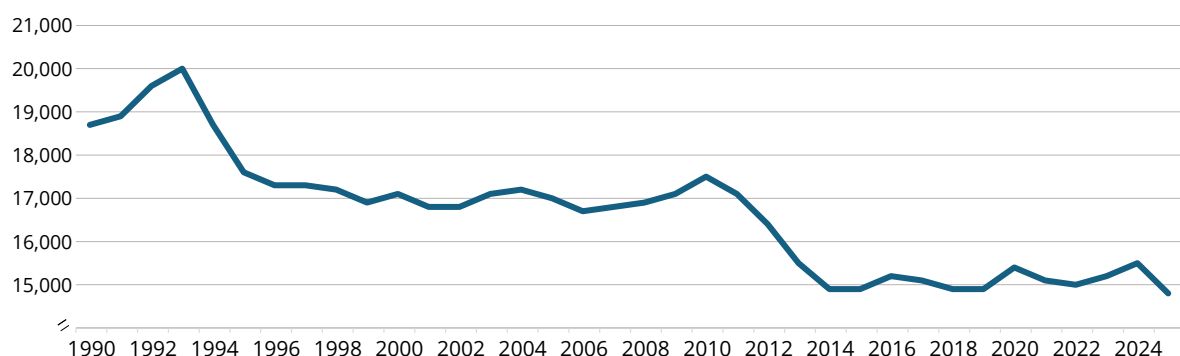
How the cuts compare nationally

Nationally, the massive reduction effort netted a modest 2.9 percent drop in federal employment, which equated to 87,000 fewer jobs.

Alaska lost about 4.5 percent of its federal jobs — nearly 700 — putting us third among the most-affected states.

All states lost federal employment, but the impact varied. Maryland, with its proximity to the nation's

Federal employment in Alaska hits its lowest level in decades



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

capital, took the biggest hit, losing 6.5 percent over the year. New Mexico followed at -5.8 percent.

New Mexico's heavy losses were in some of the same agencies as Alaska. New Mexico lost the most jobs in the Bureau of Land Management and in the Forest Service, agencies within the departments of the Interior and Agriculture, respectively.

On the low end, Maine and Texas each lost less than 1 percent.

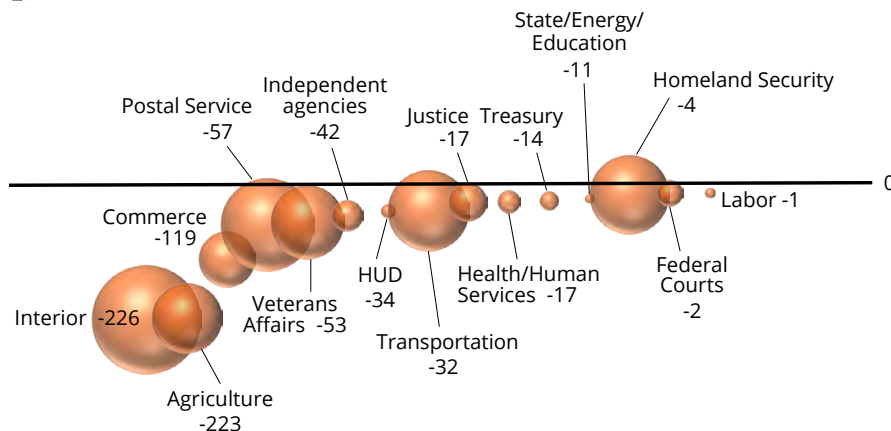
The pattern and history in Alaska

These job cuts brought Alaska to its lowest federal employment level in more than 35 years.

In the early 1990s, federal employment peaked at more than 20,000. Over the last decade, Alaska has averaged 15,100 annually, and was at 15,500 in 2024. That fell to 14,800 jobs in 2025, a steep but not unprecedented drop from the year before.

Alaska saw similar federal losses in 2012 and 2013 in the wake of the national Great Recession, and

Federal job loss in Alaska by agency, Q4 2025



Bubble shows relative size of that agency in Alaska



Note: Change is from the same month in the previous year

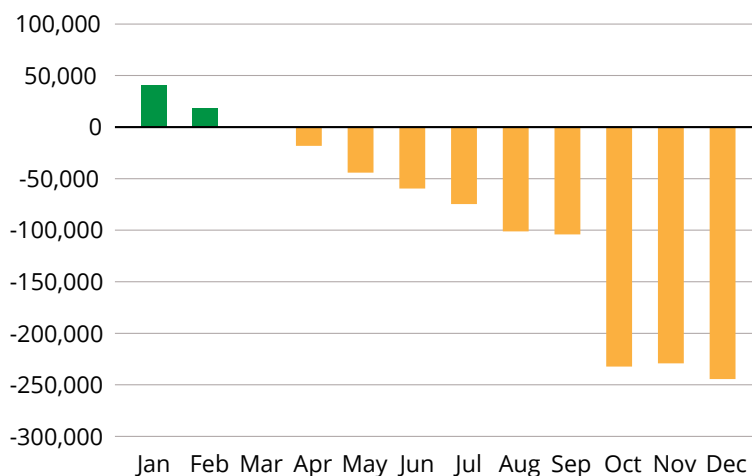
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

more dramatic drops twice in the early/mid-1990s at the end of the Cold War when the Department of Defense reduced force.

The Naval Air Facility in Adak closed in 1997, and Eareckson Air Station (formerly Shemya Air Force Base) was deactivated and converted to contractor operation in 1995. Around the same time, the Clinton administration launched the National Performance Review, which helped spur the Federal Workforce Restructuring Act of 1994.

What makes last year's losses stand out more than the total decline is how abruptly employment fell near the end of the year.

National federal job loss pattern was similar



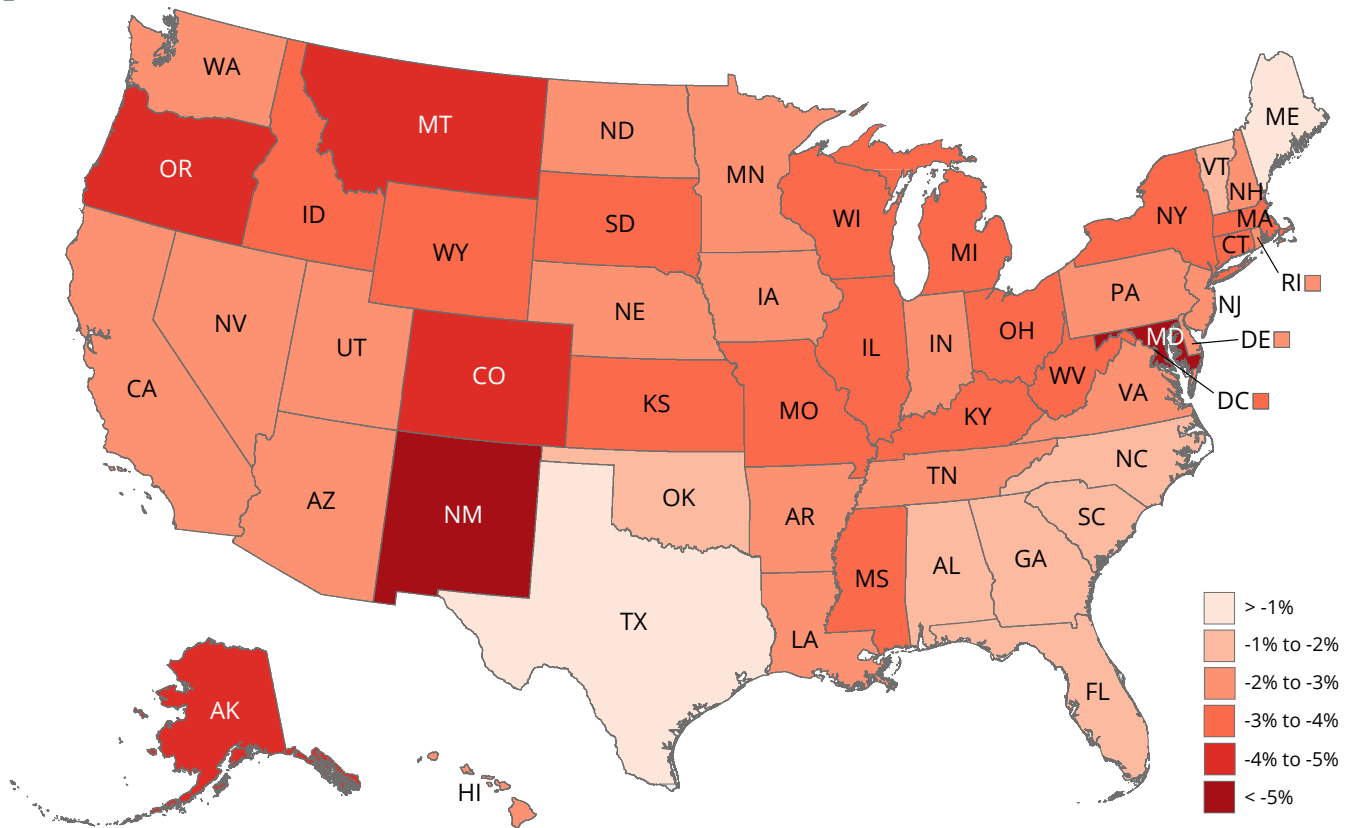
Note: Change is from the same month in the previous year

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Biggest losses came late

In the first quarter of 2025, federal employment was up slightly from the first quarter of the previous year. Second quarter jobs were down by 454, and third quarter by 762. Losses more than doubled in the fourth quarter, with federal employment down by 1,607 from the last quarter of 2024.

Alaska was one of the hardest-hit states for federal job losses, 2024-2025



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

**Federal jobs
percent change**

Active-duty military by area

Area	Military count in 2025
Aleutians West Census Area	12
Anchorage, Municipality	10,223
Chugach Census Area	141
Denali Borough	80
Fairbanks North Star Borough	9,501
Juneau, City and Borough	235
Kenai Peninsula Borough	88
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	220
Kodiak Island Borough	812
Petersburg Borough	21
Sitka, City and Borough	199
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	284

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

Part of the reason for the late-year drop is that federal workers who accepted the “Fork in the Road” resignation offer remained on the payroll through the end of the federal fiscal year, Sept. 30, even though most were no longer working. That kept those jobs from showing up as losses until October.

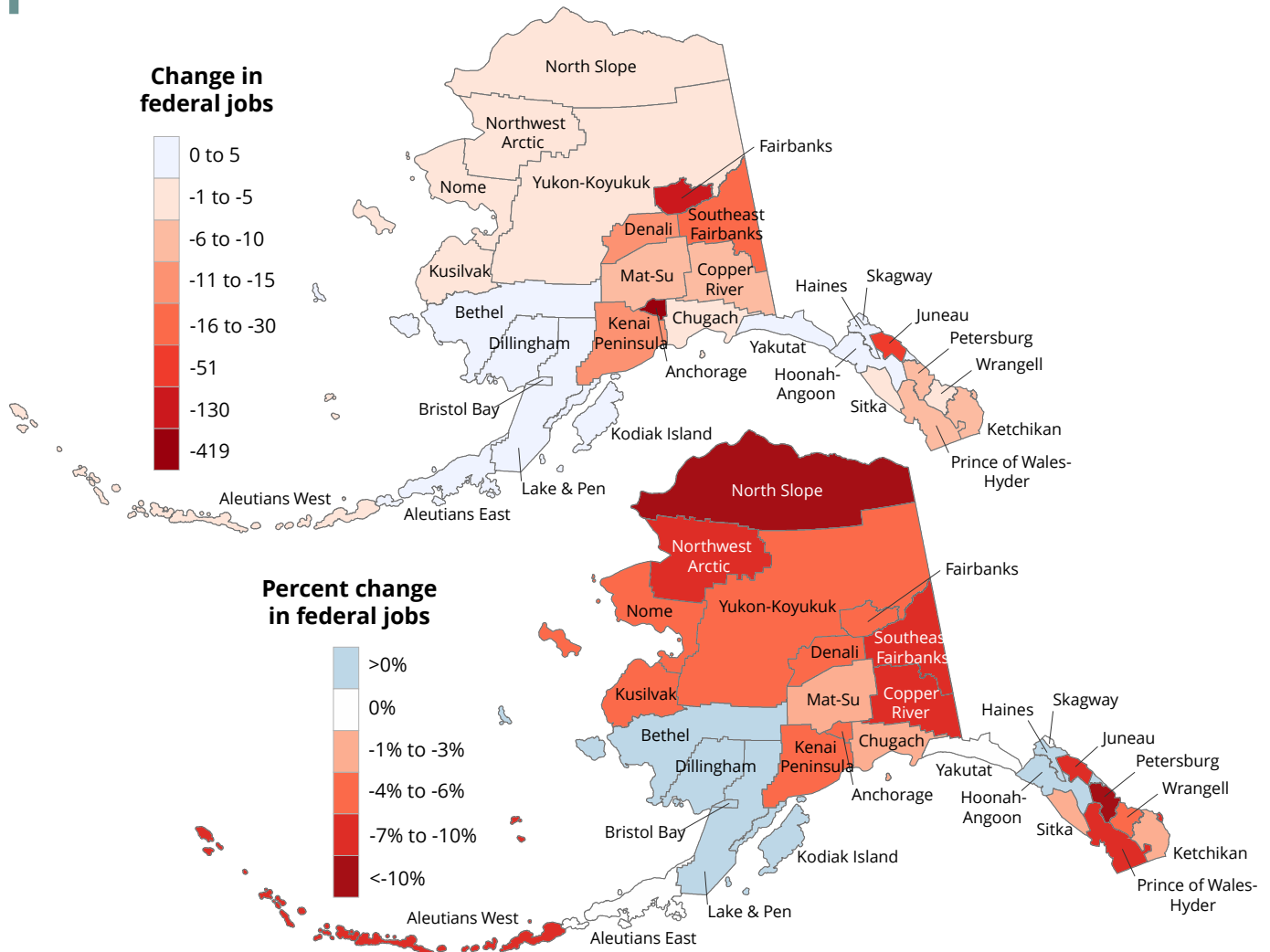
For that reason, the job numbers in this article focus not just on the year’s average loss but the fourth quarter loss, as that paints a fuller picture of the cuts and their direction.

The later cuts sliced deepest into a handful of agencies, with six sustaining over 60 percent of the fourth-quarter losses.

The Department of Defense lost the most by far (-755), with significant cuts to Army and Air Force civilian employment and the Army Corps of Engineers. The Forest Service, a significant presence in Alaska, lost 180 jobs in late 2025. The Bureau of Land Management, whose duties include forest firefighting, lost 133 jobs in the fourth quarter and NOAA lost 101.

Another small but notable late-year change is that

Federal job losses in Alaska by area, by number and percentage, 2024-2025



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Housing and Urban Development had 35 jobs in Alaska in late 2024 but almost none by late 2025.

Alaska lost \$36.5 million in federal wages in 2025

A closer look at losses by agency

Military presence didn't insulate Alaska

Alaska's strategic location and unique training environment have significant military importance. For active-duty military, overall numbers have been stable recently and some increases are on the horizon. Refueling tankers assigned to Eielson Air Force Base in the Interior will bring an additional 200 airmen and their families to the revitalized base in 2026.

The military has made significant infrastructure improvements to all major installations in recent years, with more planned.

Aside from active-duty personnel, civilian Department of Defense workers, military contractors, procurement, and construction also contribute significantly to Alaska's economy.

However, Alaska's military importance did not insulate the state from civilian military job cuts. Nearly half of Alaska's losses came from the Department of Defense. Air Force civilian cuts were largest, followed by Army civilian workers at Fort Wainwright in

Text continues on page 10

Total federal job cuts in Alaska in 2025 and in the fourth quarter

Area	Change in total yearly jobs				Late-year job change			
	Total 2024	Total 2025	Change	Pct change	Q4 2024 jobs	Q4 2025 jobs	Change	Pct change
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE	6,350	6,011	-340	-5%	6,323	5,569	-755	-12%
Air Force Base Support Services	524	481	-43	-8%	496	466	-30	-6%
Army Air Force Exchange Service/PX	354	349	-5	-1%	334	314	-20	-6%
Army Morale, Welfare, and Recreation	349	331	-18	-5%	322	322	0	0%
Air Force Civilian Career Training	18	11	-7	-37%	18	10	-8	-44%
Army Corps of Engineers	471	415	-56	-12%	480	373	-107	-22%
Army Installation Management Command	981	908	-73	-7%	1,002	834	-168	-17%
Army National Guard Units Title 32	10	11	1	6%	10	10	0	0%
Defense Commissary Agency	172	184	11	7%	172	170	-2	-1%
Military Treatment Under DHA/Defense Health	477	424	-52	-11%	474	378	-96	-20%
U.S. Northern Command	70	60	-10	-14%	72	50	-22	-30%
Pacific Air Forces	2,871	2,785	-86	-3%	2,888	2,596	-293	-10%
Space Force	38	36	-2	-6%	39	34	-5	-12%
Naval Sea Systems/Spec Warfare Command/Army Civilian HR (combined for confidentiality)	16	15	-1	-7%	16	11	-5	-29%
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	2,264	2,115	-148	-7%	2,108	1,882	-226	-11%
U.S. Geological Survey	164	140	-23	-14%	157	128	-29	-18%
Fish and Wildlife Service	494	412	-82	-17%	449	364	-85	-19%
Bureau of Indian Affairs	104	105	1	1%	111	92	-19	-17%
Bureau of Land Management	629	549	-81	-13%	603	470	-133	-22%
National Park Service	737	682	-55	-7%	637	572	-65	-10%
Offices of Secretary/Inspector General/Solicitor	68	171	103	151%	84	207	123	146%
Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement/ Bureau of Reclamation	22	16	-6	-26%	22	11	-11	-50%
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management	45	40	-5	-12%	44	37	-8	-17%
INDEPENDENT AGENCIES	156	150	-6	-4%	164	122	-42	-25%
Social Security Administration	35	35	1	2%	38	34	-4	-11%
Denali Commission	16	17	0	2%	18	13	-5	-28%
General Services Administration	40	34	-6	-15%	41	22	-19	-47%
Small Business Administration	11	11	0	3%	12	7	-5	-40%
Environmental Protection Agency	40	40	0	-1%	40	36	-4	-10%
National Transportation Safety Board	5	5	0	3%	5	5	0	0%
All Other*	10	8	-2	-16%	11	6	-5	-44%
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE	530	481	-49	-9%	544	425	-119	-22%
Natl Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	471	432	-39	-8%	487	386	-101	-21%
Bureau of the Census/Economic Development	59	49	-10	-17%	57	39	-18	-31%
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	1,150	1,176	26	2%	1,169	1,137	-32	-3%
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY	1,089	1,110	20	2%	1,104	1,100	-4	0%
Coast Guard	234	232	-2	-1%	240	221	-19	-8%
Coast Guard Morale, Welfare, and Recreation	61	68	7	11%	65	72	7	11%
Coast Guard Exchange	16	17	1	4%	16	19	3	19%
Citizenship and Immigration Svc/Secret Service	19	18	-1	-7%	20	15	-5	-25%
Customs and Border Protection	125	121	-4	-3%	126	120	-6	-5%
Federal Emergency Management Agency	33	34	1	2%	35	30	-5	-14%
Immigration and Customs Enforcement	21	26	5	23%	24	27	4	15%
Transportation Sec Admin/TSA Administrator	580	595	15	3%	579	596	17	3%
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	93	81	-12	-13%	88	71	-17	-19%
Indian Health Service	45	40	-5	-11%	44	38	-5	-12%
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	32	30	-2	-7%	31	24	-7	-23%
All Other**	15	11	-5	-30%	14	9	-5	-34%
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE	249	247	-2	-1%	254	237	-17	-7%
Federal Bureau of Investigation	131	133	2	1%	136	127	-8	-6%

Total federal job cuts in Alaska in 2025 and in the fourth quarter

Area	Change in total yearly jobs				Late-year job change			
	Total 2024	Total 2025	Change	Pct change	Q4 2024 jobs	Q4 2025 jobs	Change	Pct change
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, CONTINUED								
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives	11	10	-1	-7%	10	9	-1	-10%
Drug Enforcement Administration	15	16	1	6%	15	16	1	9%
U.S. Attorneys Office	68	61	-7	-10%	68	56	-12	-18%
U.S. Marshals Service	26	29	3	11%	26	28	3	10%
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR	22	18	-3	-15%	19	18	-1	-7%
OSHA/Mine Safety and Health Administration	11	9	-1	-11%	9	10	1	7%
All Other***	11	9	-2	-19%	10	8	-2	-20%
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE	909	833	-76	-8%	876	654	-223	-25%
Animal and Plant Health Inspection/Food Safety and Inspection Service	68	64	-5	-7%	66	60	-6	-10%
Farm Service Agency County Office	5	6	1	14%	4	4	0	-8%
Forest Service	712	641	-71	-10%	675	495	-180	-27%
Natural Resources Conservation Service	90	88	-3	-3%	91	73	-18	-20%
RR Housing Service	25	27	2	8%	31	15	-16	-52%
RR Development/Natl Agricultural Stats Service	8	8	0	0%	8	6	-2	-25%
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS	957	938	-19	-2%	960	907	-53	-6%
Fairbanks Vet Center	25	26	1	2%	26	25	-1	-4%
Wasilla Vet Center	25	25	0	0%	24	23	-1	-3%
Kenai Vet Center Satellite	24	24	0	-1%	23	23	0	-1%
Alaska VA Health Care System	559	567	8	1%	585	548	-37	-6%
Anchorage Vet Center	113	79	-35	-31%	80	76	-4	-5%
Veterans Affairs/Ft Richardson Natl Cemetery	211	219	8	4%	221	211	-10	-5%
DEPTS OF STATE/EDUCATION/ENERGY	15	12	-3	-21%	15	4	-11	-74%
DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY	61	55	-7	-11%	61	46	-14	-24%
IRS/Office of the Comptroller of the Currency	61	55	-7	-11%	61	46	-14	-24%
DEPT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT	35	1	-35	-98%	35	1	-34	-97%
POSTAL SERVICE	1,541	1,494	-47	-3%	1,534	1,477	-57	-4%
FEDERAL COURTS	117	118	2	2%	119	117	-2	-1%
TOTAL FEDERAL	15,537	14,839	-698	-4.5%	15,374	13,767	-1,607	-10.5%

*Office of Personnel Management, Marine Mammal Commission, National Labor Relations Board, Smithsonian Institute, Arctic Research Commission, Americorp, Government Accountability Office, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp., Overseas Private Investment Corp., Federal Trade Commission
 **Food and Drug Administration, Office of the Secretary, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Health Resources and Services Administration, National Institutes of Health, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
 ***Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Training Administration, Wage and Hour Division, Veterans Employment and Training Services

Notes: Calendar year. Does not include uniformed military. Agency breakouts were derived from federal wage records. A slash indicates we have combined agencies. May not sum due to rounding.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Fairbanks and Fort Greely near Delta Junction, then the Army Corps of Engineers and military health and treatment facilities.

Alaska houses nearly 22,000 active-duty military members; the largest installations are Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson in Anchorage and Fort Wainwright Army Base and Eielson Air Force Base near Fairbanks. Alaska has smaller installations, too, including Fort Greely and Clear Space Force Station in the Denali Borough.

Although the Coast Guard is included in the active-duty numbers, their civilian workforce is categorized under the Department of Homeland Security, where the Coast Guard is housed during peacetime.

The Coast Guard presence in Kodiak has grown, accompanied by base improvements including

housing. The Kodiak base is the largest in the entire Pacific Area.

Veterans Affairs also lost jobs

Veterans Affairs is separate from the Department of Defense. While the VA lost just 19 jobs in Alaska overall last year, employment was down by 53 in the fourth quarter, with 37 of those in veteran health care.

Alaska has the highest share of veterans in the nation; 10 percent of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and 9.5 percent of the Fairbanks North Star Borough are veterans, for example. (For more on veterans and their contributions to Alaska's economy, see the [November 2025 issue of Trends.](#))

Continued on page 18

Total federal jobs and wages by area, and change from 2024 to 2025

Area	2024		2025		Change in jobs	Change in total wages
	Yearly jobs	Total wages	Yearly jobs	Total wages		
Aleutians East Borough	15	\$1,030,000	15	\$1,086,000	0	\$56,000
Aleutians West Census Area	14	\$1,292,000	13	\$1,262,000	-1	-\$30,000
Anchorage, Municipality	8,413	\$862,980,000	7,994	\$842,517,000	-419	-\$20,463,000
Bethel Census Area	68	\$4,662,000	73	\$5,540,000	5	\$878,000
Bristol Bay Borough	56	\$5,867,000	58	\$5,656,000	2	-\$211,000
Chugach Census Area	54	\$4,923,000	53	\$4,980,000	-1	\$57,000
Copper River Census Area	91	\$8,433,000	84	\$7,974,000	-7	-\$459,000
Denali Borough	197	\$18,175,000	185	\$17,226,000	-12	-\$949,000
Dillingham Census Area	65	\$5,577,000	66	\$6,035,000	1	\$458,000
Fairbanks North Star Borough	3,258	\$297,453,000	3,128	\$290,500,000	-130	-\$6,953,000
Haines Borough	11	\$1,555,000	12	\$1,554,000	1	-\$1,000
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	149	\$11,832,000	150	\$11,919,000	1	\$87,000
Juneau, City and Borough	730	\$84,422,000	679	\$82,115,000	-51	-\$2,307,000
Kenai Peninsula Borough	397	\$39,562,000	383	\$39,471,000	-14	-\$91,000
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	206	\$20,693,000	200	\$20,486,000	-6	-\$207,000
Kodiak Island Borough	248	\$19,399,000	252	\$19,858,000	4	\$459,000
Kusilvak Census Area	27	\$1,052,000	26	\$1,036,000	-1	-\$16,000
Lake and Peninsula Borough	34	\$1,958,000	37	\$2,143,000	3	\$185,000
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	286	\$31,808,000	277	\$31,710,000	-9	-\$98,000
Nome Census Area	50	\$3,679,000	47	\$3,487,000	-3	-\$192,000
North Slope Borough	17	\$1,367,000	15	\$1,226,000	-2	-\$141,000
Northwest Arctic Borough	45	\$3,617,000	42	\$3,206,000	-3	-\$411,000
Petersburg Borough	82	\$7,701,000	73	\$7,204,000	-9	-\$497,000
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	88	\$7,252,000	82	\$6,940,000	-6	-\$312,000
Sitka, City and Borough	110	\$10,391,000	109	\$10,387,000	-1	-\$4,000
Skagway, Municipality	10	\$1,497,000	10	\$1,677,000	0	\$180,000
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	361	\$37,960,000	332	\$32,379,000	-29	-\$5,581,000
Wrangell, City and Borough	40	\$3,461,000	38	\$3,487,000	-2	\$26,000
Yakutat, City and Borough	19	\$1,716,000	19	\$1,706,000	0	-\$10,000
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	62	\$4,117,000	58	\$3,765,000	-4	-\$352,000
Unknown or undefined	334	\$36,681,000	329	\$37,062,000	-5	\$381,000
Total	15,537	\$1,542,112,000	14,839	\$1,505,594,000	-698	-\$36,518,000

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

Denali Borough's eclectic economy

Park tourism, coal, and military gel around a major highway

By SARA WHITNEY

Over 12,700 square miles in Alaska's Interior, the Denali Borough encompasses a broad section of Denali National Park and Preserve and a narrow corridor of the George Parks Highway connecting Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Although the borough is more vast than nine states — it would fall between Maryland and West Virginia in size — the small stretch of the Parks is where nearly all residents live. That corridor is book-ended by Anderson to the north and Cantwell to the south, with Healy, the largest community and winter hub, in the middle.

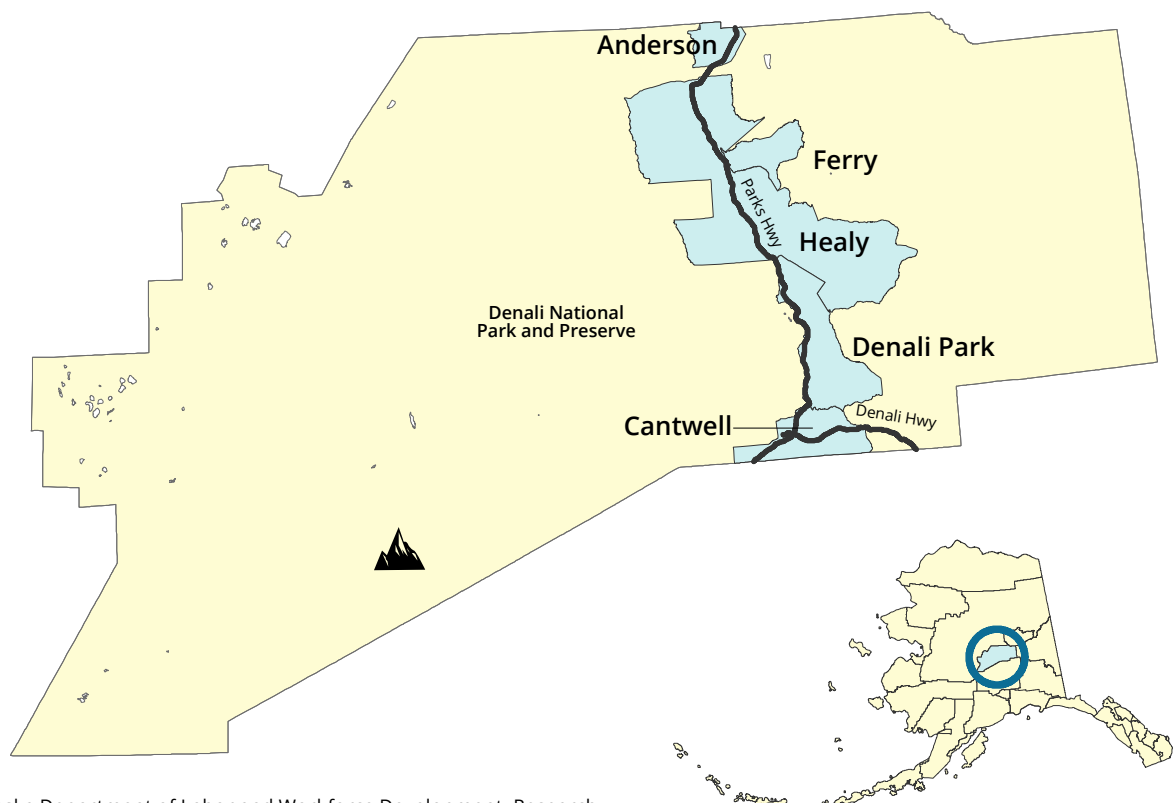
Within the borough are three discrete but

sympiotic economies: the smaller energy- and military-based economies around the Parks Highway and the booming tourism stoked by Denali National Park and Preserve.

Three pillars: Denali National Park, coal mining, and military

Denali National Park and Preserve is home to the highest mountain in North America, and its visitor industry is supported by the communities around the park's entrance. Denali, Koyukon for "The High One," draws hundreds of thousands of visitors into the heart of Alaska every year. About 60 percent make their way into the Interior from cruise ships

Denali Borough is larger than Maryland, centered around Parks Highway



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

that visit Southeast.

The park was established in 1917 by President Woodrow Wilson as Alaska's first national park. However, the area's history began with nomadic Alaska Native groups using the area for subsistence for millennia. Miners eventually struck coal, and camps sprang up around what is now Healy in 1902.

The Alaska Railroad enabled further settlement in the 1920s, allowing the coal mining industry to expand into the middle of the 20th century. As the century progressed, the railroad further supported an explosion in tourism, transporting growing numbers of visitors into the park.

Federal military investment arrived during the Cold War with the construction of Clear Air Force Station, now Clear Space Force Station. The station operates radar systems that detect ballistic missile launches, support U.S. missile defense, and track objects in Earth's orbit.

About 80 active-duty service members are stationed at Clear. The installation also employs nearly 40 civilians and hires contractors in the area.

Population triples in summer, but Healy is year-round foundation

While the entire area booms in the summer and Healy's population more than triples, Healy also anchors the year-round economy with Usibelli Coal Mine, which has operated there since the 1940s.

Usibelli, Alaska's only coal mine, has more than 100 employees and recovers between 1.2 and 2 million tons of coal per year. That coal supplies six Interior power plants, including Clear Space Force Station and the two Fairbanks-area bases, Fort Wainwright and Eielson Air Force Base.

Denali Borough population, 2020-25

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Denali Borough	1,619	1,656	1,639	1,664	1,606	1,631
Anderson	177	227	244	246	232	241
Cantwell	200	196	196	198	189	188
Denali Park	163	160	149	156	139	149
Ferry	17	17	17	17	15	14
Healy	966	944	927	941	933	940
Balance	96	112	106	106	98	99

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

Borough jobs often seasonal, 2025

Industry	Annual jobs	Jan jobs	July jobs
Total, All Industries	2,062	947	3,718
Total Private	1,738	652	3,369
Leisure and Hospitality	1,075	148	2,512
Accommodation and Food Svcs	963	121	2,270
Arts, Entertainment, Rec	112	27	242
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	258	159	3,191
Retail Trade	138	63	226
Sporting, Hobby, Music Instruments	31	*	69
Scenic and Sightseeing	26	14	51
Transit and Ground Passenger	6	*	7
Professional and Business Services	203	178	236
Administrative and Waste Services	188	170	206
Professional, Scientific, Tech	15	8	30
Construction	40	24	62
Financial Activities	14	8	21
Total Government	325	295	329
Federal Government	185	150	234
Local Government/Public Schools	119	125	93
State Government	21	20	22

*Suppressed for confidentiality
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

International coal exports ended in 2016 as overseas demand declined. The Alaska Railroad eventually sold the specialized railcars needed to haul coal to the export terminal in Seward. In the past, however, Usibelli supplied coal to Chile, South Korea, Japan, and several Pacific Rim areas.

The next-largest towns after Healy are Cantwell and the incorporated city of Anderson, which has some year-round government employment. (See the table below for the rest of the borough's communities and their population trajectories.)

Other small places mainly provide tourism infrastructure and seasonal employment near the park's entrance.

Highly seasonal, borough's jobs are dominated by tourism

The area's job numbers and industries reflect these large seasonal swings. The table above gives the yearly employment averages by industry, but looking at the peak and low months tells a more complete story.

The entire borough is home to around 1,600 people and averaged 2,062 total jobs in 2025, but the employment peaked in July at 3,718 jobs. The

vast majority were linked to tourism, with 2,512 in leisure and hospitality. Of those, 2,270 were in accommodation and food services.

In contrast, the job count fell to 947 during the January lull, with 295 of those in government. The summer powerhouse, leisure and hospitality, provided just 148 jobs at the winter low.

Most of the borough's federal employment is also connected to the park. The largest agency by far is the National Park Service, with monthly employment ranging from 102 in December to 189 in August.

For local government, the Denali Borough School District is the largest employer at close to 100 jobs throughout the year.

State government is small, and mostly in the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

Tourism taxes fund most of the borough's operations

The borough is almost entirely funded by tourism, with its overnight accommodations tax bringing in \$5.7 million in fiscal year 2025, making up 79 percent of its total general fund revenues.

It has no sales tax, but alcohol, marijuana, and severance taxes made up an additional 7 percent.

Visitor patterns at the park and the challenge of permafrost melting

Denali National Park received about 543,300 visitors in 2025, a visitor count second in Alaska only to Glacier Bay, a major cruise ship destination in Southeast near Gustavus.

Denali's visitor count took a hit early this decade, dropping from about 601,150 in 2019 to just 54,850



Entrance to Denali National Park, photo by Flickr user [Marco Giazzi](#).

in 2020, the first COVID-19 year. Visitor numbers have climbed each year since, and in 2025, the count reached about 90 percent of its pre-pandemic level.

The park's drop in visitors wasn't just due to COVID, however. A landslide that had been advancing slowly for decades, Pretty Rocks, finally overtook the single road into the park in 2021, limiting vehicle access beyond the slide point. The road is scheduled to reopen in 2027.

The landslide was the most visible obstacle and expense resulting from years of permafrost melting with a warming climate, as the shifting ground caused the landslide to accelerate.

That instability has taken a toll on the roads, too. In a 2022 Planning and Environmental Linkages study, DOT&PF reported that the Cantwell-Healy corridor of the Parks has persistent maintenance problems caused by frost heaves, drainage problems, and unstable ground.

Its study recommended major reconstruction projects, noting that patching is no longer the most effective long-term strategy. These problems are increasingly common with highways throughout the permafrost-heavy Interior.

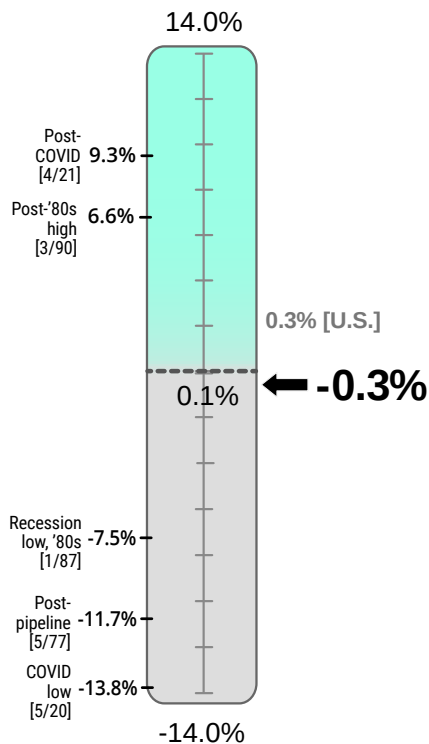
Sara Whitney is the editor of *Alaska Economic Trends*. Reach her in Juneau at (907) 465-6561 or sara.whitney@alaska.gov.

Gauging The Economy



Job Growth

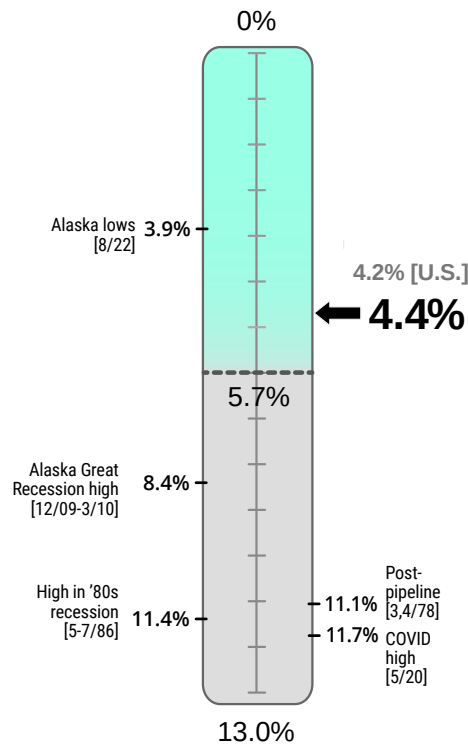
June 2026
Over-the-year percent change



Alaska's June employment was down by 0.3 percent from last June. U.S. employment was up by 0.3 percent.

Unemployment Rate

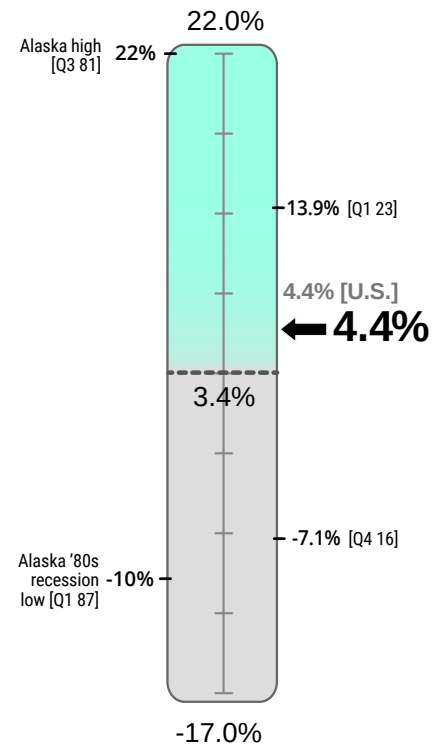
June 2026
Seasonally adjusted



Alaska's unemployment rate was up by half of one percentage point from mid-2022 but remains well below its 10-year average.

Wage Growth

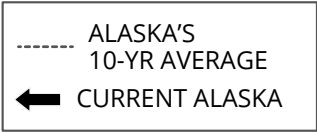
4th Quarter 2025
Over-the-year percent change



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

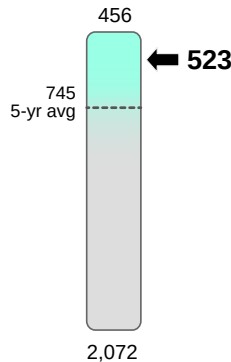
Wages were up 4.4 percent from year-ago levels in the fourth quarter of 2025.

Gauging The Economy



Initial Claims

Unemployment, week ending July 4, 2026*

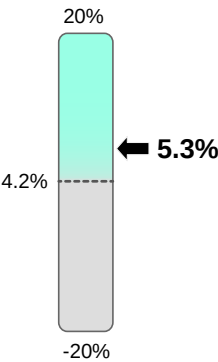


Pandemic-driven high claims loads have fallen, and new claims for benefits are well below their long-term average.

*Four-week moving average ending with specified week

GDP Growth

1st Quarter 2026
Over-the-year percent change*

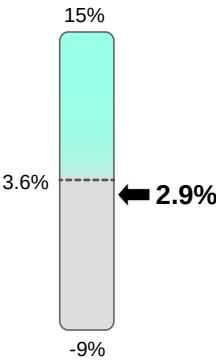


Gross domestic product is the value of the goods and services a state produces. It's an important economic measure but also a volatile one for Alaska because commodity prices influence the numbers so much — especially oil prices.

*In current dollars

Personal Income Growth

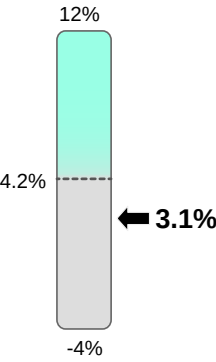
1st Quarter 2026
Over-the-year percent change



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

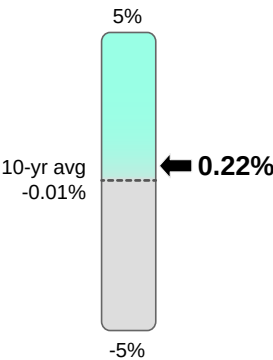
Single-family, percent change from prior year, Q2 2025



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

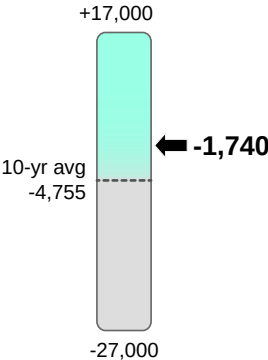
2024 to 2025



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

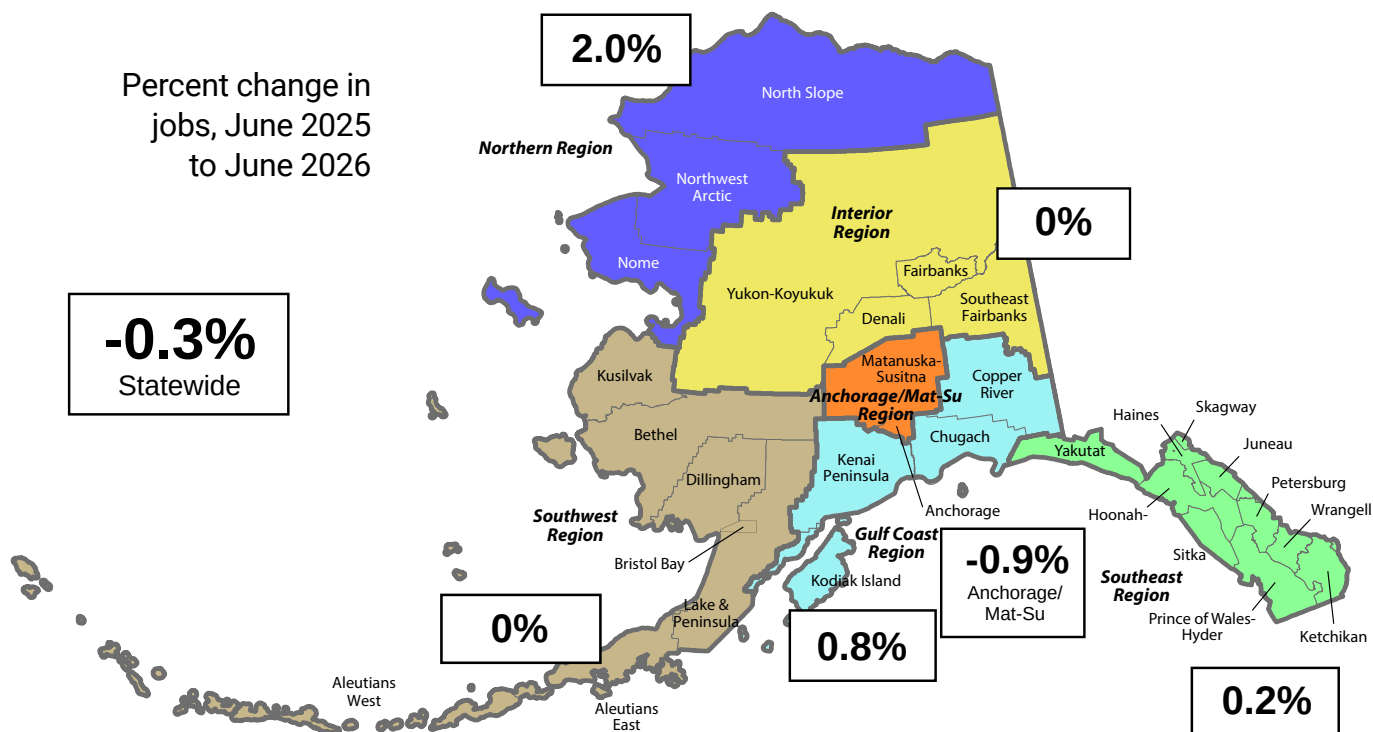
Net Migration

2024 to 2025



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

Employment Growth by Region



Unemployment Rates

Seasonally adjusted

	Prelim. 6/26	Revised 5/26	6/25
United States	4.2	4.3	4.1
Alaska	4.4	4.6	4.6

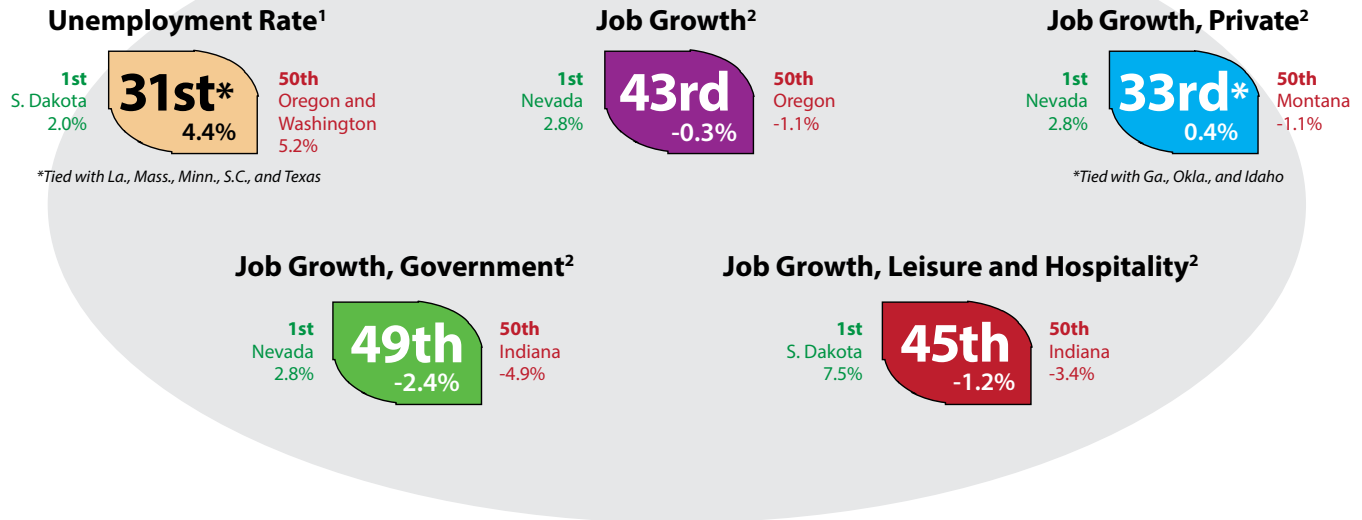
Not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim. 6/26	Revised 5/26	6/25
United States	4.4	4.1	4.4
Alaska	4.2	4.1	4.7

Regional, not seasonally adjusted

	Prelim. 6/26	Revised 5/26	6/25		Prelim. 6/26	Revised 5/26	6/25		Prelim. 6/26	Revised 5/26	6/25
Interior Region	4.1	4.1	4.5	Southwest Region	8.1	9.1	9.0	Southeast Region	3.4	3.4	3.8
Denali Borough	2.2	2.5	2.2	Aleutians East Borough	2.6	5.0	2.4	Haines Borough	6.4	7.1	6.7
Fairbanks N Star Borough	3.8	3.8	4.2	Aleutians West Census Area	3.1	4.9	3.2	Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	4.0	4.6	4.1
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	6.0	6.0	6.8	Bethel Census Area	10.5	10.1	12.9	Juneau, City and Borough	2.9	2.8	3.3
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	8.7	9.4	9.3	Bristol Bay Borough	2.3	5.0	1.8	Ketchikan Gateway Borough	3.1	3.1	3.7
Northern Region	6.5	6.0	7.5	Dillingham Census Area	7.4	7.3	8.1	Petersburg Borough	2.8	2.9	4.9
Nome Census Area	8.9	8.3	10.6	Kusilvak Census Area	19.3	16.0	18.8	Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	7.4	7.4	7.5
North Slope Borough	3.4	3.1	3.9	Lake and Peninsula Borough	5.8	6.7	4.0	Sitka, City and Borough	2.5	2.7	2.9
Northwest Arctic Borough	9.5	8.7	10.1	Gulf Coast Region	4.0	4.2	4.8	Skagway, Municipality	3.1	3.9	2.4
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	3.8	3.7	4.4	Kenai Peninsula Borough	4.2	4.2	5.0	Wrangell, City and Borough	4.3	4.2	4.7
Anchorage, Municipality	3.6	3.5	4.0	Kodiak Island Borough	3.1	3.2	4.1	Yakutat, City and Borough	4.7	4.8	4.2
Mat-Su Borough	4.5	4.3	5.3	Chugach Census Area	3.8	4.9	4.5				
				Copper River Census Area	6.2	7.1	6.0				

How Alaska Ranks



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

¹June seasonally adjusted unemployment rates

²June 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: 1982-84=100)	298.409	1st half 2026	270.441	+2.9%
Commodity prices				
Crude oil, Alaska North Slope,* per barrel	\$94.93	June 2026	\$72.63	+30.7%
Natural gas, Henry Hub, per thousand cubic feet (mcf)	\$3.20	June 2026	\$3.64	-12.1%
Gold, per oz. COMEX	\$4,010.30	7/20/26	\$3,401.90	+17.9%
Silver, per oz. COMEX	\$56.80	7/20/26	\$39.10	+45.3%
Copper, per lb. COMEX	\$6.30	7/20/26	\$5.61	+12.3%
Bankruptcies				
	77	Q1 2026	47	+63.8%
Business	5	Q1 2026	3	+66.7%
Personal	72	Q1 2026	44	+63.6%
Unemployment insurance claims				
Initial filings	2,066	June 2026	2,347	-12.0%
Continued filings	15,258	June 2026	18,555	-17.8%
Claimant count	3,833	June 2026	4,005	-4.3%

*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

FEDERAL JOB CUTS

Continued from page 10

Large cuts in Forest Service, BLM

Alaska has large national forests, other public lands, and legendary summer forest fires.

The Forest Service lost 71 jobs during the year, but the final three months of the year recorded 180 fewer jobs, making up most of the Department of Agriculture's deep losses. was the largest fourth-quarter loss among departments that have a significant presence in Alaska.

The Bureau of Land Management, under the Department of the Interior, dropped from 603 jobs in the fourth quarter of 2024 to 470 in fourth quarter 2025. The seasonal summer peak fell from 714 jobs to 612.

Smaller losses at national parks

Alaska has the five largest national parks and preserves in the country: Wrangell-St. Elias at 13.2 million acres, followed by Gates of the Arctic (8.5 million), Denali (6.1 million), Katmai (4.1 million), and Glacier Bay (3.3 million). Of the 10 largest parks in the country, seven are in Alaska.

Hundreds of thousands of people visit Alaska's parks each year, and the vast majority are tourists from out of state.

The National Park Service only lost 55 jobs in 2025 overall, but its employment is highly seasonal. In 2024, it peaked at 942 jobs, and in 2025, it was 846.

Again, however, the way the cuts were made — with many workers being paid through September 2025 — means the full magnitude of the losses won't be known until summer 2026 numbers become available.

Large cuts at NOAA late in 2025

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration manages commercial fisheries, protects marine mammals, and forecasts weather.

Although only down 39 jobs through the year, the losses were two-and-a-half times deeper by the fourth quarter (-101 jobs).

Anchorage and Juneau have a strong NOAA presence, with slightly more in the capital. Both areas sustained considerable losses: -18 percent (-29 jobs) in Anchorage and -24 percent (-50 jobs) in Juneau in the fourth quarter.

60 percent of the federal job losses came from Anchorage

.....
The largest areas lost the most federal jobs. Sixty percent of the losses came from Anchorage, home to the joint base and the state headquarters for many federal agencies.

Fairbanks, with Fort Wainwright and Eielson, lost 130 jobs — 4 percent of its federal employment.

Juneau, where NOAA and the Forest Service are the two largest federal agencies, lost 51 jobs, or 7.5 percent of its total federal employment.

The fourth hardest-hit was the group of small communities outside of Fairbanks. The Southeast Fairbanks Census Area lost 29 total jobs over the year. Denali Borough losses came mostly from the Clear Space Force Station and the Park Service.

Rural areas where the post office is the primary federal employer lost the fewest jobs, and several even added a few.

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

EMPLOYER RESOURCES

SkillBridge integrates military talent into Alaska's workforce

Since December 2023, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development has participated in the [federal SkillBridge program](#) as an authorized industry provider and has assisted Alaska employers in becoming approved providers.

Transitioning from military to civilian employment can be challenging. SkillBridge supports this transition by allowing service members to gain civilian work experience before separating from the military.

With commander approval, service members may spend up to 180 days working full time with approved industry partners, focusing solely on training and skill development while remaining on active duty. As such, they continue to receive their military pay and benefits and therefore cannot be compensated by the industry provider.

SkillBridge is a mutually beneficial arrangement for both service members and employers. For

service members, it improves marketability and supports a smoother transition into meaningful civilian employment through hands-on training and real-world experience. For employers, it provides access to a highly trained, motivated workforce at no additional cost, and provides an opportunity to evaluate potential future employees.

The program accepts new industry providers only twice a year, during autumn (October 1–December 1) and spring (February 1–April 1) enrollment seasons.

Employers interested in SkillBridge or assistance with the application process can contact our Business Connections team at (907) 269-4777 or anchorage.employers@alaska.gov.

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